



SURVIVOR

A NEWSLETTER FOR CANCER SURVIVORS
Sponsored by the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program **TIMES**

Surround Yourself With the Things You Love

by Janet Knowles

Some people have a bucket list, things they want to do before they leave this planet for good. I don't have a bucket list. Instead, my list is made up of the things I love, that I have now. My health, my children, grandchildren, and extended family of sisters, brothers, nieces, well you get the idea. But I think I only really began to appreciate those things once I became a survivor. Suddenly days were brighter, not in sunshine, but in clarity. I learned not to

sweat the small stuff and to look around and decide what I wanted to bring closer to me that I loved. Well, being a woman, of course jewelry leaps to mind, and clothes, and handbags, and don't forget shoes, but more than that, I decided about eight years ago to fulfill a promise I made to my daughters when they were teenagers. We lived on a farm that was devoid of animals



Donna Andrews Photography

“Life is beautiful, so cry when you are happy or sad, laugh until your belly hurts, love even when you get hurt by those you love. This life we have been gifted cannot be repeated.”

because my husband and I worked 24/7 together, and there just didn't seem to be enough time to have animals outside of a few dogs. But I have always believed that when you make a promise you keep it, no matter how long it takes.

When life left me with a new future to comprehend, I asked my girls if they still wanted horses, and if so, I would build a barn. Working with New Jersey Barn Company in Ringoes, New Jersey brought me in close proximity to an 1866 storeroom that was later converted into a three stall barn and reassembled on the farm. We only needed two stalls; two daughters, two horses, and one stall for whatever. Well, 12 horses later, we were doing what we loved... rescuing horses and animals that had

(continued on page 12)



Donna Andrews Photography

Letter from the Editor:

Words are powerful...some can bring us to our knees, while others lift us up, bring us joy, give us hope, comfort and inspiration...



Bonnie Mehr

I am humbled year after year as I put together each new edition of the *Survivor Times* newsletter. Whether the article is from a cancer survivor or an MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper physician, the intent is always the common thread... to enhance the human experience if you are living with, through or beyond cancer.

Each spectacular person that contributed an article in this special edition clearly demonstrates that while words are powerful, actions speak louder than words. Each contributor teaches us through their words and actions how in their very own special way they lend their voice to give us hope; or use their indomitable spirit to make a positive difference in the fight against cancer.

Our own very respected Robert Somer, MD, Director, Clinical Trials Program at MD Anderson Cooper wrote an article in this edition that simply put is a beacon of hope for today, tomorrow and the future of cancer treatment:

"During my lifetime, I have seen incredible progress in the field of oncology ranging from screening, prevention, treatment and symptom management. Even more impressive is the heroism and strength I get to witness every day in my clinic when caring for you, the cancer survivor. We have never understood the science of cancer more than we do today, which has led to an explosion of new treatments over the last few years. We are at the cusp of what I hope will usher in a dawn of a new era in cancer care, where treatment becomes curative and cures become the norm. At this pace, I am optimistic that I will be able to witness this by the end of my life, recognizing that I too may benefit from these advances." – ROBERT SOMER, MD

Every day, we at MD Anderson Cooper renew our commitment to our core values of caring, integrity and discovery. As we continue Making Cancer History, you can rest assured we'll be both at the forefront and by your side.

Here are some of the reasons why MD Anderson Cooper is your best hope for cancer care:

- Expertise
- Cutting-edge research
- Support and education

At MD Anderson Cooper, we understand that cancer is not just a physical disease...

My goal as Director of the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program is to bring together, empower and engage cancer survivors to incorporate complementary medicine options into their lives.

Our programs are designed to help cancer survivors discover ways to cope with the stress and anxiety of their diagnosis, and to alleviate some of the side effects of their treatment by focusing on the mind, body and spirit.

These programs, lectures and activities offer patients access to social, educational and support opportunities. We have several great new program options for 2015.

All programs are free for cancer survivors; regardless of where you received your cancer treatment – all are welcome. I encourage you to check out the program options listed in this edition. We have unique and diverse classes in our Voorhees and Camden locations.

If you would like to submit an article or make a donation to the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program, please contact me at: mehr-bonnie@cooperhealth.edu

The quality of your cancer journey and survivorship is important to us...

Bonnie Mehr
Editor, *Survivor Times*
Director, Integrative Oncology Services
Director, Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program
MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

CUTTING-EDGE
RESEARCH

expertise

Support &
Education



SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2015

Signature Class SERIES

A FREE series of classes for cancer survivors.

Core Strengthening & Stamina Building Through Belly Dancing *For Cancer Survivors*

This fun class will cover all the basics of the ancient art of belly dancing in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. We will work on strength, isolations and conditioning through the belly dance technique. Come learn a variety of moves and choreography that will be broken down at the beginner level. No experience is necessary and hip scarves will be provided.

PRACTITIONER: *Dee Farley, The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program*

DATES: September 23; October 7 & 21;
November 4; December 2

Guided Imagery & Meditation for Calming Anxiety *For Cancer Survivors*

This class uses meditation and guided imagery to calm anxiety by teaching patients:

- How to use meditation to cultivate well being.
- Mindful meditation to reduce stress and anxiety.
- Visualizations for inner peace and healing.

PRACTITIONER: *Corinne Corcoran, EdD, NCBTMB, ARCB, The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program*

DATES: September 22; October 6 & 20;
November 3 & 17; December 1

Pre-registration is required for all workshops.
Please call: 1.800.8.COOPER (1.800.826.6737).
Or register online at events.CooperHealth.org
Workshops may be cancelled due to inclement weather.

ALL CLASSES MEET: 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
LOCATION:

Cooper Clock Tower, 931 Centennial Boulevard
Voorhees, NJ 08043

Live & Learn

A New Perspective for the Cancer Patient

- **Thursday, September 24, 2015:**
**FEAR OF CANCER RECURRENCE
AFTER CANCER TREATMENT**
PRESENTED BY: *MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
Behavioral Medicine Department*
- **Thursday, October 8, 2015:**
Q&A WITH OUR EXPERT ONCOLOGY NUTRITIONIST
PRESENTED BY: *MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
Oncology Nutrition Department*
- **Thursday, October 22, 2015:**
**FOODS THAT FIGHT CANCER AND HEALTHY
WINTER SOUPS: Vitamix Demo**
PRESENTED BY: *MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
Oncology Nutrition Department*
- **Thursday, November 5, 2015:**
**COPING WITH DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY
DURING AND AFTER TREATMENT**
PRESENTED BY: *MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
Behavioral Medicine Department*
- **Thursday, November 19, 2015:**
**RECIPES FOR HEALTHY LIVING WITH
AND BEYOND CANCER**
PRESENTED BY: *MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
Oncology Nutrition Department*
- **Thursday, December 10, 2015:**
ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY
*(For cancer survivors only) Please feel free to bring
a dessert for all to share. Limited space available, so
please register.*

MD Anderson  Cooper
Cancer Center

Making Cancer History®



SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2015

Signature Class SERIES

A FREE series of classes for cancer survivors.

Core Strengthening & Stamina Building Through Belly Dancing *For Cancer Survivors*

This fun class will cover all the basics of the ancient art of belly dancing in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. We will work on strength, isolations and conditioning through the belly dance technique. Come learn a variety of moves and choreography that will be broken down at the beginner level. No experience is necessary and hip scarves will be provided.

PRACTITIONER: Dee Farley, The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

DATES: October 6; November 3



ALL CLASSES MEET: 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
LOCATION: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
Two Cooper Plaza, 400 Haddon Avenue
Room C4100/C4101, Camden, NJ 08103
FREE VALET PARKING

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL WORKSHOPS.

Please call: **1.800.8.COOPER** (1.800.826.6737).
Or register online at: **events.CooperHealth.org**
Workshops may be cancelled due to inclement weather.

