“It doesn’t matter what ethnic or cultural background a woman has, every woman MUST learn to put herself first.”

–Karen E Jackson, Founder and CEO Sisters Network Inc

Faith, Hope & Healing

Take an Hour to Play

Making a Difference to Stop the Silence

Many Paths Lead to Healing

Choosing Peace, not Fear
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ON OUR COVER
Karen E Jackson
Founder and CEO Sisters Network Inc
SURVIVING & THRIVING

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“So, if we receive a call from a woman that has just been diagnosed and she says I am confused, I don’t know what to do, we can put out a call throughout our network to find someone who has had the similar experience that she is having. They can help her feel comfortable with what steps are next, because talking with someone who is your age and looks like you and has the same cultural background as you does make a difference.”

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Dear Friends,

417 year breast cancer survivor

Wellness Blessings,

kindness to the fullest.

My prayer and invitation is for each of us to experience healing and wellness and

cancer gives a whole new perspective to breathing in the beauty of life, doesn’t it?

this moment and this day ~ and to give thanks for our life. Before breast cancer,

www.BreastCancerWellness.org

I have had in my seventeen years of exploring healing and wellness principles.

1-4 in Denver, Colorado. Women came from all across the United States as well

The first weekend workshop of “Journey to Breast Cancer Wellness” was held May

it too is worth your valuable time to read and to share with others.

Love, Medicine, and

Bernie is a pioneer in mind-body medicine, but what

People Living with Cancer.

Siegel’s newest book,

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today at Great Southern Travel at 1-800-810-8610; on our last cruise we sold out

www.BreastCancerWellness.org

Judith Naylor and Faith Anderson

the author of

Off, and the Return to Wholeness

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We

Cruise!

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Beverly Vote

Faith, Hope & Healing

Inspiring Lessons Learned from People Living with Cancer

by Bernie Siegel, M.D. and Jennifer Sander

After countless years of helping people participate in the process of healing their lives and curing

their bodies when they have been diagnosed with cancer, I now tell you that I have seen the power of faith, hope, and healing, and what they can accomplish. These three states of

grace have taught me that all the side effects of cancer are not by definition bad. So-called curses can become blessings, and an illness can help us come alive as human beings. Many people see their disease as a wake-up call that inspired them to literally begin their lives anew. The side effects of cancer can become the labor pains by which we give birth to ourselves and the lives we were meant to live. The side effects empower us to nourish our lives, just as hunger forces us to seek nourishment for our bodies.

In Faith, Hope and Healing, I share with you the inspiring stories of those who have experienced cancer, and in their own way found deeper faith, hope, and healing - and even joy through the process. If you or someone you love has been diagnosed with cancer, these stories will encourage and help you to develop attitudes and behaviors that survivors share, while also offering a myriad of ways to get through this difficult time and discover the gifts that cancer can bring into your life. After each entry in the book, I share my reflections about the lessons that can be learned and the wisdom derived from experiencing

these stories.

Why collect these stories? Why do I feel it is truly educational and healing to read the stories of others who have gone through similar ordeals? To put it simply, it is because the tourists cannot help the natives. What I mean is, those who have experienced a diagnosis of cancer can help you cope with and triumph over yours. What can you learn from people like Carol Wentfalt, Tom Martin, Jane Goldman, and the many other brave individuals whose stories are included here? You can learn the enormous healing power of art, the amazing transformation that journaling can produce, and the spiritual resources available to us all. Each person shares how their desire, intention, determination, and willingness to survive led them to become an active participant in their life and health. In all cases, the commitment to participate and take responsibility was a true turning point in their life.

Faith is needed to survive. Life is full of obstacles that make it difficult and sometimes seem meaningless, but faith will help you to find support and meaning. As you adjust to the changes in your day-to-day life after your diagnosis, or the diagnosis of a loved one, you will find that faith is a strong component in helping to pull you through. There is a reason God didn’t make the perfect world - perfection would make our lives meaningless. We would never have the opportunity to grow and appreciate life’s little gifts and miracles if everything were always perfect.

Faith and spirituality relate to the wonder and creation of life. But what you have faith in is the key. Just as you have a remote control to select channels, you use your mind to select what messages you are open to and where your faith is placed. When you have faith, your actions become creative. You can trust in what comes to you and in the beauty of life and the lives of those around you.

“He,” Emily Dickinson wrote, “is the thing with feathers, that perches...
in the soul, and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all.” How can anyone live without hope? One oncologist, giving a protocol with four chemotherapeutic agents which began with the letters EPO and H, realized that if he turned the letters around they spelled HOPE. So he began to call his therapy program the HOPE Protocol. While others gave the EPOH Protocol, he found that he had more patients responding positively to his therapy even though they were all given the same drugs and dosage.

When we feel no hope, because of the words of doctors or others, we are more likely to die because of what this does to our attitude, immune function, and various hormone levels. Hope is real and not necessarily related to statistics. Words can help heal us by focusing our beliefs and mind on messages of love and encouragement. With renewed hope, joy can appear. Joy is found in the relationships with those we love, whether it is with our family, friends, or beloved pets. Our relationships help keep us alive and make our lives meaningful. Often people try to find happiness through material things or by being a financial success, and then find that success does not make them happy. I say joy and success are found when you do what makes you happy.

A cancer diagnosis gives many people permission to live life to the fullest. The pain of cancer helps redefine them by granting them the permission to do the things they were either too busy or simply afraid to do. The disease frees them to reclaim their true identity and reminds them of the freedom of choice that is theirs and always has been. I hope those of you who read their stories will learn from them and not wait for, or need, a diagnosis to enlighten you. Remember, what we are talking about is healing your life and focusing your life’s energy on healing. Healing and curing are two separate processes. I know it to be true that when you heal your life, you may experience a cure as a side effect. But when you focus only on the mechanical aspects of treatment and curing your disease while neglecting yourself and your life, you are expending your energy by engaging in a struggle, and your life becomes more like a war than a process of healing. Medical treatment can be seen not just as an attempt to not die, but as a part of the healing process, too. When you heal your life, you free yourself of the old wounds accumulated over a lifetime. In a sense, you reparent yourself and bring forth the divine child within you. When the change occurs, your entire body feels the love you now have for life, and it strives to keep you alive and eliminate any afflictions that threaten your life.

Remember, your body loves you and knows how to heal, but it needs to know you love it and that you also love your life and the opportunities it provides you with. You are born with a potential to not just survive but to thrive. You deserve the opportunity to do this by healing the old wounds and moving on to a new life and journey with faith, hope, and joy as your companions.

I urge you to redirect your life toward enjoying the day instead of just doing your job, or fulfilling a role that someone else has assigned to you. As part of the healing process I have seen, people move, change jobs, get divorced, toss out their ties and jackets, or buy a house on the ocean. People try to find happiness through material things or by being a financial success, and then find that success does not make them happy. I say joy and success are found when you do what makes you happy.

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I urge you to redirect your life toward enjoying the day instead of just doing your job, or fulfilling a role that someone else has assigned to you. As part of the healing process I have seen, people move, change jobs, get divorced, toss out their ties and jackets, or buy a house on the ocean. When people choose to live joyfully, as they were meant to do, it turns out they live longer, healthier, and happier lives. Let your inner light burn brightly and be a beacon for others. To do that, you must let your life shine. Some time ago a friend moved to Colorado after his cancer diagnosis because he was told he had a short time left to live and he’d always dreamed of living in the mountains. It was expected that he would die very soon. After some time, I hadn’t heard anything from his family and began to wonder if they had forgotten to invite me to the funeral. I was upset and called them, only to have him answer the phone and say, “It was so beautiful here I forgot to die.” Faith, Hope, and Healing can offer you a gift, the encouragement and inspiration to eliminate fear from your life. When you heal your life and in the process bring faith, hope, and joy into your life, fear cannot exist. I know this to be true because I have lived and worked with many of these courageous people whose experiences you will witness in the book. Their stories will teach you, as they taught me, about our common strengths and how to live an authentic, joy-filled life.

