

## Fighting back after a bout with cancer

By Don Armstrong (pictured visiting a cancer patient)



I did not think for a minute that I would eventually be one of the estimated 912,938 individuals in the U.S. living with, or in remission from leukemia, Hodgkin lymphoma, non Hodgkin lymphoma or myeloma. It is important that you know how blood cancer has affected my life. My name is Don Armstrong. I am 53 years old and live in Fort Worth.

I have been on an extraordinary, inspiring journey the past four years. Before I begin my story, here are some overwhelming blood cancer statistics:

Every 4 minutes someone new is diagnosed with blood cancer. An estimated 139,860 individuals in the United States were diagnosed with leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma in 2009. That is 9.5% of the 1,479,350 new cancer cases diagnosed in the United States this year.

Every 10 minutes someone loses their fight with these cancers. Leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma caused the death of an estimated 53,240 individuals in 2009. These blood cancers will account for approximately 9.5% of the deaths from cancer based on the estimated 562,340 total cancer related deaths.

These numbers are alarming and staggering!

I am compelled to do everything that I can to reduce the incidence of blood cancers now and to ultimately find the cure for these insidious diseases. 2010 is the year to Make A Difference!

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My journey began with the surprising diagnosis of Acute Myeloid Leukemia or AML on September 14, 2005. Needless to say, I was shocked, overwhelmed and frightened with this reality. This could not be happening to me. I was young, my health was excellent and I was very active.

Like so many individuals who are diagnosed with a blood cancer, there were signs and symptoms of my illness, but they only made sense after my diagnosis. These diseases are very indiscriminate in whom they touch and could happen to any of us!

I was filled with tremendous uncertainty as I faced my first hospital stay, which started the day following my diagnosis. There were so many first time experiences affecting me,

and of course, there was the chemo. My first round of chemo was successful!!! However, for my future protection, my doctor and I determined that I needed a stem cell transplant to eliminate any future reoccurrence of leukemia. I had four additional rounds of chemo, and most importantly, on May 12, 2006, 8 months after my diagnosis, I was blessed with a stem cell transplant and a new start at life!

My doctor at Baylor Medical Center Dallas, allowed me to start working out on September 12, 2006. This was significant because it gave me back an important part of my life. February 23, 2007 I ran my first poststem cell transplant marathon in Fort Worth. Shortly after this marathon, I found the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team In Training, and I signed up for the 2007 San Diego Marathon. The event was an incredible experience for me and set me on a path that has included four additional marathons with TNT; 2007 Dublin Marathon, 2008 San Antonio Marathon, 2009 Rome Marathon and the 2009 San Antonio Marathon.

October 2010 will mark my fifth year in remission from leukemia. This is a significant achievement for a survivor and one that I want to CELEBRATE!!! So, here is my plan: Run five marathons and five half marathons with Team In Training starting in January 2010 and finishing in December 2010. In the process of running these marathons I will raise \$500,000 to present to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. This is a lofty goal but with your support very doable. The benefits of this plan are four fold: Raise Public Awareness of Blood Cancers; Raise Dollars to Fund Vital Cancer Research; Support Patient Services Programs; Support Efforts to Find the Ultimate Cure for Blood Cancer

I would not wish my cancer on anyone, but I sure wish that you and the whole world could know what I have gained on my journey. In the process, I discovered and confirmed some useful and precious life lessons. It is my heart's desire to make a significant contribution to the amazing programs already in place at the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in 2010. Please join me as my journey continues and help me make my 2010 goals a reality.

Thank you for your support,

Don Armstrong

Please make a donation to support my participation in Team In Training and help advance LLS's mission.

Please use the link in this email to donate online quickly and securely plus learn more about my progress. You will receive a confirmation of your donation by email and I will be notified as soon as you make your donation.

<http://pages.teamintraining.org/ntx/paris10/darmstrtb8>

I hope you will visit my web site often. Be sure to check back frequently to see my progress. Thanks for your support!

Don Armstrong's Event Schedule:  
2010 Marathon Events

January 10th - Walt Disney World Marathon Orlando, Florida

February 27th - Cowtown Half Marathon Fort Worth

March 21st - Atlanta Half Marathon Atlanta, Georgia

April 11th - Paris Marathon Paris, France

June 6th - San Diego Rock 'n Roll Marathon San Diego, California

June 27th - Seattle Rock 'n Roll Half Marathon Seattle, Washington

August 1st - Chicago Rock 'n Roll Half Marathon Chicago, Illinois

October 18th - Nike Marathon San Francisco, California

November 6th - New York City Marathon New York City, New York

December 12th - White Rock Half Marathon Dallas