

Milestone Patient at The Breast Center Shares Story of Excellence

Kelly McKelvey Was First Diagnosed in 2008

ROME, Ga., October 30, 2024 – Kelly McKelvey discovered a lump in her breast on Nov. 13, 2008. She contacted her provider who insisted she go to The Breast Center at Floyd. She was immediately scheduled for a same-day appointment. McKelvey was the very first rapid results, *Know in 24*, patient at The Breast Center.

Her 1 p.m. appointment quickly led to a mammogram, followed by an ultrasound and later that afternoon, a guided needle biopsy.

“It was a Friday afternoon,” she remembers. “I was still at The Breast Center at 7:15 at night.”

Aimee Griffin, then director of The Breast Center, and Karen Craig, a now-retired Breast Center nurse practitioner, stayed with McKelvey and her husband, Chris, the entire time.

“I don’t think we got home until 8 or 8:30,” she said.

Because her appointment ended so late on a Friday, she did not receive her pathology report until Monday. At just 34 years old, McKelvey – wife, mother of two young children and elementary school educator – had breast cancer.

While the two-day wait was agonizing, she and Chris were in awe at the speed with which Kelly’s initial appointment progressed. A co-worker had been diagnosed a year or two earlier.

“It took her four to five months to get done what I had done in 24 hours,” McKelvey said.

The breast cancer diagnosis was devastating and the journey from diagnosis through surgery, radiation treatment and recovery was hard.

“I don’t think I would have survived with my navigator,” she said. “She went to every doctor’s appointment with me. She called me at home and told me what I might expect, because the after was the worst part. I don’t know what I would have done without everybody at The Breast Center.”

McKelvey’s diagnosis was 16 years ago, and 2024 was a particularly meaningful milestone for the family.

“When Dr. Brock met with us, I remember telling Chris, ‘I’m not going to get to see Campbell and Chandler graduate,’” she said. Campbell, her youngest child, graduated high school this year. “I got to be there, so this year was extra special.”

Her son, Chandler, graduated high school in 2019.

Today, McKelvey is educational interventionist at Northside Elementary School, where she was recently named educator of the year, the third-time in her career she has received that honor.

Since her recovery, McKelvey has helped about 800 students both as a speech language pathologist and as an interventionist. Some of those kids, no doubt inspired by Kelly, are now teachers themselves who are impacting hundreds of lives.

She also is a Breast Health Advocate who, while she does not allow her breast cancer experience define her, is always willing to tell others about her cancer journey and to advocate for other women.

Recently, a friend told her she had found a lump in her breast. Without missing a beat, McKelvey told her to call The Breast Center. When she later learned that her friend had not made an appointment, she called The Breast Center with her and made an appointment. Her friend was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Since 2008, The Breast Center has built on its mission to be the area leader in breast health and to be an advocate and encourager for women to empower themselves with knowledge by adding services such as genetic testing and 3D imaging. Now, all of Advocate Health is looking at The Breast Center's care model.

Catching her cancer early and moving quickly to treat it, meant McKelvey was on hand to watch her children graduate. It ensured that nearly 800 students would benefit from her expertise. It ushered in another generation of educators who will impact many more lives, and it provided the ability for Kelly to be the voice in the ear of another woman just like her.

About Atrium Health Floyd

The [Atrium Health Floyd](#) family of health care services is a leading medical provider and economic force in northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. Atrium Health Floyd is part of Charlotte, North Carolina-based [Advocate Health](#), the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of [Atrium Health](#) and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Floyd employs more than 3,500 teammates who provide care in over 40 medical specialties at three hospitals: Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center – a 304-bed full-service, acute care hospital and regional referral center in Rome, Georgia; Atrium Health Floyd Polk Medical Center in Cedartown, Georgia; and Atrium Health Floyd Cherokee Medical Center in Centre, Alabama; as well as Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center Behavioral Health – a freestanding 53-bed behavioral health facility in Rome – and also primary care and urgent care network locations throughout northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. Atrium Health Floyd also operates a stand-alone emergency department in Chattooga County, the first such facility to be built from the ground-up in Georgia.

About Atrium Health

[Atrium Health](#) is a nationally recognized leader in shaping health outcomes through innovative research, education and compassionate patient care. Based in Charlotte, North Carolina, Atrium Health is part of [Advocate Health](#), the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, which was created from the combination with Advocate Aurora Health. A recognized leader in experiential medical education and groundbreaking research, [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) is its academic core. Atrium Health is renowned for its top-ranked pediatric, cancer and heart care, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Atrium Health is also a leading-edge innovator in virtual care and mobile medicine, providing care close to home and in the home. Ranked nationally among U.S. News & World Report's Best Hospitals in eight pediatric specialties and for rehabilitation, Atrium Health has also received the American Hospital Association's Quest for Quality Prize and its 2021 Carolyn Boone Lewis Equity of Care Award, as well as the 2020 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Health Equity Award for its efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in care. With a commitment to every community it serves, Atrium Health seeks to improve health, elevate hope and advance healing – for all, providing \$2.8 billion last year in free and uncompensated care and other community benefits.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States – created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and [Atrium Health](#). Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois, Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health services nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs 155,000 teammates across 69 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations, and offers one of the nation's largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to providing equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

