

The C. R. Wood Cancer Center at Glens Falls Hospital

# CONNECTIONS

Quarterly

Issue # 44

See this and previous issues of *Connections* at [www.glensfallshospital.org](http://www.glensfallshospital.org)

## Approaching the Holidays

By Jeff Palmer

What do you do when the telephone rings? I mean before you reach for the receiver or hit the “talk” button on your cell phone. What happens in your mind or your gut? Is it open or guarded, hopeful or annoyed, eager or hesitant, cheerful or bored? When I am busy and stressed, I’m often not aware of the shifting tides of my emotions.

Approaching the holidays can be like answering the phone when burdened by too many things. Do you want to “take this call?”

Or, we could say that a holiday celebration is like taking a trip somewhere new. Have you ever gone somewhere you’ve never been without anxiety or expectation? Can you conceive of doing that? Isn’t it true that most of us would find it very hard to be that open and receptive? Only small children can do that; most of us lost that raw sense of wonder long ago.

Approaching the holidays is difficult because the season’s message of simplicity and wonder is seemingly unattainable. It’s there but not embodied because, just like our explorations of new places, we often drag along our anxieties and expectations.

That is, when a holiday gathering is anticipated, we worry about the details or we strive to “make it like when the children were young.” When a holy day’s traditions are shared, we worry about the memories they may invoke or get depressed when the songs don’t fill the heart with joy the way they used to. We

may seesaw between these two positions, anxiety and expectation. And then the shifting energy leaves us feeling drained or lonely.

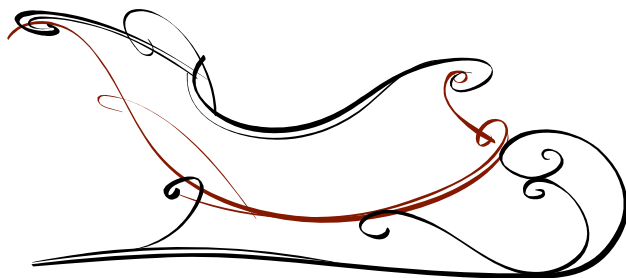
There are, however, other ways to approach the holidays beyond anxiety and expectation. One way is through keeping the mind open without pre-judging our experience, to just notice whatever is happening. This is not easy to do because the mind is an overactive machine. Opening means learning to see when the heart wants to close down. We start by seeing our need to label everything as in “Oh, that’s a sad thought, banish it!” or “Oh, this is too lonely, I must not notice this!” Openness means to return over and over to the experience of just watching, just noticing and letting go.

What would it mean to be open like that, to take a journey without the forced anxiety of making plane connections or letting go of what you expected to find on arrival?

The holidays are a mixture of the bitter and the sweet. It’s hard to hold these together, hard to stay present with what is in the moment. The heart tends to close because to stay open would mean the risk of more pain. We lose the experience of wonder because we can’t risk the potential of pain. And we don’t see that they are two sides of the same coin.

Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat remind us that “In the film *Dances With Wolves*, the Native American

(Continued on page 14)



# Survivorship: Cancer - A Way of Life

By Ina-Frances Williams

Are you old enough to remember Dragnet? “Just the facts, lady. Just the facts.” My story is a long one, starting in 1941, so I’ll try to limit it to “just the facts”.



I was born in 1941, with a birthmark on my forehead. Shortly before my first birthday the doctor recommended a new “painless, bloodless surgery” to remove the birthmark. The procedure involved taping a pea-size piece of uranium to my forehead, sending me home to return twenty four hours later and have it removed. Within a few weeks the birthmark would dry up and disappear, leaving little evidence of it ever having been there. My parents were overjoyed over the prospect of painless surgery, so the procedure was performed. It was deemed successful. (Ironically, it was also used on thousands of people to eliminate head lice.)

In 1956, at age 15, the area where the birthmark had been started festering and changing color. Further examination determined that it was cancer. The radiation that was such a blessing in 1941 had turned into a nightmare. I was now diagnosed with radiation poisoning. I had melanoma, as well as bone cancer on my forehead. Surgery was performed at Skin and Cancer, Bellevue, New York City and the cancers were removed in a lengthy operation. Fortunately, 1/32 of my skull remained, stopping the cancer from going into my brain.

In 1963 there was a human recall. I received a letter advising me to go to an oncologist immediately. The radiation I had received in 1941 was now, without a doubt, determined to cause multiple cancers throughout my body. A schedule was established for periodic checks so that cancers could be found and dealt with in their early stages.

Since then, I have had multiple skin cancers (basal cell, squamous cell, melanoma), removed or frozen off my body. I’ve had ovarian cancer, polycythemia (high red cell count), lung cancers, soft cell sarcoma and cancer in the lymph node.

In all, I have had ten different types of cancer and the lung, lymph node and sarcomas are all within the last year. And so for me, cancer has been a way of life. Fifty six years ago I was first diagnosed with cancer. I’m now 71 and continuing the battle.

My message is that cancer need not be a death sentence. Early detection is critical. Be aware of your own body. Get second opinions. And read, read, read. Talk to other survivors. Reach out to others. Just as others may help you, you may help others.

As I look back on my journey I realize that over the years, just like those dealing with death, I’ve gone through stages. There have been times of anger, self-pity and resentment, but fortunately, those have been short lived. There have also been times of happiness, appreciation, humility and valuing the actions and goodness of others. I also understand that by helping others, I help myself and my faith is renewed.

