

SPOTLIGHT

A chance to get to know the young adults with cancer in your community

**We could not be more thrilled to feature Sara Carreras for the
September 2021 Spotlight.**



Sara was 24 when she was diagnosed with Undifferentiated Leukemia. She was treated with chemotherapy, radiation, and a stem cell transplant. September marks the anniversary of her bone marrow transplant from her brother, Joey. Now she is cancer-free.

AYA@USC: What has been the 'Rose' and 'Thorn' of your cancer experience?

My 'thorn' was being in the hospital during COVID. Especially at the beginning, when we didn't know as much about the pandemic as we do now, I was horrified. Being diagnosed with a disease that wipes out your immune system is pretty scary when there's a highly contagious and potentially dangerous virus going around. As I wasn't allowed visitors for most of the time that I was hospitalized, I had to go through a lot of scary treatments and procedures without my family there. I missed them a ton, and felt anxious and lonely quite often.

My 'rose' was being able to see how much God loves me. Although at times I may have felt lonely, I knew God was with me every second of every day. He used this illness to bless my life in ways I could have never imagined--by making me a stronger person, providing me with amazingly supportive family and friends, and so any other things I'm grateful for that could probably fill a whole book. I can't talk about my cancer experience without sharing God's goodness and grace. I owe my entire life to Him.



AYA@USC: Are there any quotes or saying that you have remembered or found helpful?

'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?'

AYA@USC: What is one thing you wish people knew about cancer?

I wish more people knew about stem cell transplants and how to register for the National Bone Marrow Program (Be the Match). It's easier than you think!

AYA@USC: Between need to do, have to do, and want to do, how do you spend your days?

When I'm not at the doctor, I'm doing so much! Serving at my church, writing and recording music, and co-hosting a podcast about Disney Channel! You can check us out at @wildchatspodcast on Instagram. I also just started grad school! I'm pursuing a Master of Divinity in Theology.





AYA@USC: Did you have any animals that have helped you through cancer?

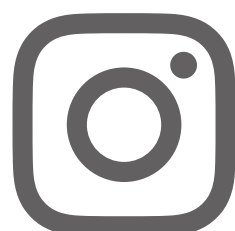
I have a four-year-old German Shepherd named April. She's my pride and joy. Everyone who knows me knows that I'm obsessed with her and that I love her very very much. When I was in the hospital, my family would put her on FaceTime with me and that always made me very happy because I missed her so much. Nowadays, when I come back from a not-so-great follow-up appointment, it always cheers me up to come home to bright eyes and a wagging tail.



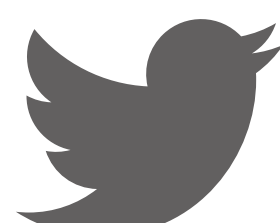
AYA@USC: For your specific cancer, are there any organizations, groups, or pages you recommend?

I'd like to thank the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society for their great resources and help so far. I'd also like to give a huge shoutout to Teen Cancer America, who I've been involved with for over a year now. They helped make my dreams come true with their music program, "Play It Back," through which I've been able to write and record my own original songs with a professional music producer!

You can learn more about the AYA@USC program by visiting
<https://aya.usc.edu/>



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