



The Connection

for women & families
79 Maple Street | Summit, NJ 07901
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PATHWAYS

FALL 2013

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Mission

Pathways, a program of The Connection for Women and Families, provides educational resources and ongoing support for women with breast and gynecological cancers, creating a community in which shared experiences lead to personal growth and healing.

Making a difference one bite at a time!



Because of our commitment to the health and well-being of the whole person both during and after cancer treatment, in 2011 Pathways began to offer two

nutrition-related programs which focus on education and guidance as to the benefits of a whole foods lifestyle. These programs, Pathways Cooks and Healing Foods, are wonderful complements to our other support and wellness programs. Karen Feldman's goal through these programs is to re-establish food as the foundation of health, and teach others how to nourish their body. Her philosophy? "My approach to nourishment, health and well-being is simple: Eat real, minimally processed, whole foods; mostly plant based; freshly prepared; as organic, in season, and locally grown as possible." Karen is a Registered Nurse, Certified Health Coach and Natural Foods Nutrition and Cooking Educator. She also holds an advanced nursing certification in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility and has worked in women's health for 20 years.



Pathways Director Michele Visco and Karen Feldman co-founded Pathways



Cooks with the following philosophy in mind "When cancer patients are impacted by the negative side effects of treatment and their appetites wane, EVERY BITE COUNTS! So we pack as much nutrition into every bite as possible." Since our inception we have served over **2,500 meals** to cancer patients and their families. We are making a difference, one bite at a time!

"Dear Pathways Cooks, You never know how much this food means until you end up receiving

this delicious food! I know it has been prepared with LOVE! Thank you so much. I have maintained my weight this week because of this food."

~meal recipient Linda B.

"This gave me the opportunity to try unfamiliar ingredients, share the day with others, and the satisfaction of knowing that the patients for whom we provided meals were a little happier!"

~volunteer Henrietta M.



From the Director

Michele Visco



Dear Pathways Friends,

You might think that focusing on one's happiness upon receiving a cancer diagnosis might seem like an odd concept -- but it may be an opportune time! While the rigors of treatment can be very difficult, survivorship can be positively experienced when we are able to anticipate challenges we may face, and plan for what changes we would like to make in our lives as we adapt to a "new normal."

Many believe that happiness is something we experience because external events and people make us feel that way -- in other words -- it is passively sought and received and if we are lucky it just happens to us. I think that a healthier perspective comes from being aware of the small and simple ways that we can not only experience happiness and joy, but we can create it in our lives. This means setting out each day with intention to cultivate happiness in our lives more actively.

A cancer diagnosis gives women permission to slow down and think about what is most important to them and identify their priorities. It gives them the opportunity to consider what old habits can be shed for they have outlived their usefulness, and what new habits and rituals can be embraced that allow us to celebrate our lives and renew our commitment to health. A life threatening disease can also bring great clarity in our priorities and purpose, and can shine a spotlight on the many positive aspects of our lives.

At Pathways, new and longer term survivors alike are given the opportunity to explore how best to regain control over their lives after cancer, and to embrace a new sense of power over their destinies. Here survivors are likely to connect with many women who understand what they are experiencing and feeling, and who become companions in their cancer journey.

Because of the generosity of our donors and grantors, Pathways has been able to provide support, education and wellness programs for survivors for nearly 20 years. Please consider making a donation today to ensure that our services continue to be available for women facing this devastating diagnosis, and to assure them that they are not alone.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Michele Visco".

Pathways Director

Through a Survivor's Eyes

Linda Brinkmann



I AM GRATEFUL...

If Ovarian Cancer is the "Whisperer" Cancer, then Primary Peritoneal Disease is the "Whisperers of Whisperers". This Disease starts at Stage III and is very hard to detect as generally no tumors are discovered on a CT scan, only a possible thickening of the abdominal wall until very advanced.

As the saga, goes, I had some astute doctors who eventually diagnosed my disease.

It began in the fall of 2009 when a pain in my abdomen appeared after reupholstering some furniture. It stubbornly would not subside. The CT scans only showed a thickening of the abdominal wall but nothing more. No one could tell me what was wrong. In the spring of 2010, I began feeling even worse and went to a gastroenterologist who through the CA125 blood test determined it was OB GYN related. I immediately went to my OB GYN who saved my life by declaring that I had ovarian cancer in spite of no specific tumors evident. On May 19, 2010, I was operated on by Dr. Brian Slomovitz to remove my ovaries, and in so doing, they discovered my future fate of dealing with this disease. I was placed on a clinical trial with Avastin at the Carol Simon Center. The disease returned in March 2012 when I was in the hospital for 8 days as three tumors tried to strangle my colon.