Bernie Siegel, M.D.

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Bernie Siegel, M.D.
Oxygen free radicals are tiny unstable molecules of oxygen normally created as by-products of cellular metabolism. We need to drive all the chemical reactions in our body. But, if there are too many of them, they can cause biological devastation by attacking cell membranes and DNA. The damage they cause initiates and fuels chronic degenerative diseases like atherosclerosis, heart disease, strokes, emphysema, diabetes, arthritis, senility, accelerate aging and cancer, including breast cancer. Pollution, pesticides, smoking, alcohol, and grills red meat are just a few of the things that pour enormous help for preventing and treating breast cancer. Pollution, pesticides, smoking, alcohol, and grilled red meat are just a few of the things that pour enormous help for preventing and treating breast cancer. Pollution, pesticides, smoking, alcohol, and grills red meat are just a few of the things that pour enormous help for preventing and treating breast cancer.

But in this age of widespread pollution, toxins, and stressful lifestyles that fuel the production of oxygen free radicals, most of us need more antioxidant protection than what we can get from our food. That’s why research shows taking an additional antioxidant supplement, like the mineral selenium, can be of great benefit in lowering the risk of several different kinds of cancer, including cancers of the breast, prostate, lung and colon.

One of the reasons selenium is so effective in lowering the risk of cancer is that it causes our body to make its own powerful antioxidant -- an enzyme called “glutathione peroxidase.” Selenium makes up a fundamental part of the structure of this enzyme. Without it, the enzyme can’t work.

Selenium also helps to fight cancer in several other ways. Research shows it is able to prevent cancer cells from growing, causes cancer cells to die, foils the formation of blood vessels needed for cancer to grow, and enhances the immune system, especially natural killer cell and T-cell function. It also has anti-inflammatory effects.

With all these anti-cancer effects, it’s easy to understand why there is a growing mountain of evidence that taking supplemental selenium can prevent cancer. In a double blinded, randomized, prospective study published in 1996, patients were given 200 micrograms (mg) of supplemental selenium everyday. After 6 years, the patients taking selenium had half the deaths from cancer compared to the patients who weren’t taking the additional selenium.

In other words, during this study, the number of people who died of cancer in the group taking selenium was 52% lower than the number of people who died of cancer in the group that wasn’t taking it. The subjects taking selenium also had 35% less new cancers diagnosed. So taking selenium not only lowers the risk of developing cancer, it also appears to lengthen the life of those with cancer.

Since that time, numerous studies have confirmed these same impressive statistics. The conclusion of the vast majority of studies looking at the relationship between selenium and cancer, is that taking supplemental selenium, or eating a selenium-rich diet, reduces your risk of most types of cancer, including breast cancer, by as much as 50% and improves your chances of survival if you have cancer.

ANTIOXIDANTS:

Red grapes
Broccoli
Plums
Spinach
Strawberries
Blueberries
Beets
Kiwi

The best food source of selenium is Brazil Nuts. Just one ounce of Brazil Nuts a day gives you 1200% of the daily recommended allowances. Other foods high in selenium include garlic, onions, green leafy vegetables, mushrooms and whole grains, especially whole wheat. You can also take selenium in supplement form. The recommended dose is about 200 micrograms a day. It's worth noting that a significant number of people do not have adequate levels of selenium in their soil. For example, the highest rates of cancer occur in areas of the world with the lowest levels of selenium in the soil. This means the areas of the world with the highest selenium levels in the soil have the lowest rates of cancer, and those with the lowest amount of selenium are found to have the highest rates of cancer.

SELENIUM SOURCES

Smoking, alcohol, and grilled red meat are just a few of the things that pour an enormous help for preventing and treating breast cancer. Pollution, pesticides, smoking, alcohol, and grilled red meat are just a few of the things that pour an enormous help for preventing and treating breast cancer. Pollution, pesticides, smoking, alcohol, and grilled red meat are just a few of the things that pour an enormous help for preventing and treating breast cancer.

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Many Paths Lead to Healing

There’s a number of established ways that foods fight breast cancer. Most of these foods, and it really should not be a big surprise here, come from the plant kingdom. In fact, hundreds of studies have identified plant chemicals found in fruits and vegetables offer us a reduced risk of breast and other types of cancer, and oncologists and cancer scientists are so excited about these plant chemicals is that they activate a number of “cancer control” pathways. In my practice, I help patients understand that the foods they can help “control” cancer and together we strategize about how to effectively employ food to fight treatment side effects, enhance chemotherapy outcome and reduce the risk for recurrence.

There are several well-established cancer control pathways that are affected by dietary intake. This article will summarize four of those pathways and offer you practical advice about how you can fight cancer with food.

**CANCER CONTROL PATHWAY #1:**
Reduce DNA damage and contribute to gene stability. One of the contributing factors in cancer development involves the genetic damage that is caused by free radicals. We generate free radicals when we eat, breathe, exercise, etc. Living creates free radicals. And these free radicals damage our cells, so the idea is to limit the number of free radicals. We know that fruits, vegetables, green tea, and kitchen spices like oregano and cinnamon, are very rich in protective dietary antioxidants and can help stop free radicals from becoming damaging to our cells. In order to reduce DNA damage you want to eat large amounts of fruits and vegetables, drink several cups of green tea and spice up your meals to include turmeric, oregano, and all of those wonderful spices that are rich in those protective dietary antioxidants.

**CANCER CONTROL PATHWAY #2:**
Reduce inflammation. For the past 25 years or so, studies have shown that anti-inflammatory medications can reduce the risks of many cancers including breast cancer. Inflammation is a significant factor in developing breast cancer, and also in the progression of established cancers. So it’s important to eat an anti-inflammatory diet. Start first by decreasing the foods that we know cause inflammation: refined processed carbohydrates and sweets. Next, eat foods that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids like coldwater fish, flaxseeds, walnuts, grass-fed meat, dairy and poultry. Consume lots of fruits and vegetables. Some of the best are apples and onions because they contain the anti-inflammatory plant chemical called quercetin. Berries, by the way, have all kinds of wonderful anti-inflammatory chemicals as well. Summer is the perfect time to enjoy raspberries, strawberries, blueberries and blackberries.

**CANCER CONTROL PATHWAY #3:**
Promote cellular detoxification. Our liver is responsible for clearing toxins and environmental pollutants from our food, air and water supply. The liver is responsible for removing toxins by employing enzymes that act to detoxify. Certain plant chemicals found in healthy foods, like chlorophyll and leafy green vegetables, garlic, broccoli, as well as citrus like lemons, tangerines, can really optimize those enzymes that remove carcinogens or prevent their activation. For example, broccoli contains something called indole-3-carbinol. These indole-3-carbinols are chemicals that detoxify the body of excess estrogen by causing a shift in estrogen metabolism. Curcumin, the plant chemical found in turmeric (a spice used to flavor Eastern Indian dishes), promotes detoxification in the liver and also has anti-inflammatory activity. Try frozen Indian food as a way to consume more turmeric in your diet or add curcuma root supplements.

