When Barbara Hall was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015, both her mother and her neighbor recommended Magee based on the care they had received here. Barbara made the decision to travel to Magee as well, even though it was almost a two-hour trip from Hollidaysburg, Pa. With help from her husband, daughter, and neighbor, Barbara received treatment at Magee, including several months of chemotherapy. Those months were long and difficult, and she felt like she had landed on another planet. Barbara was overwhelmed, afraid, and unsure of what to expect week by week.

Jen Matthews, her nurse in the Women’s Cancer Center at Magee, was a steady guide, in addition to a medical professional. She helped ground Barbara in her new reality, and made the “new planet” less intimidating. Jen brought comfort to Barbara and her husband, Thomas, at a time when it was really hard to find stability and solace.

Once chemo ended, Barbara and Thomas were so thankful for Jen’s constant care and support; they decided to make a gift in her honor. Jen was a true gem and a steady and welcome presence during some very long and difficult months.

The Hall’s also agreed to share their story in Magee’s annual National Doctors Day (March 30) and National Nurses Day (May 6) donor mailing. Participants were asked to send messages of gratitude to their doctors, nurses, teams, and departments with contributions in honor of the caregivers.

According to Barbara, coming to Magee was “more than worth the trip.” She feels blessed to have been treated at a renowned university teaching hospital and pleased to have found appropriate ways of expressing her appreciation.

Mary Anne Meade was 40 when she met the love of her life. First marriages for both, Mary Anne and Dan Meade used in vitro fertilization to conceive triplets. Through several complications, Mary Anne lost two of the fetuses. Being a physician assistant, she knew when looking at the ultrasound screen that there was only one fetus remaining.

With Mary Anne’s high-risk pregnancy, the Meade’s were referred to Dr. Hyagriv Simhan. They were told he was the best in the city. What they found was not only an exceptional doctor, but also a compassionate man. Dr. Simhan is Chief of the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine and Medical Director of Obstetrical Services at Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC.

Because Mary Anne had suffered a perforated uterus—and a perforated bladder—uterine rupture was possible. Dr. Simhan determined that she needed a mandatory C-section. Mary Anne delivered a beautiful baby girl, Maura, who is now 8 years old.

For Mary Anne’s second pregnancy, Dr. Simhan welcomed the Meade’s back, as another C-section would be required. Dr. Simhan got to know Mary Anne and Dan even better, and they developed a friendship that continues today. After a successful pregnancy, the Meade family welcomed son Connor, who is now 6.

As a way to say thanks, Dan and Mary Anne have sponsored Savor Pittsburgh (an event with proceeds benefiting prematurity programs at Magee) for four consecutive years through their company, Prime 1 Builders, Inc. Prime 1 is a sought-after builder of custom homes, distinctive renovations, and commercial workspace construction.

Prime 1’s involvement in Savor Pittsburgh started small by sponsoring a basket for the event. The company’s participation has grown, and Prime 1 was a $5,000 Crystal Cup Sponsor in 2015. Dan and Mary Anne also gathered a big group of friends, purchased VIP tickets, and enjoyed a fun night!

While Mary Anne and Dan were fortunate not to need Neonatal Intensive Care Unit expertise when their two children were born, they’ve had friends who have gone through that heart-wrenching experience.

“It’s amazing to see these tiny babies and recognize that 10 years ago, they would not have lived,” Mary Anne said. “Families have children that survived because of the research that has taken place at Magee-Womens Research Institute. But research takes lots of money, which is why Prime 1 Builders, Dan, and I are involved.”