

# ACTIVE LIVING AFTER CANCER

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
**MD Anderson**  
Cancer Center  
Making Cancer History®

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## CCDC ALAC Survivorship Reunion



Our program partner, **Cancer and Chronic Disease Consortium of El Paso** will be hosting a **VIRTUAL ALAC reunion!** We are super excited to offer past, current and prospective participants the opportunity to join us for an afternoon of survivorship knowledge and fun!

The reunion will be taking place on **October 20th, 2020**. Time is TBA. Stay tuned for more information!

## ALAC Virtual 5K

Our **ALAC Virtual 5K** takes place this

**Saturday, September 12th!**



Participants will have from **8:00am—7:00pm CT** to complete 3.1 miles. You can opt to run or walk—it's completely up to you!

Make sure to take a selfie, or post a picture of your steps and post it on our ALAC Facebook page! We can't wait to see everyone's participation!

## Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month: Participant Spotlight



I got ovarian cancer -stage IA high grade- when I was 60 years old. The shocking part of my story is how I learnt it. In June 2017, I went to an Emergency room because I had pain in my pelvis, and I was convinced that I had another UTI because this happened to me many times during that year. The doctors thought that I had stones in my kidney so after a couple of scans they came back and told me - literally- that they had two news: one good and one bad. The good news was that I didn't have a kidney's stone, but the bad news was that I had cancer... I was shocked, many thoughts crossed my mind that evening and my life wasn't the same anymore ... I had surgery on July 17<sup>th</sup> and chemotherapy after that, well after Harvey to be precise. I finished my treatment at the end of 2017 and in January 2018 they confirmed I was cancer-free.

From the moment of my diagnosis I decided to live my life day by day. As soon as I completed my treatment, despite that I was convinced I had to find my new normal, I thought that I could get my life back and I could do whatever I wanted. However, sooner rather than later I realized that my body needed more time to adjust to this new situation. I also had a couple of health issues that thought me that, being a cancer survivor, you are always suspicious and under surveillance, so to speak.

Meanwhile I was taking yoga classes and also attending the Ovarian Cancer Support Group meetings at MD Anderson. By that time, I got an invitation from the OVARCAME organization for a luncheon and it was there were I learnt about ALAC and the information was provided by Carolina.

At that point I was open and willing to do more things to improve my overall health therefore, I contacted them and enrolled in a course in June last year which unfortunately I couldn't complete. At the beginning of this year I contacted Carolina because I wanted to enroll again in the classes aiming to complete them this time. It is good to mention that my husband played a big role in this process and has been very supportive all the way.

This course has changed my approach toward physical activities changing my mindset from just thinking of doing some kind of exercising to do it regularly building, step by step, a routine with measurable short- and long-term goals. I also learnt to make time for me during the day for these activities and in this learning process, the level of encouragement from the group and the coordinators have been the highlight and a key factor for this achievement. A big thanks for the support from everyone involved!

The other great thing which for me is worth to mention about ALAC is that the topics we have the opportunity to discuss each class give us the possibility to exchange views, ideas, and experience from our own journeys.

My challenge going forward is to keep myself on track on this new path and finding new goals to be achieved down the road. I used to say that having cancer has been a life-changing situation in my life and after ALAC, I would say that ALAC will also be a life-changing experience, but in the good sense. This is the bright side of my story.

Thank you,

*Oriana Marchelo*

Click [HERE](#) to learn about our upcoming classes.

Questions?



Email us at

[GAMontoya1@mdanderson.org](mailto:GAMontoya1@mdanderson.org)

Click [HERE](#) to sign up for an upcoming ALAC class!

The Active Living after Cancer (ALAC) newsletter will be sent to you on a monthly basis, it will include updates about the program, locations of future program sites, upcoming community events, and survivorship resources that you may share with your community members.