



ON MY MIND

In February 2014, Chapman University student Janelle Hauber was enjoying winter break with her family in their Yorba Linda home. Her mom noticed several large moles on her back and recommended she see her dermatologist. No big deal, Hauber thought — until her biopsy indicated malignant melanoma skin cancer.

Hauber was frightened and confused. Fortunately her dermatologist referred her to oncologic surgeon Dr. James Jakowatz at the UC Irvine Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center. Jakowatz and his team shepherded Hauber, then just 21, through her treatment, easing her and her family's fears.

Since then she has been cancer-free and has finished her degree in integrated educational studies. She is currently working on her master's in special education and will proudly participate in the UC Irvine Health Anti-Cancer Challenge, June 10-11, at Angel Stadium of Anaheim. Proceeds from the Challenge — an event featuring cycling routes, a run-walk, a stationary bike event and other activities — support research at Orange County's only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center.



I was at work when I got the call about my biopsy. I had no idea what malignant melanoma was, but I knew from my doctor's voice that it was not good. So I did something you're not supposed to do — I Googled it. Bad call.

Later that day I was too upset to take a midterm test. I explained to my professor that I was having a bad day, which was a big understatement. Telling my parents on the phone was heartbreaking. It was St. Patrick's Day, and that evening we ate our corned beef and cabbage in total silence. And I come from a very loud family!

Fortunately, my mood changed the moment I walked into the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center with my mom and dad. The receptionist was very kind, so I knew everyone else would be kind, too. Then, while waiting for my appointment, a volunteer, Bob, came in and handed me a stuffed bunny. His wife makes these "bunnies against cancer." Bob said he was a "worst-case scenario" melanoma survivor and told me I was going to be OK.

Next, this loud, happy man walked into my room and said, "We're gonna get this thing out of you." Dr. Jakowatz held my mom's hand; he understood that my entire family was going through this, too. That meant the world to me. I tell everyone now that I'm the No. 1 advocate for the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center.

In retrospect, I was lucky. I only needed one surgery to remove the cancer, and there was no cancer in any of my lymph nodes.

Today my health is great, although I'm still adjusting to being a cancer survivor. I still worry about moles changing. But seeing Dr. J — that's what I call him — for my regular checkups keeps me sane. My whole thing now is to remain positive. I might have scars on my body that I never expected, but I know that they mean I survived.

In June, I'll be running in the Anti-Cancer Challenge with my friends as 'Team Hauber.' They'll get to meet my doctors and become part of my cancer center family. I'm doing this because I care about people who are currently undergoing cancer. I want them to feel a sense of community, know they're not alone and keep their hopes for the future alive — just as others have helped me.



— Janelle Hauber



For more information, visit
anti-cancerchallenge.org
 and ucirvinehealth.org/preventmelanoma