

# Building Legacy Through Advocacy



**By Yolonda Brisbane,**  
DPC Grassroots Manager

**A**s the Grassroots Manager for Dialysis Patients Citizens (DPC) Yolonda recruits and coaches

new DPC patient advocates, helps plan and execute our Annual Advocacy Day, and hosts Patient Ambassador training calls. She came to DPC having led youth ambassador programs for the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. For her, elevating the voices of dialysis patients is personal work.

“When I was fourteen, I lost my father to kidney failure when he refused to go on dialysis. I had no clue about what dialysis was. Years later, my mother had to go on dialysis. My brother and I learned all that we could and decided that as a family, this time we would win. That included learning about our mother’s renal dietary needs, how to understand her monthly lab reports, and building a partnership with the staff at her dialysis center. I began creating tasty recipes so that my mother did not feel left out and soon everyone was eating her food. It has been 16 years. My mother is now 80 years old and still going strong. Eight years ago, both my brother and a younger cousin had to go on dialysis. My cousin recently received a kidney transplant. My brother is finalizing the process of placement on the transplant list.”

Yolonda learned about DPC in 2013 when her mother became a Patient Advocate. “I was amazed at the work that this organization engaged in, how DPC trained and prepared the patients to meet with members of Congress and serve as leaders within their respective communities and dialysis centers. I found myself participating in DPC monthly support calls, and webinars, and reading DPC’s Kidney Citizen Magazine. I witnessed an organization that was truly mission-focused and patient-led and found myself getting involved with local advocacy efforts.”

Today, Yolonda is honored to be the first person to welcome new members to DPC, letting them know what resources and support they have available, and telling them about opportunities to help shape legislation that improves the quality of life for dialysis patients. The resolve and courage that dialysis patients and their families have, and the wealth of knowledge and support the patients are for one another, inspires Yolonda every day.

“I come from a family of Dialysis Warriors and know that behind each call, there is a face, a name, a family, and an advocate within. Whether you are a kidney patient, family member, friend or partner-in-care, there is always work to do and legislation to impact. There is a space waiting for your story and your voice. **There is a space waiting for you to create your legacy.**”

Anyone interested in joining DPC as a member or Patient Advocate, may visit our website at <https://www.dialysispatients.org> and/or contact Yolonda directly at 1-866-877-4242.