

BREAST CANCER SURVIVAL CENTER

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www.breastcancersurvival.org

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

*Weekend Retreat June 2-4
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.*

Inspiration

I wish you a day of ordinary mira-
cles

A fresh pot of coffee you didn't
make yourself.

An unexpected phone call from
an old friend.

Green stoplights on your way to
work or shop.

I wish you a day of little things to
rejoice in...

The fastest line at the grocery
store.

A good sing-along song on the
radio.

Your keys right where you look.

I wish you a day of happiness and
perfection

I wish you little bite-size pieces of
perfection

that give you the funny feeling
that the Lord is smiling on you,

holding you so gently because
you are someone special and
rare.

I wish you a day of peace,
happiness and joy.

Remember to make the time
TODAY,

To do something special
for a total stranger.

Have a TERRIFIC day!

Breast Cancer Survival Center

Providing Post-Treatment Support and Education

May 2006 Volume 7, Number 1

www.breastcancersurvival.org

Survive and Thrive: Tips For Surviving Breast Cancer

By Sheryl Kraft

Coming Events

Support/Discussion Groups 2006

May 9,
June 13, 27
September 12, 26
October 10, 24
November 14, 28
December 12

Special Speaker

Michelle Bartlett
Nutritionist
May 23

Fairfield County Women's Center,
Room 116, West Campus
Norwalk Community College
5:30 p.m.

Weekend Retreat for Breast Cancer Survivors

June 2, 3, 4, 2006
Mercy Center, Madison, CT

One-day Retreat for Young Survivors

July 15, 2006
St. Paul's Church on the Green,
Norwalk

Seventh Annual *Celebrate Life!* Fashion Show and Brunch, October 1, 2006

Shore and Country Club
East Norwalk, CT

Breast Cancer Awareness Month Candle Lighting Ceremonies

October 2006

For information, (203) 857-7304,
e-mail cancersurvival@aol.com,
or see us on the web at:
www.breastcancersurvival.org.

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

Hearing the diagnosis of breast cancer changes your life forever. But being a survivor doesn't completely take over your life. You're still you, after all. There are ways to make things easier for yourself.

Here are the most important lessons learned during 17 years as a cancer survivor. They can apply to anyone who has been diagnosed with a serious illness.

Set A Time Limit On Your Worrying. It's easy to let worrying about cancer consume all else...but dwelling on it drains you emotionally and physically. Instead, allow yourself 15 minutes a day to think about your fears - and no more. Set an alarm clock, if necessary, to time yourself. It requires great discipline to stop at the bell. It also takes discipline to start - it's common to fear releasing these feelings.

Keep Exercising. Or start, with your doctor's okay. Don't expect peak performance, but do something. Exercise can be a great diversion and a reaffirmation that you're going to be okay. It also helps counter the side effects of chemotherapy, and gives you a serotonin boost. This neurotransmitter helps you overcome depression and fatigue. During my treatment, I continued my regimen of aerobics classes, bike riding and walking on a treadmill, but at lower levels. It's amazing how good I felt after each session.

Eat Your Best. Eat fruits and vegetables. Drink fresh juice and lots of water. This is common sense, but when you are recovering from cancer, you may not pay attention. You owe it to yourself to enjoy healthful pleasures. Eating well gave me a feeling of mastery - I was doing good things for myself. That heightened my commitment to well-being and health.

Inspire Yourself. Before I was diagnosed with cancer, my enjoyment of simple things, like new buds on the trees in the spring, was not as intense. After cancer, the signs of life around me seemed like an extension of my own health.

Empower Yourself. Visualizing positive metaphors lends a feeling of control and eases the stress of recovery. When I was in treatment and riding my bike, each time the pedal went around, I would imagine another cancer cell being stomped out.

Look Ahead. Give yourself something to look forward to. Plan a vacation or family event. Tell yourself, "I'm going to get through this so I can (...)" Fill in your goal.

Look Outward. Support groups are not for everyone, but give them a try. Cancer survivors form a special bond. You can learn a lot from the creative ways other survivors have found to cope. Different people show up at different meetings, so attend a few sessions before deciding whether a support group will work for you.

Enjoy Ordinary Pleasures. Survivors often go into depression and forget the fun in their lives. Don't! Instead, see a funny movie and laugh. When I'm alone, I like to put on disco music and dance. Doing something unexpected can jolt you into a healthier state of mind.

When you were in treatment, someone was always looking after you. When treatment ends, pent-up stress and fear can tumble out. You may still need help and support.

Sheryl Kraft, a Wilton, CT, resident and professional writer, is a board member of the Breast Cancer Survival Center. This article first appeared in Bottom Line/Personal.

Cutting through the Confusion about Fat

Letter from the Director

"There's been a lot of controversy in the media about the pros and cons of low-fat diets. One study announced that just putting older women (and how exactly is that defined?) on a low-fat diet "did not significantly reduce their risk of breast cancer, colon cancer, strokes or heart attacks."

This particular study was released by the Woman's Health Initiative at the Stanford Prevention Research Center, and was funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. The headline on an article read: "Low-Fat Diets, Slim Results," and was published in the Hartford Courant on Page 1, February 8, 2006.

The problem with such a story - and it is only my opinion - is that many women, including breast cancer survivors, probably did not take the time to read the entire article, instead taking the results as permission to go out and order a cheeseburger and fries, with extra cheese.

