



CRACKING CANCER Short Bios of the Participants



ZURI SCRIVENS

Zuri Scrivens is 39 years old. Six years ago, Zuri became a new mom and put her post-pregnancy fitness to the test by competing in the “Ride to Conquer Cancer” cycling fundraiser. Ironically, she then discovered she had breast cancer herself. A mastectomy, chemo, radiation and hormone therapy were all initially successful in fighting the cancer, but after just 9 months it returned and had metastasized to her liver and lymph nodes.

Zuri was “POG’d” and the genomic analysis showed she had very high levels of a growth factor, which might be blocked by a drug previously used only for diabetes. Less than 5 months after starting to take the diabetes drug combined with hormone therapy, scans showed no tumours anywhere in Zuri’s body. 3 ½ years later, Zuri continues taking the diabetes drug and hormone therapy, and has no signs of cancer. She lives in Langley, BC.



TRISH KEATING

In 2014, Trish Keating, a retired former costume designer in the film industry, was coming to the end of her four-year battle against advanced colorectal cancer. After radiation, chemo, and three complicated surgeries, Trish was in excruciating pain from a tumour wrapped around her spine. She was considered palliative and felt she was just a few months away from dying. Then the POG program sequenced her genome, and the analysis suggested her cancer might be driven by a specific protein, which could potentially be blocked by a common blood-pressure medication. Trish started on the drug at the end of 2014, and within 5 weeks her tumours were no longer detectable. In 2016, Trish's cancer reappeared twice near her spine. The first time, she had surgery to remove it, and the second time the dosage of the blood-pressure medication was doubled and the tumour shrank. She lives in West Vancouver, BC.



KATYA MYCYK

Katya Mycyk has breast cancer that was first diagnosed in 2010. She refused chemotherapy and tamoxifen but had radiation, which was successful. In 2013 the cancer recurred with a vengeance, with multiple tumours in her breast. She decided to have a bilateral mastectomy. Then a PET scan revealed a tumour in her sacrum – which meant she had stage 4 cancer. Again, she refused chemo and tamoxifen, opting instead for a radical naturopathic treatment, change in diet, and faith healing.

In early 2015, her tumours became undetectable. However, the cancer returned at the end of 2015 and Katya then enrolled in POG. The sequencing showed that although she had no actionable mutations, she would benefit from a particular kind of hormone therapy. Katya has been on the drug since then and is doing well. She lives on Salt Spring Island in BC.



MARCY JOHNSON

Marcy was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2015 at the age of 59. Initial chemotherapy did not seem to help, and Marcy enrolled in the POG program. The genomic analysis showed that Marcy might benefit from a kind of chemotherapy not usually given for her type of lung cancer. Marcy did well at first, and felt she had gained an extra six months compared to her initial prognosis. By the spring of 2016, the cancer had spread to her scalp and brain. She tried some immunotherapy, also based on her POG analysis, but after several weeks was admitted to hospice. She died in October 2016, in Vancouver.



KARL POLLAK

Mr. Pollak was diagnosed with colon cancer in early 2015, when his cancer was already at Stage IV. He tried chemotherapy and then was enrolled in the POG program. The POG analysis suggested a blood-pressure medication might be helpful (a different one than Trish Keating took, and for completely different reasons), but after six weeks on that drug, tests showed it wasn't working. Karl returned to standard chemotherapy. He lives in Surrey, BC.



SAGAR DUTT

Sagar is a 12-year-old boy who has hereditary neurofibromatosis. It is not cancer, but is considered cancer-like because it is tumour-based. Sagar has tumours in his left hip and leg, which are painful because they are wrapped around nerves.

Sagar has had several surgeries and enrolled in POG in late 2015. The genomic analysis suggested that a blood-pressure medication might help him – a drug that would also have fewer side effects than the more powerful drugs he had taken previously. It was hoped that the drug would reduce his pain by reducing the size of his tumours. It's currently too early to know if the drug is helping Sagar, although he is optimistic. Sagar lives in Surrey, BC.



JEN STRACK

Jen was a in her early forties when she was diagnosed with lung cancer in the summer of 2013, although she had never smoked. Within weeks she discovered that the cancer was Stage IV and in both lungs. Five rounds of chemotherapy produced only a 10% reduction in the size of her largest tumour. Jen's POG analysis then showed that she had an unusual gene fusion, which was producing very high levels of a protein. The POG team theorized that the protein could be blocked by a kind of chemotherapy not usually prescribed for her kind of lung cancer. Within 6 weeks of starting on the drug in the summer of 2015, Jen showed significant improvement, felt much better and was considered stabilized for a full year.

In the late summer of 2016, Jen had surgery to remove two tumours in her brain. She then started on immunotherapy, which was also suggested by her POG analysis. However, Jen was not able to overcome an infection and entered hospice in the fall of 2016. She passed away in November, 2016. She lived in Chilliwack, BC.



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