

June 23, 2010

## Life Happens

At age 37, Dawn Epling found herself 35 lbs overweight, dealing with hypothyroidism and tired all the time. She was afraid to even hope things could change for her. Dawn joined the Pickens County YMCA and under the tutelage of a personal trainer she was taught how to exercise.

It put her on a new path, and over 3 years ago she became a Wellness Coach and Personal Trainer at the Pickens County YMCA herself. “My passion is working one on one with people, helping them face their wellness process with confidence. I believe that your best years can be your 30s, 40s, 50s and beyond if you engage now,” says Dawn.

At the age of 50, life presented her with a new challenge, breast cancer. In 2009, doctors diagnosed Dawn with Invasive Ductal Carcinoma. She was estrogen and progesterone positive and HER2 positive. She went through surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. Every three weeks she receives an infusion of Herceptin, a drug that targets HER+ cells.

Dawn says, “My biggest struggle is the fear of recurrence. Every ache or pain causes concern in a new way and brings about new medical tests. Is it cancer or just a headache, sore back, or stomach ache?” She finds comfort in a Bible verse she learned as a child. “What time I am afraid I will trust in thee.” (Psalm 56:3) She says that in God she has truly found peace that passes all human understanding. She encourages others facing a similar situation to not withdraw and close yourself off but to find someone to talk to.

Dawn says, “The one thing in life that is certain is that nothing stays the same. Change is inevitable. We get out of school and become more sedentary. We have children and our bodies change. Just when we have things figured out, life throws us a curve ball. We can’t change the past, but we can move forward. Life happens. What are you going to do with yours?”

For more information on wellness and personal training at the Pickens County YMCA please call 855-9622 or 878-8380. You may also visit [www.pcyymca.net](http://www.pcyymca.net).



Dawn at age 37



Dawn at age 50 before cancer diagnosis.



Dawn after surgery, chemo and radiation treatments.