



Sherry Whitaker's story and the meaning behind Sherry's Run

Unshakeable faith. The courage to smile in the face of an uncertain future. An ongoing desire to serve, comfort and help. These are some of the qualities that caused a 44-year-old wife and mother of two to touch the lives of people in her community, and they continue to motivate others to finish a race that she began.

In February 2003, Sherry Whitaker began to experience discomfort in her side. With no real sense of urgency, she visited a nurse practitioner several weeks later, at the encouragement of a friend. She was hospitalized immediately. A few days later, on a Friday, the diagnosis was made. Sherry had a deadly form of colon cancer known as adenocarcinoma.

Sherry and her husband, Gary, discussed their options with physicians, and she began an aggressive treatment plan that included surgery and three rounds of chemotherapy. She would not listen to the discouraging reports and trusted her husband to make the decisions surrounding her treatment. In spite of valiant efforts and a positive outlook, Sherry Whitaker lost her battle on May 12, 2004.

There was an outpouring of love and appreciation by those who knew Sherry. A few weeks after her death a close friend, Tamara Lampsa, approached Gary with an idea about honoring her friend that could also help fight the deadly disease that took her life. He talked the idea over with the Whitakers' two sons, Tyler and Matthew, and Sherry's parents. That evening he ran into another friend, Tonyia Watson, who immediately asked to help. The group's desire to take action led to a 5K run/walk to benefit the research and treatment of colon cancer, and Sherry's Run was born.