

CODI

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ing was amputated above the knee.

Then tragedy struck again in 2001. Her man died unexpectedly from an infection Codi learned to lean on her extended family for love and support.

Life started to turn around a bit after she moved to Oregon. But in October, Codi was struck by the first jab of a one-two punch: breast diabetes just fell and the cancer's fierce recurrence this spring.

Living life sunnyside up hasn't been easy, but she has made it look that way.

"I think positive. Look at the bright side," said Codi, Grand Marshal for the 2003 Relay for Life in Marion County. "I want to enjoy all the moments before I die."

Dr. Stacy Nicholson, one of Codi's doctors, said childhood cancers are rare, but osteosarcoma is one of the more common tumors of the bone in children and young adults.

Recurrence tends to be at the original site or in the lungs.

Codi's cancer, discovered during a routine exam in late March, came back in the lung area in a pattern that makes it inoperable.

Her stepson, Leon Barrett, who was there during the diagnosis and prognosis, remembered the experience as the hardest thing she ever had to do.

Codi cried for two minutes and shilled gears immediately, Leon recalled.

"So I can scratch being an 85-year-old grandma off the list?" Codi said.

Codi's attitude is a shining example of the kind of hope that doctors find inspiring.

It's also far more normal in children than adults, who may be hard pressed to summon the personal resources to deal with life effects and the imposition cancer treatment puts on their lives, Nicholson said.

"Children are naturally optimistic. They live for the present more than adults do," he said. "I find how children deal with cancer to be inspiring. It helps us help them."

Codi was in the early stage of a drug trial for those with inoperable cancers, but has since been released because it wasn't working. Although she's already had the initial prognosis of two to three months, Codi recently developed a cough.

"We're essentially searching for something that may work for her to reduce the tumor and buy her some more time," Barrett said.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski, who visited with Codi during her day at the Capitol as an honorary state senator, told her about his own bout with cancer. He recently



BEST FRIENDS: Codi Frazier (right) hugs her best friend Teagan Quail, 9, outside her home on Thursday. My mom and I really care about her," Teagan said. "She's really nice."

accepted Codi's invitation to join her at the Relay for Life.

"I love this thing and you can, too," he said. "You just have to believe."

Shortly after the prognosis, Codi latched onto Leon's suggestion that she focus on living each moment to the fullest.

Her list of moments continues to grow.

- Honorary state Senator for a day.
- Gov. Kulongoski's special body.
- A drug crew member.
- Make-A-Wish Foundation, Dinsbury, Ind.
- Keizer Iris Parade float personality.
- Grand Marshal for the 2003 Relay for Life in Marion County.
- Honorary Kiwanis and Rotary member.
- Subject of her own song "Codi Bug" by Michael Murphy & Girlfriend.
- Nine-year-old Teagan stops on school days, waits for Codi to finish breakfast and walks her to the bus stop.
- "My mom and I really care about her," Teagan said. "She's really nice."
- Codi's view about the young man: "My sister says they're easier to train."
- On good days, she's an ordinary fourth-grader at Cum-

up to check out the place. They found what they saw and decided to move to Salem.

As things turn out, their Salem apartment had a mold problem, but they couldn't afford to move. Codi's first bout with cancer left them financially strapped.

So it made sense for Codi to stay with her stepson Leon, who works out of her house and has kids of her own. They have dad and stepmom visit whenever possible.

Stepmom Katie Frazier, Leon's sister, said she's proud of how well Codi has adjusted to life's twists and turns.

"She's just a lover of strength for such a little package," Katie said. "She would do well to show adults how to take things."

Like her own dad.

Darel Frazier, who works the graveyard shift as a security guard, doesn't show a bit of emotion about his only child's illness. But with Katie knows that he is heartbroken.

"He doesn't take it very well," Katie said. "They're close. We see her all the time."

Darel said he and Codi like watching TV and movies and hanging out together.

"I just take it one day at a time," he said.

The burst of bids and constant activity at Leon's house has proven a good distraction for Codi, who was still mourning her own mom's death.

"She sometimes withdraws," Leon said. "She zones out. It's an emotional escape, playing with others."

But Codi was too full of life to be sad for long.

Instead of withdrawing into her grief and illness, she loves to reach out and help others, Leon said.

When Codi saw a 3-year-old girl with leukemia having a wreathed experience after chemo treatment, she bought a custom purse and some Guardian Angel extras in the hospital gift shop for her.

The little girl set up and never said a word, but her face lit up and she smiled, Leon recalled.

And when Codi saw a 12-year-old girl with the same cancer going into the hospital, she went up to her and said:

"It's hard at first, but it gets better."

Salem Item can be reached at 503-585-5744 or 503-585-5744.

SENATOR CODI: Codi Frazier holds a press conference Wednesday with Sen. Ginny Burdick (from left), Richard Devlin and Rick Metzger as part of her day as an honorary senator.

But she considers (from a part of her life, she rides on Salem's Riverfront Carrousel, excursions to OREGON and trips to the A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village.

It was this irrepressible spirit that won Leon's heart.

After spending a summer with her stepson in Keizer, Codi fell in love with Oregon and declared that she wasn't going back to Las Vegas.

So her father and stepmom, Darel and Katie Frazier, came

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