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for women & families
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PATHWAYS

SPRING 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.

Project hits unprecedented number!

2012 was the strongest year yet for The Women's Cancer Teaching Project, training more than 500 residents, medical, nursing, and physician assistant students through our customary panel and interview educational sessions. In addition, Lesley Andrews, our Teaching Project Manager, spoke to an additional 450 hospital administrators, medical humanities students, professors and physicians at a Humanism in Medicine Conference and a Leadership Conference. One of the 20 sites at which we provide sessions each year utilizes the Women's Cancer Teaching Project in a very unique way. Under the guidance of Jill Gora, MD, FAAFP, Assistant Director, Somerset Family Medicine Residency Program, and Barbara Franzblau, MSW, LCSW, Associate Director, residents are prepared for and then videotaped during their interview sessions with Pathways trained Patient Educators.

"Somerset has fully embraced the Pathways Women's Cancer Teaching Project



Barbara Franzblau, Elham Siddiqui and Michele Visco

and now formally includes the panel discussion and the 1-to-1 interviews in our Behavioral Health curriculum. The Project provides our resident physicians with a remarkable opportunity to develop their Patient Care and Interpersonal/Communication Skills. This year we focused the panel session on the primary care physician's role in helping patients live with a cancer diagnosis. We also developed a set of questions for residents to ask during the 1-to-1 interviews that are designed to help them practice putting patients at ease while discussing sensitive issues. Each resident's interview was videotaped and will be reviewed with the Residency Program's Behavioral Scientist. This will enable residents to watch their interviews and directly assess their effectiveness at establishing clinical rapport, in addition to receiving the written feedback from Patient Educators. Comments from our residents ranged from "I wish the interview could have lasted an hour!" to "Thank you -- I never sat and talked to a patient about the strictly 'non-medical' parts of their illness before." Barbara Franzblau, Associate Director, Somerset Family Medicine Residency Program

These Pathways Teaching Project taped interviews provide valuable insight used to assess the resident's core competencies related to the ACGME guidelines for resident training. Through this process, they are able to observe each resident's skill at communicating effectively and respectfully with a patient both verbally and non-verbally, comfort in discussing "challenging and at times painful" topics, and ability to respond empathetically and compassionately to a patient's emotional responses.

From the Director



Michele Visco

Through a Survivor's Eyes



EJ Davis

Dear Pathways Friends,

Today is my 51st birthday, and as a survivor I am so happy to be celebrating it. The negative feelings people have toward their birthdays has always confused me, because I have always enjoyed them, and despite or maybe because I am getting older (considering the alternative, that's not so bad!), I appreciate them.

I don't love the fact that my body is feeling older, however. Everyone who knows me well knows what a slow study I have been with regard to my own health. Ah, I knew I should eat better and exercise, but I didn't have the time to think about it, I didn't want to be told what to do, and wasn't I hearty enough, anyway? I was the most reluctant exerciser that I knew!

Funny enough, when I started exercising for real last November and eating better last year, I started to feel so much better. More energized, more comfortable in my own skin, and more likely to keep exercising and eating well. I wish I could say that I always make the right decision with respect to my personal health, but I can't. It doesn't really matter, though, so long as most of the time I am making healthier choices. I started small without making a huge commitment to change, and this has been much more sustainable for me.

Find your reason to start feeling better, and commit to making small changes. The better you feel, the more motivated you will be to continue to embrace your own health! Take a look inside at all of the interesting ways that Pathways offers to help you in your journey toward well-being. I promise that if I can change my thinking about exercising and eating, you can too!

Survivors benefit from the support and camaraderie of others who know what they have been through. Your support makes it possible for us to continue to offer programs which benefit all women with cancer. **The needs are so many, and our resources so limited.** Please donate today to help women regain control of their health and their lives after cancer.

Take care,

Michele Visco



SURROUNDED BY POSITIVE PEOPLE...

As I look back on my past 6 years of survivorship, there are a few significant "stand-outs."

*The first is being part of the Pathways Women's Cancer Teaching Project as a Patient Educator and Board Member. I never imagined that taking part as a panelist and interviewee would impact my **own** wellness. It really makes sense when you think about it... being able to speak about your personal story to a groups of interns, residents, clergy and nursing students would seem daunting to some, but it has been like self-therapy to me. In doing so, I was literally "raised-up" along with my self-esteem. Each time that I tell my story - and it seems to morph as time goes by - I gain new insight into what I went through emotionally and medically. It is clear to me now how important it is to share my path as a cancer patient and survivor with both healthcare professionals and cancer patients alike.*

I have made new friends through this project, and that is not always easy when you're in your sixties. The women I have met are strong, interesting and like me, willing to bare their souls to illustrate so personally how important it is for healthcare professionals to adopt a humanistic approach to treating female cancer patients. We commiserate and find strength in sharing our stories with each other. We are champions of reaching out to the newly diagnosed to help them through their journeys. I continue to be amazed that I still get phone calls from friends who want me to speak to their friends who have just been diagnosed with breast cancer. I think that just hearing about what I went through and that I am feeling fine can be a great comfort to others.

The second is that I find myself surrounded by positive people now. Through this journey I have forgiven a few people along the way and this has unburdened my soul. Now I am ready to move forward, continuing to meet new people and embracing my future and all the adventures that are in store for me!

Pathways Supports the Whole Person...

BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT!