Live & Learn

A New Perspective for the Cancer Patient

- **Tuesday, September 22, 2015:**
STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH FATIGUE AND INSOMNIA: For The Newly Diagnosed Through Long-Term Cancer Survivorship
PRESENTED BY: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper Behavioral Medicine Department
- **Tuesday, September 29, 2015**
COPING WITH DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY DURING AND AFTER TREATMENT
PRESENTED BY: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper Behavioral Medicine Department
- **Tuesday, October 13, 2015:**
Q&A WITH OUR EXPERT ONCOLOGY NUTRITIONIST
PRESENTED BY: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper Oncology Nutrition Department
- **Tuesday, October 20, 2015:**
FALL AND WINTER HEALTHY SOUPS: Vitamix Demo
PRESENTED BY: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper Oncology Nutrition Department
- **Tuesday, October 27, 2015:**
VIRTUAL GROCERY STORE TOUR
PRESENTED BY: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper Oncology Nutrition Department
- **Tuesday, November 10, 2015:**
HOW FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS CAN CHANGE AFTER A CANCER DIAGNOSIS
PRESENTED BY: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper Behavioral Medicine Department



The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program Presents:

2015 Creative Arts for Healing WORKSHOPS

**These classes are free for cancer survivors
and there is no cost for materials.**

Please register for each class so the appropriate number of supplies can be provided.

Please call: **1.800.8.COOPER** (1.800.826.6737). You can also register online at events.cooperhealth.org.

VOORHEES

2015 DATES	PROJECTS
September 16:	Affirmation Bracelets
September 30:	Make Your Own Stationary
October 14:	Jeweled Box Project
October 28:	Candle Project
November 18:	Winter Mobile

TIME:

WEDNESDAYS 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

LOCATION:

Cooper Clock Tower
931 Centennial Boulevard
Voorhees, NJ 08043

Therapeutic Massage & Reflexology Days

ATTENTION ALL CANCER SURVIVORS: Come enjoy the mind body spirit benefits of Therapeutic Chair Massage and Reflexology.

2015 DATES:

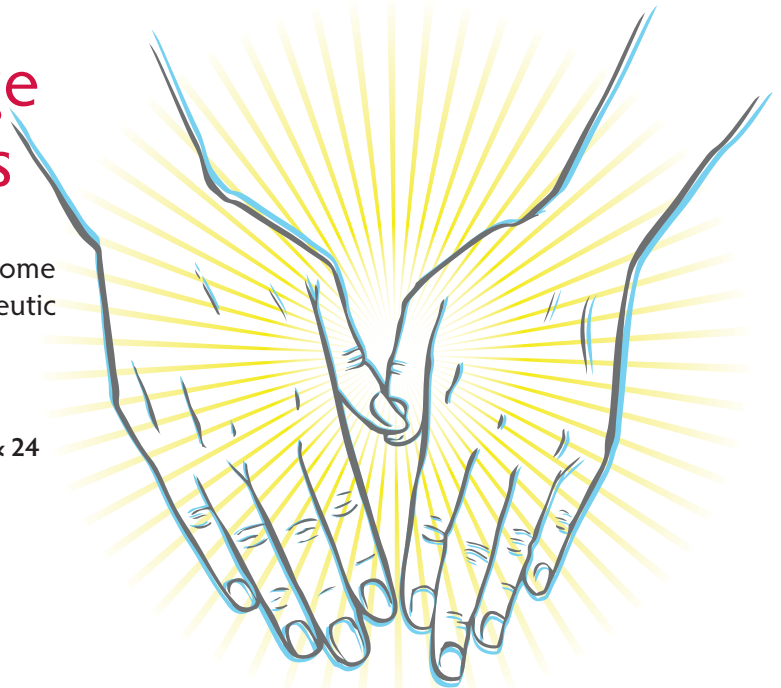
September 29 • October 13 & 27 • November 10 & 24

TIME:

9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION:

Cooper Clock Tower
931 Centennial Boulevard, Voorhees, NJ 08043



These classes are free for cancer survivors.

Please register by calling **1.800.8.COOPER** (1.800.826.6737). You can also register online at events.cooperhealth.org.

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Making Cancer History®



The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program Presents:



HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

FOR CANCER SURVIVORS

2015 DATES	PROJECTS
Thursday, September 17:	The Art of Chinese Flower Arranging
Thursday, October 1:	Kitchen Herb Wreaths
Thursday, October 15:	Picture Perfect Pumpkin with Live Flowers
Thursday, November 12:	Autumn Harvest Basket: Discover the Splendor of Using Dried Plant Materials
Thursday, December 3:	Pinecone Creations

TIME:

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

LOCATION:

Voorhees Clock Tower
931 Centennial Boulevard
Voorhees, NJ 08043

Each class is limited to 25 cancer survivors, so please register online at: events.cooperhealth.org.

FACILITATOR:

Rachelle Hasenberg, BS, HTM,
Senior Therapist of Inspirational
Horticultural Therapy

This class is free for cancer survivors and there is no cost for materials.

MD Anderson  Cooper
Cancer Center

Making Cancer History®



Making Cancer History®

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

Becoming a cancer survivor starts the moment a patient is diagnosed, and at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper we realize that physical healing is only part of our mission.

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program enhances traditional cancer treatment by focusing on mind, body and spirit. The program offers a variety of mind-body therapies performed by certified therapists and practitioners.

Our complementary therapies are designed to lessen the pain, stress and anxiety associated with a cancer diagnosis. They also provide assistance in managing the side effects of traditional treatments, such as radiation and chemotherapy.



The following are available throughout the year in our Camden and Voorhees locations:

- Laughter play shop
- Therapeutic chair massage
- Reflexology
- Qi Gong and Meditation
- Horticultural Therapy
- Gentle chair yoga
- Music therapy
- Creative Arts for Healing classes
- Gentle body movement
- Nutrition education
- Behavioral Medicine workshops
- Educational seminars
- Survivor Times newsletter
- Tea Cart program



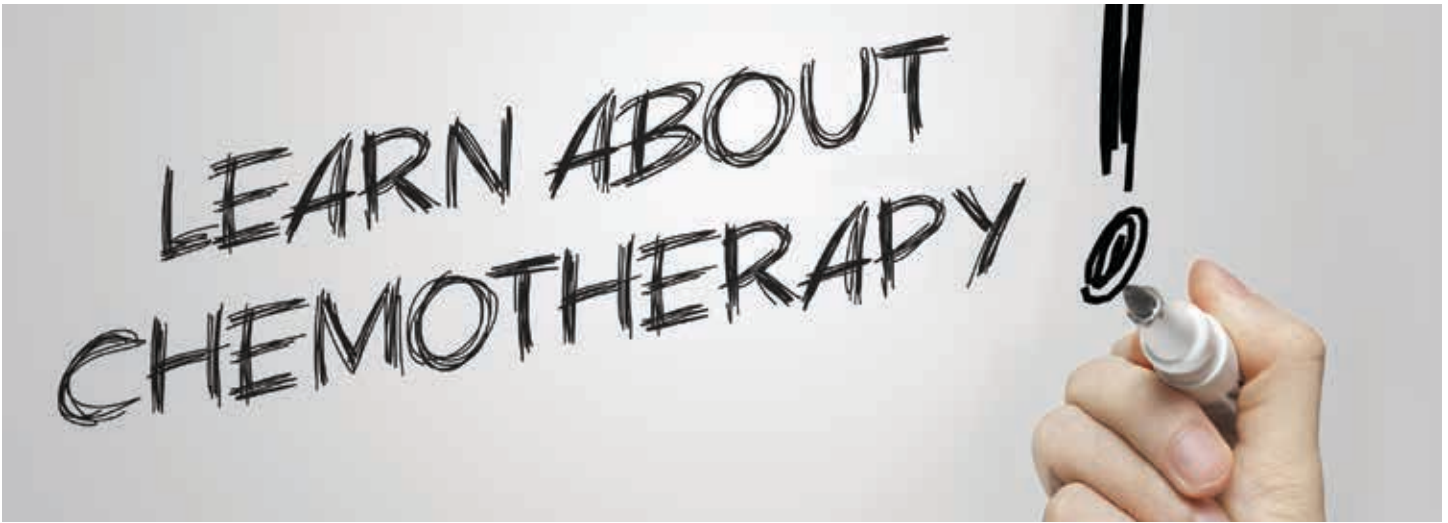
Tea Cart Program

Program Highlights

- The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program has provided services to thousands of cancer survivors, at no cost, regardless of where they receive care, since its inception in 2004.
- The program has recently expanded to include chair-side reflexology services and creative arts in the chemotherapy infusion units, as well as therapeutic chair massage throughout the cancer center in Camden for patients and their family members.
- Surveys are conducted annually to measure the program's effectiveness in reducing stress and anxiety, and in patient satisfaction. The most recent survey conducted on Chairside Reflexology, Introduction to the iPad classes and Creative Arts for Healing classes demonstrated a 100 percent satisfaction rating in all areas.



