



Name: Nicole Abair

Role on PPFAC: Co-chair, Pediatric Council

What do you do for work (or hobby or passion)?

Before staying home to raise my children, I worked in both management consulting and marketing. As a strategic management consultant for an international consulting firm, I helped businesses in a variety of industries improve their performance and grow through strategy development, operational improvement, process analysis, and organizational change management assistance.

Since leaving the workforce, I have volunteered and held leadership positions in the Lexington Public Schools, Lexington Catholic Community, Field & Garden Club, and PMC Kids Ride, to name a few. Most important is the time I have spent as an active childhood cancer advocate and fundraiser. I am most proud of Dana Farber Cancer Institute's "Nate Cavallo Fund," named in memory of my son, which supports pediatric research and a new communication curriculum for pediatric fellows.

What brought you to the Patient and Family Advisory Council?

In June, 2012, my then 11-year-old son Nate was diagnosed with metastatic undifferentiated sarcoma. He was in active treatment until his death in December, 2015. During that time, I witnessed change in both the physical structure of the Jimmy Fund Clinic and Boston Children's Hospital, as well as the methods used to care for patients. I appreciated the emphasis on continuous improvement, and our son directly benefited from those changes. I knew that I wanted to give back and so I spoke to our Nurse Practitioner about ways to do that. After some time, I submitted my application and have been an active PPFAC member since January 2017.

Why is the work the Council does so important to you, and what skills do you bring?

I was a strong advocate for my son throughout his illness, and our family was fortunate to be able to seek alternative therapies and other opinions. I know that not every family is in this situation, and that is why I feel so strongly about patient advocacy and the need to ensure that every child gets what he or she needs, and that every caregiver feels involved and informed throughout the process. As the primary caregiver for my son during his nearly four years in treatment, I have a good understanding of how things work at Dana-Farber and also the challenges that many parents face while their son or daughter is in treatment. As a former consultant and seasoned volunteer, I bring leadership, analytical, and team-building skills, as well as the ability to seek and manage diverse ideas and opinions.

What are your hobbies and interests?

Traveling with my family, gardening, yoga, and spending time on Cape Cod.