But I was undaunted and recovered! This disease returned again in 2013, but no surgery was required and I am currently receiving monthly chemotherapy. On this journey I have been blessed to have discovered beautiful healing places with loving and caring people, one of which is Pathways.

As my OB-GYN told me at the beginning, with cancer, 98% of this will be mental. And the "mind monkeys" can go wild at times. At Pathways I have participated in the Group Fitness Classes, the OB GYN support group, Healing Foods classes, and the Women's Cancer Teaching Project. I have witnessed both being a participant and recipient of the food preparation for the Pathways Cooks Project.

The amazing people that I have discovered through Pathways continue my healing journey!

I am GRATEFUL!

Thank you, Pathways Spring donors!

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COMMUNITY SERVICE

Pathways Cooks

Survivors and community volunteers prepare and deliver nutrient rich whole foods meals to female cancer patients and their families.

Pathways Financial Assistance Fund

Provides limited aid to women with cancer who are medically underserved, uninsured or who demonstrate financial need.

Funding for this program is urgent, please consider donating.

EDUCATION

The Women's Cancer Teaching Project

Trained breast and ovarian cancer survivors (Patient Educators) provide educational programs to physicians, residents, medical students, nurses and other health care professionals.

Healing Foods For Survivors

Cooking demonstrations designed to give survivors the knowledge and skills to nourish themselves with delicious, cancer-fighting, whole foods meals.

WELLNESS

Pathways Team SOS (Save Our Sisters)

Survivors' Dragon Boat team practices at Lake Parsippany from April to October.

Gentle Yoga Tuesday evenings & Saturday mornings.

Meditation Reiki Healing Circle Wednesday evenings once a month. Guided meditation and chair Reiki treatments.

SisterStrong

Tuesdays, Fitness for women recovering from surgery & treatment

SUPPORT GROUPS

Gynecological cancer

Alternating Tuesday afternoons.

Breast cancer

Alternating Thursday evenings.

Grupo de Apoyo Mujeres con Cancer

Cada otro Sabado por la mañana.

For more information on all Pathways Programs call 908-273-4242 Email Pathways@TheConnectionOnline.org. Visit TheConnectionOnline.org

**Please send this form, along with
your donation, payable to: Pathways**

The Connection | 79 Maple Street | Summit, NJ 07901
or make your donation online at TheConnectionOnline.org
(under the Community Service dropdown bar)

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PATHWAYS
*Support, Education and Wellness
for Women with Cancer*

Pathway's Teaching Project



The Pathways Women's Cancer Teaching Project provides an opportunity for healthcare professionals to increase their understanding of the perspectives, stresses and needs of women with cancer, enabling them to become more empathic and interpersonally effective at providing care. Through the Teaching Project, female breast and gynecological cancer survivors are trained to provide educational programs to residents, physicians, nurses, physician assistants, medical students and other hospital professionals and the community. These "Patient Educators" conduct panel and one-on-one teaching sessions that focus on the impact of receiving a cancer diagnosis; interactions with physicians and the healthcare system; and the reality of living with cancer.

This project is one of a kind in that it provides the medical community a unique opportunity to engage in a conversation about the humanistic aspects of medical care with patients in a most intimate way so as to understand the

"whole person" patient experience. At the same time, as patients work with other survivors in a professional capacity – discussing both the challenging and positive details of their treatment and its aftermath and responding to questions from the audience, a deeper understanding of their experience can be realized. Survivors appreciate this opportunity which can help them make meaning of their disease in a way that supports their healing beyond measure.

The Project currently provides sessions annually at a total of 21 sites, including 9 area hospitals; medical and nursing schools; and physician assistant and hospital chaplaincy training programs. Since 2012 special sessions have been conducted for larger audiences, including the Leadership Development and Humanism in Medicine Conferences which both took place at Overlook Hospital, a Medical Humanities Conference at Drew University, a Survivorship Symposium at Overlook Hospital and medical student conferences at Robert Wood Johnson and Columbia University.

This project has been generously funded by the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the Head Family Charitable Foundation.

Art in Autumn

6th annual Exhibit on display through October 31st – come visit!

