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Ann Campbell, 77, is a few years in following her diagnosis of anal cancer. Another rare form, anal cancer is not the same as cancer of the colon or rectum, but is often curable with radiation and chemotherapy. While the Edmonton senior had little to no symptoms before her cancer was discovered through a routine colonoscopy and follow-up biopsy, indicators for anal cancer often include pain, swelling or bleeding around the anus. This type of cancer can be caused by smoking or HPV, among other factors.

"I've always been vibrant, healthy and happy--travelling and enjoying theatre and outdoor festivals," said Campbell, who was a registered nurse and then an accountant before retirement. "I had spoken about cancer patients when I was a nurse, but now I was one--part of an exclusive club. That messed with my mind. I always wanted to be in control of my life and body, but after diagnosis, I felt like I was tossed about by the wind. I was being told what doctor appointments, classes and medicines to take. My friends weren't sharing with me about what concerts we'd seen anymore. Now the conversation was about how I was coping. It was a life change I didn't want and it took some time to get used to."

Campbell also had to battle extreme

side effects of chemotherapy/radiation that included nausea, mouth sores, hair loss and extreme fatigue. Through it all, she said she maintained a sense of humour (even naming her fanny-pack-type treatment pouch 'Pauly') and singing a Johnny Nash song to get through.

"Those lyrics helped me a lot during treatment. I can see clearly now the rain is gone. I can see all obstacles in my way. Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind. It's gonna be a bright sunny day," she remembered.

Like Brown, Campbell credits staff at the Cross Cancer Institute with helping her endure treatment and offering support and compassion on every step of her journey. She is now a patient advisor at the Cross and part of the Alberta Cancer Exercise study. Campbell also takes in Cross-sponsored groups on mindfulness and stress management, something she finds particularly valuable since dealing with several post-treatment pelvic fractures.

"The treatment weakened my bones, so I deal with that. Sitting is difficult. But overall, I feel very lucky. I'm a 'seize the day' type of person and I'm grateful that my scans are clear," she added. "I'm independent and intend to be so for a long time to come. I always remind myself that I'm still vertical."



Photo supplied by Ann Campbell

Staying engaged with friends and community has been a key part of healing along Ann Campbell's cancer journey.

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"It's a great way to get out of the house," said Loiselle, suggesting the league is one of the more affordable sports in the city. "All equipment is supplied. All we ask is that you wear clean rubber-soled shoes. You don't have to know how to play. We offer free lessons for all newcomers."

Everyone who walks in for a day of either singles or doubles competition is given a name tag and a poker chip, stating foot and head - indicating which side of the long board they will play from.

On a typical day, one-half of the rink is covered with eight plastic lanes--39- feet-long by six-feet-wide.

Loiselle says all of the lanes - except one - have unique characteristics due to irregularities in the concrete, adding "it affects the discs when they are thrown."

Each player - in either singles or doubles - uses a long wooden cue to push a weighted disc down the plastic surface into a marked scoring area. Scoring is made by having the disc land completely inside the scoring zones--no touching the line allowed. In all, there are 16 frames in each game, which usually last about 90 minutes.

The club increases the playing area to 12 lanes when they host tournaments, attracting competitors from across the western U.S. and western Canada.

"We have a 97-year-old lady who comes every year from Victoria. Her daughter drives her up," said Loiselle.

For 2020, in an attempt to create greater interest, the club will be introducing a variation of shuffleboard called Horse Collar.

"This puts three people on each team, allow-

ing more people to participate. It makes it that much more fun, and that's all were trying to do here," he said.

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to delay the 2020 season.

For more information go to shufflewithgesa.ca



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