

BREAST CANCER SURVIVAL CENTER

A Non-Profit Organization Providing
Post-Treatment Support and
Education for Breast Cancer
Survivors and their Families

*Regional Summit Sept. 15
Mercy Center, Madison CT*



Please let us know of others who would like to receive this quarterly newsletter.

Editor's Note: We cannot provide medical advice. Consultation with your doctor is your best source of medical information.

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Inspiration: Life Lessons

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others'. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
16. Life is too short for long pity parties.
17. A writer writes. If you want to be a writer, write.
18. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
19. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
20. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
21. Over-prepare, then go with the flow.
22. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
23. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
24. Frame every so-called disaster with these words: "In five years, will this matter?"
25. Always choose life.
26. Forgive everyone everything.
27. What other people think of you is none of your business.
28. Time heals almost everything. Give time time.
29. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
30. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.
31. Believe in miracles.
32. Growing old beats the alternative.
33. Your children get only one childhood. Make it memorable.
34. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
35. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
36. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
37. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
39. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
40. The best is yet to come.
41. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
42. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
43. If you don't ask, you don't get.
44. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

Breast Cancer Survival Center

Providing Post-Treatment Support and Education

May 2007 Volume 8, Number 1

www.breastcancersurvival.org

Organic Coach Addresses Lifestyle Changes after Breast Cancer

Interview By Laurie Forcade

Coming Events

Support Group Chew & Chats

April 10, 24

May 8, 22

June 12

September 11, 25

October 9, 23

November 13, 27

December 11

Room 116, West Campus, Norwalk Community College, 6 p.m.

One-Day Retreat for Survivors

April 28, 2007

St. Paul's Church on the Green

Norwalk, CT (See registration form in this newsletter)

Healthy Choice Store Tour

May 21, 10 a.m.

Wild Oats, Westport, CT

Presenter: Gina Paterno Villalobos

Northeast Regional Summit for Survivors

September 15

Mercy Center, Madison, CT

Presented in collaboration with the Lance Armstrong Foundation

Eighth Annual Celebrate Life! Fashion Show and Brunch

October 14, 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Shore and Country Club
East Norwalk

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Candle Lighting Ceremonies

October 2007

For Information, (203) 857-7304

e-mail cancersurvival@aol.com

www.breastcancersurvival.org

Thanks to Wilton Woman's Club and Novartis Oncology for underwriting this newsletter.

Gina Paterno Villalobos, seven-year survivor, spoke at the Breast Cancer Survival Center 2007 kickoff group meeting. Gina, of Greenwich and a model in our October 2006 *Celebrate Life!* fashion show, is an "organic coach" who changed her entire lifestyle after her breast cancer diagnosis. She now makes it her life's work to teach about nutrition, give macrobiotic cooking classes, and counsel people about the benefits of good foods.

Though the connection between breast cancer and diet is controversial, Gina recommends eating less sugar and refined or processed foods and more organic whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

She comments: "Diet directly impacts our health. The American Cancer Society acknowledges that approximately 1/3 of all cancers can be prevented by proper diet and exercise. But many of us forget this in our busy daily lives. In my own personal healing journey and recovery from breast cancer, I have found that macrobiotics has given me a wonderful tool to manage and take responsibility for my own health."



"From a macrobiotic perspective, there are certain categories of foods that potentially contribute more to breast cancer versus other diseases, so these are the foods that I am careful with. I have a high-risk profile: I was diagnosed with breast cancer at 40, Stage 3C with 13+ nodes, so my view is I control what I can. I feel this is crucial in prevention of both disease and recurrence. It's very important to closely examine both dietary and lifestyle factors. All facets of our lives are connected; our bodies are not separate from our mind, emotions, environment etc. Everything interacts with each other.

She continued: "A good and basic place to start is with food, particularly because in today's world so much of it is highly processed and refined, loaded with chemicals, and grown with all sorts of pesticides.

"A 'macrobiotic' lifestyle stands for healthy living with a keen sense of awareness of ourselves, our environment and our interaction with that environment. It means eating a diet full of healthy foods high in fiber, low in fat, minimally processed, nutrient-dense and anti-inflammatory: organic whole foods, more whole vs. refined grains, a great assortment of vegetables, lots of beans and legumes and bean products, and eating animal foods commensurate with one's level of physical activity and actual needs, more fish vs. meats or poultry, and with that, more wild white fish, wild salmon and organic meats and poultry.