While the availability of programs that address the whole person - body, mind and spirit – are not unique, the attachment and affection women feel for others who have been through a similar experience is palpable at Pathways. Special programs such as Cancer Recovery Fitness, Gentle Yoga, Dragon Boating, Pathways Cooks, Healing Foods, Support Groups, Meditation and the Women's Cancer Teaching Project help women heal from and make some meaning of their experience, alongside others who "get it."

Our list of programs may have changed over the years, but the Pathways mission has remained the same since 1993 – to provide support, education and wellness programs to women with cancer, creating a community in which shared experiences lead to personal growth and healing. At the very core of Pathways is the unifying theme of Connection – women will seek out ways to connect with other women, and especially at times of great stress. When a woman has been diagnosed with cancer, the knowledge that she is not alone in what she is thinking and feeling provides a tremendous amount of relief and comfort.

Pathways addresses the needs of women with cancer, which may change over time – from the point of diagnosis, during and at the conclusion of treatment, and throughout their survivorship. Programs are designed to help women cope with the stress of their experience and move forward with their lives. The women of Pathways help one another do this as only survivors can – because though everyone is different, they are bonded by their shared cancer experience.

Volunteer Spotlight

Ellen Law

Ellen Law has coached Team SOS NJ since 2007, patiently working with our small crew at first, and guiding Pathways as we built our survivor team to 45 members currently! As a volunteer, she has been influential in



growing the sport of Dragon Boating and helping teams like SOS enable women to engage in an activity that not only heals them, but also helps them regain control of their lives after cancer.

In addition to spending hundreds of hours coaching our team each year, she also organizes volleyball fundraisers (yes, she is a volleyball coach as well!) that have raised thousands of dollars used by Team SOS to pay for membership and race entry fees. In 2014 our team will race in Sarasota at an International Breast Cancer Paddler Commission Dragon Boat Festival with more than 80 teams from around the world!

In the end, Ellen is our greatest cheerleader, and we are grateful for all of the time she devotes to coaching Team SOS. Although she stands and steers us from the back of the boat, we know that she stands alongside every one of us in our journey back to health!

ART!
IN AUTUMN

Save the Date!
September 19th

WINE & CHEESE RECEPTION

We celebrate Ovarian and Breast Cancer Awareness Months in September & October by displaying survivors' artwork throughout The Connection!

Submissions by novices & professionals welcome!

CALL MICHELE VISCO FOR DETAILS
908-273-4242

Thank you, Pathways donors!

\$1,000 + Sustaining Benefactors

Joe and Ann Berkery
Drs. Catherine and John Cunningham
Bob and Mary Hill
Ellen Law's Volleyball Fundraiser for Team SOS
Gail Scudellari

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Ann Berkery in honor of our Gynecological Cancer Support Group
Pat and Philip Murphy-Ciriello for Pathways Cooks
Lynn Franklin in honor of all Ovarian Cancer Survivors
Jackie and Stuart Fried for Pathways Cooks
Margaret McHugh Hagen in honor of Michele Visco and in memory of Bredeen McGlynn
Diane Hrobsky in honor of Ann Berkery, Mary Hill and Sandy Johanson
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Jeanne Molinari in honor of Joanne DeLuca
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Trudie's Treasures Fundraiser for Team SOS
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Rosalind Kendellen
Patrice Kirkinis in honor of Donna Dwyre
Assata Knox in honor of Aunt Rosa and in memory of Tiffany Corbett
Stephen and Kerry Kowitt
Judy Krafchick in honor of all Breast Cancer Survivors
Sybil Kramer
Doreen Ladinski
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Rhonda Walker
Carol Watchler and Ann Baker in honor of all Survivors and the Pathways Staff
Walter Willinger
Grace Leung Wong
Deborah A. Woodbury
Elaine Yamin in honor of Peggy McHugh Hagen
Kathleen Zerweck

MANY THANKS TO :

Dennis Ingui, CEO of Aurorae for his donation of Yoga mats for our Gentle Yoga participants,
www.auroraeyoga.com

What's Happening at Pathways!

Team SOS launched its 6th season on April 15th. Eleven newcomers join 35 experienced paddlers for what promises to be our best season yet! Team SOS is open to female survivors of any type of cancer, and women who support their cause. It's an exhilarating experience to paddle in unison with 19 other women! A dragon boat is similar to a 40 foot long canoe, which rides low to the water and powers along smoothly when everyone is working together.



As in the past, this year we plan to enter 5 races as a team, including Paddle for Pink, a fundraiser for the Breast Cancer Resource center of Princeton. It's on June 8 at Mercer Park – come cheer us on if you want to experience a wonderful festival of Chinese culture. Or better yet, join our team and try out dragon boat racing for yourself!

This year and next we will be raising money to fund a trip to the International Breast Cancer Paddler Association race in Sarasota, FL which will take place in October of 2014. It will cost our team more than \$20,000 to send 20 Breast Cancer Survivors and their steerer and drummer to this race that will attract more than 80 Survivor teams from around the world. What a thrilling experience it will be! Occurring once every 4 years, International BCS events are celebrations of survivors from around the world, who embrace life after cancer through the joy of dragon boating with their "sisters."

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.

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

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.

Cancer Recovery Fitness Program

Tuesdays, for women recovering from surgery and treatment.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Gynecological cancer

Alternating Tuesday afternoons.

Breast cancer

Alternating Thursday evenings.

Grupo de Apoyo Mujeres con Cancer

1er y 3er Jueves de Cada mes.

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

The Connection | 79 Maple Street | Summit, NJ 07901

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\$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$ _____

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PATHWAYS
Support, Education and Wellness
for Women with Cancer