**CANCER CONTROL PATHWAY #4:**
Support an optimal immune system. The immune system is responsible for searching out, targeting, and destroying any cancer cells that are hanging out in the body. I liken the immune system to a police force when you eat a diet that’s really high in sugar, you are effectively telling the police force to head into the doughnut shop when they should be out in the street. While the immune system has limited capacity to address established cancers, it is essential for detecting and eliminating early pre-cancerous cells and controlling something called micro-metastases which are deposits of tumors that consist of a very few cells that are undetectable on scans. Fruits, vegetables, and omega-3 fatty acids have immune boosting capability. Are you starting to see a pattern here?

Controlling cancer involves a number of pathways, and that means that there are a number of opportunities to promote self-healing. I encourage my patients to strive for “therapeutic” nutrition—to get enough of the right kinds of nutrients into the body on a consistent basis so that cells begin to “grow” differently. By eating a diet rich in produce, fatty fish and whole grains, we offer our bodies a chance to create stronger, healthier cells. Cancer fighting cells.

Kim is a nationally recognized expert in cancer nutrition and author of Challenge Cancer and Win! To hire her to speak or learn more about her services and products, please visit www.cancerbusters.org.

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Cancer Control: Many Paths Lead to Healing by Kim Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD

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Dr. Kim Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD

Dr. Kim Dalzell is a doctor of holistic nutrition and registered dietitian who has helped thousands of cancer patients with her “inside out” nature-based healing approach to cancer control. She is a sought after speaker, author of Challenge Cancer and Win!, industry spokesperson and founder of cancerbusters.org. To learn more about how you can control cancer with nutrition, please visit: www.cancerbusters.org.

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Listen to your heart. Trust your Journey. Do Something.

Listen to your heart. Trust your Journey. Do Something. All of this is good advice as far as I am concerned when it comes to fighting cancer. What is it that you will hear or do or believe? Cancer is a personal journey. What works for one might not work for another survivor. What it boils down to is what will work for you. What will give you the strength and determination as well as the peace to walk this road? If it were the same for everyone we would have been done with breast cancer a long time ago. Since it isn’t, I have learned that cancer is an opportunity to take a good look within.

Our minds are so powerful and yet so vulnerable. The thoughts that they harbor become feelings that affect us in many ways. I am always challenging myself and others to take negative thoughts and use them for good or let them go so they can’t get ahead of your soul. That may seem melodramatic but I truly believe it. We become our thoughts. I know I want to become a healthy, positive person. That doesn’t mean that every day is all sunshine and flowers, it means that at the end of the day my soul rests in peace.

A few years ago I met a woman who also has a similar diagnosis to me and she is a ray of sunshine. She has the same struggles with balancing her life with young children and taking on cancer, but she approaches it with a positive outlook each day. When something doesn’t work out she tries a different approach. I love to see her determination and attitude and how far it is getting her. This spirit attracts other positive experiences in the same way that a magnet draws objects closer. It is so important to build on your individual strengths. If you are a competitor, let that drive you. If you are a meditative individual, take your mind where it can heal your body. Make a list of your strengths and capitalize on them.

You’ve heard it before, and seen it on t-shirts, cancer sucks. While it is true, maybe it is time to look on the bright side. To find something everyday that you can do which will make you feel better, stronger. It can be physical, emotional, or spiritual. It may take one minute or an entire day. You and your life are worth it and your body will respond to the positive feelings that begin to flow. If you are looking for a starting place, come and join me on my blog www.gobeyondtreatment.com every Thursday where I host Thankful Thursdays. It is a short moment to be grateful for the gift of the day and a fun way to let positivity reign.

Though cancer is an individual journey for everyone, there is much that we can learn from each other. Bev and I will be putting together a space just for stage IV survivors at www.breastcancerwellness.org and we are excitedly thinking about the future and how we can help you heal in a positive and whole way. Here’s to health! Are you ready to go beyond treatment?
It’s summer and while the living isn’t always easy as a caregiver, it can include a little more play.

Maybe it is the beautiful Ozark weather, but I know I am feeling the urge to get up and get outside for summer activities. I am happy to know that study after study is showing that the benefits of play can be just as important as regular checkups for your loved one and yourself.

One study focused on the work of Dr. O. Carl Simonton, an oncologist who pioneered work in highlighting the mind-body connection and encouraging cancer patients and their loved ones to follow his prescribed plan for “getting well again”.

After years of working with cancer patients, Dr. O. Carl Simonton identified what he considered to be six elements of a healthy lifestyle. These six elements include:

- **Diet:** Our bodies need good nutrition to fuel us.
- **Exercise:** Simonton says this is all relative. For example, in illness being able to walk unassisted to the bathroom is good exercise for someone who hasn’t had the energy to do so previously. It’s just important to keep some kind of movement in your day.
- **Sense of Purpose:** We all need a reason for being. It may be to help with grandchildren or manage a multimillion dollar company. Remembering our purpose can help us focus on the future.
- **Social Support:** Who doesn’t need a listening ear once in awhile? Surround yourself with people who fill you with good feelings and are truly there for you.
- **Guided Imagery:** Being able to visualize health and wholeness is a vital part of Simonton’s program, and it can be one of yours too. Commit to daily time to picture yourself, and your loved one, enjoying life to the fullest again.
- **Play:** If he had his way, Simonton would like us to each play one hour a day. That “me” time contributes to a balanced lifestyle and a happier body.

It was when Simonton got to the “play” element, or any activity that produces the feeling of joy or what might be called “having fun”, that he started to get a reaction. “Playing can be expensive!” people said. “Do you know how much it costs for a movie and dinner and a babysitter these days?” And then “There’s nobody to play with. All my friends are busy with their own families or their schedules don’t mesh with mine.”

To counterbalance these protests, Simonton devised the Party from Play List. He invites his patients (and you) to draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. On the left, write a list of twenty things that can be done for under $10. And on the right side, make a list of twenty things that can be done by just you.

Once you have your list, schedule time for 1 of the events into your day. Some of my favorites are reading a book in the park, blowing bubbles for the neighborhood dog to chase and eating cold watermelon on the patio.

What are the benefits of play? Consider play a prescription for help today. We know that it can lower our blood pressure, just like hard exercise can. Play can also help us focus on our needs for our lives. It can provide the mental break from work and help us to solidify new friendships. It can help us to recapture the simplicity of life so that we are better prepared for tomorrow.

Ann Leach
Ann Leach is the founder and president of Life Preservers: a global grief support community. She served as the primary caregiver for her mother, who died of cancer twenty-one years ago. Ann produces an award-winning free online newsletter called the Flow for caregivers coping with loss.

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

—Melody Beattie

I am grateful to each of you for your donations to the Breast Cancer Wellness mission. It is because of your support that we continue this work of bringing hope, education, inspiration, and empowerment for breast cancer survivorship.

—Beverly Vote, Publisher

People always want to help, yet sometimes breast cancer patients do not know how to let others help them. How many times have we heard or have we offered “just let me know if you need anything”. Then we say our goodbyes and yet the opportunity to touch some one’s life slips away. Both the potential recipient and the giver have missed an opportunity to receive a mutual ideaing. But with the help of a cookie jar, this can easily be resolved.

The cookie jar has symbolized the special container for holding tasty convenient comfort food. Yet now, perhaps it can stand for something else – to remind each of us to ask for and to remember help.

