



Meera (L) and Kanan (R) in 2012.

Winter 2023

Dear Friend,

We hope you are well and enjoying this beautiful holiday season. This year we've chosen to make the incredibly moving story of two HERS patients -- the Jani sisters -- the focus of our year-end letter. We encourage you to watch our video in which Kanan shares her story. It's on our home page at [hersbreastcancerfoundation.org](https://hersbreastcancerfoundation.org); for quick access use our QR code below.

## Best Friends and Sisters

One of the first things everyone notices about Kanan is her smile; she simply radiates warmth. She is also a deeply caring and sensitive person, which is evident as she shares details about the loss of her beloved sister, Meera. Close since childhood, they were not just sisters, they were best friends. Together they learned to navigate life in the United States after immigrating with their parents from India and shared highs and lows, supporting each other as they experienced the journey into adulthood.

The news of Meera's breast cancer diagnosis in early 2019 was a terrible shock. Meera was young and vibrant; the trauma of the news was compounded by the rarity of her cancer and the struggle to find appropriate treatment. As her sister's illness progressed, Kanan remembers vividly how she and their mother stayed by Meera's bedside through many tearful days and nights.

Surgery and treatments were painful and weakened Meera, but there were bright spots. Kanan recalls that her sister became a HERS patient, receiving post-surgical products, compassionate care, and a heart-shaped pillow which gave Meera much-needed comfort. Sadly, Meera passed away a short 10 months after her diagnosis. It was January 2020 and she was just 39 years old. Kanan's sense of loss and hopelessness were still part of her daily life when, in late 2020, she received her own breast cancer diagnosis.

*HERS is grateful to our dear friend and volunteer, Ramil Sumalpong, for creating our new film. Use our QR code to view it our visit our home page at [www.hersbreastcancerfoundation.org](https://www.hersbreastcancerfoundation.org) to view it.*



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Kanan and her husband, Kaushal, in 2021.

## Her Own Journey and a Lift Up

Kanan's surgery quickly proceeded, and she soon connected with Debra, our Breast Care Specialist who previously helped her sister. At that visit they spoke about Meera and shared their sorrow. Kanan recalls that visit to HERS as being filled with "compassion, empathy, care, and love."

Connecting with HERS was just part of Kanan's healing journey. She credits her family and her now-husband, Kaushal, for their unwavering love and support. Kanan also embarked on a spiritual journey, which continues to help put her experiences into perspective. Today, three years after her diagnosis, Kanan is deeply grateful for her body, her mind, her health, and her life.

Serving patients like Kanan and her sister Meera is a privilege for our team, and we are grateful that Kanan has entrusted their story with us. It is our hope that Kanan's journey will deepen your understanding of how and why we strive to restore HERS -- Hope, Empowerment, Renewal, and Support -- in our patients.

Equally important is conveying how greatly our *under-served* patients need a lift up; financially challenged patients and those who are under-insured or uninsured deserve products and services that aid physical and emotional healing. HERS Assistance Programs facilitate access, but we cannot do it alone; **we need your support to sustain our work.**

Whether you choose to donate securely online via the HERS PayPal account (<http://tinyurl.com/HERSPayPal>), use our convenient QR code, or mail your gift using the enclosed remittance envelope, will uplift patients in need for many months to come.

With all best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season and New Year!

*Tina*

Tina Fernandez Steckler  
Executive Director

