

## **Cancer Would Not Take Away Joan's Joy!**

“Perhaps you or someone dear to you has received a life-changing diagnosis. You may find it difficult to imagine that the emotion of joy could possibly be associated with the likes of cancer.

Battle—now, you and I hear that word associated with terminal illness all the time. But joy?—it takes an amazing individual to exude a spirit of joy amidst suffering. **It takes a person like Joan.** Joan was a model wife and mother of four. She was tirelessly committed to her husband and children. She assisted in the creation of her husband's business, an animal hospital. Joan had a degree in interior design and dedicated her life to using her creativity to help others in need. Joan's definition of family extended to all. She gave generously of her time and treasure. She was an ardent defender of life. With a humble strength, she was always ready with words of encouragement and hope.

Although, I was not a personal friend of Joan's she will forever hold a special place in my heart. In fact, a copy of her obituary is tucked away in my planner. I bring it out when I am “battling” challenging times in life. I thank God for the blessing of Joan whose legacy was a life so filled with kindness she exuded joy despite suffering. And, whose greatest hope was to leave a spirit of compassion and joy for others.

A couple months after Joan's passing, we were notified that her retirement account proceeds were gifted to Catholic Charities to care for those living on the margins in Southern Minnesota. **Joan's legacy of joy lives on in the lives of families in crisis, vulnerable adults and seniors, and children in need.** When I look into the eyes of the poor and vulnerable we serve and see their fears transformed into joy through acts of compassion—**I think of Joan!**”

Mary Alessio  
Director of Advancement



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