Just make a list of ways you would like others to help you and put these ideas on small separate pieces of paper into the cookie jar. Next time someone offers to help, just let them randomly draw from the cookie jar. Let your imagination flow with your ideas. Here are a few ideas:

- Pray with me.
- Pray for me.
- Start a prayer chain for my healing.

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- Pray with me.
- Pray for me.
- Start a prayer chain for my healing.

Take me out to a funny movie. Help me try a new hair style or a new hair color sometime when my hair grows back.

Help me try new on fashions. Help me buy a healing journal. Take me out for a relaxing lunch, let’s not talk cancer, but help me feel like a part of the world again.

Take my dog for a walk on Tuesdays. Help me find survivors with my type of breast cancer, either in my town or on the internet.

Help me find online breast cancer communities that are positive and compassionate.

Help me research my type of breast cancer. Let me call you and cry when my hair falls out.

Let me share my fears out loud. Just let me be heard.

Help me research wholistic healing principles.

Teach me a new healthy recipe. Help me bake and freeze healthy casseroles for the days I don’t feel like cooking.

Baby my children one evening so that I can have private time with my significant other.

Do something that I need but I don’t know how to let others help them. Perhaps it can stand for something else – to remind each of us to ask for and to remember help.

Remind me that I have the strength and courage to get through any dark days.

Remind me that it is okay to take time to heal and to rest.

Help me to stay committed to an exercise plan even if it is a little bit each day.

Help me find online breast cancer communities that are positive and compassionate.

THANK YOU to the person that shared this idea with me, whoever you are!!

A Little Help
from the Cookie Jar

by Beverly Vote

If you would like to make a charitable donation to the Breast Cancer Wellness mission, please send to: Breast Cancer Wellness, PO. Box 2040, Lebanon, MO 65536. If you made a contribution and are not listed, contact Beverly Vote at beverly@breastcancerwellness.org.

We are grateful for your donations.

Thank you.

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Thank you.

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Thank you.
Any time you’ve sat across from your doctor or nurse and asked questions, you’ve been an advocate for your health. Trying to get the most information before making decisions about your health is second nature to most of us. But did you know you can share your knowledge with doctors, nurses, and other patients, and become an advocate for the entire breast cancer community?

Although we often think of “advocacy” as a national-level political effort, anyone can educate and advocate for themselves, and for the patients who will follow them on the breast cancer journey. All it takes is a little courage, and the right information.

You can be one of the soldiers “on the ground,” advocating in a personal setting – the office of your doctor. Amoena has medical referral packets available – educational literature about a woman’s progression of needs (see our ad, page 19), post-surgery compression and drain containment garments, breast forms, symmetry shapers, and more. Pair literature with your personal experience, and you have a very effective advocacy tool.

Surgeons sometimes don’t know about the newest products available to patients. One relevant example is Amoena’s Hannah drain containment camisole. Perhaps you were one of the patients who safety-pinned drains to your blouse when you left the hospital… but it doesn’t have to be that way for the next person. Hannah’s removable drain pouches are secure and the garment itself is infused with Vitamin E and Aloe to help comfort tender skin.

So let’s talk about specific strategies you can use when advocating with your own healthcare providers. You can begin during a regularly scheduled appointment, or approach a nurse or office manager if you’re more comfortable with them. You don’t want to sound pushy or dissatisfied, so phrasing it as a question – “Have you ever heard of this?” – is a sound tactic. Some providers still bristle when patients do their own research, but it’s becoming the norm; if you have literature or products with you, your question has more impact. And if you’ve already past the stage where the products will help you, emphasize that you’re sharing the information for other patients’ benefit.

Be considerate of their time. Don’t spend too much time discussing details with your busy doctor or nurse. Present them the basics, give them the highlights of your experience – for instance, “Wearing a symmetry shaper and a pocketed bra as I’ve gone through the reconstruction process has really made me feel confident and ‘normal’…” – and leave it at that.

Leave no stone unturned. If you got along really well with your chemotherapy nurses, start there. They can pass valuable information to the surgeons and oncologists with whom they’re associated. Your support group is another obvious place to share information – and encourage fellow members to pass it on.

It is said that “Advocacy has to come from the heart.” You can be the heart of your immediate breast cancer community. Start today and help get the word out.

Lee Thrash

E-business & PR Coordinator, Amoena USA

Lee Thrash manages Amoena’s online community, theBreastCareSite.com, Amoena Life magazine, and other online and print publications which help breast cancer survivors and their families. A graduate of Emory University, Lee has more than 10 years’ experience in online and print reporting for health care journals such as Hospital Case Management, Case Management Advisor, and Hospital Home Health (HC Media), as well as 10+ years editing educational websites, brochures and publications.

After breast surgery, Amoena® is here for you.

During the breast cancer journey, your needs will change from immediately after surgery to getting back into your daily routine. Different stages require different products that will help you on the road to living life to the fullest.

No matter what stage you are in, Amoena has something for you—such as ultra-comfortable post-operative garments; breast forms or symmetry shapers that restore your silhouette; and a beautiful line of feminine intimate apparel for every occasion.

Visit our store locator at www.amoena.us or call 1-800-741-0078 to find an Amoena retailer near you.

Amoena is the world-wide leader in post-breast surgery products. Post-breast surgery products may be covered by Medicare and private insurance.

Insist on Amoena / www.amoena.us
Dear Friends,

During his first address to a joint session of Congress, President Barack Obama urged a new effort “to conquer a cancer that has touched the life of nearly every American, including me, by seeking a cure for cancer in our time.” It was a call to action that resonated for me and mirrored my personal ongoing dedication to ending breast cancer. It was nearly three decades ago that I promised my sister Suzy, who died at age 36 from breast cancer, that I would do everything I could to end the disease that took her life. A couple of years later, I too was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 37. We have made a lot of progress since then. We now have a basic understanding of breast cancer, which is the foundation for discovering the cures. And with this new understanding, we’re moving toward more personalized treatments – as each patient and each tumor is different, their treatment must reflect those differences.

While we are in position to experience significant advances, the sad fact remains that we are still facing an enormous cancer crisis – cancer will claim the lives of more than a half million people this year – about 1,500 people a day. In all, 40 percent of Americans will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lives, including approximately 1.4 million new cases this year alone. Without a change in course and with the graying of the Baby Boom generation, it is feared we are about to experience a cancer tsunami.

Thus I was inspired to hear our new president call for re-igniting our nation’s commitment to end cancer. And it didn’t take long for a group of Senators to answer that challenge. The group, led by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), who have been working together and in close consultation and collaboration with the cancer community for more than a year, introduced the 21st Century Cancer ALERT (Access to Life-saving Early Detection, Research and Treatment) Act. This bill is an effort to address our shortcomings and renew our commitment to discovering and delivering the cures to cancer.

I am grateful to both Senators, particularly Senator Hutchison, for ensuring that this was a true bipartisan partnership, and that everyone had a seat at the table. For Senator Kennedy, this is obviously a personal issue. Senator Hutchison has been with us in this mission since our early days, and this would not have happened without her leadership.

One of the first steps in saving lives is in detecting cancer early. If breast cancer is a guide, developing effective early detection techniques is critically important to increasing mortality rates. For example, when my sister died only 77 percent of women who discovered their cancer before it spread lived beyond the breast survived at least five years. After nearly three decades of investments and advancements, the five-year survival rate has increased to 98 percent. Unfortunately, many cancers still do not have effective early detection methods. Ovarian cancer is a particularly devastating example: there is no screening diagnostic, thus a diagnosis is most often made after the cancer has spread. According to the American Cancer Society, when ovarian cancer is detected early, the survival rate is 92 percent; however, only 1 in 5 cases are detected at this stage, dropping the overall five-year survival rate to only 45 percent. Mortality rates are even more disturbing for lung and pancreatic cancers. This has to change.