When you are comfortable being a caregiver, it’s difficult being a care receiver. I’ve had to learn to accept help and to admit that there are things I can’t control. Asking for assistance doesn’t come easily to me, but I’m getting there. I’ve learned the value of prayer, the comfort in the words of the Lord and the peace from hymns. My priorities are different. I look at people from a different perspective realizing that everyone is fighting some kind of battle. I realize the importance of thanking others. I procrastinate less. I value each day.

Cancer has taken me on a roller coaster ride, but a ride I believe I needed to take. It has made me a better person. I have experienced a variety of oncology centers from Florida to New York. I have a deep respect for the C. R. Wood Cancer Center. By far, treatment here exceeds any I have received ever. The compassion of the staff, the support, the encouragement that I received from the moment I entered the door sets such a positive atmosphere. No question is left unanswered. Even family members receive attention and their questions are addressed and they are comforted.

Strange as it may seem, cancer has been good for me. It has altered my life and the good outweighs the bad. In truth, I have been blessed.

## Your Cancer Center Care Team



**Rodney Griest, RN**  
**Oncology Inpatient**

Rodney recently joined the team on Tower 2. He received an Associate's Degree in Nursing from Harrisburg Area Community College in 2009. Rodney worked in the Oncology Unit at Fountain Valley Regional Hospital in California for over three years. He used to manage a show quality Holstein herd at Pamtom Farms.

Rodney grew up on a 250 acre dairy farm outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His parents still have 49 acres of the original farm where they continue to reside. Rodney enjoys running, biking and hopes to purchase a "farmette" in this area to raise a small herd of Holsteins.



**Mary Winn, RN**  
**Oncology Inpatient**

Mary joins the team on Tower 2, having graduated from the Nursing Program at SUNY Adirondack earlier this year. She previously held several jobs, including working as a waitress, a silversmith, in retail and most importantly, being a Mom.

Mary and her boyfriend live in Granville and have two children, Giana (5) and Hayden (3). Although her hobbies took a backseat during nursing school, she has several holiday knitting projects going and is officially starting to run again!



**Darlene Olivieri Raynsford** is the new Director of Communications, Marketing and Public Relations at Glens Falls Hospital (GFH).

Darlene comes to GFH with more than ten years experience in organizational communications, marketing, and social media. She has worked in both the higher education and health care fields, having held positions at the University at Albany, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Ellis Medicine. At GFH, Darlene is responsible for the development and delivery of internal and external communications to key audiences, including employees, community members and the media. She has joined us on the *Connections* editorial board.

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### Changing Places

**Patty Godnick, RN,**  
**Hematology Oncology Clinic**



Patty joins the Hematology Oncology Clinic as the Telephone/Triage Nurse. For the past thirteen years, she worked as the Oncology Care Manager, working with both the Inpatient and Outpatient departments at Glens Falls Hospital. Before coming to Glens Falls Hospital, Patty worked as a supervisor for Washington County Public Health for fourteen years.

Patty and her husband Gary live in Hartford and have three daughters (Amy, Mary Jo and Sarah). She enjoys gardening, hiking, biking, camping, cooking and entertaining.

The best way to make your dreams come true is to wake up.  
Paul Valery

# Food for Thought: Caregiving Tips for Managing the Holiday Meal

By Kimberly Seelig RD, CDN



The holidays are soon upon us and anticipating the grand feast can be stressful for both caregivers and their loved ones. Families come in all shapes and sizes but typically hold traditions. These special occasions are supposed to be times to carry out those customs, share joy and create good memories. However, for a person whose life has been affected by cancer, holidays may bring a different set of emotions.

Taking into consideration your loved one's needs along with your own through open communication, advanced preparation, sensitivity and delegation of tasks amongst family members and friends can make the event more enjoyable. The following tips may help to make your holiday meal a success.

- Invite guests to the home of the care receiver so that he or she may feel more comfortable and not have to be taken out.
- Adjust your expectations and establish new traditions.
- Consider cutting back on the number of guests you have in attendance. It will not only reduce the stress of having to entertain a large party but it will allow for a less hectic, noisy environment for your loved one.
- Suggest a potluck meal in which guests can bring different dishes. Make clean up easy by using festive paper plates and cups.
- Talk to your loved one about the special occasion in advance. You may want to ask your loved one how they would like to celebrate, address meal preferences and discuss concerns.
- Talk to family and friends in attendance before the event. It is important for them to know how



- they can be sensitive to the care receiver.
- If your loved one is having difficulty with nausea, make sure the food or smell will not exacerbate their symptoms – ask guests to do cooking at home or have the care receiver avoid the area where food is being prepared. If he or she has had a loss in appetite, ask guests to be sensitive to how much the person can eat. Consider adjusting portion sizes provided to your loved one on the big day (ex: teacup for soup vs. bowl).
- The care receiver may have other symptoms affecting their appetite that may need to be acknowledged. They may be confused or have other behaviors that guests may not understand. Explain the circumstances to those in attendance and tell them how to approach the situation.
  - Enjoy special moments, recognize that you are doing your best and commend your loved one and yourself for the strengths you have developed. Appreciate the new traditions your family and friends may establish this holiday season. Be flexible and kind with each other. Acknowledge that you are doing the best you can to care for your loved one and making the holiday season special and enjoyable for all involved. Reflect on the strengths you have developed, and build on them during the holidays.

