

Anita Jackson: LIVING IN HOSPICE – Anita crossed over early in the morning on February 17, 2017. We will miss her dearly.



My story began on a small island off Maine. I was born into the Penobscot Nation. The people of the Penobscot Indian Nation are traditionally known as the penawahpskewi. Together with the Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Mik Maq Nations, the four Northeastern Woodland tribes make up the Wabanaki Confederacy.

I always practiced good health and had regular health screenings of mammograms and pap smears. Then in 1983, my breasts became irritated. I couldn't believe it when there seemed to bleed at the nipples. The doctors thought breast cancer, and decided on surgery to remove the tips of both my breasts. I thought that would end it, so I went along with the decision.

In 2003, I began spotting irregularly and the next thing I know, and I can't pee. What now! I thought to myself, and immediately went to the hospital. A series of tests followed to help identify the type of cancer, where it was located, and whether it has spread to other parts of the body? Kidney cancer, they said; and it was very aggressive and spreading at a fast rate'.

It was scary knowing the cancer had spread so quickly to my lungs, chest, left side and my back. Radiation and chemotherapy treatments followed. I tried to keep as much as I could from the kids, and took myself to treatments. Sutent Clinical Trial was offered to me in 2008. At first, I didn't know what to expect. I stayed with the program for two years. The medication that was given to me made me so ill. I stopped the program, I just couldn't do it.

In April of 2011, I was selected as a recipient for the *Make a Wish Foundation*. What a wonderful gift! I returned home to see my birth place one more time. My childhood memories flooded back, and my heart became filled with a sense of calmness and peace, it had kept its beauty.

In 2012, a new Voltrient Clinical Trial was being offered. I don't know why I decided to try it, but I am so glad I did. I have been on the new chemo for a year and half, and my body feels stronger than it has in some time. My hair is even coming back. I am going backwards now... (She laughs, with a big smile). My hair which was black before had gone completely white after chemo. Now it is growing back and changing to *black!* People tell me, 'You sure look good!

Today, I continue to struggle with cancer but consider myself very blessed, and my cancer doctors have been so wonderful. I recently started a new clinical trial for Vitamin D Deficiency. The doctors have said that "I am dying" for the last ten years... giggles, but I am still here! I don't know why but God must have

some purpose for me. I value time spent attending the Native American Cancer Survivor's group, and volunteer to coach others who have cancer.

I am content with my life and pending fate. Although my children seem to think I will live forever... I do not fear death. "The Great Spirit has shown me though visions; that my relatives await my arrival in heaven and again we will fish in the river streams".