

*"Going through a cancer diagnosis and the chemotherapy treatments, I felt out of control of everything going on around me. Committing to the program forced me to take control of getting back on track."*

- Paulette Hearn,  
breast cancer survivor

*"Life is good and I am alive. I owe a lot to Mercy Fitness and the Especially For Me program. I made new friends and received a lot of positive reinforcement."*

- Jody Isenhour,  
breast cancer survivor

*"It has been a life-enhancing experience for me. Without this, I would not have been able to maximize my quality of life."*

- Leslie Meyer,  
breast cancer survivor



Breast cancer survivor Lynn Widen works out at the Mercy Fitness Center. Here, she is being videotaped by a FOX 28 news photographer and her story later appeared on the local television station as part of Mercy's monthly "Focus on Health" series. The segment highlighted Mercy's Especially For Me cancer wellness program.



WELLNESS PROGRAM

Especially ♦ for Me

## Cancer survivor

After a tough battle with breast cancer, 53-year-old Lynn Widen finally feels like she's taken back control of her life. Just two years ago, the chaos that often comes with a cancer diagnosis reigned.

*"I was emotionally and physically exhausted. My road to true recovery began at the Mercy Fitness Center in the Especially For Me program."*

- Susan Blocker,  
breast cancer survivor

Lynn's cancer journey began in early 2006 following a routine mammogram that detected a cancerous lump. She was thrown head first into a strange new world of trying to manage a disease that threatened her survival. She took a leave from her job as an emergency room social worker to deal with the rigors of her treatment, which included surgery, six rounds of chemotherapy and finally, 40 days of radiation.

It wasn't until the spring of 2007 that Lynn could think beyond doctor's visits and treatment schedules. A referral from her doctor to Mercy's *Especially For Me* Cancer Survivor Wellness Program helped with the transition back to normalcy. *Especially For Me* is a breast cancer wellness program that combines a guided exercise plan with a personal health coach at Mercy Fitness Center, one-on-one consultation session with a clinical dietitian and a licensed occupational therapist, and small group educational sessions on a variety of pertinent topics. Due to the overwhelming success of the program, *Especially For Me* now is offered for other types of cancers.

The goals of the 12-week program are to help cancer survivors overcome fatigue and exhaustion while boosting their mental outlook and gradually changing their lifestyle – just what Lynn was looking for.

"It was an important piece of the puzzle," says Lynn. "When I started, it wasn't about exercising or losing weight. It was about getting control when everything seemed so out of control."

While the most common side effects of

cancer treatment are thought to be nausea and hair loss, the overwhelmingly prevalent side effect exhibited in almost all cancer patients is fatigue. Previously, no structured program existed in the area to address the mental and physical benefits of combining exercise and nutrition for people with cancer.

"It gave me the kick start to change what I needed to change, to do what I needed to do. The first time I came to the gym, I sat out in the car and cried and thought 'I can't do this,' because I'd never been in a gym in my life. Well, I'm still here," says Lynn.

Lynn credits the program for not only getting her started on an exercise routine, but keeping her motivated, even now, to go to the gym at least three times a week. She's a familiar face at Mercy Fitness Center. And her progress is nothing short of remarkable. She has regained her energy and is back to working part time. The program, she says, provided her with an important emotional outlet to network with other breast cancer survivors, and perhaps the most obvious outward change is that Lynn has lost more than 130 pounds since she was first diagnosed.

For Lynn, it's great to be back in the control seat, and even better to be cancer free.

For more information on the *Especially For Me* Cancer Survivor Wellness Program, please go to [mercy.org](http://mercy.org) or call Mercy Regional Cancer Center at (319) 221-8771.

