



“WE CAN SAY there is hope. They are not alone. Be brave, be strong. Now we can do what we have to do to help ourselves.”

**– LINDA HAVATONE,
*Cancer Has Crept Among Us***

An updated version of the video produced by the Inter-tribal Council of Arizona, called “Cancer Has Crept Among Us,” featuring Mrs. Havatone, was released in 2008. Mrs. Havatone traveled to Washington D.C. to share her story at the Susan G. Komen Cancer Foundation conference in April, 2009.

To see the video, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNBpy-BIG-4>



Linda Havatone and Gloria Susanyatame (seen here with Bill Ward, prostate cancer survivor and educator) attend many cancer education conferences to learn more about cancer, so they can share the facts with Native people across the U.S.

A Voice of Experience

Linda Havatone (Hualapai), (pictured lower left) has suffered many experiences with cancer in her immediate family. In 2000, Linda’s daughter Janette (next page), discovered she had cervical cancer. Janette is cancer free today. That same year, Linda’s husband, Earl passed away from throat cancer. Soon afterward, her son Chuck, who suffered from brain cancer, also passed away. In 2006, and again in 2007, Linda herself, had surgery for thyroid cancer. Like Janette, she too is cancer free today.


That’s four people with cancer in the same family in less than ten years.

Despite the repeated tragedies in her life, Linda is choosing not to hide away. Instead, along with her daughter Janette, and cancer advocate Gloria Susanyatame, (Havasupai) she is a leading voice for cancer education. (Gloria is not a cancer survivor. She works as the program manager for the Hualapai Cancer Project, in Peach Springs, Arizona.)

In 2007, Linda and Janette volunteered their stories to the production of a cancer education video. It has been shared with everyone from cancer policy makers in Washington D.C., to community members in her hometown of Peach Springs, Arizona. Linda also travels to other reservations to speak, and participates on national cancer advisory boards, asking medical doctors hard questions.

“In my travels I have learned that many surgeons and doctors don’t know that Native American people don’t want to talk about cancer,” Linda says.

“So, I’m out there not just speaking for my people. I am speaking for all Native people across the U.S.”

Linda is very honest when she shares her story. “Because of my family’s history, yes, I’m still afraid. I don’t know what is going to happen next. But I still say, ‘We need to take care of ourselves. Get your checkups. You still have a life ahead of you!’” 

Janette's Story

Before it became such a large part of their lives, the Havatone family didn't know much about cancer. It was only after she found out she had cervical cancer that Janette Havatone (Hualapai) learned that cervical cancer starts with no physical warning signs. By the time she felt pain, the cancer was in a very late stage—and life threatening. Treatment saved her life.

Janette Havatone (Hualapai), and her mother Linda Havatone realize that many Native people don't have the facts about cancer. That's why Janette and Linda share their cancer stories with Native women and men whenever they can.

Not everyone wants to talk about it. When she tried to tell a cousin about her cervical cancer, and how her cousin should get a Pap test, "she tuned me out," Janette says. Just the same, she isn't giving up.


"When I see a woman not taking care of herself I wonder if she sees herself as less important than her other family members. For me, it was my family that made me feel like I mattered."

"I know that women need to be ready to hear about their bodies," Janette says. However, she also believes that women have to help educate other women, so that they can be ready to take the step and go to their health appointments.

Janette says that her family's experience is her motivation. "I just never want anyone to go through what I've gone through, what my family has gone through."

Looking back on the events since 2000 is difficult for Janette. "My dad was getting his radiation at the same time I was getting mine. So we'd drive to Kingman [Arizona] together. Afterward he would take me to a cheap place to eat two-dollar eggs. He couldn't eat because of his throat cancer. Later, he'd stop and buy us both ice creams. Even though he was so sick, we would talk all the way home—or I'd lie back and rest while he drove. When we got back to the house, we'd lie on separate beds, exhausted, until the next time we had to go."

Janette recalls another important time in her cancer treatment. "I just got out of surgery. I was in a deep sleep. I saw a blue tunnel. Coming from the light was my Aunt. She was so happy. She said, 'Janette, it's not your time. You need to go back. You'll be okay.' Behind her I saw a shadow. When I woke up, I got a call that she had passed away. Two months later, my dad had passed on, too. I knew then that he was the shadow behind her that I had seen."

It took some time after her surgery to feel complete again, but Janette says the Grand Canyon near her home, helped her heal. "Whenever I go out to Eagle Point I say a prayer. The canyon has healed me inside and out. It has put back my missing parts. It has fulfilled my emptiness. I am okay again, just like my Aunt said." 



Janette Havatone,
Hualapai