Participants bask in a sense of community, nurturing friendships and the mutual support they have experienced through The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program.



Chemo and Biologic Therapies: What Every Patient Needs to Know

Chemotherapy uses medicine to stop or slow the growth of cancer cells. Biotherapy is a type of treatment that stimulates or suppresses the immune system to help the body fight cancer, infection and other diseases. These treatments can be used alone or with other cancer treatments such as surgery and radiation therapy.

MD Anderson Cooper invites you to take part in a one-hour class taught by our experienced oncology nurses to help you and your caregiver understand chemotherapy and biotherapy. The class will cover:

- Understanding the goals of chemotherapy and biotherapy
- Preparing for your treatment day
- Managing potential side effects
- Preventing infection
- Managing appetite changes and nutrition needs
- Understanding blood counts
- Accessing support services and programs

All patients and caregivers are invited to attend. The last half hour will focus on a complementary medicine experience, which may include meditation, guided imagery or Qi Gong. These programs are available to our patients free of charge and assist in alleviating stress, anxiety and side effects of treatment.

MD Anderson  Cooper
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CAMDEN

When:

This class is offered **every Tuesday** from **9:30 – 11 a.m.**

Where:

MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

Two Cooper Plaza
400 Haddon Avenue
Conference Room C1111
Camden, NJ 08108

VOORHEES

When:

This class is offered **every Thursday** beginning **September 10, 2015** **2 – 3:30 p.m.**

Where:

Cooper Clock Tower
931 Centennial Blvd.
Voorhees, NJ 08043

Pre-registration is required for this class.

Please call **1.800.8.COOPER** (1.800.826.6737) or register online at **events.cooperhealth.org**





SUPPORT GROUP SERIES

US TOO Prostate Lecture Series (Voorhees)

Presentations led by medical professionals on the diagnosis, treatment options and management of prostate diseases. There will be ample time to ask questions and share experiences. Significant others are invited to attend.

DATES: Sept. 8, Nov. 10

TIME: 6 – 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper in Voorhees
900 Centennial Boulevard, Building #1 Suite L Conference Room
Voorhees, NJ 08043

Breast Cancer Support Group (Camden)

A support group for women with breast cancer and those who care about them. We offer information about breast cancer, treatments, and an opportunity to meet with other survivors. The group sessions will provide emotional support as well as strategies for coping.

DATES: (No meetings in July or Aug.),
Sept. 9, Oct. 14, Nov. 11, Dec. 9

TIME: 10 – 11:30 a.m.

LOCATION: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper in Camden
Two Cooper Plaza, 400 Haddon Avenue,
Room C1111, Camden, NJ 08103

Gynecologic Cancer Patient and Family Support Group (Voorhees)

Women facing ovarian, cervical, vulvar and uterine cancers and the people who love them meet to share their personal experiences, exchange information, offer emotional support and express feelings and concerns.

VOORHEES:

DATES: Aug. 10, Sept. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 9, Dec. 14

TIME: 2 – 3:30 p.m.

LOCATION: The Ripa Center for Women's Health & Wellness
6100 Main Street, Voorhees, NJ 08043

Sister Will You Help Me (Camden & Willingboro)

A breast cancer support group for women of color and faith. The group's mission is to empower through knowledge, encourage through sisterhood, enlighten through faith and bond through love.

CAMDEN:

DATES: (No meetings in July and Aug.),
Sept. 10, Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 10

TIME: 6 – 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: One Cooper Plaza, Roberts Pavilion
10th Floor, Room 1014, Camden, NJ 08103

WILLINGBORO:

DATES: (No meetings in July and Aug.),
Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Nov. 5, Dec. 3

TIME: 6 – 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Willingboro Public Library
220 Willingboro Parkway
Willingboro, NJ 08046

Brain Tumor Support Group (Voorhees)

A support group for people with brain tumors and those who care about them.

DATES: Aug. 5, Sept. 2, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2

TIME: 6 – 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Clock Tower Building
931 Centennial Blvd., Voorhees, NJ 08043

Young Women with Breast Cancer (Voorhees)

A support group for all young breast cancer survivors, whether you are newly diagnosed, or a long-term survivor. For more information and to register please contact: **Carla Doorman** at cdoorman_ysc@outlook.com or **856.630.6659**.

<http://www.youngsurvival.org/ysc-f2f>

DATES: Aug. 19, Sept. 16, Oct. 21,
Nov. 18, Dec. 16

TIME: 7 – 8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: The Ripa Center for Women's Health & Wellness
6100 Main Street, Voorhees, NJ 08043

Latino Cancer Survivors (Camden)

Cancer information and support for you and your family. Free refreshments and parking. For more information and to register please call: **Virgenmina Lopez 856.968.7092**.

DATES: Aug. 13, Sept. 10, Oct. 8, Nov. 12,
Dec. 10

TIME: 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

LOCATION: One Cooper Plaza
Roberts Pavilion, 10th Floor, Room 1005
Camden, NJ 08103

LLS Multiple Myeloma Group (Camden)

For myeloma patients and their loved ones.

DATES: July 27, Aug. 24, Sept. 28, Oct. 26,
Nov. 23, Dec. 28

TIME: 10 – 11:30 a.m.

LOCATION: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper in Camden, Two Cooper Plaza
400 Haddon Avenue, Room C1111
Camden, NJ 08103

Look Good, Feel Better (Camden & Voorhees)

Program offered by the American Cancer Society (ACS) to help women undergoing cancer treatment learn to cope with appearance-related side effects of treatment and regain a sense of self confidence and control over their lives. Registration Required. Call ACS at **1.800.ACS.2345**. FREE.

VOORHEES:

DATES: Oct. 12

TIME: 4:30 – 6 p.m.

LOCATION: The Ripa Center for Women's Health & Wellness
6100 Main Street
Voorhees, NJ 08043

CAMDEN:

DATES: Aug. 17, Nov. 16

TIME: 3:30 – 5 p.m.

LOCATION: MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper in Camden
Two Cooper Plaza, 400 Haddon Avenue
Room C1111, Camden, NJ 08103

To register for these support groups, please call **1.800.8.COOPER (1.800.826.6737)**
or register online at events.cooperhealth.org (unless otherwise noted).

Call for cancellation information due to inclement weather.

Research Drives Advances in Cancer Treatment and Survivorship Research

by Robert L. Somer, MD, Director, Cancer Clinical Trials Program

In January 2015, President Obama asked Congress to approve \$215 million for a “Precision Medicine Initiative” designed to help doctors tailor treatments to the individual characteristics of their patients and was considered a “down-payment” for future cancer research.

This reminds me of the signing of the National Cancer Act of 1971 by President Richard Nixon, which is generally viewed as the beginning of the war on cancer. That declaration led to a major investment in cancer research that has significantly improved cancer prevention, treatment and survival.

