

I MY DOCTOR



Paul J. LoVerme, M.D., Plastic Surgery

Submitted by Christina Kraus

I don't know how to put into words the deep respect and love I feel for Dr. Paul LoVerme. I should probably start by saying Dr. LoVerme went from being my aunt's physician to part of my family. I don't think there is one person I know that hasn't heard the words Dr. LoVerme come out of my mouth a few hundred times. Not only has Dr. LoVerme shown my entire family such support and encouragement, but his entire staff has followed suit throughout each one of our individual battles. Dr. LoVerme came into my life a few years back when my aunt came to him for help. My aunt was diagnosed the year before with stage 1 breast cancer. The plastic surgeon she was seeing at the time, with lack of better words, basically made her look like Frankenstein. She had scars of different shapes and locations and her implants were starting to ripple as they healed. Not only was she battling cancer, going through chemo, and taking care of her three small children, she had to look at herself in the mirror everyday and be reminded of the battle she had yet to overcome. When left helpless and told, "There is nothing we can do for you", it was Dr. LoVerme who came to her rescue. He made her feel like the beautiful woman she always was. Nothing will take away the memories but he helped in taking away that constant reminder.

Next in line to be blessed by Dr. LoVerme was my mother. My mother and I were tested together, after my aunt received her positive results, for the BRCA gene. Not letting my aunt stand alone, we both received our positive results for BRCA-2 also. This was just a confirmation for my mother. She had already been a breast cancer survivor for 10 years when she received her news. Even though she was "in the clear" for so many years, she still had that fear her cancer would come back. No member of my

family has survived breast cancer twice so naturally my mother never completely felt at ease. She was fearful that if god forbid the cancer would come back, would she be able to beat it again? Would she catch it in time? Would this disease defeat her like so many have been defeated before her? With these questions looming in the back of her head and the recent news of her positive test results, she decided to have a double mastectomy with TRAM Flap reconstruction. This was a decision she knew would change the rest of her life. The chances of her getting breast cancer again were now slim to none but not without sacrifice. The entire way through her decision making process, Dr. LoVerme was there with the answers. Every question was answered no matter how big or small. It was as if he had no other patients and he was there for us at any time. He made my mother feel as if no matter what decision she made, he was there to see her through it. He was more than a doctor, he was a friend, an ear to listen, and most importantly a solid support.

