

## PAULA COOK LYNCHBURG, VA - AUGUST 2010

A year ago I found out that I had a very aggressive form of breast cancer. I have since gone through a double mastectomy, 22 chemo treatments, and 6 1/2 weeks of radiation. I still have seven treatments left.

My husband and I were not prepared for this financially. We were working on getting out of debt and this threw us for a loop. We have very good insurance but there is so much that is not covered in what is called a catastrophic illness. Someone anonymously contributed thousands of dollars to cover my co-pays, deductibles, and out-of-pocket costs.

We received a letter from my husband's company in January saying that \$98,000 in doctors' bills had been processed on my behalf last year. This year we are already at about \$50,000 being processed through the insurance company. Every chemo treatment for me costs \$5,000. I am going to have reconstruction this year and that is a \$50,000 surgery. I am going to have it this year because next year we will have to start all over with the insurance and we can't afford it.

My dream is for us to get every bill we owe paid off. We want to be totally debt-free, including our house. We need newer vehicles. I want to win the car. Then I want to establish a fund to

help someone who is going through what I'm going through. I know my husband and I are not the only ones who have been hit with this and it could have been devastating for us – for someone else, it might be.

Unfortunately, dealing with bills and financial devastation is a part of a serious illness. At the one time in my life that I just wanted to concentrate on being well I was so afraid because we didn't have a clue as to what to do. Thank God for His provision. One day I want to help someone else the way I have been helped.

Designer Paula Cook