Since then, basic scientific research, fueled in recent years by the tools of molecular biology, has generated unprecedented knowledge of cancer development. We now understand many of the cellular pathways that can lead to cancer. We have learned how to develop drugs that block those pathways; increasingly, we know how to personalize therapy to the unique genetics of the tumor and the patient.

Not only has therapy improved, but so have our supportive medications. Gone are the days where patients experienced severe nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy.



Robert L. Somer, MD

As a result, two thirds of people diagnosed with cancer today will live at least five years after diagnosis, compared with just half in the 1970s. There are now more than 12 million cancer survivors in the U.S. — as compared to 3 million in 1971.

The American Society of Clinical Oncology has identified the top five significant

advances in cancer research and patient care over the past 50 years. They are:

- **Chemotherapy Cures Advanced Hodgkin Lymphoma** – In the first chemotherapy breakthrough for advanced cancer in adults, a four-drug combination chemotherapy regimen – called “MOPP” – induced long-term remissions in over half of patients with aggressive Hodgkin lymphoma. The 1965 discovery sparked the first hope that advanced cancers could be cured with drug treatment, and paved the way for 90 percent cure rates for patients with this disease today.
- **HPV Vaccine Approved to Prevent Cervical Cancer** – The Food and Drug Administration’s 2006 approval of the first human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, Gardasil, protects against the two strains of HPV known to cause most cervical cancers. Widespread vaccination, if fully implemented, stands to drive

dramatic reductions in cervical and other HPV-related cancers in the U.S. and worldwide.

- **Targeted Drug Transforms Treatment of Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia** – The rapid FDA review and approval of imatinib (Gleevec) in 2001, dramatically changed the treatment of patients with chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML). This daily pill – which targets a molecular defect in nearly all patients with CML – turned a disease that had almost no long-term survivors into one with five-year survival rates of 90 percent! It also ushered in a new era of successful research on molecularly targeted treatments for many more cancers.
- **Chemotherapy Cures Men with Advanced Testicular Cancer** – A new three-drug combination chemotherapy regimen – called “PVB” – produced complete remissions and some cures for more than 70 percent of men with advanced testicular cancer. Earlier chemotherapy treatments worked in just 5 percent of men. This 1977 discovery, coupled with later surgery, radiation and chemotherapy advances, made testicular cancer one of the most curable cancers and one of oncology’s biggest success stories.
- **Powerful Anti-Nausea Drugs Dramatically Improve Many Patients’ Quality Of Life** – The FDA approval of the anti-nausea drug, ondansetron (Zofran) in 1991, as well as other supportive care drugs in the following years – dramatically changed the experience of cancer treatment, bringing unprecedented improvements to patients’ quality of life. These drugs not only bring relief from intense, treatment-induced nausea, but make it possible for patients to avoid once-routine hospital stays, complete their full course of treatment and live longer and better lives.

As I write this article for *Survivor Times*, it is clear that these five advances have helped people with many types of cancer, including breast, ovarian, gastrointestinal cancers, leukemia, lung,



melanoma, lymphoma and many others. Targeted therapies have been used in breast cancer for decades ranging from hormonal therapies like tamoxifen, and aromatase inhibitors, which take advantage of the hormone receptors cancer cells may have, to agents that target the HER2 receptor such as trastuzumab. We even have a targeted therapy with chemotherapy attached, acting like a “smart bomb” that brings chemotherapy directly to the cancer cells. In ovarian cancer, drugs that interfere with the BRCA-dependent characteristics of cancer cells have recently been developed.

Ibrance is a new drug (a capsule, taken orally) used in combination with letrozole for the endocrine-based initial treatment of ER+/HER2- metastatic breast cancer in postmenopausal women. Ibrance is in a class of drugs called “pyridopyrimidine-derived cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK) inhibitors.” In ER+/HER2- metastatic breast cancer, the presence of estrogen can cause an overactive signaling of proteins within the nucleus (center) of the cell that tells the cell to grow and divide. By stopping these proteins, Ibrance puts the brakes on cell growth and division in healthy and cancer cells – helping slow the progression of cancer. Clinical research proved that in appropriate patients, those treated with the combination of

Ibrance plus letrozole had twice the duration of control than if they had received letrozole alone. Furthermore, 55.4% of the patients who received Ibrance combined with letrozole experienced shrinkage of the cancer, compared to the 39.4% patients who received letrozole alone. Because of these results, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted accelerated approval of Ibrance for use in combination with letrozole in appropriate patients.

In addition to the advances made in the field of medical oncology, our colleagues who specialize in other fields have also contributed to improved patient outcomes and a better quality of life for patients:

- Radiologists have improved screening techniques for breast and other cancers so we can detect cancer earlier, at the most treatable stages.
- Surgeons and gynecologic oncologists have developed tools such as minimally invasive and robotic surgery that can shorten recovery time, and have advanced tissue conservation and complex reconstructive techniques for a better cosmetic result after surgery and a more natural breast reconstruction.
- Radiation oncologists have developed more precise methods of delivering radiation treatment,

reducing side effects and damage to healthy tissues.

As you can see, we have made tremendous strides in the war against cancer since 1971. I favor to think that it was no coincidence that it was the year of my birth and oncology is my life’s calling. During my lifetime, I have seen incredible progress in the field of oncology ranging from screening, prevention, treatment and symptom management. Even more impressive is the heroism and strength I get to witness every day in my clinic when caring for you, the cancer survivor. We have never understood the science of cancer more than we do today, which has led to an explosion of new treatments over the last few years. We are at the cusp of what I hope will usher in a dawn of a new era in cancer care, where treatment becomes curative and cures become the norm. At this pace, I am optimistic that I will be able to witness this by the end of my life, recognizing that I too may benefit from these advances.

I urge every patient to explore the availability of cancer clinical trials. Participating in clinical trials offers patients the opportunity to try new and effective treatments that could potentially improve their condition, while taking part in vital research that can benefit many future patients. Trials are available for all types and stages of cancer, many at MD Anderson Cooper. ■

Going Bi-Lingual!

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program Opens the Door to the Spanish Speaking Cancer Survivor Population

To better serve the needs of Latino, non-English speaking cancer survivors, The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program has hired Mary Palacio, a long-time community outreach worker and bilingual educator. Mary has previously worked at the American Cancer Society and recently retired from the NJ Cancer Education and Early Detection Program. She will be present at any complementary medicine program to which a Latino survivor signs up to provide translation services and support. She is excited to spend her retirement years with the target population she loves to serve, cancer survivors. Come join us at our complementary medicine programs in Camden, and get to know Mary.



El Programa de Medicina Complementaria de la Doctora Diane Barton abre las puertas a la población de sobrevivientes de cáncer de habla hispana

Para servir mejor las necesidades de los sobrevivientes de cáncer Latinos que no hablan inglés, El Programa de Medicina Complementaria de la Doctora Diane Barton ha contratado a Mary Palacio, una trabajadora comunitaria y educadora bilingüe de largo plazo. Mary ha trabajado anteriormente en la Sociedad Americana del Cáncer y

recientemente se ha jubilado del Programa de Educación y Detección Temprana del Cáncer de Nueva Jersey. Ella estará presente en cualquier programa complementario en cual se suscriba un sobreviviente Latino para proporcionar apoyo y servicios de traducción. Está emocionada de pasar tiempo con la población que le gusta servir, los sobrevivientes de cáncer. Únase con nosotros en nuestros programas de medicina complementaria en Camden y conozca a Mary.



Behavioral Medicine Program Launches New Research Study Using the Apple™ Watch

by Cori McMahon, PsyD, Director, Behavioral Medicine Program

The MD Anderson Cooper Behavioral Medicine team has partnered with Polaris Health Directions of Wayne, PA to embark on an exciting research venture focused on improving patient care, communication and overall quality of life.

