



Ten years ago, my life was changed forever. I was diagnosed with Triple Negative Breast Cancer. I had no idea what that meant. According to studies cited at [Breastcancer.org](http://Breastcancer.org), women with triple negative breast cancer (of all stages) have a five year survival rate of 77 percent, compared to women with other subtypes of breast cancer, who have a five year survival rate of 93 percent. About 4 years ago, I met Leslie Williams and worked with her as she formed Survivors On Purpose (SOP) networking group. I wish I had known her when I was diagnosed! Because of SOP, I have learned so much about how to live life after breast cancer.

As a breast cancer advocate, I recently had the opportunity to serve as a consumer reviewer to evaluate research applications submitted to the Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP), sponsored by the Department of Defense. I was nominated by Leslie of SOP. As a consumer reviewer, I was a full voting member, along with prominent scientists, at meetings to help determine how the \$120 million appropriated by Congress for Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) will be spent on future breast cancer research. I was in awe! Having the opportunity to review the applications for funding opened up a whole new world for me. Can you imagine reading scientific research material and really understanding the information; having an input on amazing research to help people like me? OMG!! Let me tell you, it was an amazing experience!

Consumer reviewers (like me) represented the collective view of breast cancer survivors and patients, family members and persons at risk for the disease, sitting with doctors and scientists as we evaluated the impact of each application. As a consumer reviewer, it was an eye-opening experience. Meeting with the scientists and discussing each application in depth gave me a better

understanding of the research that is pursued to stop Breast Cancer from being a death sentence.

Each peer reviewer was brought to Reston, Virginia with the best of accommodations. They wanted to make sure we were as comfortable as possible. Right down to a pillow for your chair or a refrigerator in your room because you needed it. We enjoyed great food and the comradery was wonderful. Each group was like a family. After the final application was reviewed, we had a chance to give feedback. What would we change for the next session? WOW! My voice really mattered.

Thank you, Leslie for such a wonderful opportunity. Thanks to the Congressional Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) for sponsoring this program.

**SURVIVORS ROCK!**

*Jacqui Harris*