

Good evening, everyone. My name is Kraig Kuusinen and I was born and raised in Grand Rapids, MN. I am a 2 – time Osteo Sarcoma survivor for more than 37 years. I hope you are all having a great time tonight.

In December Of 1985, I had some pain in my left leg. I got cortisone shots and tried physical therapy but it did not work.

In the spring quarter of 1986, I was a student at the University of Minnesota. My leg still hurt so I went to the Boynton Health Services. They X-Rayed my leg and found a mass on my left fibula. They scheduled to have a biopsy the next day and discovered the Osteo Sarcoma tumor on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1986. It was then I met my pediatric oncologist Dr. Marie Steiner and orthopedic surgeon Dr. Roby Thompson. The staff discussed the treatment and anti-nausea medication between THC and Ativan with my parents and me. Naturally, I choose THC!

I was diagnosed as a pediatric and shared a 4 bedroom room, bathroom and another 4 bedroom room with 7 other patients who were all under 10. One was from my home town of Grand Rapids. That was a great help for my parents. I knew right then that I would survive for me and them. I never once thought that I would not beat this cancer.

I initially had high- dose methotrexate and had a reaction that they had not seen before and the THC did not have any effect. They decided to try again and give me some steroids. I still had the same reaction but this time I got really high!

The staff changed my chemo course and I had out-patient chemo and took the THC. I went to class after and then got really sick. I made it back to the clinic where they started me on Ativan. I had chemo into May, it killed the tumor and had it removed the day after my last final. I had chemotherapy once a month through December and at times I got cold sores down my throat so it was painful to swallow. They tested my internal organs for 3 months and decided to stop giving me chemotherapy in March as my body was too toxic.

In the summer of 1987, I noticed shaking on my right side. When I got down to the U of MN that fall, I went to see Dr. Steiner. She scheduled an MRI and it showed that Osteo Sarcoma had metastasized into the left part

of the brain. I had it removed quickly and underwent the most radiation that they allowed. I went to games 6 & 7 of the Twins World Series after getting out of the hospital.

After about two years, I had another checkup with Dr. Thompson. He said that people who have Osteo Sarcoma metastasize to your brain do not live this long and I do not have to take any more tests. I was still young and did not think much about what he said. Over the years though, I wondered what he meant by me being a survivor when no one else was.

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 (20-year anniversary), I called Dr. Marie Steiner and asked her if she remembered what happened 20 years ago. Of course, she did not and we remembered a few other things from that time. I also asked her what Dr. Thompson meant when he said that. She said that no one before me and no one since me has survived that happening. I almost dropped the phone.

I had already been volunteering for Rein In Sarcoma, but now I decided to become a dedicated volunteer. I took over the luminaries when the person who started it left. I have bought everything for making of the luminaries including the canopy and tables. Over all the 24 years of this event, I have donated and solicited around \$8000 for the silent auction.

I would like to thank all the staff and nurses for treating me with their best care and the doctors for getting me through this ordeal. But most of all, I want to thank my parents for coming down for all the chemo treatments and surgeries and being the best caregivers anyone could hope for!

Thank you for listening and I hope this helps you throughout your journey!

Have a Good night and Be Kind!