"Healthy eating will vary by person. To keep it simple, a healthy balanced day of eating might consist of something like steel cut oats for breakfast, miso soup [see p.2 recipe] and whole wheat burrito filled with brown rice and beans and veggies, with a little sauerkraut and some steamed bok choy or broccoli for lunch; an a quinoa dish with halibut, baked squash, a side salad with a tahini dressing, and apple pudding for dinner, ideally all organic.

"The foods you eat the most are the ones to buy 'organic,' definitely eggs and dairy if you eat them; fruits, berries and apples-- in particular; poultry and meats," she said.

Gina's mottos are: "Think Wholistically, Live Organically"™ and "Whole Foods For Healthy Living."™ "I am passionate about what I do and about helping people in whatever way I can." Gina Paterno Villalobos can be reached at gina@theorganiccoach.com or at (914) 841-1113.

Survivors Tell their Stories

Letter from the Director

Thanks to all who responded to our recent newsletter survey. The results showed that many readers want to hear more personal survivor stories, like the wonderful and moving one Laurie Forcade shared about modeling in our October 2006 *Celebrate Life!* fashion show.

These are the stories that help us so much on our wellness journey. At last fall's Lance Armstrong Foundation national survivors' summit, with all the professional speakers we heard, it was folks like Elizabeth Edwards (wife of presidential candidate and former Senator John Edwards) and Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, who shared their personal stories of triumph over cancer, that moved the 750 delegates the most.

In response to what you wanted, as you'll see in this issue, we feature

more survivor stories, from the trenches, if you will.

Hopefully, they'll inspire you as much as they inspired us. Every survivor has a story to tell, and we would be proud to run yours if you want to share it with us.

Be well.

Susan Santangelo



CT Survivor Summit

Representatives from eight states met recently at Quinnipiac University in Hamden to begin planning a northeast regional cancer survivors summit.

Everyone present had been a delegate to the October 2006 Lance Armstrong Foundation LiveSTRONG Summit in Austin, TX.

The committee now has an official name, the Cancer Advocates Coalition, and a web address, www.canceradvocatescoalition.org. For up-to-date information on summit plans, check it out.

Committee pictured left to right: Susan Santangelo, co-chair, Connecticut; Michelle Ziomek, secretary, Massachusetts; Ron Bye, chairman, New Hampshire; Dave Barnes, New Jersey; Sally Santi, Pennsylvania; Linda Billy, New York; Stephanie Fraser, Vermont; Linda Dziobek, Rhode Island. Not pictured: Debbie Violette, Maine.

Save the Date

Saturday, September 15

Northeast Regional Cancer Survivors Summit

Mercy Center by the Sea,
Madison, CT.

Details to follow.



Gina's Healthy Miso Soup

Ingredients

Miso ("Miso Master" brand, 2-year aged Barley Miso, or any 3-year aged "South River" Miso. Use 1 rounded tsp. of Miso paste per 1 cup water, quantity of Miso as desired

Wakame (1/2 tsp. of pre-cut Wakame or 1" piece if from whole Wakame strip)

Thinly sliced onions, to taste

Thinly sliced green cabbage, as desired

Carrots cut in half moon slices (cut lengthwise in half, then cut half again into halfmoon slices)

Water (1 cup per 1 rounded tsp of Miso paste)

Parsley or scallions for garnish

Directions

Soak Wakame in water until soft, about 3 minutes

Slice all the vegetables

Throw out soaking water of Wakame once it's softer, then add the soaked Wakame and sliced vegetables in pot of fresh water

Bring mixture to boil, uncovered

Allow mixture to simmer

Dilute Miso paste in small bowl with a few tbsp of water to make into a liquid. Add to simmering water.

Cover and simmer for additional 2-3 minutes.

Garnish with parsley or scallions.



Presents

A Single-Day Retreat for Breast Cancer Survivors April 28, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Guild Room and Healing Garden
St. Paul's on the Green
Norwalk, CT

This retreat will address the issues and concerns of women who have completed treatment for Breast Cancer in an informal and supportive setting.

Coordinators: Nina Marino, LCSW, and Lee Ann Fallet, MA, CRC, OTR/L.

For the past six years, Lee and Nina have been planning and leading retreats for the BCSC that have allowed participants to identify and explore opportunities for healing, self- discovery and personal growth.

