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PHOTO BY MARY DAVIS

Laura Stride is willing to show the scars from her breast cancer surgery to help dispel fear in others who may face the disease

a record number of people—more than 37,000—walking in the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Race for the Cure. Participants raised about \$1.6 million for breast cancer research in that event, according to the foundation.

Stride even managed to hike in the Columbia River Gorge and participate in a three-kilometer event for Komen during her cancer treatment earlier this year.

She said she'll always do the race, but she also encourages women in their 20s and 30s to think about breast cancer detection. Although Stride has met other survivors in those age groups, she doesn't think the campaigns focus enough on young women.

"Even at that race, they hand out things saying, 'Get your mammogram starting at [age] 40,'" she said. "I tell women all the time—cashiers, at coffee shops, wherever it comes up—'Go get a mammogram!'"

Stride said she has a gut feeling that her prognosis is good. "I don't sit and think about dying at all, but I am having some post-traumatic stress."

Stride said CAT and PET scans after her surgery came out clean. She must visit her oncologist every three months this year, then

every six months in her second year of recovery and once a year thereafter.

Stride asked her surgeon about the chances of a recurrence of the cancer and was told there's no way of knowing. Nevertheless, she said she doesn't want people to be fearful.

"I feel like talking about it dispels fear about it," she said. "It encourages people to get checked."

Her advice to friends of cancer patients?

"If you know someone who's having cancer treatment, I really believe in the power of positive intent," she said. "Some people refer to it as prayer. It means so much to send a card to somebody saying: 'I am thinking of you. I am sending positive energy.'"

For her part, Stride said she hasn't had a hard time adjusting to her changed body. She even maintains a sense of humor about it.

"I remember the first time I was going out to the store, and I thought, 'I'd better put on a bra,'" she said. "And I thought, 'I don't have to!' That's kind of liberating, just putting on a T-shirt." ☐

For more information about the SUSAN G. KOMEN BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION visit www.komen.org.

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