I hope that these tips can help you through the holiday season. If you are concerned that your loved one is not meeting his or her nutritional needs, please feel free to call me at 926-2635 to discuss your concerns or to set up an appointment.

References:

<http://cancerservices.blogspot.com/2011/12/q-caregiving-during-holidays.html>

<http://blog.lungevity.org/2011/12/caregiving-during-the-holidays/>

Dreams are which the mind conceives, the heart desires, and the soul believes.

# Pharmacy Corner: Oral Chemotherapy

By Beth Sponzo, RN, BS, OCN®

Oral Chemotherapy is any drug that you take by mouth to treat cancer. Chemotherapy taken by mouth is as strong as the intravenous (IV) form. The use of orally administered cancer therapy has increased dramatically in the past decade. Unfortunately, patients are inclined to think of oral chemotherapy as just a "cancer pill" and assume that it will be easier than an IV alternative. This is not always the case.



For oral treatments to be safe and effective, patients must practice the same level of adherence as for supervised IV regimens. Patients receiving oral chemotherapy have more responsibility than ever. Many factors can influence a patient's compliance, which may in turn reduce the efficacy of their treatment. Common factors that affect compliance include not taking doses as prescribed, inadequate reporting of side effects and financial constraints that result in failure to fill prescriptions on time.

With self-administered oral chemotherapy the doctor must rely on information reported from the patient as a basis to continue therapy. It is important for patients and caregivers to keep an open line of communication with their providers. Sometimes patients may feel that reporting their side effects will result in an unwanted interruption in treatment. Side effects often resolve quickly by withholding treatment and can often mean resuming therapy sooner, possibly with a modified dose that is better tolerated yet still effective. Not reporting side effects



can result in a longer disruption of treatment or possibly discontinuation. Early intervention can prevent mild side effects from becoming serious or even life-threatening.

Understanding the treatment schedule and taking the prescribed dose at the prescribed time is paramount to the success of treatment. Missed doses and medication errors should be reported to the healthcare team. Having a personalized treatment calendar listing the dates and times medications are due to be taken can help patients adhere to the treatment schedule. By checking off each dose as it is taken, patients can double check their calendar to see if a dose has been taken which can reduce the risk of error. It may be helpful to pre-fill a seven day pill box that can be checked to make sure that a given day's dose has been taken. This will also allow for another opportunity to make sure that the correct dose is taken.



Insurance coverage may be a challenge with oral chemotherapy. Insurance plans may or may not cover the drug and even if they do the co-pay may be steep. Many drug companies offer assistance programs. Members of the healthcare team can be invaluable in assisting with these issues to help get patients their treatment.

An increasing number of oral chemotherapy agents are being developed and used in cancer treatment. Although oral treatment can present many challenges, keeping an open line of communication with your healthcare team and playing an active role in your treatment can improve your success. Home-based therapy can offer many patient advantages. A sense of increased flexibility and autonomy can be empowering for patients.

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.  
Henry David Thoreau

## Ed Levin Jewelry - Helping Support our Patients

Ed Levin Jewelry was well represented at the fundraiser "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer", which was held in Salem, New York on October 7, 2012. Over \$719 was raised by "Team Holly," named in memory of a former Ed Levin employee. To date, the event has raised \$31,000 overall.

In an ongoing support of breast cancer health, Ed Levin Jewelry partners with select retailers who sell the Inspiration Collection of jewelry. A minimum of 30% of the purchase price for every piece of Inspiration goes directly to support patients of the C. R. Wood Cancer Center. These funds have been used to help cover the cost of co-payments for treatments and medications, as well as transportation assistance in the form of gas



cards. The gas cards are given to patients who have to travel a distance to treatment, sometimes multiple times within one week. To date we have been able to help 30 people continue their treatment and lessen the financial burden that cancer care can present. We look forward to helping more in the future. For more information on where you can view and/or purchase this specialty line of jewelry you can visit the Glens Falls Hospital Gift Atrium, Scoville Jewelers in Glens Falls, The Silo in Queensbury, Jacqueline's Bridal shop in Glens Falls, Just Because in Greenwich, and O'Hearns Pharmacy and Gifts in Cambridge. Christmas is just around the corner. What a great way to help many people with just one gift!!

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## Patient Navigators: Your Guide Through Your Cancer Journey

By Vickie Yattaw, RN, OCN®, CBCN

You will probably never forget the day your doctor told you or your loved one that "There is something worrisome on your scan, we need further testing". Then the next thing that stands out are the words "You have cancer". Once you hear these words there are many different reactions or thought processes that everyone goes through. The one thing that is common for many people is "What comes next? What do I do? and What does that mean for me and my family?" This is where your patient navigators can help you.

### What is a patient navigator?

Patient navigators are nurses that are trained in oncology care and can help you understand who the key players in your cancer care will be. This includes the many different doctors that you will be meeting: surgeons, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists and perhaps more. Navigators can help you coordinate appointments in a timely manner.

Not sure how you are going to get to all of these appointments? Navigators can help. Not sure what your insurance covers or how you are going to af-

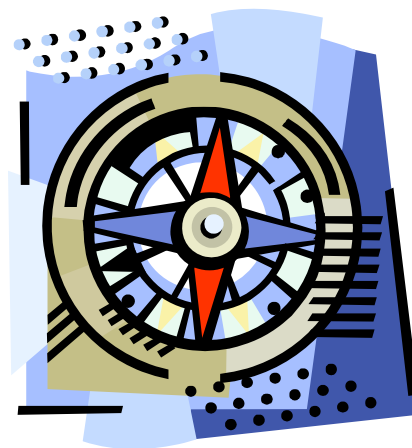
ford treatments? Navigators can help. Not sure how you are going to work through treatment or manage your family? Navigators can help.

