



BALANCE AWARENESS WEEK to **DEFEAT** *DIZZINESS*[™]

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VERTIGO IS KRYPTONITE

VESTIBULAR DISORDER EQUALLY CHALLENGING AS FIGHTING CANCER

Portland, OR – Anne Kirchheimer was hospitalized with extreme vertigo and nausea, so severe she couldn't even walk five steps to get to the telephone for help. She was initially diagnosed with labyrinthitis, an inner ear infection. Hospital neurologists assured her that she would fully recover and be back to normal in a matter of weeks.

Fast forward 10 years, and her suffering from imbalance, cognitive difficulties, neck pain, and excruciating headaches continues. Anne's fatigue was so bad that putting one foot in front of the other was like climbing Mount Everest. At a young 60 years old, she felt like a hobbled 90-year old.

It took many months for doctors to diagnose her with a chronic vestibular disorder that forced this successful writer and communications professional into retirement. Before Anne received her vestibular diagnosis she thought she was dying, going crazy, or had just burned out. Some patients call these type of disorders "vertigo kryptonite" because of the powerful impact it can have on a patient's career, family relationships, social life, and everyday activities like grocery shopping or eating out at a favorite restaurant.

"I am a long term cancer survivor and am supremely grateful for my life," says Anne. "Today I am working on being a vestibular disorder survivor. It may not be life threatening, but this damn disorder can sure kill your spirit if you let it."

As many as 35% of adults aged 40 years or older in the U.S. —approximately 69 million Americans—have experienced some form of vestibular dysfunction. That's why Anne has joined the Vestibular Disorder Association (VEDA) to celebrate Balance Awareness Week from September 14-20, 2015. As a VEDA Ambassador, Anne is encouraging others – especially people who experience dizziness, vertigo, or imbalance - to visit VEDA's website at vestibular.org to learn about vestibular disorders.

Today Anne has to treat herself as a delicate hothouse flower. Plenty of sleep and rest are mandatory in order to function at even a compromised level.

"We can't thank Anne enough for her willingness to share her story and bring hope to those searching for answers through a sea of misunderstanding about dizziness, balance and other vestibular disorders," says Sheelah Woodhouse, President of VEDA's Board of Directors.

The goal of Balance Awareness Week is to "Defeat Dizziness™" by helping people recognize the symptoms of a vestibular disorder and urging them to seek help from a professional vestibular specialist. VEDA encourages friends and family of those suffering from a vestibular disorder to learn how balance dysfunction can impact their loved one's ability to perform common day-to-day activities.

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For interviews with Ann or more information, please contact Tony Staser at 213-590-5360 or email at Tony.staser@vestibular.org. For more information about the VEDA, please visit vestibular.org.