Health Champion: A victory lap in the fight against breast cancer

Sadia Khan has been through a journey that an estimated one in eight women will go through during their lifetime – a diagnosis of breast cancer. Her courage and the support of people around her have helped her through it, but it has not been easy.

"One day, I felt a lump and couldn't remember – had it always been there? I started losing sleep over it," Sadia remembered. "After four weeks of contemplating what it might be, I decided to get it checked out. I kept hoping all would be well."

Sadia met with Dr. Maria Jose, a doctor at the General Office health clinic, who immediately guided her through the next steps, including two weeks of preliminary testing and further tests with a breast cancer specialist.

"I don't remember the exact words, but I remember how it felt to hear that I had cancer," she said. "It put a big knot in my stomach, and my eyes welled up with tears. The first thing that came to mind was, 'How bad is it?' and 'Will I make it through this?' I knew that I couldn't let fear take over my thoughts, and I tried to focus on what I could do – educate myself and keep a positive attitude."

The IT information security analyst read about chemotherapy options and completed extensive research. After additional testing, and learning that her cancer was at stage two, she kept telling herself that she was a warrior – a survivor. But she still struggled to share her battle beyond her family, some close friends and her FPL team.

"It was upsetting, and I would break down when I tried to talk about it," Sadia said. "As time went by, it became easier to open up, although I still become teary-eyed thinking back on the down moments during treatment. I'm so grateful for the support system that I have. My family was my rock. My FPL family was patient, flexible and supportive, sending emails and cards throughout my treatment or covering my work on unexpected days out of the office. It was probably the hardest thing I have ever gone through, and knowing that people were cheering for me helped me have courage and hope."

For Sadia, healthy habits, yearly checkups and self-exams will continue to be part of her journey – and so will participating in Race for the Cure.

"This year will be my eighth year running in Race for the Cure, but the first I am running for my journey," Sadia said. "It's my victory lap."

Florida Power & Light Company is a proud supporter of Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. To learn more, go to eWeb/Cure.