Our cancer program has been research partners with Polaris for almost a decade and has collaborated together on six studies related to behavioral health with funding from the National Institutes of Health. In fact, our behavioral medicine team helped Polaris develop the Polestar distress screening tool that is used in MD Anderson Cooper outpatient clinics and at many other cancer centers across the U.S.

Our newest undertaking with Polaris is a pioneering research study using the Apple™ watch. The study will launch this fall and will focus on capturing behavioral data that could affect the courses and outcomes of treatment for breast cancer patients.

The first phase of the study (pilot) will include 30 breast cancer patients who will be asked to wear the watch and interact with it for approximately 9 months. Through the patients' interaction with the Apple™ watch we will be able to collect both "passive data" (heart rate, activity level) and "active data" (patient rating of mood, pain, treatment side effects).



Cori McMahon, PsyD

The patients involved in this initial phase of the study will also be connected with each other via the Apple™ watch and receive automated messages on the watch based on what they record. For example, if a patient rates a low mood for a few days in a row, or rates a high pain level, a message will be sent asking how she is doing and whether she would like to connect with the medical team.

We hope that through the initial phase of the study we will learn how wearable technology can best be used to improve the patient experience. We then plan to expand the pilot study to include patients with other types of cancer.

Phase II of the study will expand to include data collection at other cancer centers.

We know that the impact of the integration of behavioral health in cancer care is significant and that a positive frame of mind can help a patient through all phases of diagnosis and treatment. If results of this pilot



prove promising, the partnership will pursue a National Cancer Institute research grant for a full-scale breast

cancer project.

Apple™ business leaders in the Philadelphia region and at the Apple™ home base in Cupertino, California have been involved with and are very enthusiastic about this project. Apple™ hosted an exciting kick-off event in June at their Philadelphia headquarters, at which the primary research teams from MD Anderson Cooper and Polaris Health Directions were given Apple™ watches so they could become experienced users – able to guide patients involved in the study in the use of the device. This fall, Apple™ will host a second event for our pilot group participants. Each participant will receive their Apple™ watch along with personalized training with the technology.

The Behavioral Medicine team is very excited to be leading this project at MD Anderson Cooper. This is cutting-edge research and we are fortunate to be partnered with Polaris Health Directions and to have the support of the MD Anderson Cooper clinicians and leadership team. ■

Surround Yourself With the Things You Love

(Continued from page 1)

nowhere to go and no one to care for them. We rescued mini horses that are no bigger than large dogs, race horses that had gone lame, or were starved because they couldn't work anymore... horses with problems that no one wanted to tackle. We took in Donkeyote, a miniature donkey who loves treats; dogs, cats, chickens, guinea hens, goats and even a few needy folks. We loved it in the bitterest of winter, down pours of rain that soaked everything, mud up to our ankles, even the flies in summer, and the snow and ice in winter. We watched

goats and kittens and chicks being born, and sometimes die. We love, and loved, every minute. My girls loved it so much that they wanted to go off and do their thing on their own farms. So now my barn is empty, but my memory list is full, and I still get to visit with all those wonderful animals that taught us so much. Life is beautiful, so cry when you are happy or sad, laugh until your belly hurts, love even when you get hurt by those you love. **This life we have been gifted cannot be repeated. This is it! Do what your heart tells you to do, no matter what hurdles you have to climb, but be in the here and now, and "surround yourself with the things you love."** ■



The Gift of Time

by Marianne Murray

When I was a little girl, I worried that I would never be important enough to ever be remembered, and if given the gift of time to live to be 35, well, certainly by that time I would've lived a full life and achieved some accomplishment to be in history books. Well, that didn't happen.



Marianne Murray

BUT, I was given the gift of time to live another 35 years. By then, I still didn't accomplish anything memorable – but by that time I valued what I did have: being married (twice), having a darling daughter, a rewarding teaching career, a caring son-in-law, fantastic grandkids, able to travel the world – AND cancer!

While suffering the ravages of chemo and radiation treatments, I chatted with a woman in the doctor's office every day. To my surprise, she was an author, and wrote a book about ME! "She Wears Her Bald Head Like a Warrior" never went to print; but it defined me.

My oncologist gave me the gift of time. Everyday I feel honored to have my MD Anderson Cooper team keeping me energized and excited about events in my life. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

The gift of time *was* on my side. I'm

happy to say today, April 6, 2015, I was exactly 5 years cancer free... and I shouted from the rooftop, "I beat it!"

I'm not foolish enough to think I have a guarantee forever, and I do take my gift of time seriously. Not being religious I have accepted prayers from at least 21 different cultures – maybe they worked?

I rarely turn down an invitation and often live my life on the edge. To quote Angelina Jolie-Pitt, "cause a little trouble, it's good for you." If I didn't take risks I would've missed out on meeting some awesome people and some awesome experiences: holding hands with Elizabeth Taylor, hugging Raisa Gorbachev, rallying in Washington, DC for Womens' Rights, visiting St Jude's Hospital – just to name a few.

Every person that you care for enriches your life and changes the way you see the world. Every single one of you reading this has influenced my life in some way – over time memories become more precious and in most cases more hilarious.

If you can always remember our life and laughter together, my time on earth will have had a purpose.

I wish you the gift of time. ■



Frank Del Rossi, Lisa McLaughlin, Sara Goldstein and Leslie Tarr.

A Day in the Life of the Oncology Social Workers at MD Anderson Cooper

We have four dedicated social workers who help patients with psychosocial, emotional, financial and other barriers to care. Our social workers help patients with a variety of issues from giving information on how those eligible can access transportation assistance, to providing materials to help parents discuss their cancer with children, to giving vital information about what patients going out on disability need to know and beyond. Our social workers have a wealth of information and are happy to share it with you.

We asked our social workers to tell us what they did on a certain day. Here is what they came up with:

- Provided emotional support to upset patients both in person and over the phone
- Arranged transportation for patients who qualify for assistance
- Completed required paperwork for Medicaid programs
- Guided patients through the disability process and provided paperwork
- Referred patients to our Behavioral Medicine program
- Explained Advance Directives to patients
- Educated patients and families on the difference between hospice and palliative care
- Referred patients to home hospice programs
- Completed applications for financial assistance programs
- Communicated patients' concerns about their medical condition to the right doctors and nurses

(continued on page 14)



I was bald here at the Mid Atlantic Clown Convention in 2010 – still too weak to dress "in clown," but my friends weren't! My clowning education has been important to me... I get to make a difference by spreading joy and laughter. Clowning is like snow at Christmas! If you would like to join me at Kapo's Gang Clown Club, visit [facebook.com/kapogang](https://www.facebook.com/kapogang).

A DAY IN THE LIFE

(continued from page 13)

- Provided Homelessness Prevention program information
- Advised patients on how to find a primary care physician
- Arranged for patients to get assistance with the cost of medications
- Celebrated the end of treatment with patients

This is just a snapshot of what oncology social workers do every day for patients at MD Anderson Cooper. Our social workers also facilitate support groups, network with other area social workers to get the latest information about what resources are available to patients, arrange home care with a doctor's order and a multitude of other things. If you have questions about any of the above, please contact your social worker. In Camden, your social workers are Sara Goldstein and Lisa McLaughlin. Frank Del Rossi and Leslie Tarr work in both the Voorhees and Willingboro offices.

Who works with patients with:

**BREAST, DIGESTIVE TRACT,
BRAIN, GYNECOLOGIC,
URINARY AND UNKNOWN
PRIMARY CANCERS**

In Camden

Sara Goldstein:
856.735.6297

In Voorhees/Willingboro

Leslie Tarr:
856.673.4631

Who works with patients with:

**HEAD & NECK, LUNG,
SARCOMA, SKIN,
HEMATOLOGICAL CANCERS**

In Camden

Lisa McLaughlin:
856.735.6257

In Voorhees/Willingboro

Frank Del Rossi:
856.325.6779

Lucky, Fortunate and Blessed

by Theresa Sentel, Co-Chair, Pink Roses Teal Magnolias

*I am lucky. I am fortunate.
I am blessed.*

This has been my mantra since October 2010 when I was first diagnosed with breast cancer.

