

# "I'm always amazed what a small act of kindness can do!"

When Christine Ferdinand saw how much a small gift of jewelry meant to a friend battling cancer, she and her husband, Bill, decided to give thousands more women the same beautiful hope...

Night was falling as Christine Ferdinand and her husband, Bill, pulled into the hospital's parking lot.

During the years they had owned a jewelry store near their Morristown, New Jersey, home, so many of their customers had become friends. Barbara, who was now battling ovarian cancer—the same disease that had taken Chris' own mom—was one of them.

"It's so good to see you," Barbara smiled. Then waving her bare hands, she sighed, "I miss my bling!"

Barbara always wore the set of rings Chris and Bill had made for her out of her mother's diamonds. But, afraid they might get lost in the hospital, she'd left her jewelry home.

Ever since she'd learned about Barbara's diagnosis, Chris had been trying to find a way to lift her spirits. Suddenly, she knew exactly what to do...

## Bringing the bling!

The next day, Chris ordered several cubic zirconia (CZ) rings—which sparkled like diamonds but were not as valuable—and had them overnighted to her jewelry store. Packing them in a pretty case, she and Bill visited Barbara again.

"I know we can't bring you flowers in the oncology unit—

but we can bring you bling!" Chris smiled.

Barbara's eyes welled with tears as she traced her fingers over the shimmering rings. Then, slipping one on, she held out her hand. "Look how gorgeous!" she marveled.

And Chris knew: Though the ring wouldn't cure Barbara, it did bring her happiness and make her feel beautiful.

On the drive home, Chris couldn't stop thinking about the joy they'd brought Barbara. And it struck her: *I bet other women facing the daunting process of cancer treatment could use a bit of bling to brighten their lives, too.*

And Operation Bling Foundation (OperationBlingFoundation.org), a nonprofit dedicated to gifting jewelry to cancer patients, was born.

As word spread and donations poured in, Chris was able to order an array of sterling silver and CZ rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets and watches for women, men and children facing cancer.

## Shining with hope

When Laurie Liming lost her hair to breast cancer, she took comfort in proudly showing off her earrings.

"It may sound silly, but I knew that as long as I had my earrings and lipstick, I'd

"It's about more than just jewelry—we give people hope!" says Chris (right) putting a necklace on Laurie Liming.



be all right," Laurie says.

But when her earrings were lost during a hospital stay, Laurie was heartbroken. Then, Operation Bling surprised her with a sparkly new pair.

"The kind gesture helped this cancer patient shine!" Laurie says.

Ann Allen was feeling overwhelmed before beginning radiation treatment for breast cancer when a nurse opened up several jewelry cases. "Choose whatever you want!" she said.

Slipping on a shiny silver bangle bracelet, a sense of joy and calm came over Ann.

"What a boost in the arm—I feel like me again!" she said.

For Yuseline's four-year-old daughter, Katarina, having to endure treatment for leukemia was heartbreaking. But when she got the chance to pick out a special piece of jewelry...

"I feel like a princess!" she sang, admiring her pink heart earrings in the mirror.

After battling colon cancer for

five years, Rich was weary. Then Operation Bling surprised him with a watch—and a pretty necklace for his wife and biggest supporter, Linda.

What you do is so special. You bring some sparkle to the dreariness of cancer! Linda e-mailed Chris with gratitude.

And though Elizabeth rarely wore jewelry, after picking out a "warrior" bracelet from Operation Bling, she told Chris, "Somehow it adds to my determination to beat cancer. From now on, I will wear it with great hope and thanks in my heart!"

Today, with the help of a team of nearly 50 volunteers and nurses in nine local hospitals, Operation Bling has "blinged" more than 17,000 people!

"I'm always amazed what a small act of kindness can do," Chris beams. "At a time when people are worried and may not feel like themselves, a little bling reminds them of all the good things in the world!"

—Rachel Cosma

## Do good with your old jewelry!

Got a bracelet or necklace you don't wear? Lift the spirits of those in need, like Chris and Bill did, by donating it!

### ✓ Help those looking for jobs!

Have jewelry that would be appropriate for an interview? Donate it to Dress for Success, a nonprofit that helps women find work and dresses them to impress! Learn more at [DressForSuccess.org](http://DressForSuccess.org).

### ✓ Cheer on cancer patients!

Donate costume and estate jewelry to IHaveWings.org, and the nonprofit will use it to raise funds for gifts to cheer up women undergoing breast cancer treatment!

### ✓ Make prom memories for teens!

Help a high schooler in need feel like the belle of the prom by donating sparkly costume jewelry (and formal dresses and shoes, too) to [BeccasCloset.org](http://BeccasCloset.org).



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