Feeling overwhelmed with the diagnosis? Navigators can help.

Navigators help coordinate personalized care for each person. Patient navigators are the one constant person that you can talk to through the whole cancer journey. They can help connect you with many resources in your community to help you get through treatments and connect with others with similar cancers.

### Types of patient navigators

*Community navigators* - Community based people to help with prevention and screening recommendations for all. Community navigators are available through the Hudson Headwaters Health Network and through the Cancer Services Program at the



Glens Falls Hospital (CSP). The CSP offers free screening for breast, cervical and colon cancer. Monthly free screenings are available by contacting the CSP at 926-6570.

*Screening Navigators* - Currently work in the Breast Center at Glens Falls Hospital to make sure you can get your annual screening and help you if you need further screening or testing. There is also a colon cancer navigator through the CSP that helps coordinate annual health prevention screenings for the patients of the C.R. Wood Cancer Center and Glens Falls Hospital based clinics.

*Diagnosis, Treatment and Survivorship Navigation* - Oncology nurses at the C.R. Wood Cancer Center meet you after a diagnosis of cancer and help with the education and support you and your family need. They help reinforce and clarify information that the doctor has given you to help you make informed decisions regarding your treatment options. Once your treatment plan is in place, navigators work with you to make sure you have all of the support and resources you need to help you through the treatments as well as connecting you with other resources available at the cancer center and throughout the community.

*Patient Resource Navigator* - These are volunteers that work through the American Cancer Society that are available within the waiting room of the C.R. Wood Cancer Center. Their job is to help make you aware of the various resources that can help you: transportation, financial, nutrition, support, and anything else you need.

Many resources are available to the patients of Glens Falls Hospital and the C.R. Wood Cancer Center:

- There are two Nurse Navigators, Vickie Yattaw, RN, OCN, CBCN and Paul Miller, RN OCN.
- Social Worker - Karen Cook, LMSW is available to help with support and community resources for you and your family.
- Health Psychologist - Gerry Florio, PhD, can meet with you and your family to help give you the tools to cope with your diagnosis.
- Registered Dietician - Kim Seelig, RD, CDN.
- Pastoral and Spiritual Care - Jeff Palmer.
- Financial Counselor and Insurance Coordinator - Michele Stauches.
- Wig and hair care through the Uniquely You Boutique with Kathleen Wilcox, services free of

charge to patients of the CR Wood Cancer Center.

- Spa services through Cindy's Healing Place include massage, as well as coordination to community acupuncture and Reiki.
- Oncology Rehabilitation services as part of the Glens Falls Hospital Rehabilitation program with certified professionals available at the cancer center for management of lymphedema, range of motion and any issues related to treatments. These services are also available at any of the GFH Rehabilitation locations.
- We also offer support groups, so you can connect with other people who have similar cancers, activity groups that help you connect with others through gentle exercise, art workshops, knitting groups, tai chi and many more. Camps and retreats for men, women and children who have a loved one with cancer as well as many educational and survivorship programs are offered throughout the year.

**How to Get Your Own Navigator** - People are referred to the navigators in many different ways. Some are through referrals from the breast center, surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists or community physicians. You can also call yourself. Navigators services are free of charge and do not bill your insurance. Navigators are available by phone, in person, by e-mail, or other social media contacts. For more information contact: Vickie Yattaw, RN at 926-6639 or [vyattaw@glensfallshosp.org](mailto:vyattaw@glensfallshosp.org) or Paul Miller, RN at 926-6629 or [pmiller@glensfallshosp.org](mailto:pmiller@glensfallshosp.org).

We are here to help you and your family. Let us guide you through this uncharted territory and make your cancer journey smoother sailing.



## ***Offering Support Services in Concert with Medical Care***

For general questions about cancer or support services available, please call Oncology Resource Nurses: Vickie at 926-6639 or Paul at 926-6629.

### **Services for Individuals by Appointment**

#### ***Care Management***

For: Continuing care needs, transportation and financial concerns  
Info: Karen Cook, LMSW, OSW-C ~ 926-6619

#### ***Chemotherapy Education Class***

For: Individuals and family starting chemotherapy  
Meets: Tuesdays at 4:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library or by appointment at your convenience  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, OCN®, CBCN ~ 926-6639  
Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

#### ***Clinical Research***

For: Anyone interested in learning about clinical trials  
Info: Beth Brundage, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6644

#### ***Genetics Counseling***

For: Anyone concerned about their personal or family history of cancer  
Info: 926-6620

#### ***Nutrition Counseling***

For: Anyone interested in dietary counseling  
Info: Kimberly Seelig, RD CD-N ~ 926-2635

#### ***Pastoral Care***

For: Anyone interested in spiritual counsel  
Info: Reverend Jeff Palmer ~ 926-3531

#### ***Patient Financial/Insurance Assistance***

For: Referrals, prior authorizations, billing, insurance questions  
Info: Michele Staunches ~ 926-6637

#### ***Psychosocial Oncology***

For: Counseling for patients and/or their families  
Info: Gerry Florio, Ph.D. ~ 926-6529  
Karen Cook, LMSW, OSW-C ~ 926-6619

