

Kathleen Kauffman's Journey of Hope



Kathleen (center) with her mother and sister

Health and wellness experts often encourage people to listen to their bodies. That advice saved the life of Kathleen Kauffman, a Personal Symmetrics ABC Certified Post-Mastectomy Fitter. Kauffman built a friendship with Personal Symmetrics patient Michelle L., a 33-year-old survivor of stage 3 triple-negative breast cancer. Talking to Michelle about her symptoms and reflecting on her own family history of cancer,

Kauffman became more intentional about performing self-breast exams.

"You hear about breast cancer in older women," Kauffman said. "But I see patients in their 30s, and you think, 'It can really happen to me.'" When she felt a small lump, Kauffman made an appointment with her gynecologist right away. A mammogram showed the lump was dense tissue, but it also revealed calcifications that required follow-up. On December 5, 2024, at age 30, Kauffman was diagnosed with stage 0 breast cancer. The diagnosis was DCIS (ductal carcinoma in situ), meaning abnormal cells were contained in the milk ducts. Because the cancer had not spread to her lymph nodes, Kauffman did not need chemotherapy, radiation or hormone therapy. Still, she chose a double mastectomy with reconstruction. The path to recovery included four surgeries.

Kauffman wanted the cancer "out of my body. I'm 30 years old," she said. "There are so many things I want to do—have a great career, live a full and happy life, and possibly get married and have kids. I'm not ready to give that up."

On Christmas Eve 2024, she received what she calls the best gift: confirmation that all the cancer had been removed. "I'm cancer-free, and I don't need any further treatments," she said. Kauffman credits her Personal Symmetrics co-workers for support. "They felt the scare, worry and shock right along with me." Clinical Director and Post-Mastectomy Fitter Tammy Franklin helped Kauffman with post-surgical fittings, including bras, compression garments, custom breast prostheses from American Breast Care and a partial prosthesis to add projection to her implants. Kauffman says the same individualized care is extended to every patient, with time to ask questions and find options that feel comfortable and build confidence.

Going through breast cancer has changed how Kauffman relates to patients. After a single or double mastectomy, women may feel sad, vulnerable or self-conscious. "A bra and prosthesis can help her feel like a woman again," Kauffman said, "and I love seeing that smile return." Kauffman emphasizes that early detection was key. "Pay attention to your body," she said. "If something feels not quite right, get it checked." She also encourages peer support, noting that connecting with someone who has been through the same experience can validate feelings and ease isolation.



R. J. Rosenberg
Orthopedic Lab, Inc.

We specialize in upper limb and lower limb prosthetics and silicone restoration.

Our certified team of professionals offer high-level technology, support, and one-on-one compassionate care.

rjrosenberg.com



At Personal Symmetrics, we offer you personalized and exceptional service; post-mastectomy, and lumpectomy care.

We feature custom breast forms, breast prostheses, bras, camisoles, and post-mastectomy swimwear.

personalsymmetrics.com

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON R.J. ROSENBERG ORTHOPEDIC LAB
OR PERSONAL SYMMETRICS, CALL 513-221-7200.**

3366 CENTRAL PARKWAY • CINCINNATI, OH 45225

Clifton



NON PROFIT ORG
 U.S.Postage
PAID
 Cincinnati, OH
 Permit No. 301

Clifton Town Meeting
 P.O. Box 20042
 Cincinnati, OH 45220-0042