*I am lucky. I am fortunate.
I am blessed.*

I have said this to myself a thousand times a day to help keep the other thoughts – ‘I have breast cancer and am going to die’ – at bay.

I am lucky because until that day in October my only operation was to have my tonsils out and the only medicine I ever took was a multi-vitamin.

I am fortunate because I was close to other women who survived breast cancer, including my mother. In fact, she and I now share the same doctor – Generosa Grana, MD, Director of MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper.

And *I am blessed* because I have the greatest family and friends to support me in my fight against the disease.

At first, I kept my diagnosis to myself.

It felt like cruel and unusual punishment to be diagnosed in October – Breast Cancer Awareness Month – when pink ribbons were everywhere serving as constant reminders that I had the disease.

Those days were overwhelming.

I told no one at work so that I had a place to go where I did not have to talk or think about cancer.

The most difficult person I had to tell was my mother.

But as a cancer survivor herself she knew just what to say:

“At least it’s a problem you have the ability to fix. In a couple of years, you’re not going to give it a thought.”

*I am lucky. I am fortunate.
I am blessed.*

After undergoing a successful double mastectomy and being declared cancer free, I decided to pay my good fortune forward.



Theresa Sentel and her mother.

I am also honored to serve as co-chair of The Cooper Foundation's Annual Pink Roses Teal Magnolias Brunch, which raises money to support innovative breast and gynecological research programs at MD Anderson Cooper.

I came to admire the strength of pink and convinced my company, TD Bank, to launch a breast cancer awareness campaign each October. Last year, we raised more than \$24,000 to benefit MD Anderson Cooper.

I am also honored to serve as co-chair of the Cooper Foundation's Annual Pink Roses Teal Magnolias Brunch, which raises money to support innovative breast and gynecological research programs at MD Anderson Cooper.

This year's brunch will be held on Sunday, October 25 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza on Route 70 in Cherry Hill.

I will be there with my friends and family, including my mother who turns 91 this year.

*I am lucky. I am fortunate.
I am blessed.*

I am a breast cancer survivor. ■



The Janet Knowles Breast Cancer Center

The Janet Knowles Breast Cancer Center was born seven years ago when Janet Knowles, a breast cancer survivor and philanthropist, made a generous financial donation and personal commitment to advance Cooper's breast cancer program.

Today, the Janet Knowles Breast Cancer Center has a "home" on the second floor of the MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper in Camden, centralizing outpatient breast cancer services on the Camden campus in a beautiful physical space that is both calming and comfortable.

The Janet Knowles Breast Cancer Center features eight clinical exam rooms, two with ultrasound capabilities, a beautifully appointed waiting area for breast cancer patients and their families, and workspace for physicians and other clinicians. In this center, patients have access to all their breast cancer specialists in the same convenient location,



In this center, patients have access to all their breast cancer specialists in the same convenient location, creating a more seamless approach to multidisciplinary cancer care.

Infusing a patient's experience with artwork and a warm, comforting environment can improve recovery and outlook. Physically, emotionally and spiritually, art can heal. Throughout MD

creating a more seamless approach to multidisciplinary cancer care. The space also includes the Boutique of Hope (see sidebar).

Each year, hundreds of women turn to MD Anderson Cooper for breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. These women know they will have access to an outstanding, multidisciplinary team of breast cancer surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, reconstructive surgeons, clinical researchers, imaging specialists, pathologists, nurses, genetic counselors and supportive care service providers. This team approach to cancer care results in highly coordinated, individualized treatment, an exceptional patient experience and outstanding clinical outcomes.

Anderson Cooper, patients and families are surrounded by art created by New Jersey artists. The works have been meticulously curated to bring comfort and serenity during the challenges of diagnosis and treatment.

More than 20 stunning pieces of art grace the walls of the Janet Knowles Breast Cancer Center, all created by inspired women artists from New Jersey. Many of the artists have a personal connection to cancer, and the sensitivity of their work clearly reflects this. While diverse in style, content and media, they share an empowering message of healing and hope.

The new Janet Knowles Breast Cancer Center is a testament to Ms. Knowles' resolve that women have access to the best care medicine can offer in a beautiful and comfortable environment. ■

Please join us in welcoming **Pallav K. Mehta, MD**, to MD Anderson Cooper. Dr. Mehta serves as Director of Integrative Oncology and Director of Practice Development and is a member of the breast cancer team. In addition to caring for patients with breast cancer, Dr. Mehta specializes in incorporating integrative medicine into the care plans of patients with all types of cancer.



Pallav K. Mehta, MD

Dr. Mehta comes to MD Anderson Cooper from a private hematology/oncology practice in the Philadelphia suburbs. Dr. Mehta received his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, underwent his internship and residency training at Temple University Hospital and completed his fellowship at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia.

Dr. Mehta is the co-author of, "**After Cancer Care: The Definitive Self-Care Guide to Getting and Staying Well for Patients After Cancer,**" which will be available to the general public this August.

Boutique of Hope

The Boutique of Hope, located within the Janet Knowles Breast Cancer Center on the second floor of the MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper in Camden, is a small specialty shop that offers unique MD Anderson Cooper branded clothing, accessories, pampering soaps and lotions, gourmet teas, scented candles and other comforting and inspirational gift items.



The stylishly appointed boutique is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Cash, checks, credit cards and payroll deduction (for employees) are accepted.



Become a Patron of the Arts at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

by Susan Bass Levin, President and CEO, The Cooper Foundation

In 1860, Florence Nightingale recognized the profound effect “beautiful objects” have on sickness and recovery.

“Little as we know about the way in which we are affected by form, by color and light, we do know this – that they have an actual physical effect,” Nightingale wrote.

Studies have confirmed Nightingale’s instinct. Infusing a patient’s experience with artwork can improve recovery and outlook. Physically, emotionally and spiritually, art can heal.

While the state-of-the-art clinical treatments at MD Anderson Cooper are saving the lives, the thoughtfully curated artwork that adorns the center’s walls is helping patients heal emotionally and spiritually.

We call this combination artful healing.

Throughout the center in Camden, patients and families are surrounded by more than 100 pieces of art created by New Jersey artists. The works have been meticulously curated to bring comfort and serenity during the challenges of diagnosis and treatment.

Many of the artists have a personal connection to cancer, and the sensitivity of their work plainly reflects this. As diverse in style, content and media as the images are, they share an empowering message of healing and hope.

This spring, the Cooper Foundation launched the Artful Healing campaign to raise money to fund research, patient



Susan Bass Levin

access to clinical trials, new technology, the Patient in Need fund and supportive services.

You can support the campaign by becoming a Patron of the Arts. Your gift will be honored by an elegant plaque mounted adjacent to a framed artwork of your choosing, with your name engraved.

We have made it as easy as possible to donate.

Just visit **CooperArtfulHealing.com**. There you can review the works of art throughout the center, meet each artist and enjoy his or her interpretation of healing and hope, and choose a favorite piece.

Invariably, a donation of this kind also becomes an inspiration for others to give to this life-sustaining cause.

If you would like to discuss the program further before making your decision, please contact me personally at **basslevin-susan@cooperhealth.edu** or **856.963.6703**.

