

# Cancer survivor says she finds volunteering rewarding, therapeutic

is. At that time, she found a lump, which was surgically removed, but three months later it returned to her lymphatic system and she had to have major surgery to remove it. That surgery resulted in her being permanently unable to continue life as she once had. Her legs, where surgery cut into nerve endings, get tired quickly and she lives in constant pain. She can't stand for any amount of time without her ankles swelling. "But I'm good," she said, thankful she escaped "easily." Cancer didn't leave her family though,

and just five years after her scare, her young son Christopher, 10, developed a lump on his neck. She knew it was bad, and insisted on having him checked out at Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital, where she was told he had Hodgkin's lymphoma. Fortunately, doctors were able to treat him successfully. "He had the good kind," Anania said, wiping tears from her cheeks, adding, "I said then I'd give back someday." Both of them are cancer free today, but that

leaves her questioning her luck. Although she feels fortuitous, she said it comes with living with a sense of guilt. "I got lucky... but you have to wonder why... why me and why not others?" she said, adding she's been volunteering with the cancer society's Halton branch for the last 10 years. She finds volunteering therapeutic. "I was really out of it after my sister died for two or three weeks. Then I started to plan this and I'm doing it in their honour and it's been really good," she said.

This is the fourth year she's been the volunteer committee chair and she finds the experience rewarding every time. "I just thank God I'm so lucky... family is everything — it's all you've got." Two memorial awards will be presented at the Great Ride N Stride to honour Anania's relatives. For event details, go to [www.cancer.ca/greatride](http://www.cancer.ca/greatride). Julie Slack can be reached at [jslack@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:jslack@miltoncanadianchampion.com) or on Twitter @miltonmusing.

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