#### ***Resource Nurses***

For: Individuals & family diagnosed with any cancer  
Meets: By appointment or stop by (office is across the hall from the Cancer Center Library)  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, OCN®, CBCN ~ 926-6639  
Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

#### ***Spa Services at Cindy's Healing Place (Massage Therapy)***

For: Cancer patients during and after treatment  
Meets: By appointment in Cindy's Healing Place  
Info: Call 926-6640 for an appointment

#### ***Uniquely You® Boutique & Salon***

For: Any cancer patient  
free wigs, hats & turbans, skin & hair care  
Meets: By appointment on Tuesdays in the C. R. Wood Cancer Center  
Info: Call 926-6640 for an appointment

#### ***Look Good ... Feel Better®***

***American Cancer Society***  
For: Women cancer survivors  
Meets: C. R. Wood Cancer Center Library  
Info: Call 926-6640 for date and time

### **Special Programs Pre-Registration Required**

#### ***Annual Survivors Events***

**Breast Cancer Survivor Luncheon - October**  
Call Vickie at 926-6639 for information

**Spring Survivorship Celebration Breakfast**  
April 20, 2013 - Call Paul at 926-6629 for information

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#### ***CG Men's Retreat***

For: Men living with and beyond cancer  
Meets: One weekend each year in the Fall  
November 1-3, 2013  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

#### ***Cindy's Retreat***

For: Women living with and beyond cancer  
Meets: One weekend each Spring and Fall at Silver Bay on Lake George  
Info: Karen Cook, LMSW ~ 926-6619  
[www.cindysretreat.org](http://www.cindysretreat.org)

#### ***Cindy's Comfort Camp***

For: Children and teens ages 6-17 years who have experienced the death or serious illness of a parent or close relative  
Meets: One weekend this Spring at the Double "H" Hole in the Woods Ranch in Lake Luzerne, NY  
Info: 926-6515 or [www.cindysretreat.org](http://www.cindysretreat.org)

#### ***Tobacco Cessation***

Whether you're thinking about quitting or ready to quit, call the NYS Smokers' Quitline for help and support.  
**1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487)**



## ***Open Support Groups***

These groups are open-ended and you may come as you wish. You may want to call if you are new or you have not come for some time to make sure that the schedule or location has not changed.

### **Discussion Groups**

#### ***ABC Support Group (After Breast Cancer)***

For: Individuals with breast cancer  
Meets: 4th Monday each month  
6:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Waiting Room  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN®  
~ 926-6639

#### ***Blood Cancer Support Group (Leukemia & Lymphoma Society)***

For: Individuals & family diagnosed with  
lymphoma, leukemia or multiple myeloma  
Meets: 2nd Wednesday each month  
6:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

#### ***Cancer Support Group***

For: Individuals and family diagnosed with cancer  
Meets: 2nd Wednesday each month  
4:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

#### ***Caregiver Support Group***

For: Anyone caring for a cancer patient  
Meets: 1st Wednesday each month  
2:30 P.M. ~ Quiet Room on T2  
3rd Tuesday each month  
6:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Waiting Room  
Info: Karen Cook, LMSW, OSW-C ~ 926-6619

### **Activity Groups**

#### ***Circle of Hope Knitting Group***

For: Cancer Survivors who want to learn to knit  
and crochet. Teachers available for new  
knitters  
Meets: Wednesdays ~ 1:30 P.M. ~ Cancer Center  
Library  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN®  
~ 926-6639

#### ***Healthy Steps®***

For: Gentle exercise for individuals with a cancer  
diagnosis  
Meets: Tuesdays at 10:00 am - Auditorium B/C  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN®  
~ 926-6639

#### ***Living with Hope***

For: Individuals with advanced or recurrent  
cancer  
Meets: 3rd Thursday each month  
1:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Gerry Florio, Ph.D. ~ 926-6528

#### ***Prostate Cancer Awareness Group (American Cancer Society - Man to Man)***

For: Men with prostate cancer and their families  
Meets: 3rd Thursday each month  
7:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Waiting Room  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

#### ***Rays of Hope***

For: Women with ovarian cancer  
Meets: 3rd Wednesday each month  
4:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Mary Davis ~ 656-9321  
Carol Smith ~ 793-0565

#### ***Young Survivors Group***

For: Young individuals diagnosed with any cancer  
Meets: Intermittently throughout the year at  
different locations  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN®  
~ 926-6639

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#### ***Tai Chi and Relaxation / Meditation***

For: Anyone interested  
Meets: Monday afternoon at 3:30 P.M.  
and 5:30 P.M. - Community Learning Center  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

#### ***Twisted Twirlers***

For: Individuals diagnosed with any cancer who  
would like to join this Hall of Fame twirling  
group  
Meets: 11:30 A.M. ~ First and Third Tuesday each  
month  
Info: Carol Newton ~ 854-9860

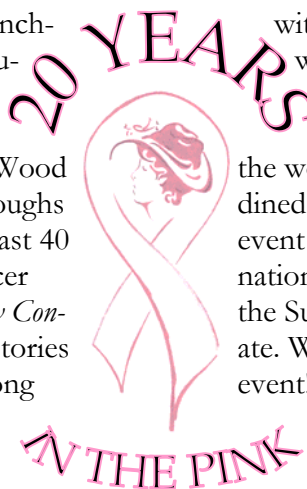
#### ***Ways of Seeing - Art Workshop***

For: Individuals & family diagnosed with any  
cancer who want to enjoy the life affirming  
pleasures of making art  
Meets: 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month  
11:30 A.M.  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

## The Uniquely You Breast Cancer Survivors Luncheon Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

The 20th Annual Breast Cancer Survivors Luncheon was held on October 27, 2012 at the beautiful Sagamore Resort and Conference Center in Bolton Landing, New York. Dr.

