



Teresa Faust

By Jenny Holmes | Photograph by Andrea Baumann

Having been on the “other side of the pen” for most of her career, it isn’t easy for Teresa Faust to talk about herself.

However, the Nisswa woman and busy community activist’s extensive experience coupled with an incredibly optimistic attitude, leads to a story anyone would want to read.

Faust and her husband, Dave, moved to Lake Country in 2001, after successful careers in the metro area. A graduate of the University of Minnesota with a degree in journalism, she worked in advertising, marketing, and public relations for organizations such as Valleyfair, the Minneapolis Aquatennial, a gourmet foods publication, and as a writer for former University of Minnesota President Mark Yudof.

“Little did I know at the time,” says Faust, “but all of this variety gave me a great base for working in Nisswa on both a profes-

sional and a volunteer basis.”

Shortly after their move to the area, Faust worked in community relations for Bethany Good Samaritan. Not long after, she accepted a position as director of the Nisswa Chamber of Commerce and she immersed herself in the community.

“When we moved here, I really wanted this to be my home,” she says. “And when it’s your home, I think you should be a part of the community.” She began seeking volunteer opportunities and attended many community events solo to make connections. “I’m a big girl. I can do that,” she laughs. “I just started to meet people and it went from there.”

Her volunteer involvement includes her current role as president of the Nisswa Women’s Club, time spent on the Nisswa Chamber’s board of directors, member and secretary of the Nisswa Area Women of

Today, member of the Nisswa City Planning and Zoning Commission, board member for Good Samaritan Home Care and Hospice, as well as coordinator of the annual “Love Lights a Tree” event to benefit Good Samaritan, held in conjunction with the Nisswa City of Lights Festival each November.

No wonder she was recognized as the 2010 Nisswa Citizen of the Year, an honor she modestly acknowledges.

“I was so honored. I really was,” she says. “I’m not saying that to be corny—I was really surprised. I enjoy giving my time to the community. And it’s never about me. I just like to do it.”

That same selflessness and positive attitude have shone through even during some of Faust’s darkest hours, a true testament to this amazing woman’s strength of character. In December 2006, Faust was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer. In one week’s time, a large tumor had been detected, diagnosed, and removed in a series of events that left her head spinning.

“It was really a surprise to me because I had always had my yearly physicals and had been fine. And I just didn’t know anything about ovarian cancer. Even though I’m a woman, I didn’t. I had this idea in my head that when I had surgery and they took it out, the cancer was gone. But it doesn’t exactly work that way.”

Six weeks post-surgery, Faust began an aggressive schedule of chemotherapy. Over time, the cancer has recurred, necessitating regular chemo treatments.

While many may retreat from a busy life of volunteering following such a traumatic diagnosis, Faust’s resolve strengthened—leading her to start the area’s first, and only, ovarian cancer support group.

“At first, I really didn’t think about a support group or anything like that,” she says. “I had so much to learn and deal with and understand. But I was at a seminar at Mayo and discovered a group called MOCA (Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance). They had support groups based in the Twin Cities and Rochester, but nothing this far north.”

And with that, Faust began the “Team Teal of the North” MOCA support group in January 2009. The group meets monthly

with a mission to support ovarian cancer survivors and their families and friends—as well as promoting education and awareness about the deadly disease.

“Maybe in a good way, it’s not a very big group,” she laughs, adding that the group frequents various events where they are given an opportunity to reach out to women regarding ovarian cancer, increasing their knowledge of the fifth-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in women.

“I’ve learned that I still want to be, and I still can be, involved. I’ve just learned to pace myself. As far as my outlook, I want to continue my involvement with the support group. But that’s only one side of me. I don’t want to be defined by it. As much as I realize it’s serious, I intend to live my life.”

Faust recently became Minnesota’s only sales representative for an Ohio-based company offering unique flower and memory preservation through shadowboxes and jewelry. She also continues her focus on myriad community events and working with the organizations with which she shares a passion.

“I don’t know what’s on my horizon,” she says. “I always like to try new things. You just have to stay involved.” 🌸

Nisswa Women’s Club

What began in 1920 as a sewing club has grown into a thriving service organization with more than 250 members.

The Nisswa Women’s Club meets monthly. Educational programs are provided at each gathering, ranging from “Writing After 50” to “Crime Scene Investigation: CSI in the Real World.” The average attendance is one hundred members with numbers fluctuating seasonally.

The club’s twenty-eighth annual fundraiser fashion show was held in May at Madden’s on Gull Lake and attracted a sell-out crowd. “It’s not just a fashion show, but also a fundraiser to provide scholarships,” Faust says.

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More on the good works and camaraderie of the Nisswa Women’s Club. LakeCountryJournal.com