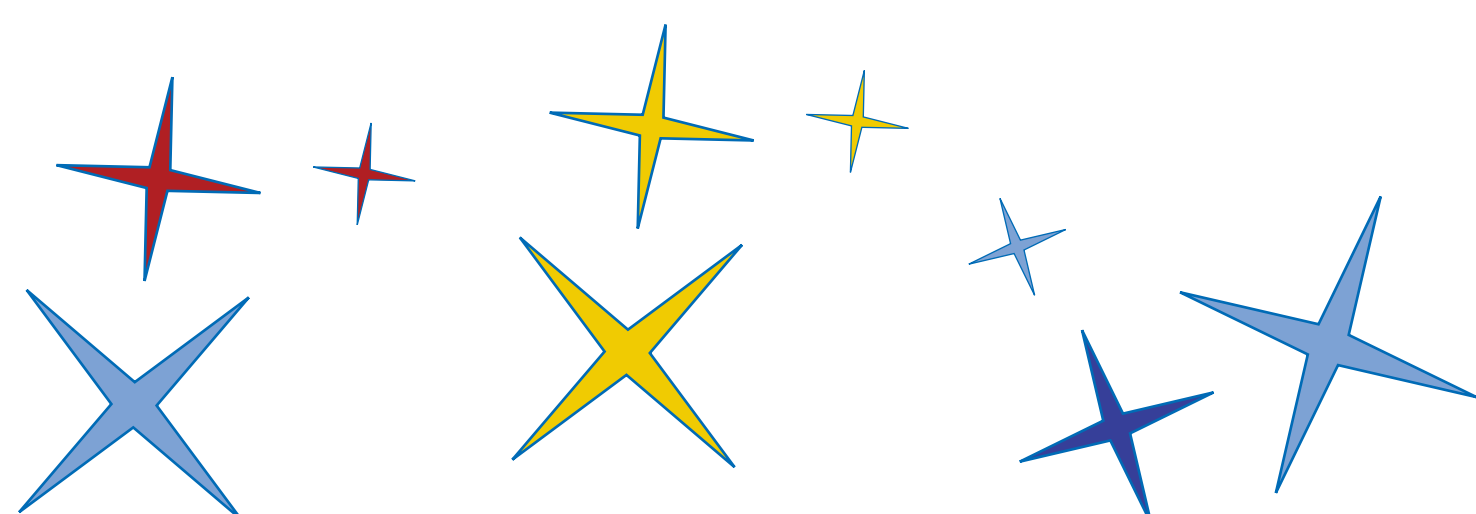
Dr. LoVerme then became my angel. Before I received my results for the BRCA testing, I made the decision that if I was positive, I would too get a double mastectomy. Those words were much easier said than done. When I received that phone call, I was devastated. I knew it was a good possibility but I was hoping that maybe it skipped me. Maybe I would be the lucky one. When I fell asleep that night, I felt defeated and scared. I woke up the next morning and realized I was the lucky one. My mom had "given" me a gift with this gene. She gave me the gift of knowledge and power. I now knew that I had an 84 percent chance of following in my family's dreadful footsteps. But I had the power to change it. At the age of 26 I could change the road my life was possibly going to go down and I knew just the man that could help me. Since I wasn't technically sick and was completely healthy at the time, I had a lot of people questioning my decision. Not Dr. LoVerme. He sat down with me and his giant text book, and explained everything to me from start to finish. I was armed and dangerous with my added knowledge! I knew what I wanted to do, how I wanted to do it, and when I wanted to do it. He stood by me every step of the way. The morning of my first surgery, blurry eyed with no contacts in, lying on that operating room table, I was terrified. Was I making the right decision? What if I don't wake up? Geez its cold in here. He walked into that room and didn't leave my side the entire time. I fell

asleep looking at the face of the man that would now change my life forever.

My second surgery was a little more eventful. Because of complications with my IV, I wasn't falling asleep. We both knew the small talk we were having wasn't supposed to last that long. I started to freak out a little, panicking and starting to shake. I tried to be strong and not let anyone catch on, but he knew me too well. Not skipping a beat, he continued to be my super hero. He stood next to me, holding my hand and telling me I was going to be ok. He stood there the entire time, calm as can be. I knew he had to prepare for surgery and must have had 10 other things he could have been doing at that point but I was his number one priority. The face I had seen every week since September was the same face that held my hand and stopped his day for that moment to make sure I felt safe.

My mother's cousin was hopefully the last of us to meet Dr. LoVerme. She was diagnosed with breast cancer and scheduled her surgery for a week after mine. We went to almost every one of our weekly visits together. Her battle was much different than mine. She had to overcome many hurdles during her journey but Dr. LoVerme was there to guide her over them. Since he now turned into our go-to guy for almost everything, and seeing as though we are Italian, the only way we knew how to re-pay him for his patience, generosity, and upbeat attitude throughout all of this, was to feed him. We would all take turns bringing everything from cookies to full-cooked dinners. How could someone that walked into our lives as just another doctor, make such an impact on all of us?

For the reasons stated above and many, many more, I believe Dr. Paul LoVerme is more than just a doctor. He is an EXTRAORDINARY person. I feel more than lucky to have met Dr. LoVerme and his staff. They will always be part of my family and I will never forget what they have done for all of us. I believe every person enters your life for a particular reason. Some to teach, some to guide, and some to help. He has done all these things and more for my family and I will be eternally grateful.



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