Robert Sponzo, Medical Director of the CR Wood Cancer Center, shared the scientific breakthroughs in breast cancer treatment and care over the last 40 years. Constance Bramer, a young breast cancer survivor, single mom and local author of *How Connie Got Her Rack Back*, shared her humorous stories of how she managed her cancer treatment along



with raising her 2 young children. The event was attended by 225 survivors and their guests. They enjoyed the piano music of Ray Alexander as they were entertained by the wonderful wait staff from the Sagamore and dined on some of the finest food in the area. This event was made possible thanks to generous donations from the Glens Falls Hospital Guild and the Susan G. Komen for the Cure NENY affiliate. We look forward to seeing you at next year's event!

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## Fourth Annual Lymphedema Awareness Fashion Show Strikes a Pose

This year's annual Lymphedema Awareness Fashion Show was held on November 9, 2012 at Glens Falls Hospital. Lisa Malette, Lymphedema Specialist, P.T. organized the event with eleven models by arranging fittings for the fashions from both Finders Keepers consignment shop and Jacqueline's Bridal Shop. Each model is a cancer survivor of various cancers, ages and stages. Five of the models were wearing fashionable compression sleeves thanks to the LymphDivas organization.



Those fun and fashionable sleeves can be seen at the CR Wood Cancer Center Uniquely You Boutique and purchased through PA Medical Supply in Glens Falls.

Each year, the money collected from donations and silent auction bids are utilized to help cover the cost of Lymphedema products and services that insurance companies do not always cover, or have a high deductible. This year's event has raised over \$1,400.

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## Annual Holiday Celebration Held

The annual holiday party for survivors was held on December 5th, 2012 in the C. R. Wood Cancer Center waiting room. Twenty five guests enjoyed the evening with dinner, good conversation and a gift exchange.



## CG Men's Retreat Held

The CG Men's Retreat was held at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center in Greenwich, New York, on November 9-11, 2012. Beautiful scenery and great fall weather accompanied the eleven men who attended the weekend retreat. Discussions on coping and managing thought processes with a cancer diagnosis were explored and relaxation techniques were also identified and practiced. The men also enjoyed good food and some open time to build on friendships old and new.



## First Annual Shine a Light on Lung Cancer Held at Glens Falls Hospital

By Vickie Yattaw, RN, OCN®, CBCN

November was National Lung Cancer Awareness month and this year the CR Wood Cancer Center honored lung cancer survivors, their family and friends by hosting a Shine a Light on Lung Cancer Vigil. This vigil was held on November 13th in conjunction with the Lung Cancer Alliance. There were over 90 different vigils throughout the country on that date. This was the largest nationally and internationally coordinated awareness event for lung cancer. Speakers this year were: Elaine Winchell, who shared her experience caring for her father and then 35 years later, caring for her 27 year old daughter who was never a smoker; Dr Louis Decunzo, Thoracic Surgeon, who provided information about CT screening for those at high risk, breakthroughs and promising treatment options; and John Fickel, a five year lung cancer survivor who shared his experience

through diagnosis and treatment.

Every year we lose more people to lung cancer

than breast, prostate, colon and pancreatic cancers *combined*. Nearly 80% of those diagnosed today are former smokers or never smoked. There is hope! Scientific validation that screening those at high risk for lung cancer using CT scans reduces mortality by 20%. More and more people are talking about lung cancer and the stigma is being confronted and reversed. Lung cancer is a disease deserving of our attention and compassion. You can heed the call to action and contact your legislators and ask for support for the Lung Cancer Mortality Reduction Act. For more information contact the Lung Cancer Alliance at [www.lungcanceralliance.org](http://www.lungcanceralliance.org). Next year we will bring more awareness and support. We hope to see you there!



## Cindy's Retreat

Eleven women attended the most recent Cindy's Retreat at Silver Bay Conference Center the weekend of September 14-16, 2012. There was good conversation, companionship and lasting friendships made. One of the participants is a professional photographer and she did glamour shots for each woman who wished to participate. Each woman took away tools to help with coping and relaxation during stressful life events.



# A Gentle Touch

By Laurie Hughes

“You took me to a place where there was no cancer.” Those were the words spoken by a gentleman after he received his very first massage. He originally thought that a massage was not feasible



because of his type of cancer. A young woman once said, “I come to the Cancer Center for my massage and the chemo is just something on the side”. She, along with many others, found it very useful while going through cancer treatments.

I often see the difference in people’s faces from the time they come in and when they leave. After the massage, their appearance is much brighter yet their whole demeanor is much calmer. Recently a patient told me before her session, it seems her brain is being “bombarded” with thoughts. During her massage, she is able to relax and let go of these thoughts – she feels more like herself when she leaves. She is presently receiving a massage once a week while going through her chemotherapy treatments.

Massage slows down the body and thought process which can aid in stress reduction and improved sleep. It can create a sense of well-being as it slows down the nervous system. Massage can be soothing on aching bodies which is often a side effect of chemotherapy. Radiation, chemotherapy and repeated tests and doctor visits can often leave a person feeling fragmented. Massage helps to alleviate that.

