

Operation Kiwi

My own Pandemic

By Kymberlee Baker

2-22-2020 the day that changed my life for GOOD!

I was feeling very different at work that day. This day was different the atmosphere felt different, the streets looked different my very familiar desk and chair seemed different. Could be the day I go to my boss to let him know I needed to go to the ER because something about me just wasn't right and with shock in his eyes he told me to call him later to let him know how I was doing. The shock in his eyes was due to me never calling in and always going above and beyond. I was a worker Bee my job was my identity.

I walked into the ER with no reason for alarm after all my headaches, unbalance issues I was told by an ENT that I had Vertigo so no need to worry. I had just returned from Mexico with the love of my life Mr. Love. Life was great RIGHT? My career was great, my family was doing well, everything seemed fine and I moved in with Mr. Love. My co-worker was my BFF and I loved going to work. I assumed that's why I consumed everyday with my job. I was the Queen of pranks; co-workers would try to prank me oh but mine was so on a different Level I had an imagination that was outside the box. I am smiling while I am remembering the friendly Shangins we displayed towards each other. We were the 3Mustaterrs truly. Kymberlee, B-Mann and Christopher

While I was getting checked into the ER the check in nurse said I seen this before either you had a stork or you will have a stroke. No, you're wrong I recently returned from Mexico and I literally just left work to come here. In my mind I was thinking how long is this going to take.

After hours but it seems like time stood still a man wearing a white jacket comes in the hospital room with a film piece of paper and said these words I will never forget "Miss Baker we found a large mass on your MRI Results and we need to preform emergency brain surgery" my response "Okay well how long will this take? I need to get back to work. I remember having this ridiculous amount of peace at that moment like it was okay. I felt like whatever happens it was going to happen was going to happen and I was going to be okay and the doctor just needed to hurry up and let's get her done.

I was in that hospital room waiting for a team of doctors to come and do surgery on my mind and all I could think about was getting payroll completed so no one will be without a correct

paycheck. I was so unbothered my sister told me that nurses from everywhere wanted to come see this patient who was up conversating with people, eating a hamburger waiting for the time to have surgery. I know that my mother traveled from Arkansas, my brother came from California and my brother came from Florida they all fly in from near and far just to see me and then COVID happened. This was at the very beginning of the Pandemic and no one even knew what to call it. I know that everything shut down. My family had to leave just as soon as they arrived. I quickly realized while the world was experiencing their Pandemic, I was experiencing my own. I had to imagine going through all of this without anyone well okay let's do and the sooner it happens the sooner I could get back to work. I do recall the doctor telling me that there is a 12% mortality rate, I would need to be in ICU for some time, Acute Care for some time and extensive rehabilitation okay I am sure I will cut all those down I am a fighter I had to fight all my life. I don't know if God just didn't allow me to process what was about to take place but I was in complete trust in God. I knew that the God I always had prayed to and song about had to be with me. I gave myself fully and unashamed to his will.

I had faith and God did the rest. The date of surgery was February 24, 2020 the same day as my oldest daughter's birthday wow this is all designed by God!

On the way into the room, I glanced over to the left and asked the up to the surgeon Dr. Bethwell Roare and I asked are you ready to be part of a miracle he looked back at me with utter disbelief but he shook his head yes.

After having surgery for two days, I woke up a different person. I can't really explain it I went to sleep one way and I woke up and couldn't speak. I just know I wanted to understand what just happened. I was just in Mexico and now I can't move. After rehab and physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy you know it I had it. My sister Alicia was there every step of the way how she sneaks into the hospital room every day is beyond me but I think she was just that loved by the staff. I was able to rehab at the best rehab facility Shepherd Center located in Atlanta GA (address) #10th in the Country I knew that was all God. My doctor was not supposed to be at work that night he was on call another divine appointment. While my time there it was going to be Easter 2020 and I knew we all missed our loved ones. I asked for material to make cards for all the patients on the unit and I asked the nurse for their names and I made them all an Easter Card. A year in half after that I was at a rest stop in Alabama and this guy noticed the shirt, I was wearing it was the graduation shirt for Shepherd Center and I meet a young man named Jack who was blind from his accident and he told me that he always wanted to thank the person that made that card for him while he was in the hospital. My new friend Jack is a wonderful young man he is the reason I started Kimmie's Heart Cards I make hand crafted greeting cards because I knew it was a random rest stop in Alabama I was on my way to Arkansas and Jack was on his way to the Carolinas that's not by chance.

I was told that I had two Brain Tumors on my brain stem the size of Kiwi fruit so that is where the name Operation Kiwi came from my friend Amy started that name while I was in the hospital so it just stayed around.

Now I go the Capital to ask congress for more funding for cancer resource. We need more funding there is no cure for brain tumors. I am an advocate for National Brain Tumor Society and Southeastern Brain Tumor Foundation.

I may not have what I had before my operation but what I have now bets my life is so fulfilled now and I am so happy

God is doing something so beautiful in my life. I know it sucks to be a part of this club but it is the best family to be a part of. God took someone like me and used me to be the voice for those who are no longer with us.