This legislation seeks to address this by placing an emphasis on early detection and promoting the discovery and development of biomarkers so cancers can be detected at the earliest possible stage when cancer is most treatable. It will also strengthen the cancer research process by promoting public/private partnerships and collaboration between government agencies. And they stress translational research, so new discoveries and breakthroughs in the laboratory make their way to patients’ bedside as quickly as possible.

At the same time, we have to remind ourselves as we push for science to develop the early detection methods that will save lives tomorrow, millions of our friends and loved ones do not have sufficient access to the detection and treatment methods available today. Tens of millions of people are uninsured and lack access to basic health care. Federal and state programs that provide support to underserved people with cancer are cut, enacted or underfunded, leading to huge gaps in access.

Even those with insurance often have difficulty accessing life-saving treatments, whether it is because they live in a rural community, have language barriers or are faced with roadblocks to participating in a clinical trial. The Cancer Act will begin to improve access to cancer care for underserved populations by expanding access to clinical trials and patient navigation services.

One thing I’ve learned over this journey is that we can do anything if we just put our minds to it and show that we are committed to success. These efforts of our bipartisan congressional leaders are important and promising steps in showing that discovering and delivering the cures for cancer is still a national priority, and that we are all committed to seeing it through.


With warm regards and appreciation,

Susan G. Komen

Ambassador Nancy G. Brinker Founding Chair, Susan G. Komen for the Cure®

ABOUT NANCY G. BRINKER...

Nancy G. Brinker is the Founding Chair of Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, the world’s largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and enable scientific research to find the cures. Globally known as a change agent, Ambassador Brinker was appointed by the World Health Organization as Goodwill Ambassador for Cancer Control in May 2009. She was included in TIME’S “100 Most Influential People” in 2008, and that same year, President George W. Bush appointed her to The Kennedy Center Board of Trustees. She served as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Hungary from 2001-2003 and most recently served as U.S. Chief of Protocol from 2007-2009 where she was responsible for coordinating travel abroad.

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SURVIVING & THRIVING

Difference to Stop the Silence

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ethnic, or cultural needs for African

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She discovered that the education,
specifically for African American women.

that no national organization existed
months after being diagnosed; she be-
to be persistent in taking care of our
American women.

Karen's personal experience with breast cancer is a reminder to all of us to be persistent in taking care of our health needs. Aware of her family's breast cancer history, Karen started having annual mammograms before she was 40. Each year she was told that she was fine. However, the doctors didn't tell her she was unaware that 15% of women fall through a crack in the testing system because mammograms do not show all of the types of breast cancer tumors. Karen needed further testing to be properly screened, which included an ultrasound. Because Karen was doing monthly self exams, she felt the lump and was persistent and requested more testing. She knew something was going on in her body, something wasn't right. It was through her persistence that the ultrasound revealed a palpable mass and not calcification which had been there for 5 to 6 years. Karen's medical treatment included a lumpectomy, radiation, and chemotherapy.

Karen then became concerned for other women, women that don't go to the doctor either for financial reasons or aren't aware of the need to take care of their breast health and their over-

all well-being. "It is devastating when
women have no money or no insurance and cannot have the medical treatment they need, SOMETHING has to change," said Karen.

Following her treatment, Karen started having visions of creating a na-
tional network specifically dedicated to addressing the educational and emo-
tional needs of breast health care for African American women. This organiza-
tion would help bring a voice all across America so that African American women would not feel alone or excluded. Consumed with the vision and a passion to make a difference and coming from a family of community and action minded people, Karen was confident she could achieve her goal of creating a national presence for African American women. Although she had no funding, it was her trusting faith that kept her moving forward leading her to found Sisters Network Inc., the only national African American breast cancer survivorship organization in the United States.

"I was just following the Lord; I felt I didn't have a whole lot to do with this. If I had known what I was agreeing to, maybe it wouldn't have happened. It was my trusting faith to move forward with this passion that was deep in my heart. At the time, I didn't realize how much it takes to create a national or-

ganization, and I am very grateful that I was able to follow through with the
vision. We are in our 15th year of serv-
ing African American women, but there still remains so much to be done. Even today, I remain focused and dedicated to this purpose," said Karen. Today, Sisters Network Inc. has grown to 43 chapters across the county. "Because of our continued national presence that we have today, Sisters has been able to grow even faster in reaching our mission of connecting with all African American women and educating on the impor-
tance of breast care." added Karen.

"I took the initiative to go to other
national events to see what was going on at the national level, and then locally I was able to attract 15 women that started
the base for our national organization here in Houston. We didn't have funding or an office, but we had a vision and a purpose. And that was enough. My liv-
ing room and my home phone was the national headquarters when we started. Although, there were only 15 women, I always referenced the organization as nationally focused. I was able to connect with other women across the country and we were able to launch Sisters Network Inc. with 3 affiliate chapters na-
tionally. Because of the networking I had been doing, and the contacts some of the other women who had family across the country, one thing led to another. Our network has never stopped growing since day one," said Karen.

"Last April, we had our 10th annual Sisters Network Inc. national conference, which originally started in 1999. We have approximately 500 women from across the nation, as well as women from outside the country attend the conference. Our participants range from survivors, caregivers, and health care providers and the community. One of the things we are proud of is that our conference is accredited; it is the only conference for African American women that is accredited," said Karen.

Another milestone for the Sisters Network is their new national head-
quarters, which is located in a Houston, Texas African American community and in close proximity to the Texas Medical Center, an internationally recognized medical complex. The "Sister House" staff includes Eric Calloway, Executive Director, Tamara Floyd, National Community Outreach and Virgie Ashley, Co-
ordinator. The office has plenty of space; it has a large meeting room, large enough to host community forums for about 75 people and can hold luncheons up to 120 people.

Additional funding will support Sisters Network's goal to expand their existing services such as their free mammogram program, medical finan-
cial lodging support and other outreach programs. Because the Sisters Network members have been housing survivors in their homes who are there for treat-
ment, Sisters' goal is to provide survi-
ors from any part of the country with expanded financial support for their lodging when they come to Houston for medical treatments.

If you are a breast cancer survivor of any race, I know my life was spared for a purpose. I live my life to educate the women in the African American community on the im-
portance of good breast health. I have been involved with Sisters Network since my diagnosis. My hope for the future is a cure would finally end this devastating disease. Edita Staples, President Sisters Network of

Mark your calendar for the 1st National African American Breast Cancer Walk on Saturday, April 10, 2010 in Houston, TX

Sisters Network: Making a Difference to Stop the Silence
Our hope is to be a big part of eradicating breast cancer. Sisters Network, Inc is dedicated to the education and support of African American women who are fighting breast cancer. Our conferences and focus groups reveal the fear of having breast cancer is dramatic and real. Too often that level of fear prevents some women from taking that step to get screened, said Karen.

"When I was diagnosed, I went to support groups. Even though I found education, I didn’t find the camaraderie or the sisterhood that I really needed at that time. What Sisters Network offers is that someone is always there for you in any town or neighborhood; you can pick up the phone and call. I feel very good that the women are friends and they rise to the occasion, and I mean this in every sense of the word,” said Karen.