One of the highlights of the fall season at The Connection is our annual exhibition "Art in Autumn." This is our 6th display of artwork created by cancer survivors who are also novice and professional artists. Running September through October 31st,



our exhibition features work in celebration of Gynecological and Breast Cancer Awareness months. This fall, 35 pieces by ten different artists are shown, some for sale with a portion of the proceeds supporting various Pathways programs. EJ Davis returns with 10 beautiful photographs. Also returning are Fran Goodin, displaying ZenTangles she has created with ink and pencil and Katie Weiss with a collection of

water color and oil paintings. Please stop by The Connection and take a look at the amazing photographs, paintings, prints and more on display. You will not be disappointed!

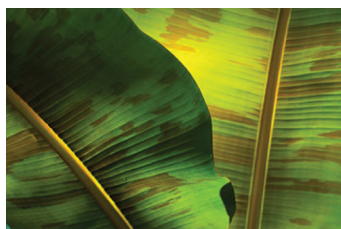


Photo credit: EJ Davis,
Two Leaves at the Arboretum

DragonBoating



Team SOS is wrapping up another successful season! We practice locally at Lake Parsippany, and this year, our team, comprised of 35 survivors and their supporters, paddled in 5 races up and down the east coast. Plans are well underway for the International Breast Cancer Survivor Festival in Sarasota, Florida in **October 2014**. Our goal is to **raise \$22,000** to finance this trip; which occurs once every four years, as over 100 breast cancer survivor teams from all over the world paddle alongside one another, embracing life after cancer. Support our efforts to get to Sarasota by sending your tax deductible donation to Pathways today, or **make an online donation** at TheConnectionOnline.org; you'll find [Pathways Women's Cancer Support](#) under the Community Service drop down bar. Note that your donation is for Team SOS in Sarasota!

What's Happening at Pathways!



SISTERSTRONG IS HERE!

SisterStrong: a Fitness Program led by physical therapist Heather Ferrara

This fall we introduce our newest program – SisterStrong. This class is held every Tuesday from 1:15 to 2 pm and is led by

physical therapist Heather Ferrara of Overlook Medical Center. Participants will engage in a combination of light fitness with weights and bands and exercises to improve range of motion and core strength. In addition, simple relaxation and stress management techniques will be introduced and practiced. Join other Pathways members for this class designed for those new to exercise programs or more experienced fitness enthusiasts who are adjusting to challenges experienced as a result of their treatment.

Gentle Yoga Class offered twice a week

Gentle Yoga promotes personal wellness and a sense of community for cancer survivors. Experienced Yoga instructor Jana Huba encourages participation at a level that makes each member comfortable, and suggests modified poses for those experiencing specific challenges. Regular participants will note increased flexibility and core strength, as well as the ability to relax using simple calming techniques such as focusing on their breath. It is held on Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings.



Gynecological and Breast Cancer Support Groups

The Gynecological group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday afternoons of each month. The Breast group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday evenings of each month. Women who have been diagnosed with one of these types of cancers, regardless of their stage or type of treatment, are welcome to join us. Call Michele Visco, 908-273-4242 for more information.

Grupo de Apoyo Mujeres con Cancer

Cada otro Sabado por la mañana.



FALL WORKSHOPS

ZENTANGLES

Fran Goodin will offer a ZenTangle workshop to the Pathways community on October 20th. Her ZenTangles are featured in our Art in

Autumn Exhibition this year – so stop by and take a look if you are curious about this simple, creative way to bring about a sense of relaxation. In this workshop you will create beautiful art using only a pen, pencil, paper and eraser. As a novice, I can assure you that you don't need to be an "artist" to enjoy making these beautiful pieces created by following designs of repetitive patterns. Time spent "doodling" in quiet meditation promotes a wonderfully relaxed state. Join us from 11:30 to 1:30 on the 20th and experience the art of ZenTangling. All materials will be provided, registration is required.



Cultivating Happiness Workshop led by Michele Visco, LPC

Michele Visco draws from 18 years of experience as an oncology counselor, as well as her own cancer

journey, to offer a workshop this November entitled "Cultivating Happiness." During and after treatment daily practices such as stress management, mindfulness and maintaining a sense of gratitude can be very healing and bring about feelings of calm and peace.

In this interactive workshop, coping skills will be introduced and practiced and participants will discuss topics as such as finding joy in the everyday and the gifts of helping others in our search to find meaning in our cancer experience. Identify ways to endure the challenges of treatment and long term survivorship and also become more aware of the power that each of us possesses to influence our experience of happiness. Participants will gain inspiration from one another as they focus on the positives in their lives and begin to more actively sow the seeds of their own happiness. Women with a history of any type of cancer and who are at any stage of diagnosis, treatment and recovery are invited to attend. Registration will be required.