

# My Niece

If you're a long time reader of the blog you know that one of the people who I am closest to in my family is my niece Jody. Jody is my sister Judy's oldest daughter. Being Judy and I are sixteen years apart, that makes me closer in age to her daughter Jody who is only 4 years younger than me.

I really don't remember much of my life before Jody. We were great pals and friends. In our young years, while her dad was fighting the Vietnam War, Judy, Jody and her younger brother Jeremy lived in a trailer home on my mom and dad's farm. Our homes were just 50 yards or so from each other. We spent so much time traveling the path between our houses. She's really like a sister to me.

This past year, I think we got even closer. When I got my cancer diagnosis, Jody was the first one there. She didn't run away and quit being my friend like some people did...she didn't treat it like the elephant in the room like some people did. She was front and center there. She answered questions...she listened to me complain. She listened to my fears. She listened to my disappointments. It was so comforting to me because she got it. I didn't have to filter what I said. I could say out loud whatever I wanted...whatever I needed. She could do this better than anyone because she had breast cancer two years earlier. She understood so many of the roller coaster type emotions.

While I was just coming to an end of my scare, her's came back. Her breast cancer, even though she had a mastectomy, came back. This time, it was so much more....this time it came with chemo.

Here's Jody celebrating my 50th birthday with me.



At the time the picture was taken we didn't have any idea that either of us had cancer.

A short time after the picture was taken we were lamenting about the new year and new medical deductibles. WOW. We never knew that we blow those deductibles up in a short time.

Here we are a year later...both of us thankful to be alive. Both of us are facing another deductible. I'm fortunate. We have good insurance and I don't have a passel of kids that I am paying medical and other expenses on either. For Jody, that's not true. They have five little ones. They do have insurance...higher deductibles and not as good drug coverage. She's been so thankful for all the help they've gotten from family and friends along the way helping with gift certificates, meals and comfort...however, the medical bills are hard.

A friend of Jody's is putting together a benefit for her family.



As things sit right now, Jody finished her last day of chemo last Tuesday. She's been at it since August. They are looking at possible radiation next. Of course, she's not the "cut and dry- we know exactly how to treat you case". We don't know exactly what's next.

What we do know is that she's a fighter but that fighting might be a bit easier if she didn't have to worry about the medical bills.

That's why I am so thankful that a friend of hers is putting the benefit together. I am trying to help but living 2 hours away makes it a little harder. In light of that, I'm doing what I can from a distance. I'm trying to rally some items for the silent auction.

I am putting up my Allietare quilt. I love it but it will do more good as a silent auction item than in a pile of finished quilts at my house. I'm hoping it brings some good money. A blog reader once wrote if I ever sell any of my Bonnie Hunter quilts I should let you all know...so I am.

If anyone wants to put in a bid I'll happily enter it for you when the benefit comes around on January 28th @ New Covenant Bible Church in Cedar Rapids. Here's [a link to the page](#) if you want to know more about the benefit.



If any of you feel inclined to donate money or items for the silent auction, or even to bid on my quilt,

I would happily accept any donations and pass them along to the benefit organizer. They are looking for all sorts of things for the silent auction from signed memorabilia, to tickets to events, quilts, to craft items, to gift baskets that are put together...any sort of goodies that people can bid on.

Here is my email if you have any questions or want to put a bid in on my Allietare quilt.  
rogjok@iowatelecom.net

Thanks so much....Jody and her family mean the world to me.

UPDATE:

Thanks so much to the blog readers who started the challenge (read about it in the comments)...also: Andy asked for an address to send a donation to. I will be attending the benefit. Any money can be sent to me I will hand deliver it to the benefit. Here's my address.

Jo Kramer  
111 2nd Ave NE  
Waucoma, IA 52171

Also if you read the comments one reader has an 18" doll she'd be willing to donate and is wondering if anyone has any doll clothes for it that they would be willing to donate to make a nice gift basket set for the silent auction.

I am overwhelmed by your generosity! THANK YOU.