



Bertha Johnson-Harvey was first diagnosed with breast cancer back in 2011. The ICS Head Start teacher went through six months of chemotherapy followed by 33 radiation treatments. A year after the initial diagnoses, Johnson-Harvey was declared cancer-free. At 74, she continues to have her yearly mammogram.

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Johnson-Harvey prayed for God's help

By **CHUCK HATHCOCK**
Sports Editor

Bertha Johnson-Harvey, a 73-year-old Institute of Community Centers Inc., Head Start teacher from Grenada, has a required checkup as part of her job to thank in all likelihood for saving her life.

Back in 2011, Harvey was diagnosed with breast cancer after going through a health checkup as part of her Healthy You benefit provided by her insurance. During that examination, Nurse Practitioner Debbie McGehee found the lump and referred Harvey to Furhan Yunus, who for-

warded her to another doctor for the biopsy. The test revealed her worst fears that it was Stage 3 cancer.

"I was down after they told me I had cancer," Harvey said. "I didn't want to tell my children and didn't tell them for two months."

The only child that Harvey told was her daughter, Vanessa Jones, who relayed the information to her other four siblings.

"Vanessa went with me to every doctor's appointment — she followed me all the way to the end," Harvey said.

Harvey leaned on her church family at Brusher Fork M.B. Church for support.

"My church family was always there for me," she said. "I always seem to have members visiting most days."

Like most cancer patients, Harvey pointed to her faith as critical during her battle with the dreaded disease.

"You've got to have faith that God is going to heal you," she said. "After my surgery, I prayed to God and asked Him to help me come through this. I believed He was going to bring me through, and He did with no medication."

Following the diagnosis, Harvey went to Jackson to see Dr. Phillip Ley, one of the top oncologists in Mississippi.

"I was blessed to be able

to see Dr. Ley, who is considered one of the top breast cancer doctors in the state," Harvey said. "He is the doctor, who started my chemotherapy treatment."

Harvey went through six rounds of chemo over a six-month period, which took place every 21 days, followed by 33 radiation treatments, which lasted 30 minutes each day. The effects showed following the third chemotherapy treatment.

"I got so sick following my third treatment," Harvey said. "I lost my sense of taste and didn't want to eat."

Harvey credited God for helping her through her treatments. She never

missed a day of work during her treatments. Her co-workers were also there for her during her cancer battle.

"God answered my prayer to help me during my treatments," Harvey said. "I never missed work during my treatments, and it was because He helped me and never left my side. My co-workers encouraged me all through my cancer. We had four of us dealing with cancer at the same time."

After going through initial scans, Harvey went through surgery to remove the lump, along with one of her lymph nodes. Doctors performed another scan six weeks later, which revealed that the

cancer was gone.

One year following her initial diagnosis, Harvey was deemed cancer-free. She went back for three years for testing followed by checkups for five years, when she was finally released from her doctors.

Today, Harvey does her mammogram once a year like most women are encouraged to do.

"Women need to have their yearly mammogram," Harvey concluded. "At the time of my diagnosis, I had not been having my mammogram just every other year."

Harvey is nearing her 54th year as a Head Start teacher of 3-4-year-olds.