While going through chemotherapy treatment, people cannot tolerate a vigorous massage. In this case, a slow soothing full-hand stroke with light pressure is utilized. Positioning can be adjusted to make anyone comfortable. Some people cannot lie face down or flat on their back. In that case, a side-lying position is used. Pillows, rolled up towels or sheets are used to elevate or protect a sensitive area. There is almost always a way to make a person comfortable so that they can relax and enjoy the benefits of the massage.

Dana and I are the licensed massage therapists in the spa. We both attended training specifically for oncol-

ogy massage so that we are familiar with precautions that may be necessary in giving the massage. During the first visit, we will sit down with you to discuss your health issues and then adapt the massage specifically for you. Any concerns or questions you may have will be addressed at that time. Often a new client who has not experienced a massage will try a half hour. Many times, they find that a half-hour goes by too fast and then will make another appointment for a full hour.

I enjoy working in the C. R. Wood Cancer Center and have been here for three and a half years now. My training for oncology massage began with Tracy Walton who is a well-known pioneer in this field. During a massage session, I often incorporate energy work such as Reiki and bio-dynamic craniosacral therapy. Both can create a deep relaxation experience. During these sessions people may experience self-healing which can be physical, emotional and/or spiritual. Often, the use of heated stones during the massage can melt away tension.



One woman currently receiving treatment feels like she is constantly reminded that she has cancer as she takes medication every day and receives chemotherapy treatments periodically. During her half-hour session of bio-dynamic craniosacral work, she forgets the cancer. After her session she is able to go home and relax in a peaceful manner. She often reports that she feels relaxed, but is more energetic.

Cindy’s Healing Place is located in the CR Wood Cancer Center just across from the library and is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. You can schedule an appointment by calling Suzy at 926-6640. The fee schedule is \$30 for an hour or \$15 for a half hour. If you are presently going through treatment and feel that this amount is not in your budget, you can discuss this in private with your massage therapist and an adjustment can be made. Please know that if you need a massage during your treatment, you will receive it. Dana and I look forward to meeting you.

## Greenwich Goes Pink

The Cancer Services Program held a Breast Cancer Awareness event called *Greenwich Goes Pink* on October 6, 2012.

The day started off with a 2.2 mile fun run at the Greenwich School. All twenty-two participants wore pink T-shirts and were awarded pink trophies as pink refreshments were served.



From there, the fun continued in the downtown business district. Participating businesses decorated their stores with pink ribbons and each displayed a pink binder with breast

cancer awareness information. The public was invited to pick up a “passport” at The Country Peddler that listed all the participating businesses. Making a stop at each business and getting the passport stamped entitled one to enter a drawing for great gifts donated by the Greenwich merchants. Breast health nurses and cancer survivors were on hand to greet people and answer questions.

Many people came out in Greenwich to enjoy the day and learn about breast health and to show support.

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## Radiation Therapy and Vitamin Supplements

By Kelle Engel, RN, BSN, OCN®

Antioxidant vitamins such as A, C, D and E should not be taken while receiving radiation therapy. Radiation works by creating highly energized molecules (free radicals) that damage cancer cells. Antioxidants help keep these free radicals from forming.

There is a potential conflict with the goal of radiation therapy and the goal of antioxidants. Therefore,

we advise patients to stop taking these supplements during radiation treatment.

The radiation oncologist will advise you after treatment is completed when you can resume taking these vitamins. We recommend that you do the best you can to eat a well balanced diet that includes all the vitamins and nutrients that you need while on treatment. Vitamins that are a natural part of your diet are unlikely to interfere with radiation treatment.

Hope is the dream of the waking man.  
French Proverb

## Save the Date - Main Streets Go Blue for Colorectal Cancer

The Blues Party for Main Streets Go Blue is scheduled for Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm at the Queensbury Hotel in the Adirondack Room. As always, it is free and open to the public with food, music, speakers and more. This colorectal screening

and prevention awareness program is provided by the Cancer Services Program. If you would like more information, please call 926-6570.



## New Year Re-registration

The New Year brings the need to reregister all Cancer Center patient accounts. It is necessary to verify your personal information including address, telephone number and insurance information. It is also necessary to have all of our patients sign a new treatment consent form and a new privacy form. Change of insurance often occurs at the beginning of the calendar year. It is critical that we have your correct information so that we can accurately bill your insurance company.

**We do ask that you bring your insurance card**

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### Approaching the Holidays

(Continued from page 1)

chief Kicking Bear says to United States Army Lieutenant Dunbar: 'I was just thinking that of all the trails in this life, there is one that matters more than all the others. It is the trail of the true human being. I think you are on this trail and it is good to see.'

**with you so that we can copy it for our records. If you have a separate prescription card we will also be making a copy of that.**

Our Registration/Reception team is working hard to have paperwork prepared in advance to minimize delays as you reregister for the New Year. Unfortunately, checking in at the reception desk may take a couple minutes longer than usual. We appreciate your understanding and apologize in advance for any inconvenience.

By being open to our experience we become true. We become more human. We become heart centered. Yes, opening the heart to the holidays with all the memories, the blessings and the loss, may be difficult beyond words. But the brave heart knows that this is the trail that leads back to wonder.

*Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life.*  
Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, Editors. Scribner, 1996. page 334.

