

Breastfeeding Cafe

Connect, facilitate, nurture and empower

(Newsletter Vol 5, April 2017)

Hello all,

Hope everyone is doing great. Finally, we are here with a beautiful and gorgeous weather. We have started visiting beaches on weekends and spending hours there. . The Pacific Ocean has always been my family's way of



feeling less stressed when the going gets hectic for us. Driving by the highway 1 and stopping by at the less crowded beaches, is one of our favourite activities during summer. Watching the blue whales spouting water makes me happy as a child. Those are a few precious moments which make me remember my childhood back in the northeastern part of India, which was quite like living in the valley with lots of natural activities in summer nearby. Curiosity and imagination are the gifts of childhood and can help solve many crucial problems in today's world. Albert Einstein once famously said, "To stimulate creativity, one must

develop the childlike inclination for play." And even Pablo Picasso said, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." It's our duty as adults to provide them an environment where these qualities are nurtured. Time to think may-be?

Connect, Spring 2017

We have a few exciting things to share with you today - our first community [event](#) page is up and running. A few of my favourite brands have supported us in our endeavour. They are offering generous coupons and discount codes to all participants taking part in the event. Event details are shared in the above link. We would love to see you at the event and share your parenting moments. Breastfeeding Cafe would love to listen to them and incorporate those use cases in our business model. We wish to make it a place where each and every parent's struggles are addressed.

While this journey is mostly fun and challenging, sometimes it gets deeply stressful. Without the help of likeminded friends, however, it would have been impossible. I am supported by an amazing group of ladies who are luckily my friends too. We found an amazing cofounder in our journey; Samantha Infeld, my dear friend from this amazing group, is one of the cofounders from now onwards. She is mom to two boys and a full-time working mom. I am thankful to her for offering me all the help.

Spotlight

From this newsletter onwards, we would be having a section named SPOTLIGHT. We would be featuring all those rockstar parents who are defying each and every challenge that life is throwing at them and emerging victorious .

Today's SPOTLIGHT will be the amazing mom from Portland, **Erin Maher**, who is struggling with cancer and defying all odds to go ahead with her life. She shared her heroic story of breastfeeding amidst her battle with cancer with breastfeeding cafe. She shared it to create an awareness among women. Our prayers are with her to emerge

victorious in her fight against the deadly disease. Here it is in her own words:

"My son was born Feb 24th, 2014 and we had a rough start at breastfeeding. I created a breastfeeding group in the small town that he was born in so I could get help from other moms to continue our relationship. Since then breastfeeding and breastfeeding support has become a passion of mine more now than ever because my daughter is



100% donor fed by wonderful selfless women who want nothing in return other than to see my baby girl thrive. I love every single one of them and will never be able to put in words what they mean to me, to us. When my son was about 2.5 years old I found a small pea size lump in my right breast. I am 32 years old and was very familiar with my breasts mostly due to the fact that I was still breastfeeding. I imminently sought out help from a doctor but was told it was a clogged duct. This went on for about a month and I went in several times, within that month I discovered that I was pregnant with my daughter. July 6th, 2016 was my 10-week ultrasound with a new doctor, I chose to switch doctors to try to find someone to help me. By the time I saw her my pea size lump was now about 4.5cm. My new OB didn't even feel it, she automatically sent me to get a diagnostic ultrasound. Within a month of seeing her that first time, I had a diagnostic ultrasound and a biopsy. Aug 3rd, 2016 less than a month after seeing my sweet baby for the first time my new OB looked me in the eyes and told me "you have breast cancer". Because she is not a cancer specialist and couldn't tell me whether or not I would be able to keep my baby my husband and I spent the next 24 hours deciding how to move forward. I never knew how difficult that decision would be until it was in front of me. The next day my husband and I went to and oncologist and surgical oncologist both of which told us that I could undergo chemotherapy while pregnant. While there we learned the severity of the situation. I was told I had a grade 3 tumor that was 5cm at this point, my cancer was stage 3a invasive ductal carcinoma, triple negative. What this means is it had already moved to my lymphatic system and didn't respond to estrogen or progesterone. Triple negative is the most difficult to treat because it basically grows without being fed so there is no way to deprive it of its "food". At this point, I was forced to quit my job in order to seek treatment

because the following week I needed surgery to put in a port, go to a high-risk OB and start chemo ASAP. I went to my boss and told him the devastating news I had just received. Instead of letting me quite he made up a new position so that I could continue to contribute to the company, bought me a computer, and let me continue to work. I will always consider my coworkers family, I couldn't have made it through this without them. The next several months was a whirlwind, I did 5 rounds of chemotherapy while pregnant. We were going to do 6 rounds but when I came for my last round it was very apparent my tumor had grown back. It had shrunk to 2cm but was now back to 5 and was no longer responding. At this point, we had no choice but to have a lumpectomy, remove the tumor and induce her early. My beautiful baby girl was born at 35 weeks gestation after a 34-hour induction. She is so perfect, strong and beautiful and is quite the little warrior. She spent 4 days in the hospital for jaundice but otherwise was alright. 6 days postpartum I went back on a stronger chemo. I did a pet scan and a brain MRI 10 days postpartum which showed they got clear margins on the lumpectomy and cancer had not spread past the lymph nodes, however, it was still very

prevalent in the lymph nodes. I will be starting radiation next week to try to make sure we get it all. I will have 33 rounds which will be 6.5 weeks every single day. I am still working and have been through all of this. My daughter's gestation and birth were not under the most ideal of circumstances but she is thriving. When I found out I had cancer I went on several sights and requested breastmilk donations. I was shocked to see the response, I ended up purchasing a 14.5 cubic foot freezer and had it filled within 3 months! She will have enough to easily be breastfed exclusively for well over a year!"She shared beautiful pictures of her loving family with us too.

We would love to know your story too, if you feel moved to share with this community. Please drop us an email at tanaya@breastfeeding.cafe. We can't wait to hear your challenges, ideas, wishes and successes.

Warm regards,
Tanaya
Founder, Breastfeeding Cafe