

Tana Rios

Accounting Associate



January's featured employee is a testament to courage. In 2021, Tana Rios was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor on the left side of her brain. Although a devastating diagnosis, Tana handled her cancer journey with bravery and grace. Her positive attitude and determination helped to carry her through one of her toughest years. In Tana's own words:

"Hey Everyone!

I just wanted to say thank y'all for everything. Here is a little of how my 2021 went:

On June 16th, my three kids and I went to Abilene to get some pitching practice in. My oldest, Ethan, was catching for Isaiah, my middle kid. But then Ethan went to pitch and I said I'll catch for him. I was told "no you're not, he's throwing too hard". But I thought since I played lots of softball in my past, I said "yea, I got this". So, I squatted down and felt my pacemaker go off, so I stood up to catch my breath. I squatted back down and I completely missed the first pitch taking it straight to the right cheek bone. The next day it had swelled up a little and my family and friends told me I needed to go have it looked at. I was really feeling fine but seeing how the pitch was 78mph, my son feeling so horrible, and to prove to everyone I was ok, I decided to go to the doctor. When I get to the clinic, the doctor decided to do a CT. Once the test was done, I went back to work and then I got the most life-changing call from the doctor himself. He said your cheek bone looks good; however, the radiologist is seeing a tumor on the left side of your brain. With me having a pacemaker that is supposedly not compatible with an MRI, I ended up having two more CT's. After those tests were done, Snyder doctors sent me to a neurologist in Lubbock. Between my neurologist and cardiologist arguing back and forth for several days, they were able to get me in for an MRI with all kinds of medical personnel present. Once I get that test done and the results come back, I got an appointment with the neurologist to go over the results. Get there and I find out the tumor is cancerous and about 7cm and is pushing the main vein in my head to the right. With the tumor being located where it was, he knew it couldn't be completely removed or I would lose my speech. Walking out of the office in tears, scared to death and knowing my kids were already going through a lot since their dad and I were in the middle of a divorce, now their mom has cancer. Dr. Scranton's nurse got busy on getting everything set up and my surgery was scheduled for July 21st.

July 21st got here a lot faster than we were wanting but also not fast enough. We headed to Lubbock on the 20th to take my kids to my friends to stay the night and wait for me to get out of surgery and my sister would pick them up once the procedure was done. When I got to the hospital that morning, with my support crew, things start moving extremely fast and next thing I know I am getting pushed back to the OR. The doctor said the surgery would take 8+ hours. I don't really remember much after coming out of surgery other than telling the nurse on the 23rd to get me released or I was just signing out. Later that day, before I was permitted to leave, I had to have another MRI, then they released me, which meant I was finally going home to see my babies again.

On August 23rd, I start chemo and radiation. I was going to Lubbock five days a week for six weeks for radiation all the while taking chemo pills 7 days a week. When I walked into the radiation room, I freaked out seeing how I am claustrophobic and the mask I had to wear would be locked into the bed! After that first week, it started going by faster and before I knew it, my last day was here. October 4th was my last day of radiation and I was walking out, ringing the bell. A few weeks went by, then I had to have another MRI to follow up with my progress. The tumor was still 3cm but had not grown anymore. After seeing my chemo doctor, he tripled my dosage and I take that the first Monday-Friday of every month, along with blood work for the next one to two years. I will also have MRI's and doctor appointments every three months as well.

This year has been one of the toughest years ever, and I just want to say thank you all again for your support and prayers. I could not have made this journey without such a positive attitude without everyone's support and encouragement."

