

Local mom’s cancer effects linger

By Madison Smyser

Durant lunch staff employee Melissa Snyder was diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago in the middle of COVID-19. Since having a mastectomy on her right breast, Ms. Snyder has had no signs of returning cancer.

However, it’s possible that her particular gene mutation could return more aggressively in the lungs or brain. In addition, it might be passed down to her daughter, Emily, a Durant freshman.

Ms. Snyder was officially diagnosed with stage three breast cancer on April 29, 2020. The right breast had a nine-inch lump and felt like “shattered glass,” Ms. Snyder said.

After removing the breast, doctors checked her lymph nodes, and 27 of the 31 lymph nodes were “lit up” with cancer, which is what carried the cancer throughout her body, Ms. Snyder said.

According to a website from the American Cancer Society, there is a one in eight chance of a woman developing cancer in the United States, and breast cancer is the “second leading cause” of cancer death in women.

“At this time, there are more than four million breast cancer survivors in the United States. This includes women still being treated and those who have completed treatment,” said the website.

COVID-19 had a huge effect on Ms. Snyder’s treatment. When she first found a lump in the right breast in January of 2020, no doctors were taking new patients. After three days of searching, she eventually



Photo contributed by Melissa Snyder
Durant staff member Melissa Snyder is pictured with her daughter Emily Renert.

managed to get an appointment.

Doctors will continually test Ms. Snyder once a year with scheduled mammograms and body scans because of her particular genetic mutation.

Ms. Snyder enjoys working as a part of the lunchroom staff, which wore shirts in support of her cancer fight. Ms. Snyder still has to go to many doctor appointments, and Food Director Tessa Dierickx is great at providing her with a flexible work schedule.

“They [the staff] just support me 100 percent, even to this day,” said Ms. Snyder.

Ms. Snyder has an older brother who was recently diagnosed with stage four colorectal cancer.

The doctors originally gave him two years to live if chemotherapy worked but have now raised it to five years. This type of cancer is unfortunately incurable and inoperable, Ms. Snyder said.

Ms. Snyder’s daughter, Emily Renert, also has over a fifty percent chance of developing her mother’s cancer, according to Emily.

Doctors recommend that Emily get her blood tested around age thirty and have a mammogram at age forty.

When Ms. Snyder was first diagnosed, Emily was ten years old. When Ms. Snyder told her daughter the news, she was surprised how well Emily took it. She was quiet and didn’t ask too many questions.

“Kids are so much braver than what you think, so it was really hard to tell her,” said Ms. Snyder.

Emily remembers returning home and seeing her mom laying on the couch after her first surgery. Her mom was unable to move and in a lot of pain.

“Watching her made me feel like I was useless at that point because I felt like I couldn’t do anything for her,” said Emily.

While Ms. Snyder was in recovery, every week Emily would support her mom by making gift baskets or fun activities for her to enjoy.

Doctors no longer consider their patients “cancer-free” because of the rise in cancer cases, according to Ms. Snyder.

Patients are now considered NED, which stands for No Evidence of Disease.

When Ms. Snyder officially became NED, her family threw a party in honor of surviving her battle with cancer.

“It was a struggle, but it brought us closer together as a family,” said Ms. Snyder. “You appreciate and don’t take the life you have for granted.”

Cohen Jepsen

Mascot tips apply to life beyond suit

Willie the Wildcat is our renowned and beloved spontaneous rascal, and he is seemingly immortal.

Many Durant students in the past have donned that carpet of a suit and have waved, flipped, danced and jumped to get that school spirit glowing big and bright. They had the honor to personify school spirit and did it spectacularly.

I remember seeing Willie when I was but knee high to a grasshopper while walking the halls in an orderly line with my classmates. Every time I saw the big



fella, I smiled. He was never scary, indifferent, or even boring. And of course, there was always that question, “Who is Willie the Wildcat?” On the eve of entering high school, I was given the very rare opportunity to be Willie.

Now, at first, I had no idea what that duty even meant. But my sails were catching the wind, and I was eager to set out on the sea of bounteous experience.

Little did I realize how much you sweat under that suit. The first few football games were a bit tumultuous. But when I remembered to bring my water bottle, and when the nights got colder, the sweat levels dropped considerably.

I loved every moment as Willie. Jumping around in that suit, I always had that same smile that I had as a little kid seeing him in the halls.

Out of class, running around the school as Willie, and surprising a bunch of classrooms was awesome, and my four years as Willie were aided by three guidelines that I came up with my freshman year.

First, abandon all your inhibitions as the mascot. No matter how shy or nervous you are, never let it get to your head. Willie is supposed to be outgoing and unpredictable. He can’t stand rigid and bland. Dance, jump, flip. Once you don the suit, you’re Willie.

Next, treat everyone the same. Willie is the school’s goofball, and his main goal is to make people laugh. Laughter shouldn’t be restricted to one group or another. Be friends with everybody. Be respectful—even to opposing football teams.

Finally, live in every moment and think outside the box. Come up with unique ideas for funny skits. Take some risks, but don’t go crazy. Always see the best outcome, make people laugh, and have zero regrets.

My guidelines don’t apply solely to future mascots, but to everyone else as well. We don’t need to don a mascot uniform to live life to it its fullest—we just need to be comfortable in our own skin.



Prom From page 1

unreal that I was actually there,” Grace said.

Grace had to take a train ride back at the end of the prom weekend. But the couple got to spend an extra day together after missing her train in Chicago the first

time.

“We were there an hour early and got lost and went the wrong way and missed the train by a minute,” Grace said. “And I was crying a lot because I thought it’d have

to be a quick bye.”

Grace got on the train the next day, and she said “it was extremely hard to say goodbye.”

But the two juniors plan to see each other this summer. Nolan’s family is going on a vacation to Niagara Falls in New York. So hopefully his family can pick Grace up to spend the week together.

When asked at the end of the *Chronicles* interview what Nolan liked the most about Grace, he replied without hesitation.

“She’s really caring, she cares about a lot of things, especially other people,” Nolan said. “She’s very thoughtful. She’s just really really amazing.”

Green Acres employee of the month



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Congratulations, Class of 2025!



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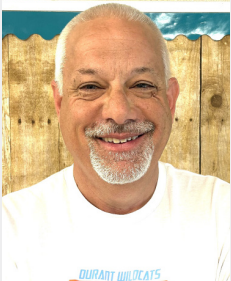
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Today’s Dentistry coach of the month

Girls’ track coach Doug Frett has been coaching track for 25 years and coaching for 33 years overall. He always enjoyed playing sports growing up, so he got into coaching. His goals for the track season are to build positive team chemistry and take as many events to state as possible. Coach Frett’s favorite part about coaching is seeing growth in the athletes’ events and the excitement when they reach a personal goal.



Frett



PAPER’S LUMBER & SUPPLY

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Liberty Trust & Savings Bank’s club member of the month



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Senior Seamus DeVine is a new student at Durant. He came from Davenport North to play baseball. He was a National Honor Society member at his old school and is now a member here. In NHS, Seamus participates in leadership activities and promotes excellence.



DeVine