

# Openness about illness prompts 'love and hugs'

From page 12.

Mittelstaedt says that whenever she tries to thank people, they say it's nothing, but to her it is a big deal.

Mittelstaedt gets emotional when she talks about all of the support she has.

"I want to thank everyone," she says. "I don't want to mention names. Well, I want to mention them but I can't."

There are too many to list and Mittelstaedt doesn't want to leave anybody out, but she does mention her husband and both their families. She is overwhelmed by their support.

Her doctors, Solow and Robert Gall from Markham Stouffville Hospital, are both held in very high regard by Mittelstaedt.

"I trust those two doctors completely," she says. "They are two very kind and compassionate men."

Mittelstaedt is open about her illness. She knows of other cancer patients who don't tell anybody about their illness, sometimes not even their families.

"If I hadn't told everyone, I wouldn't be getting the support, love and hugs that I am."

From the pastor and congregation at Stouffville Missionary Church, to the cashiers at the A & P and the staff at Shopper's Drug Mart, Mittelstaedt finds support all around town.

"Stouffville itself is a very caring community," she says.

Mittelstaedt also receives support from individual cancer patients she talks to.

One friend of the family who is in her seventies is a 20-year survivor of ovarian cancer and there are other patients she has met at the hospital who she keeps in touch with and talks to on the phone.

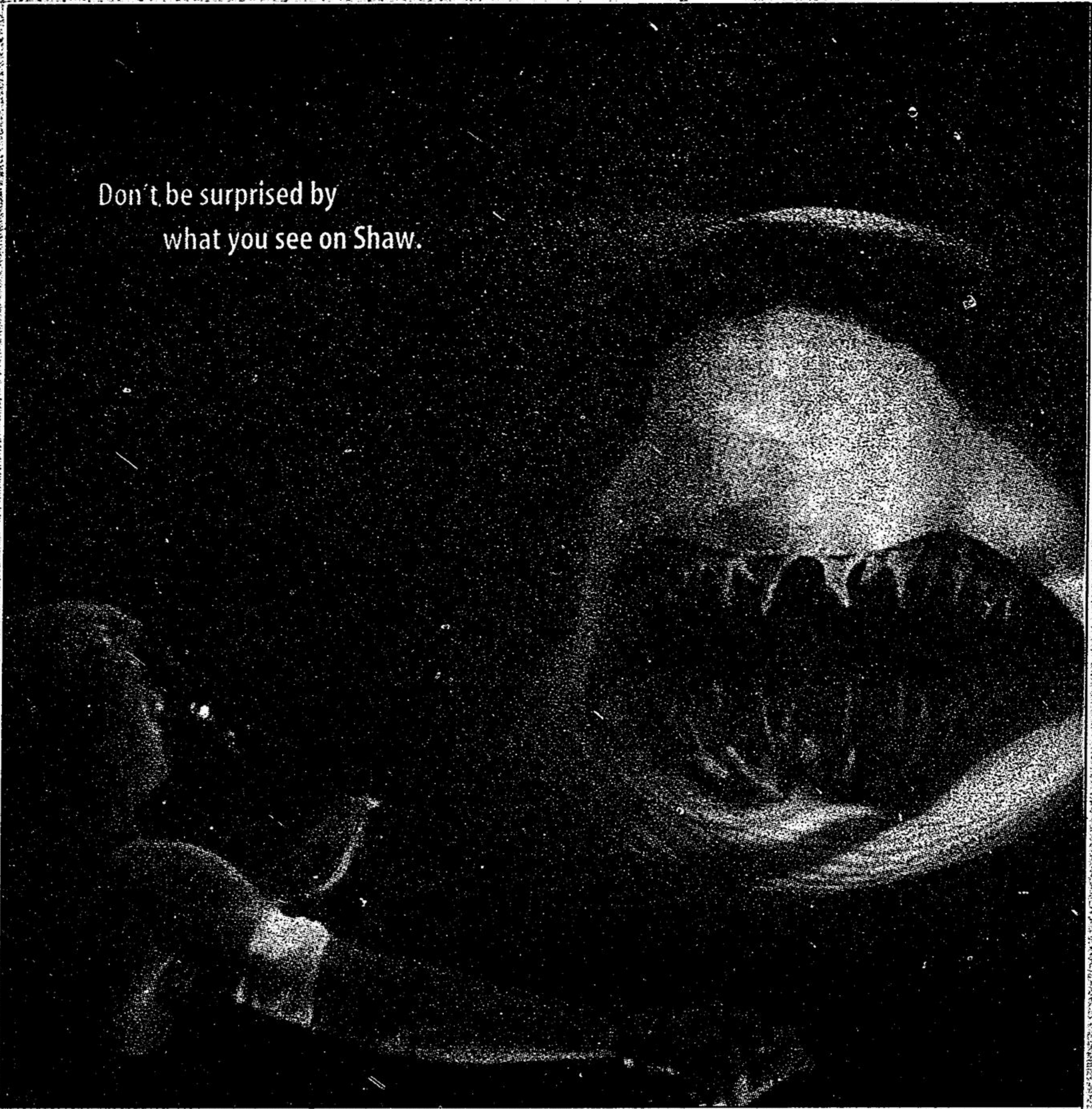
"With cancer you get a lot of laughs," says Mittelstaedt. "The chemo room is very uplifting and the nurses are marvelous."

Mittelstaedt does not have a prognosis in terms of her illness because she doesn't want one. She also doesn't want to hear statistics about her disease.

"I don't think it's helpful," she says.

Her focus right now is to get better and fight the cancer.

That is why all of the help and support she is getting means so much to her. Not worrying about all the things that are being taken care of gives Mittelstaedt more time and energy to focus on her healing.



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