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## Breast Imaging: New Standards and Laws

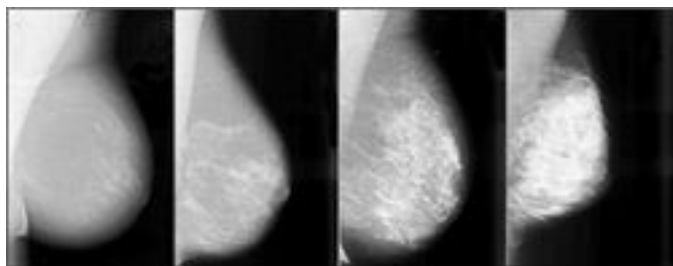
On January 19, 2013, a new law will take effect that requires mammogram providers to notify a woman if her mammogram shows that she has dense breast tissue. This is an amendment to the Public Health Law. This law requires mammogram providers to include information about dense breast tissue in the mammogram report that is sent to the patient and their primary care physician. Dense breast tissue is defined in the law in accordance with nationally recognized breast imaging and reporting data system of the American College of Radiology. Breast tissue is composed of fatty (nondense) tissue and connective (dense) tissue. Radiologists use a grading system to describe the density of breast tissue based on the proportion of fat to connective tissue.

The four levels of density are shown in the illustration to the right: From left to right: Level 1 (a very fatty breast), Level 2 (fatty tissue makes up more than 50% of the breast), Level 3 (dense tissue makes up more than 50% of the breast) and Level 4 (a very dense breast with little fat). Fatty tissue appears dark on the X-ray. Dense tissue appears white. So do po-

tentially cancerous spots, meaning they can blend in. Density tends to decrease with age. Half of women younger than 50 and a third older than 50 are estimated to have dense breasts. Dense breast tissue is very common and is NOT abnormal.

The information about the result of your mammogram is given to you to raise your awareness. Use this information to talk to your physician about your own risks for breast cancer. At that time, ask your doctor if more screening tests might be useful, **based on your risk.**

For more information, please call Vickie Yattaw at 926-6639.



# Chemotherapy Education Classes

Chemotherapy education classes are open to all new treatment patients and their families. They are held each Tuesday at 4:00 pm in the Cancer Center Library. We strongly encourage new treatment patients to attend. The class is about one hour long. If the time is inconvenient, we are pleased to offer an individual education session at a time that better fits your schedule.

The class provides an overview of what to expect during treatment. We offer an introduction and general overview of medications, managing side effects, nutrition, support services and survivorship programs. Please call Vickie at 926-6639 or Paul at 926-6629 to attend the regularly scheduled class or to schedule an individual time to meet.

## Cancer Services Program (CSP)

**Men and women** who are **uninsured**, meet eligibility criteria and are **in need of treatment** for breast, cervical, colorectal or prostate cancer, are eligible for full Medicaid coverage through the Medicaid Cancer Treatment Program. Coverage is arranged through the Cancer Services Program Case Manager and will last for the entire treatment period.

**These eligibility guidelines are more generous than local counties.** So if you've been denied in the past please don't let that stop you from applying again through the Cancer Services Program.



Glens Falls Hospital provides a New York State Department of Health Cancer Services Program grant that funds breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings and follow-up testing at no cost for uninsured women and men. If you or someone you love is without health insurance, call today at: 1-800-882-0121 or (518) 926-6570.

## The C.R. Wood Cancer Center At Glens Falls Hospital

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**The information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only and is not intended to be used as medical advice. Please consult your physician for questions regarding your treatment.**

If you are unable to view us on the internet and would like to receive **Connections** at home please call, write or e-mail the editor:

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# Communities Against Cancer

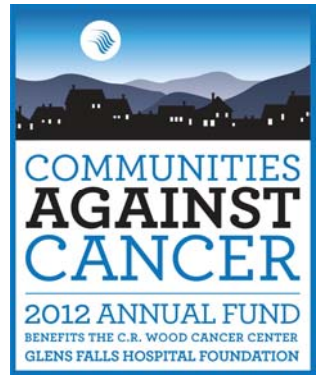
The Tavern owners Matt Sokol and John Horgan wanted to raise funds and awareness for the 2012 Communities Against Cancer campaign. Earlier this fall they opened the doors of their Queensbury location and their wallets to the Glens Falls Hospital Foundation for the first annual "Tavern Night" to benefit Glens Falls Hospital. Hospital Foundation trustees, Foundation and C. R. Wood Cancer Center staff, and community volunteers traded places with The Tavern staff.

Foundation Board of Trustee Chair Kathie Duncan, who worked as a bartender remarked, "We will stick to our day jobs. We could never compete with The Tavern staff; they are top notch and were very patient with us novices!"

Even torrential rain did not deter a large and enthusiastic crowd who also enjoyed the musical entertain-

ment of Phil Camp and Bobby and Susan Dick. Thanks to the generosity of our fantastic community, more than \$3,000 was raised.

The Communities Against Cancer campaign has a \$2



Cheryl DeMeo, Kristan Greene, Lisa Amorosi and Dr. Darci Gaiotti-Grubbs pause for a picture while volunteering at The Tavern during the fundraiser.

million goal by the end of the year in support of a new linear accelerator for the C.R. Wood Cancer Center. Nearly \$1.3 million has been raised so far this year. For more information on the Communities Against Cancer campaign or to make a donation, please use the enclosed envelope or call Annual Fund Manager, Claudia Higgins at 518-926-1846 or visit: [www.glensfallshospital.org](http://www.glensfallshospital.org).

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