Registration Fee: \$45 advance/\$50 at the door (includes continental breakfast and lunch).

Registration Deadline: April 21, 2007

For more information, please call 203-857-7304; e-mail us at cancersurvival2@aol.com or visit our web site www.breastcancersurvival.org

To register: please complete this form and mail with \$45 registration fee to: Lee Fallet, BCSC, 140 Ingleside Road, Fairfield, CT 06824-1908. Please make checks payable to BCSC.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (Home) _____ **(Cell)** _____

E-Mail _____

Mother's Day Donation

Honor Mom This Mother's Day

Make a contribution to the Breast Cancer Survival Center and we'll send Mom a lovely acknowledgement gift from you.



- Donation \$25-49
Sport socks, Circle one: (black) (white)
- Donation \$50-100
"Meg" Bear, Circle one: (white) (light brown) (dark brown)

My Name (please print)

Address

City, State, Zip

Daytime phone/e-mail

In honor of:

Mother's Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Please make checks payable to Breast Cancer Survival Center and mail to: **BCSC, 4 Drummers Trail, Old Saybrook, CT 06475.** Thank you. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Hope in Art

By Bridget Smith
Survivor and 2006 BCSC Model

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in April 2006, at the age of 30. I had my radiation treatments at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey. In the treatment room, I noticed a few artistic painted ceiling tiles, to give patients something pleasant to look at while they were undergoing the radiation treatment. I decided I wanted to do one too.

On my last day of treatment, I took a blank tile home with me and it sat in my art room for a few weeks until I got inspired. I wanted my painting to give hope and comfort to the women getting treatment, so I decided to use chevrons for protection and the colors I chose represent love.

The characters in the tile are running across it, showing that they are free to do whatever they want! Doing the painting for the hospital was my way of saying thank you to everyone there at the Cancer Center who helped me and the many other women before me and after me. I hope the patients after me will look up at the ceiling and see that another woman survived and is giving them strength to get through their cancer too.



Bridget Smith shows tile she created after her treatment



Breast Cancer In the News

"Cancer Relapse Test Gets FDA Approval."

A new genetic test that tries to predict whether a woman with breast cancer will have a relapse won approval yesterday from the Food and Drug Administration—a step toward an era in which medical treatments are personalized for each patient. The approval was the first ever of such a complex genetic test, not only the first for breast cancer relapse....MammaPrint, developed by scientists in the Netherlands, examines the pattern of activity of 70 specific genes in a breast tumor after its removal by surgery. Associated Press, 2/7/07.

"Cancer Patients Gain Say in Drug Approvals."

A cancer drug's effectiveness has long been measured in two important ways: whether it shrinks a tumor and whether it extends patients' lives. But researchers and regulators are paying increasing attention to another criterion: how a patient feels while taking this medicine. In an important change, cancer patients' own assessments of how a drug is working, called patient-reported outcomes of PROs, are increasingly part of the drug-approval process at the Food and Drug Administration....One recent study demonstrated that clinicians tend to underestimate subtle signs of problems that patients can pick up on earlier...Patients reporting numbness in the hands or feet, a symptom caused by some anticancer drugs, were able to detect the problem months before the clinician reports did.

Wall Street Journal, 2/13/07.

"New Type of Ultrasound May Replace Biopsies in Detecting Breast Cancer."

Finding a lump in the breast is a frightening moment for a woman.... Doctors remove suspicious cells from the breast to examine under a microscope. It can take days or longer for the...results. That wait may shorten to minutes with an experimental, noninvasive technique: using ultrasound in a new way to tell the difference between cancerous tumors and harmless, or benign, ones. In a small study of 80 women, the technique, called elastography, distinguished harmless lumps from malignant ones with nearly 100 percent accuracy. Associated Press, 12/2/06

"Doctors Back New Approach on Second Opinion."

Dr. Michael Sabel, a University of Michigan breast cancer surgeon, and author of a new study, finds that a team approach to cancer treatment provides more accurate assessments than serial doc-shopping for a second opinion, says Lauren Neergaard, an Associated Press medical writer. The team reviews are important because of the prevalence of inaccurate treatment assessments by individual doctors, Neergaard says. In Sabel's study alone, of 149 breast cancer patients, half had their initial treatment changed when they sought a review (by other doctors). Yahoo News, 1/3/07

Survivors' Story

Reap Our Inner Harvest

by Adair Wilson Heitman, four year survivor

As a Fairfield resident and a breast cancer survivor, October is not only a beautiful month to live in our tree-filled coastal community, October is a month in which we can all focus on Breast Cancer Awareness. Not that I need a special month to remind me. Just looking down at my Mt. Everest on one side of my chest and my meadow on the other side of my chest is a daily reminder of the grace of being alive.