"It doesn’t matter what ethnic or cultural background a woman has, she MUST learn to put herself first. Without your health, you have nothing. This is not a cliché, if they put their health first, not only will they live longer, but they will have a higher quality of health. What better gift can we give back to our family and friends and community than to live longer and healthier? And what’s the best way to do that? Get yourself checked and find out what’s going on as you go through your journey, and networking with people that are positive, and who can help you better,” is what Sisters Network is about! If we’re going to do something about it, we can’t do it alone.

Sisters Network offers a program called BCAAP. Breast Cancer Assistance Program which provides financial assistance to women. Some of the chapters are able to financially help an individual member and sometimes the national office is able to provide financial matching assistance with the Chapter. Sometimes the organization is contacted by women who live in a city where there is no chapter. Even though they can’t provide funds under those circumstances, Sisters’ is still able to help. Our organization also provides mammography screening within the communities.

"Knowledge is power, this is not a slogan, and that is a truism. Your knowledge is that you are putting yourself first, getting second opinions as you go through your journey, and networking with people that are positive, and who can help you better–that is what Sisters Network is all about! So, if we’re going to do something about it, we can’t do it alone. But together we can make a difference, and Sisters Network is here to help. You can call from a woman that has just been diagnosed and she says I am confused, I don’t know what to do, we can put out a call throughout our network to find someone who has had the similar experience that she is having. They can help her feel comfortable with what steps are next, because talking with someone who is in your shoes and looks like you and has the same cultural background as you does make a difference. You feel more comfortable, you feel more like you can live. I can tell you when I was diagnosed, I thought I was dying. You need someone to stay with you throughout your treatments. Sometimes the treatments are so harsh, you want to stop because you don’t see light at the end of the tunnel. At the moment, you might think it is easier to die than to live, but having someone to be with you throughout that part of the healing process is very important. You can tell them that you understand how it feels and that you CAN get through this."

Sisters Network has helped women to come full circle in their lives outside of the cancer. I have seen women that are so empowered that they are now a different person. They have come into their own and they are stronger and more vibrant as a person. I hear this often because of Sisters they have been able to become stronger within themselves," adds Karen.

"As an organization we know that Sisters Network has improved the livelihood of a lot of women. These women are acknowledging that they are smarter, stronger, and more able to live in the present than ever before. While Sisters Network has made a difference in the fight against breast cancer there is so much work that still must be done. Karen emphasizes "Black women must stop the silence, so we can start beating the breast cancer odds.”

To get involved and support Sisters Network, please visit us online at www.sistersnetworkinc.org or call 713.781.0255. I

Dr. Lisa Neuman, Chairman President D. Reed, and CEO Karen Jackson at the Sisters Network 10th annual conference in Houston, TX

Sisters Network Day of Wellness

24

Support, compassion, and understanding do make a difference," said Karen. "As I look back, I truly feel very blessed, and I do feel that I was guided by the Lord. This was not something that came from me, but given to me. When you start a national organization without any funding or no knowledge of how to attract funding, that is stepping out on faith. I am proud that Sisters Network has helped women to come full circle in their lives outside of the cancer. I have seen women that are so empowered that they are now a different person. They have come into their own and they are stronger and more vibrant as a person. I hear this often because of Sisters they have been able to become stronger within themselves," adds Karen.

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Nationally, there are 43 chapters of the Sisters Network, to find one near you, www.sistersnetworkinc.org.

Sisters Network Inc Nashville, TN
Mary Kelton Smith, President
972-693-5337
sistersdallas@yahoo.com
Dallas, Texas

Sisters Network Central Virginia, Inc
Brenda Archer, President
662-842-3440

Sisters Network Tupelo Chapter (SNTC) was founded in 2001 by Edna Wiles. I am the director and coordinator of the SNTC, which provides financial assistance to breast cancer survivors. SNTC was founded to give back. Since forming the Orlando Chapter, I felt that I have helped to make a significant contribution to educating African American women on breast health issues.

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407-784-1087
www.sistersnetworklv.org

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Surviving & Thriving

Choosing Peace Not Fear

by Suzie Humphreys

It is never any good dwelling on what worries you. fretting makes fear worse.

-Archie Moore

Well, the bad news is its cancer. The good news is that it’s at stage zero. “Okay! Right! Thank you for calling. No, I’m fine.” I lied. “Well. We’ll go from here and just do what we have to do. Bye...” “Okay, this is a shock.” I muttered, as I made my way to the office to tell my husband, Tom. Reaching myself to find the right words, I impulsively blurted out, “Honey, Dr. Diane called and I do have a little breast cancer. Now before you say anything I’m fine about this I really am, I mean if Christopher Reeves could go through paralysis and breathing on a respirator, I can do this. It could be so much worse.”

Tom just looked at me—partly stunned and confused at the same time. “Suzie, a little breast cancer?” is all he said, as if he had crossed over the experience of his own trauma, and in his confusion was unable to understand the enormity of what he now faced. “It could be so much worse.”

He was encouraging and he was right. The pain came so suddenly it literally took my breath away, and then I started shaking uncontrollably. I felt myself in great silent waves. I was so tense and in such pain I was frantically fighting to not tell them to stop. I was a baby, trembling and shaking until, in a matter of minutes, I was totally exhausted—and I let go.

If you ask me what I felt during that cold examining room to that pathological frightened “me” on that particular day, I would say “a miracle happened.” The operating room took me to the most peaceful, perfectly calm place that I had ever been in my life. Though the pressure was just as immense for the next several minutes and the pain just as intense, I didn’t feel it. When I gave up my fight, I let go of the fear. The pain was still there, but I no longer felt the need to stop. I was a baby, trembling and shaking until, in a matter of minutes, I was totally exhausted—and I let go.

Afterwards, I told the doctors and nurses what had happened and how grateful I was to have had the whole experience. I had learned that there is no wisdom in what I call a “holy instant,” an awareness of what our minds are capable of doing. I felt that I had subconsciously asked for cancer as my teacher. Certainly every time I met a cancer survivor, I had imagined what it was like for them to go through the treatments and hair loss and yet to joke about the turbans they wore or not having any eyebrows. Did I ask for this? Since it is a question to which there is no answer.

I quickly knew that whether asked for or not, I was going to teach me what I really was made of. Whether I could take what lay ahead with humor and grace, or would I let my self down and those who loved me, by making it harder mentally than it had to be. If I could keep the “fear” at bay, I would do okay.

I called Kay from the parking lot and told her what happened. “Okay, this is doable,” I muttered, listening to the explanation of what the doctors would say. The needle was the easy part. The biopsy, I wondered about “answered prayers.” I had subconsciously asked for cancer as my teacher. Certainly every time I met a cancer survivor, I had imagined what it was like for them to go through the treatments and hair loss and yet to joke about the turbans they wore or not having any eyebrows. Did I ask for this? Since it is a question to which there is no answer.

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It was almost a year earlier when I sat in the parking lot too dazed and numb to drive. And then totally alert, I remembered a prayer I had made to God. I have a special place on our ranch, a ten by twelve foot little cottage-like building that I call the potting shed. It serves as almost a “sanctuary” for me when I am tired, or troubled, or worried. It is a place I can retreat to when the world can’t touch me. A small iron bed in it, and a wonderful antique table filled with photographs of my family of ones, some who are still with us and some who have passed over. My special books are there, my soul books, my Bible. Favorite art pieces I love, some candles and that I burn in prayers for friends who are suffering, for strangers in the news that desperately need help and consoling. There are no sounds in the room. No air-conditioning motors, no telephones, no compressors, or buzzing from electric lines, just the rare sound of “silence.”