We appeal to your love of art, understanding of its healing effects and your generosity. Your gift will help make cancer history. ■



Artist: Kathy Dallara-Pennell



Artist: Myra Ryan



Artist: Dolores Poacelli

My “New Normal”

by Lori Bussison

Over 2 1/2 years ago I was diagnosed with an aggressive, stage 3 triple positive, invasive ductal breast cancer. It’s a mouthful to say, even more to conceive when you hear those words. A cancer diagnosis wasn’t new to me, being my second time around the cancer block. I had ovarian cancer at 17, in 1975, with a complete hysterectomy and radiation. Times and available treatments were so different back then, but thankfully my prognosis was successful. Forty years later,



Lori Bussison

being hit with breast cancer, I feel thankful that research, surgery techniques and new treatment options have come a long way with more success than ever before.

My journey this time around was a longer, harder battle. I discovered the fairly large lump myself, knowing deep down where this was going to take me. For two weeks I hit the ground running from doctor to doctor, test to test, before hearing those words “I’m sorry, you have breast cancer.”

I knew right then what my path would be. Yes, I was scared; how could you not be. But I had to be strong for me, my family and most importantly, positive and focused through every part of this journey. I never asked “why me?” as

that question has no answer and only brings your mental psyche down. So, I walked through the door of my oncologist’s office and knew my life was about to change forever. I was blessed to have an ace medical team from my breast surgeon, my plastic surgeon, Dr. Grana my oncologist and Dr. Hughes my radiologist.

Based on my diagnosis, I went through four and a half months of chemotherapy with Herceptin for a year, a bilateral mastectomy; Latissimus flap reconstruction, 27 rounds of radiation treatments and three additional procedures. Doctor appointments and physical therapy encompassed my time. I knew in order to survive, live life under my new “normal,” I would need to continue working, focus on the things I love to do and have the never-ending support of my husband, son, family and friends.

The hardest part was telling my 18 year old son, who was starting his senior year of high school. This was his time to enjoy life,

(continued on page 18)





Sunday, October 25, 2015
11 A.M. – 2 P.M.

Crowne Plaza • Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

Join Us in Honoring

Meredith P. Crisp, MD
 Gynecologic Oncology Program

Lydia Liao, MD, PhD, MPH
 Director of Breast Imaging

Francis R. Spitz, MD
 Deputy Director, MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

Patricia A. Stienes, RT RM
 Director, Out-Patient & Women's Breast Imaging Services

Event Co-Chairs

Donna Forman • Janet Knowles • Josephine McGinniss • Theresa Sentel • Carolyn Shelby • Mary Ann Todd
 Kristin Brill, MD • Generosa Grana, MD • David Warshal, MD

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TICKETS _____ Number of tickets @ \$130 each

_____ I cannot attend but I would like to make a donation.

Proceeds benefit breast & gynecological cancer programs at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper.

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 E-mail: _____ Phone: _____ Table Captain: _____

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E-mail ads in high-res PDF format to winderman-suzanne@cooperhealth.edu or call 856.963.6704.

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Card #: _____ Charge Amount: \$ _____ Security #: _____ Exp. Date: _____
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Mail payment to: The Cooper Foundation, 200 Federal Street, Suite 146, Camden, NJ 08103.

If paying by credit card or payroll deduction, you may fax this form to: 856.342.2109.

Purchase tickets, sponsorships and ads online at www.foundation.cooperhealth.org/pinkandteal.

Questions: Please call 856.963.6704 or e-mail winderman-suzanne@cooperhealth.edu.

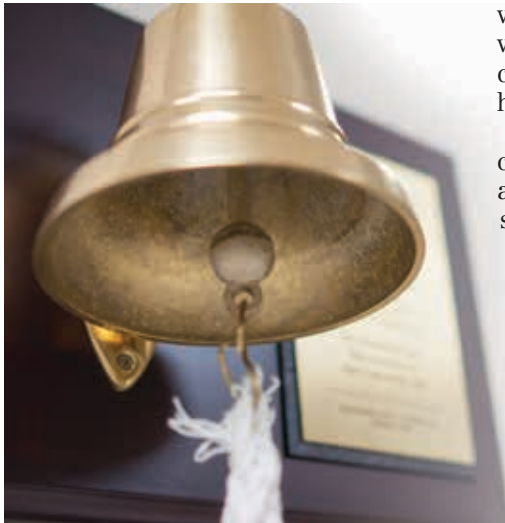


For Whom The Bell Tolls

by **Julie Fischer**, Practitioner, The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

I was thrilled to see the patient walk in. She's the kind of woman who dresses and acts in bold, bright colors. She sits down, puts up her feet, pulls out her smartphone, pushes record and starts talking about how this is her last treatment, and how grateful she is for the foot massage I'm giving her, the care of the nurses, the many people she has met in this building.

Have you ever felt your heart seems to get exponentially bigger in one split second? This seems to happen to me often since I've started working in infusion. Anyhow, as she was talking, it was happening again. I experienced that amazing feeling of laughing and crying at the same time, circled by awe and gratitude, the result of which left me speechless.



"It's for my video diary" she says, waving the camera at me, "I put these clips together to keep people updated on how I'm doing." Her support group, who, as I soon found out, consists of many. Her family, their friends, her friends, family members or friends, a very large church group and numerous prayer partners, broadcasted through the internet. It was a village, plus.

The video clips were sent out at first to minimize the number of phone calls she needed to make, and in a short period of time, they were a source of inspiration for countless people. Janice was surprised to hear that they were getting passed on to others who she didn't even know that were going through the same things.

"You see", she says, "it's the funniest thing - I have never been so alive and present to life since I got this diagnosis. All of a sudden I went from getting by - routinely going from one thing to the next... to seeing minutes as a gift. All of a sudden I realized how much can be done within these minutes. When I realized that my little video blogs were getting passed on, it was apparent that even when I could only do small things, even when I was sad, hurting or confused, I could still help someone else. I could offer hope. And this mattered to me... a lot."

So her mission became to help other cancer survivors and their support people, and that she does. Her message is simple - don't die from the diagnoses, there is lots of life to live right now. I know she is not alone. I have met many survivors whose experience with this disease brought with it a great fortitude. It is heart-growing and very humbling.

At 5:00 p.m. the nurses gathered along with a small crowd that was invited to be part of the ringing of the bell, signifying the patients last

chemo treatment. She wanted everyone to be able to ring it with her, so she found these tiny bells that actually ring and tied festive ribbons around them. She said "For people who can't be here, they can ring it from wherever they are. We are all connected, there's no doubt about that."

This bell was not being rung for her triumphant finish alone, although that in itself is no small thing. I was part of the village that supported her. It is for everyone who sat there with her hour after hour of treatments, waiting rooms and recovery. It was for everyone who helped her live with the diagnosis, convinced her to buy a wig and make hard decisions. It rang for all those connected with her in any way. For those who cared for her at MD Anderson Cooper and the other patients she met along the way.

When I look at my little bell, which now has a special place in my home, I am reminded that every time that bell in the hallway rings it is for every person who can hear it on the floor, urging patients, caregivers and family members to stay strong, you can do this. **The bell rings for the doctors and nurses, schedulers and social workers and so many behind the scenes, saying thank you for caring in ways that can never be expressed. The bell rings for everyone who has braved, cried and laughed through cancer diagnoses and treatment. It rings for the many that care deeply and work vigilantly to find a cure. It rings hope for who feel alone, who are not aware of the village that surrounds them too. It rings for those who did not receive a chance to recover, and those who have been in remission for years, showing us all what strength truly looks like. It rings for us all - to let us know that these moments matter.** ■

My New Normal

(continued from page 16)

look at colleges and hopefully be recruited to play baseball. As school was beginning, so was chemotherapy. How would I be there for him to help with applications, school visits... I had to think of my health first in order to be successful with my fight and be there for my family. It was a scary time for all of us, especially the

With this life experience I try to give back from what I learned, helping others newly diagnosed, to demystify the unknown.

unknown. Crazy, losing my hair was the most traumatic thing I remember. Getting neuropathy and discolored nails were the worst of my chemo symptoms. I took it one day at a time, counting down each day on a calendar. You never believe it's going to end but looking back, I can't believe how far I've come and the future that lies ahead.

