



12TH ANNUAL Chicago  
prostate  
cancer  
walk/run

September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Lincoln Park

[www.SEABlueProstateWalk.org](http://www.SEABlueProstateWalk.org)

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SEA  
Stories

*A Personal Experience from  
Jerry Deans, Vice Chairman of the  
Us TOO Board of Directors...*

### Finding the Blessings in the Wilderness

It's been another challenging year with this illusive and persistent prostate cancer I have fought now for 17 years. We discovered it had metastasized to my lungs a third time in October of 2014. Since then, my doctor has treated me with combinations of the latest drugs in hopes that we can knock it back into remission like we have on two previous occasions. After a year and a half of treatment, the nodule that was positive for cancer has disappeared. That would be glorious news if it were not for the now persistently rising PSA, an indication that it may be finding its way around the treatments. The questions loom over us. When will it break out into the open and, when it does, what will we be able to hit it with this time? Chemotherapy is still an option but not one we look forward to.

I have come to characterize these life challenges as *wilderness experiences*. Our family has had many trips into the wilderness starting with the loss of our daughter Shantel and the spinal cord injury of our son, Matthew, just to name a couple.

If you are a cancer survivor or have walked beside a loved one, then you know why I call it a wilderness experience. The journey is most assuredly a trip into uncharted territory. It is confusing and disturbing and it strips us of our belief that we will have unlimited days ahead. I once heard it said that "We all know we are going to die but most of us don't really believe it."

Cancer survivors are gifted with the knowledge that our days are numbered. Our veil of invulnerability has been stripped away in the wilderness. It's the first thing to go. Initially it ushers in fear and confusion. But if we use the blessing of being poor in spirit well, it motivates us to live life to the fullest and be extra thankful for each day we are given.

Another gift of the wilderness, if we can claim it, is the realization that we cannot live this life in isolation. Finding others who are walking the same path provides us with encouragement to continue the fight and an opportunity to help others who are struggling to find their way.

I am fortunate to have found an organization (Us TOO International) that is providing hope to men and their families who have been driven into this wilderness of prostate cancer. I have joined an army of volunteers and a very small staff who are supporting over 200 support groups across the country. This organization exists to provide men and their families with the Support, Education, and Advocacy they need to make the best choices about treatment and navigate the twists and turns of the wilderness road.

Once a year, I am part of the SEA Blue Chicago Prostate Cancer Walk & Run, which raises money for this non-profit prostate cancer support organization. I ask you to please consider making a tax deductible contribution to my SEA Blue fundraising page benefitting Us TOO. Visit <https://www.classy.org/fundraise?fcid=704375>. Your contributions go to help men and their families learn to transform the fear and confusion of a cancer diagnosis into the gifts and blessings that are found only in the wilderness. Thank you for any contribution you are able to make.

Sincerely,

Jerry Deans  
Vice Chairman of the Us TOO Board of Directors