It was almost a year earlier when I came home from a ten day trip and I literally could not wait to go to my little room “the potting shed.” I was fatigued but happy, grateful to be home again and in my prison of paralysis, I said to God in joy, “God, I don’t want to leave this life without knowing all that you want me to learn. I am ready to learn it...”

Sitting in my car after the “core biopsy,” I wondered about “answered prayers.” I had subconsciously asked for cancer as my teacher. Certainly every time I met a cancer survivor, I had imagined what it was like for them to go through the treatments and hair loss and yet to joke about the turbans they wore or not having any eyebrows. Did I ask for this? Since it is a question to which there is no answer.
Closer than sisters. We help each other through everything. We are gently honest with each other and we understand the depth to which we can descend in fear and the heights to which we can soar through faith. We have studied and learned and are joyful in our experiences. She cried with me on the phone and I went home to change my clothes and do a speech in the afternoon. The following day I was called by my doctor to tell me that we needed to do another core biopsy on the other breast. Well, I knew what to expect now, didn’t I? I told Kay when I would be going and she wanted to come with me. I really do better if no one “hovers” over me, not that she would, but I get a lot of strength doing things by myself. I really do better if no one “hovers” over me, but discreetly covered in a little teeny shoulder cape, I thought it would be a good time to check my cell phone messages. After listening and laughing so hard, the nurses wanted to know what was so funny. So, replaying the message and putting it on speaker phone, they heard this message from Kay: “Oh! Suzie, I feel horrible about what they are doing to you with that old core biopsy, I just can’t stand it that you are in pain. I wish you had let me come with you but I knew how independent you are and to squeeze my good breast. Squeeze, it they did. But it was not at all painful. We all talked about how easy it was on me the second time, and during the chat my cell phone rang. I said, “I don’t suppose this would be a good time for me to answer that?” The doctor replied from his little roll-around stool, “I don’t suppose it would.” We went back to random chat, and in another fifteen minutes the procedure was ended. Still half dressed, but discreetly covered in a little teeny shoulder cape, I thought it would be a good time to check my cell phone messages. After listening and laughing so hard, the nurses wanted to know what was so funny. So, replaying the message and putting it on speaker phone, they heard this message from Kay: “Oh! Suzie, I feel horrible about what they are doing to you with that old core biopsy, I just can’t stand it that you are in pain. I wish you had let me come with you but I knew how independent you are and you are so brave. But if I could I would have gladly gone through this with you. I know you’re probably out of there by now and I remember that you said you might be going to Neiman Marcus afterward and I was wondering if you were... would you mind stopping by the Bobbie Brown counter in cosmetics and pick me up a tube of lip-gloss?” Oh how we laughed in that cold examining room. We laughed loud and hard and strong and all of us needed that, especially the nurses who, every day, deal with tragedy and with patients who come fearing the worse and hoping for the best. Kay certainly took me to that peaceful place again. I got there through a different form of transportation, but the results were the same. Peace with what was. Peace, whatever the circumstance.

We are all walking around with an “it” of some sort. It can be cancer, or heart disease, grief over the loss of a loved one, a broken marriage, an estranged child, guilt over the past, or fear of the future. In each of the barriers is an opportunity to go beyond what we think we can do and flourish in the face of pain, despair and tragedy. Suzie Humphreys is the keynote speaker for the 4th annual Breast Cancer Survivors Cruise 2010. She invites each of you to join her on the cruise and she will share more heartwarming and laughter filled moments about life. To read the rest of Suzie’s chapter of Puces Peace from Fear which is chapter 23 of her book, “If all else fails...Laugh!” go to www.suziehumphreys.com to order her book so that you can enjoy her provocative, gentle, and humorous collections of Suzie’s One Of A Kind Escapades. You will enjoy Suzie’s down to earth personality and her unshakable optimism in the goodness of life that will inspire each of us to better manage our own life experiences. Her book shares her experiences from a career that led her from administrative secretary, to television talk show host, to twenty years in radio. Suzie has been fired, been broke, been disappointed, been a put upon caretaker of an elderly mother at 40 years old and lived her life with a passion for learning not only how to be, but to see things differently. She lifts, jolts and nurtures her audiences. She makes them laugh until they think they can’t laugh anymore, and then she “groans” them again. Suzie is a much sought after motivational and inspirational speaker. She makes her home in the hill country of Texas.

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Comprehensive Care - at the Arizona Cancer Center Clinic, it’s defined as every patient’s journey from the diagnosis of cancer to becoming a cancer survivor.
I AM So Much More Than This
by Fay Elliott Moore

I never connected with the term “breast cancer survivor.” The whole time I was sick, I kept telling myself that I would come out of the experience in better shape than I was in when I started. I had no idea how long that road would be. If I had known maybe I would not have been so optimistic. Almost twelve years now since the original diagnosis, I can say that there were many gifts along the way.

In 1995, Michael my husband of 25 years and I were driving home from a shopping trip. The next thing I remember opening my eyes and feeling the worst headache I had ever experienced. I looked to my left, and he was slumped down in the driver’s seat with his head tilted toward me and blood running from his ear. This was the beginning of an eighteen month ordeal for us which ended when he decided to disconnect his life support. For me the journey still has not ended. We both had head injuries from the accident. His head hit mine and broke two bones in my face and caused trauma to my brain.

Nine months after he died, I felt a lump in my right breast. Nothing about it indicated cancer. My mammogram had been clean earlier in the year. The doctor was certain it was just a liquid filled cyst. Since there was no fluid after all, they performed a hystectomy, and then they told me I had breast cancer. After the ordeal with Michael, it seemed like just one more project to take on. I researched my options and found an oncologist willing to work with me.

The decision to have the breast removed was complicated by the options to replace the breast or not. I had no idea in the end how traumatic the recovery and long-term ramifications of that decision were going to be. I was very fortunate to have a very supportive partner at that time and he was there with me through the whole ordeal. Even now I have not recovered completely from the psychological and physical trauma caused by both the head injury and the breast cancer experience. When I decided to go to my first “Journey” Intensive, I thought it was for the enlightenment experiences. I read Brandon Bay’s books and wanted to become a “Journey” practitioner even though I wasn’t exactly sure what that entailed. I had no idea that I had undertaken a journey into my own soul and my own healing. I have always been a very level-headed person with very little emotional reactions to things. Even after Michael died, I didn’t cry for almost six months. I held my feelings in and paid for it with gastritis, colitis and other stress related illnesses. What I discovered when I started doing the “Journey” work was how much unresolved grief I was carrying around for Michael, for the deaths of my parents and for myself. The Journey work returned me to myself and set me free to move on with my life.

