

My Story for San Antonio SABCS 2025.

The longer I am involved in advocacy, the deeper my appreciation grows for everyone who is involved especially with our organization Lobular breast cancer alliance, because of this my own level of gratefulness grows deeper by having the opportunity to attend these amazing events.

Attending SABCS really helps me define my strengths as an active advocate, and helps shape my areas of expertise where I can shine, and do more for our association.

I am discovering my talents as a natural networker, and love the gift of the gab

I am inclined to find it easy talking to people especially being Irish, I truly enjoy connecting with people and having meaningful conversations about advocacy, and with networking, hearing other people's experiences and input.

This year I was honored to be asked to be a mentor to other advocates who were attending for their first time. I was paired up with one of my dear friends and LBCA fellow advocate Gitte Jorgensen, who I respect and look up to as a very seasoned advocate and is simply a wonderful person.

We had an amazing time with our new advocates, and I think they really enjoyed our leadership and guidance. We now have amazing new members / friends to add to our lobular family at LBCA.

I have always been someone to naturally lean into helping those in need, whether it be animals or people, and so therefore I know this is work of the heart and I am more than happy to be fully invested. I consider myself now a official NBA "natural-born advocate". I just coined that term so in the future if I'm asked if I have a degree I'm going to say I have an NBA (and laugh with joy).

I am blessed with a very understanding and helpful husband that minds all the animals while I am gone, and that I still have the physical ability still to travel to these events and be part of our amazing scholarship program with the LBCA. It allows me the opportunity to attend these enormously beneficial learning symposiums chocked full of groundbreaking current information about all breast cancers.

At this particular symposium, I picked up a lot of valuable information about the current state of affairs, especially when it comes to lobular as we had more sessions and posters dedicated to our subtype than ever before.

I learned a lot about all the amazing clinical trials that are being currently studied, and what we can expect from the outcomes and how this may change the trajectory of oncology when it comes to de-escalation of treatment and how we can have better disease-free survival when combining treatments such as Serds and ABCs antibody conjugates in a earlier diagnosis treatment plan.

The idea of personalized precision treatment for each individual is becoming more available and realistic.

A huge highlight of this trip for me was the very special breakfast we got to have with the renowned scientific chair for LBCA. Dr. Jason Mouabbi , this was a very unique opportunity to sit and listen to his very generous talk about lobular and kindly opened up the floor for questions. This by far was amazing.

I also learned through other patient advocates and discussions with them of sessions that they attended and borrowed dormancy and some new things that I learned about what can awakened cells in the body, I found this fascinating as this is new conversation for me.

There was a lot of great sessions about treating metastatic breast cancer and there is some new drugs coming on the market that may really help patients in these situations.

We all so got to hear a lot more about the future of AI (artificial intelligence) and how this will change the landscape of screening moving forward.

There was also a lot of great conversation about CT-DNA liquid biopsies and how are these will be used everyday and screening and monitoring.

I find every time I attend this annual conference I come away with months worth of notes to comb back through and re-watch sessions that I didn't get to attend or ones that I did but need a second viewing.

It is beyond valuable for me to attend these events so I can continue to grow as a very educated advocate and helper not only in my community but also overseas in my home of Ireland where I have started some amazing advocacy work especially for lobular, and breast cancer in general.

If there is such a thing, I feel like this is the "Oscars" of breast cancer learning opportunities.

There's not a day that went by that didn't have amazing sessions, poster, exhibits, and people to meet.

My only critique would be that the time goes by too quickly and while we try to visit it as many people as we can, it is not possible. Therefore, it is important to return the next year. It comes around to strengthen those connections and build on them.

I absolutely loved seeing my other patient advocate friends getting to spend time catching up on their journeys, and life events while networking and strategizing about our advocacy adventures. It is a week of collaboration and celebration as we get to see each other one more time which is a blessing for some and unfortunately we remember those who cannot attend because they have passed away from this horrible disease. It is a stark reminder while we search for cures and ultimately hopefully ending breast cancer. That is not the case for many who fought fiercely to also advocate and help your awareness to get better help for others, it is in those moments of remembrance and tributes that are aired through the conference that it brings home the urgency to learn more and do better with that knowledge.

I hope that some of her new members that attended this year for their first time were able to see some of the amazing things that advocates can do, such as networking at our booth and reaching out to people with great feedback about what we do.

I also got to participate in a project called " Letters between us" through working with Novartis, this was an opportunity to extend my patient advocacy, and have my voice heard and it was great for other advocates to see this is just one aspect of what you kind of accomplish.

I personally think we have one of the best organizations in the breast cancer arena and that was confirmed for me by the amount of people that came forward during the week to talk to us about that very fact that they notice her unified we are and how strong we are as an association to get things done together.

I am very excited for LBCA as I see us only expanding given the amount of posters and sessions dedicated to lobular breast cancer this year, I can only think that next year will be bigger. I am excited to collaborate on expanding our scholarship program and look forward to seeing many more new faces in the future.

We have an amazing leader in Laurie, and not a day goes by that work is not being done by the amazing staff of LBCA.

This year I had hoped to see some new sites in San Antonio during my week, I am not sure on what planet I thought that would happen as I was lucky to fit in if you walk between the beautiful parks and along the Riverwalk in San Antonio .. as time went so quickly this week, I'm actually glad I dedicated it to learning as much as I did, and I look forward to watching some of the session replays on what we couldn't make it to.

I feel next time hopefully I will gift myself a few extra days outside of the conference to take in some of the beautiful sights. It's the most amazing City and I feel very at home there.

I wish I would have given myself a few more days either side of the trip to rest before traveling back as there was so many flight disruptions for me. I came home exhausted and then got speed tracked in to getting ready for the holidays. I would advise any advocates traveling to this if it is at all possible that they give themselves a cushion of a few days before and a few days after to really get the max benefit of the symposium in a way that doesn't leave them flat out exhausted.

I have only amazing things to say about the opportunity of getting to attend this type of symposium.

I cannot express how beneficial it is for me, and I know other advocates that this fills in a lot of blanks moving forward of putting a shape on where we are at today in breast cancer.

Lastly, thank you so much to the LBCA for making these scholarship opportunities available, and also to our donors that obviously sponsor these trips financially.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for these opportunities.

Ciara Mohan-Gustafson.