My outlook of life has changed because of my cancers and I cherish everything more than ever. With this life experience

I try to give back from what I learned, helping others newly diagnosed, to demystify the unknown. It doesn't matter that our cancers or our treatments might be different, it gives me purpose to be there for someone, any way that I can.

In addition, I'm an active member of the South Jersey Breast Cancer Coalition, raising money for women who need assistance with their household bills and other services while they are undergoing treatment.

I am happy to be a success story and pay it forward whenever I can. ■



Chances Are?

by Melissa Costello

I have always believed that everyone who is put in your life was put there for a reason and that no encounter was by chance. Boy was I ever right. I am about to take you on a journey of three lives intertwined through a dreadful diagnosis called 'breast cancer.'

As a child, I grew up in South Philadelphia. Our neighborhood was tight knit.

I had many childhood friends but one friendship would take the place to be so much more. My childhood girlfriend, Michelle Rinick would visit her grandmother, Mary Falcone routinely for Sunday dinner who happened to live right next door to me. Our families were close. Our mothers were best friends. Early one Christmas morning when I was five years old, my house caught fire. It was a horrible tragic fire. My mother and I were trapped inside and it was Michelle's Uncle Armand who bravely took a ladder and made a chain of hands across the roof tops to get my mother and myself to safety. He saved our lives!

Years go by; you grow up and grow apart. We kept in touch but not as much as one would like. Life takes over; you get married, have children and move on... fast forward to the year 2001. I am a new resident to New Jersey and newly married with my second child, Isabella. It is the day of her baptism and to my surprise there standing in the church is Michelle with her family. Her son Christian was also getting baptized in the same ceremony, same church in Marlton, NJ. Talk about a wonderful reunion! Come to find out we lived around the corner from each other.

Our three children ended up going to the same grade school and our eldest children would come to graduate high school together in 2014.

In the interim I started working as a medical assistant in a very reputable dermatologist office in Marlton. There I met yet another beautiful friend who would be part of my destiny – Mary Racite. We hit it off immediately. Mary is an angel. We worked hard each year to support a huge benefit given every year for breast cancer survivors at our office. It was much to our delight to do so and to this day we are still involved. Mary was diagnosed with Stage 4 ovarian cancer during my time working there. It was through that diagnosis she learned that she had breast cancer. In 2010 my husband was deployed to Kuwait for 'Operation

Enduring Freedom' with the 177th FW Air National Guard for six months. I had to leave my position at the office to take care of my three children. Mary and I kept in touch and always remained close friends.

In February of 2013 I was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer after my very first mammogram at 41 years old. I immediately called Mary, in distress. Fear had set in along with panic. I can still remember her calming words and they were this, "You will see no one else but my breast surgeon Dr. Kristin Brill at MD Anderson Cooper, I will come to your first visit." After my first visit I immediately knew that God had placed me in the right hands. My husband, Mary and I went to the first visit and I had a certain wave of peace that came over me.

I was experiencing every emotion one could imagine when you are told that you are possibly facing death. Later that afternoon of that very same day of my visit with Dr. Brill, I received a phone call from my son Demetrius, "Mom you won't believe who has breast cancer – Michelle Rinick! Her daughter, Amanda just told me at lunch." My heart dropped and the tears started flowing. I fell to my knees. How can this be that two of my friends along with myself could have breast cancer? To know that it was happening to my childhood friend was even more heart wrenching. To my surprise, Michelle was also under the care of Dr. Kristin Brill. We were

Life can read like a book with each page, sentence and chapter bringing you suspense, drama, romance, heartache and all the trials and tribulations that compose a good novel. Not often do we get the opportunity in life to really see how important moments are and how the people we meet are put there for a reason.



Melissa Costello with friends Michelle Rinick and Mary Racite

within months apart in our diagnoses and treatments.

So here we are three women, all faced with fear of the unknown, under the care of one doctor. We all went through it together. We shared stories and formed bonds while pulling strength from one another. This would turn out to be a life altering experience that would bind us together forever. Each one of us had our double mastectomies, reconstruction, chemotherapy and radiation treatments at MD Anderson Cooper. We are now 'surviving and thriving!'

Life can read like a book with each page, sentence and chapter bringing you suspense, drama, romance, heartache and all the trials and tribulations that compose a good novel. Not often do we get the opportunity in life to really see how important moments are and how the people we meet are put there for a reason. Chances are that one will never be lucky enough to recognize the importance of an encounter of divine intervention. I can tell you that I am grateful for these two women. Mary always tells people that I am like 'Christmas' when she sees me. Little does she know that I feel like I have been touched by an angel when I am with her. My dear friend Michelle always says, "We are in this together." Little does she know that from little girls we have always been destined to "be in it together." This journey is like no other. Every story is different but this one is special. We were three souls orchestrated to be cared for by Dr. Kristin Brill. Chances are one in a million that three lives would intertwine in such a profound way.

God is good always! ■



WordSearch

Find all the words listed hidden in the grid of letters. They can be found in straight lines up, down, forwards, backwards or even diagonally.

Theme: THE WIZARD OF OZ

- AUNT EM
- COWARDLY
- LION
- DOROTHY
- EMERALD CITY
- ESCAPE
- FAITH
- GLINDA
- GOLDEN CAP
- GOOD WITCH
- HELP
- KANSAS
- LAND OF OZ
- MUNCHKINS
- NOVEL
- OIL CAN
- SELF-CONFIDENCE
- SILVER SHOES
- STORY
- WICKED WITCH
- WINGED MONKEYS
- WINKIE COUNTRY
- YELLOW BRICK ROAD

D	P	Z	I	K	P	H	C	T	I	W	D	O	O	G
A	A	E	O	L	K	A	N	S	A	S	Z	E	W	W
E	M	O	E	F	U	M	N	Z	M	Z	S	C	I	I
N	M	H	R	L	O	A	E	U	C	E	B	N	C	N
O	O	E	Y	K	C	D	N	T	O	R	G	E	K	K
I	D	X	R	L	C	C	N	H	N	E	I	D	E	I
L	Y	O	I	A	H	I	S	A	D	U	B	I	D	E
Y	R	O	R	K	L	R	R	M	L	B	A	F	W	C
L	O	J	I	O	E	D	O	B	L	O	I	N	I	O
D	T	N	D	V	T	N	C	Z	W	N	N	O	T	U
R	S	W	L	M	K	H	N	I	N	O	K	C	C	N
A	O	I	F	E	H	A	Y	Z	T	O	L	F	H	T
W	S	S	Y	E	P	A	C	S	E	Y	V	L	B	R
O	S	S	G	O	L	D	E	N	C	A	P	E	E	Y
C	A	D	N	I	L	G	F	A	I	T	H	S	L	Y

L	A	S	T	E	S	S	O	S	S	O	S	S	O	S	S	O
L	H	F	T	O	L	Z	A	H	E	I	O	V	O	I	F	E
N	C	C	K	O	N	I	N	H	K	N	I	W	S	R	S	R
L	U	N	N	N	Z	N	C	Z	N	L	D	V	T	N	C	Z
O	I	O	I	O	T	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	O
C	W	R	K	L	R	M	L	B	A	F	W	C	L	O	J	I
E	I	A	H	I	S	A	D	U	B	I	D	E	I	D	X	R
I	D	X	R	L	C	C	N	H	N	E	I	D	E	I	D	X
K	K	O	E	Y	K	C	D	N	T	O	R	G	E	K	K	O
N	M	H	R	L	O	A	E	U	C	E	B	N	C	N	M	H
C	I	I	E	M	O	E	F	U	M	N	Z	M	Z	S	C	I
W	A	E	O	L	K	A	N	S	A	S	Z	E	W	W	A	E
D	P	Z	I	K	P	H	C	T	I	W	D	O	O	G	D	P

SOLUTION



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"I had to co-pay for the bagel."