Recently I had a headache that wouldn’t go away. It lasted over eight weeks. My support system throughout this new ordeal and recovery has been my “Journey” friends. The love and support has been amazing. One practitioner held me in her arms and let me cry for hours. She has been working with me on the shame and embarrassment I feel over the scars from my surgeries. This work moved aside to deal with my new situation. Another “Journey” and “PUSH” therapy practitioner works with the physical scars and adhesions that are causing contraction and tightening around my organs where the surgeons tunneled through my body to move my belly to my breast in the replacement surgery. At each birthday, I feel grateful to have lived so long. This is one of the gifts of the cancer. The other gift of Michael and my parent’s deaths and my own brush with death is the desire to work with hospice. I am a hospice volunteer and a full time student studying for a master’s degree in divinity. My goal is to become a hospice chaplain. My “Journey” training is so valuable to me in hospice work. Working as a Journey Practitioner has taught me about the pain that sits below the surface in all of us. I have skills I would not have had on my own before my Journey experience. More so than anything else, I have a sense of stability and emotional ease I never had before. I cry easily now and just because. I feel deep compassion for myself and for the families I work with. I use my Journey tools to stay grounded and to not run away from my emotions and the emotions of those around me. I feel very blessed to live this life and to share the gifts of my experience with others. I still don’t think of myself as merely a survivor. I know I am so much more than this.

Leaving home for church.

Making a new friend on a cruise.
Vicki Tashman didn’t just survive breast cancer, she beat it. Commanding all the resources and support available to her, she was a prime example of the active and pro-active patient. She interviewed different doctors, attended different support groups, signed up for different studies and never took “no” – or “I don’t know” – for an answer. All this worked to her advantage and she is alive today because of it.

The one thing she felt was missing however during her battle with the disease, was a way to find another woman who had the same type of cancer, was considering the same treatments, feeling the same side effects and processing the same fears. When she finished her treatment she decided to do something about that.

“It just occurred to me one day that here we had this unbelievable tool, the Internet, at our disposal, but there was no way for me to find someone who was going through, or had already gone through, the same kind of cancer as me,” Tashman says. “Why should it be easier to find a date online than a compatible mentor who can help you get through chemo?”

Pink-Link (www.pink-link.org) is the outgrowth of this idea and is now the only online searchable database of breast cancer patients and survivors on the Internet. Completely FREE and CONFIDENTIAL, Pink-Link allows women to enter as much detail as they like about their particular diagnosis and then search for other women who are the same age, living in the same part of the country, taking the same medications, facing the same treatment options. The site can match women who are going through treatment simultaneously or can pair a patient with a survivor… or both.

“You know, it was great when I was sick to talk to any other woman who’d had breast cancer. We could cry on each other’s shoulders, try and cheer each other up, understand each other in a way others could not,” she says. “But when it got right down to it, I had a lot of specific questions that could only be answered by someone who’d been in my exact shoes, and that was hard to find.”

“Well, thanks to Pink-Link, now it’s not.”

A California native, who attended University of Colorado at Boulder, Tashman lives in LA with her husband and two children. Her paternal grandmother died of breast cancer, and her mother is a survivor of seven years.

“Each day is a gift,” she says. “I’m not trying to change the world, just make a difference where I can.”

Winner of the IPPY Award for Best Health Book of 2005

WAKING THE WARRIOR GODDESS

Dr. Christine Horner’s Program to Protect Against & Fight Breast Cancer

Breast cancer has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Once a relatively rare disease, it now affects 2 to 3 million women, and the incidence is going up at an alarming rate. What can we do about it? Christine Horner, M.D., has the answer.

A pioneer who pushed through federal and state legislation ensuring that breast reconstruction after a mastectomy would be paid for by insurance companies, Dr. Horner lost her own mother to breast cancer. She decided then that her mother’s death would not be in vain. Something good would come from it. This legislation was her first gift to her mother’s memory, and this book is another.

Dr. Horner says, “We each have a Warrior Goddess in us, and it’s time to set her free.” Using the metaphor of the Warrior Goddess, this book explains something that the ancient healing tradition Ayurveda describes as our “inner healing intelligence.” It also explores the various foods and supplements that can enable women to successfully fight breast cancer and claim the healthy body that should be theirs. Dr. Horner tells readers what to avoid and what to embrace, what will poison the Warrior Goddess and what will feed her, and what she needs to thrive.

The final part of Waking the Warrior Goddess presents Dr. Christine Horner’s program for reclaiming health and defeating breast cancer. These guidelines can serve many other health-promoting purposes, too. Dr. Horner’s program focuses on nutrients and activities that bring health, vitality, and longevity to women. In addition, this book includes an extensive resources section for obtaining the particular nutrients and products that our bodies need to become and stay strong and healthy.

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Christine Horner, M.D., F.A.C.S.

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Hi Everyone,

The 3rd annual Breast Cancer Survivors Cruise 2009 was very special. I met wonderful women and men from across the country. As is always the case when breast cancer survivors come together, we feel stronger and more loved by the sisterhood that only breast cancer survivors share. The cruise gave us a very special opportunity to make even more wonderful friends and to celebrate our lives together. I received the following mail and I wanted to share it with you in our scrapbook of memories. It is a true reminder that we are drawn together to make a difference for each other.

Thank you Sabrina for taking the time to share! I am already excited about the 2010 cruise.

~ Beverly Vote

A Special Thank You to Our 2009 Cruise Sponsors:

amoena – Breast Care Site

The Breast Cancer Survivors Cruise 2009 was the 2009 Winner of the Breast Cancer Survivor's Cruise Contest. I had not spread to any other place in my body. The next thing she told me was that she was pulling into A couple of hours later my sister called and asked how I was doing and told her great since the cancer which was a Friday I tried to call my mom and let her know about the test results and she did not answer. 3 surgeries and chemo. The day I found out I had cancer I left work early, when my husband came home in Cincinnati, OH). They all wanted to surprise me and support me. Without my wonderful family, I don't know how I would have gotten through everything. When my hair started falling out I asked Steve to shave my head, he said it was the hardest thing he had ever done.

I have 3 sisters, 3 nieces, 4 nephews, 1 great nephew, step son and 2 step grandsons. Steve and I like to go to the lake on the weekends, getaways and enjoy the outdoors. Steve and I have been married 13 years. Our anniversary is May 25th. We choose that day because it was the anniversary of my daughter’s birth-death at age 11 and it would make a nice happening. Today this thread, Clinical Trial E5103 is shared by the elite opportunity of a lifetime for two women to meet that had shared a journey. So you see how the cruise was more than just a cruise, it gave the opportunity of a lifetime for two women to meet that had shared a journey. I met wonderful women and men from across the country. As is always the case when breast cancer survivors come together, we feel stronger and more loved by the sisterhood that only breast cancer survivors share. The cruise gave us a very special opportunity to make even more wonderful friends and to celebrate our lives together. I received the following mail and I wanted to share it with you in our scrapbook of memories. It is a true reminder that we are drawn together to make a difference for each other.

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2009 Winner of the Breast Cancer Survivor's Cruise Contest

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Prevent Lymphedema By Stopping 'Wrong Arm Access'

"Breast Cancer patients should never have a needle inserted or blood pressure taken from their affected limb" says Christine Laronga, who heads the breast cancer program at H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center. This is how breast cancer survivor June Bucy got lymphedema. "I would go to the doctors' offices for follow-ups, and they would take my blood pressure on my arms, I just figured they knew what they were doing" says Bucy. Laronga says such cases are more common than she’d like to admit. "I think it happens frequently. Patients can develop lymphedema 2 days after surgery or 20 yrs later" she says.

Bucy says this wristband might have prevented her case. "Don’t Let This Happen To You - Order Yours Today!! Only $7.95 each (plus shipping) * A portion of the proceeds will be donated to breast cancer research.

www.wrongarmaccess.com

* Read The Tampa Tribune’s Article about ‘Wrong Arm Access’ on our website.
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If selected, your article will appear in the special 2009 Fall issue of Breast Cancer Wellness Magazine. Hurry, the deadline is fast approaching. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
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