

Patient Testimonial – Lynne Leaver Shields Radiation Oncology Center - Mansfield

For many people St. Patrick's day is a fun-filled day of parades and festivities but for Lynne Leaver of Lakeville, MA, St. Patrick's day was the furthest from celebration. It was the day she was diagnosed with breast cancer after an annual mammogram. As a seasoned ultrasonographer, Lynne has provided ultrasounds to patients for years. Her own diagnosis came as a shock because she is number six of eight children and there was no family history of breast cancer of which she knew. Lynne recalled looking at her mammogram and ultrasound and thinking "In this field, I had never seen anything that looked like that and *wasn't* breast cancer."



Lynne Leaver, her husband George and her two sons, Robbie and Corey

"I don't know what was harder, telling my mother or my kids about my diagnosis." Lynne shared. Growing up in a large close family and being a wife and mother of two sons, Lynne knew cancer would be just as hard for the people who loved her as it was for herself. Lynne needed to find the very best options for treatment, but also the ones that helped her maintain as much normalcy as possible. She said "I chose to go to the Faulkner Hospital in Boston for my surgery and medical oncology. But for 6 weeks of radiation therapy I didn't want to travel every day into the city. And I didn't want my husband or sons to have to drive me. I wanted and needed to stay close to my home for radiation."

Lynne's friend who had been through radiation therapy recommended Shields Radiation Oncology Center in Mansfield. During her consultation Lynne explained to Dr. Daniel Han and his team that she wanted to continue working, she asked if she could have a 4:15 p.m. appointment so she could come right after work for her treatment. "I told Dr. Han, "I wanted my life to remain as normal as possible. Radiation therapy needed to work for me, my family, my lifestyle." A flexible and convenient schedule gave Lynne what she needed and she never missed a day of work while going through her radiation treatments. "Work, family and friends are the things that helped me feel empowered, hopeful, strong and positive. If I hadn't gone to Shields, my life would have changed dramatically. I wouldn't have been able to continue working my 32-hour work week and that would have affected my family's lifestyle." Lynne is an inspiration, showing that great strides can be made during the most difficult of times.

Lynne shared that she never felt rushed and how important that was for her. Lynne said "Everyone I came in contact with at Shields was so kind and compassionate. It takes a special person to work in this field. They truly made me feel very comfortable. "Working with my medical providers and letting them know what I needed made all the difference". The members of Lynne's team were able to frequently communicate and coordinate the best plan possible for treating the cancer successfully.

"It isn't easy being on the other side of the fence" shared Lynne. As the one who always brought comfort (and dinner!) to others in need, Lynne's journey let her treasure all the support she received from friends that cooked and sent letters of inspiration, a sister with unending love and support, terrific kids, supportive co-workers, and a caring husband who has helped her every step of the way. "All in all, I wouldn't have asked for this but there is a reason I have gone through this journey" she said. "The message I want to share with others is to get your mammograms every year after age 40, do a self breast exam every month, get the best care team possible, accept kindness from others and feel less rushed and more blessed every day." Lynne thank you for sharing this valuable story and inspiring others with all that you do and all that you are.