WORDS TO LIVE BY

‘Anything is possible’

Susan and Laura Stachler are among several local authors appearing at the book festival this year. Their book, “The Cookie Cure: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of Cookies and Cancer,” is the story of young Sue’s journey through the same form of cancer that killed her namesake aunt, and the cookie business that came about during her recovery.

Sue and her mother, Laura, own Susansnaps, a gourmet cookie shop in Sandy Springs that specializes in gingersnaps.

Sue was diagnosed with cancer at age 22 in 2004, just two weeks before graduating from Auburn University.

Despite her diagnosis, she felt fine, with little to no symptoms.

“At 22, you think you’re invincible,” says Sue, who is now healthy and vibrant. “I walked into chemotherapy healthy. I thought, ‘Surely chemo won’t be that bad. I can do anything.’”

“Literally by the time she walked out the first day, she was sick,” Laura says.

During Sue’s six months of grueling chemotherapy that left her feeling sick and nauseous, Laura, a baker who had a commercial kitchen in the garage, learned from a nurse that ginger might ease her daughter’s discomfort.

“I never baked gingersnaps,” Laura says. “I was so desperate. Halfway to entertain her, I baked 100 cookies and that was that.”

The cookies helped relieve Sue’s side effects. “The ginger helps soothe my stomach,” Sue says.

As her health improved, Sue started baking gingersnaps with her mother. Eventually, they would take cookies to chemotherapy patients.

“Baking – it’s therapeutic in its own way,” Laura says. “There’s a rhythm to it. You can get lost standing up there in the garage baking those cookies.”

100 cookies turned into thousands and thousands gifted to patients and sold to corporate businesses.

Soon the duo opened their brick and mortar location and found themselves on such programs as “The Today Show,” “ABC World News with David Muir,” “The Rachel Ray Show” and others.

Most of their appearances were due to Sue’s ease in going for what she wants by contacting corporate heads and such people as David Muir directly.

“I don’t think I was like that before,” Sue says. “I was very safe and played by the rules. It took a little while after I finished treatment to notice it, that I go after things differently now.

“Making a phone call or sending an email to somebody is not life or death. You look back sometimes and think, ‘What if I had?’ Good, bad or indifferent, anything is possible.”

-Susan and Laura Stachler appear at the Book Festival of the MJCCA on Nov. 8. Susansnaps, susansnaps.com

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Susan and Laura Stachler will make an appearance at the MJCCA book festival. Photo courtesy SUSAN STACHLER