As women we need courage not only to survive this crazy epidemic of a disease but to do so on our own terms. As human beings we need strength to encourage our loved ones to chart their own journeys. I learned the hard way that the only person who has the right to make a choice in regard to diagnosis, treatment and recovery is the person with cancer. No one else has the right to dictate choice. Not our doctors, not our spouses, not our friends. They can be our consultants, our sounding boards and we can cry in their arms, but they are not our decision makers. We all have the right to live and sometimes to die, our way.

Charting my own course through my breast cancer journey wasn't easy, yet it helped me define my life. I knew I was responsible for my own choices and I have no regrets. Choosing not to rush into things gave me time to research, time to get my feet planted and time to start natural healing options first before proceeding to allopathic medicine. On my journey, the marriage of the two healing modalities worked for me.

After my mastectomy I'm still happy with my decision not have my beautiful, full breast reconstructed. I love my body, with one ample and lovely breast on the left and on the right a flat, tranquil side, 12-inch scar and all. I am simply asymmetrical. I love my body just the way it is. My beloved husband delights in my presence and when I hug our young son my heart is closer to his.

It took trial and error to find the right allopathic doctor for me. My search paid off in riches beyond belief. Not only did I find a top-notch surgical oncologist who specialized in the breast, she did not criticize my propensity for natural healing. The gifts of

modern surgical procedures and a skilled surgeon were able to cut out the cancer, I am lucky and I am grateful. Naturopathic medicine was able to fortify my body before, during and after. My mind, emotions and spirit were enlightened as I combined the healing arts of meditation, working with the wisdom of my nighttime dreams, insightful journaling and using philosophical and metaphysical healing. I did energy work, took vitamins, made diet, life and work-style changes. I hired experts in and relied on massage therapy, art therapy and physical therapy. I still see a chiropractor to help me stay aligned.

I risked going into the unknown to find my own answers, and by doing so, my breast cancer journey deepened my connection not only to my family, and myself but also to the human race and to the limitless wonder of the natural world. I let my mind, body and spirit be actively involved in my whole process of discovery and recovery.

While I'm out and about in my professional or play clothes, I usually wear my temporary prosthesis., I find it's politer in society, and the weight of the prosthesis helps my balance. When you see me though in my bathing suit, without the prosthesis, swimming at the YMCA, or at Jennings, Penfield, or Southport beaches, or Lake Mohegan, don't turn your eyes away. I'm OK. If you exercise next to me in my cardio and strength class or see me afterwards at The Pantry, in my exercise clothes only wearing a sports bra without my prosthesis under my shirt, don't be embarrassed, I'm not! I'm not sorry or sad; you don't need to be either. I am a very happy and proud one-breasted woman.

During this month of cooler weather as we watch our abundant trees turn into the colors of their autumn splendor, let's all turn to reap our own inner harvest, one of love, one of joy and one of acceptance. We all have the right to navigate our cancer journeys our own ways. Let's enjoy our diversity in this exquisite bounty we call life.

Also printed as a letter to the editor in the *Fairfield (CT) Citizen-News*.

Want to be a Supermodel?

Planning has begun for our eight annual Celebrate Life! fashion show and brunch, to be held Sunday, October 14, at Shore and Country Club in East Norwalk.

Want to be one of our superstar models this year?

No experience necessary! Contact us by voice at 203-857-7304, or by e-mail, cancersurvival@aol.com, and we'll sign you up.

You'll have a wonderful time, guaranteed.

April Retreat

by Lee Fallett

In her book *The Spiritual Activist*, Claudia Horwitz had this to say about healing and retreats: "Many people who easily muster tremendous discipline and dedication for their families, their work, or their communities find it hard to set aside a fraction of that time for their own healing and transformation."

"A retreat can be a period of rest and renewal. A day spent in a quiet location with no distractions can be an effective way to rejuvenate."

Please join us on April 28 to identify and explore opportunities for healing, self-discovery and personal growth. A registration flyer is included in this newsletter.

Please register as soon as possible to be sure of a place. This is a wonderful healing opportunity for all survivors.