Reading further in the article, and it took a long time to get to this part, was the following: "Rather than trying to eat low-fat, women should focus on reducing saturated fats and trans fats, the so-called 'bad fats,' while maintaining their intake of 'good' fats, such as vegetable, olive and fish oils....A large and convincing body of evidence shows that eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and low in saturated and trans fats; avoiding smoking; exercising regularly; and maintaining an appropriate weight have a powerful effect on health."

I believe that what we choose to eat and how much or if we choose to exercise contributes in a major, positive way to our overall recovery from breast cancer. In fact, these are things that we as survivors can actually control in our lives.

But all this low-fat controversy is certainly confusing. To try to take the mystery out of what all this means, the Breast Cancer

Survival Center is presenting a talk by **nutritionist Michelle Bartlett**, "Eat Well, Live Well: Healthy Nutrition for a Healthy Life," on **Tuesday, May 23** at 5:30 p.m. at the Fairfield County Women's Center, Room 116 West Campus, Norwalk Community College.

Michelle will also give information on super-market shopping, especially how to read those complicated food labels and make the best, healthiest choices for ourselves and our families.

All are welcome, but seating is limited, so come early to reserve your place.

Susan Santangelo

And for a healthy lasagna recipe you can do at home from the American Institute for Cancer Research, read on.

Save the Dates

Weekend Retreat for Breast Cancer Survivors

June 2, 3, 4, 2006

Mercy Center, Madison, CT

One-day Retreat for Young Survivors

July 15, 2006

St. Paul's Church on the Green,
Norwalk, CT



Providing Post-Treatment Support
and Education for Breast Cancer
Survivors and their Families

Easy Spinach Lasagna

- 2 tsp. oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 (10 oz.) packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- 1 ½ cups part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. dry basil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 3 cups low fat prepared marinara sauce
- 12 pieces dry oven-ready lasagna noodles
- ¼ Parmesan or Romano cheese
- Fresh chopped parsley or basil (optional)

Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees. In large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until the onion begins to turn opaque, about 3-4 minutes. Add the spinach and nutmeg and cook, stirring, until the liquid is absorbed, about 3 minutes.

Remove and spread the mixture into a shallow dish to allow it to cool, about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine the ricotta, mozzarella, egg, oregano, basil, salt and pepper. Set aside one-half of marinara sauce for the top of the lasagna. In a 9 x 13-inch glass baking pan, pour a thick coating of marinara sauce. Cover it with three uncooked lasagna noodles. Top the noodles with one third of the spinach, followed by one third of the cheese mixture.

Repeat the layering process, beginning with the sauce, three times. Pour the reserved half cup of marinara sauce over the top and sprinkle it with Parmesan cheese. Cover the dish with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove the foil and continue baking until the noodles are cooked through, 12-15 minutes. Let it cool and cut it into sections. Sprinkle with fresh chopped parsley and basil, if desired.

Makes 12 servings. Per serving: 217 calories, 8g. total fat (4 g. saturated fat), 24 g. carbohydrate, 12 g. protein, 3g. dietary fiber, 417 mg. sodium. This meal can also be prepared in advance, cut into individual servings, and frozen.



Presents

Wellness 101 Weekend

for Breast Cancer Survivors

June 2, 5:30 p.m. - June 4, 1:00 p.m.

SeaScape on Long Island Sound

Mercy Center, Madison, CT

This weekend retreat features: Labyrinth Walks * Discussions * Gentle Yoga * Music * Personal Reflective Time *, Laughter and most of all support.

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

For the past five 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: \$225 (includes lodging and all meals)

Registration Deadline: May 21, 2006

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

To register, please complete this form and mail to: BCSC, 4 Drummers Trail, Old Saybrook, CT 04475. Please make checks payable to the BCSC.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Spring-Summer Order Form

BREAST CANCER SURVIVAL CENTER

Providing Post-Treatment Support and Education

Sock It to Breast Cancer!™ socks

Sports Bras with the Breast Cancer survival candle logo

Sock It to Breast Cancer!™ bear

Running Shorts with logo



Selection	Quantity	Price	Total
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Socks			
Trouser socks, black		\$10.00	
Sport socks, white		\$10.00	
Sports Bra (Circle size)			
L		\$20.00	
XL		\$20.00	
"Meg" Bear			
White		\$20.00	
Light Brown		\$20.00	
Dark Brown		\$20.00	
Running Shorts (Circle size)			
L		\$15.00	
XL		\$15.00	
Shipping	Under \$20	\$ 2.50	
	\$20 and up	\$ 4.50	

TOTAL

My Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone/e-mail _____

I Would Like to Donate \$500, \$250, \$100, \$50, \$25, Other _____

Please accept my tax-deductible contribution to help provide support and education to breast cancer survivors and their families.

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 fullest extent allowed by law.

Breast Cancer In the News

"A Cancer Drug Shows Promise, at a Price That Many Can't Pay," *New York Times*, February 15, 2006.

Doctors are excited about the prospect of Avastin, a drug already widely used for colon cancer, as a crucial new treatment for breast and lung cancer, too. But doctors are cringing at the price the maker, Genentech, plans to charge for it: about \$100,000 a year. That price, about double the current level as a colon cancer treatment, would raise Avastin to an annual cost typically found only for medicines used to treat rare diseases that affect small numbers of patients....Genentech intends to file an application later this year with the Food and Drug Administration to expand the drug's label to include treatment for breast and lung cancer....For now, insurers are deciding case by case whether to cover Avastin for breast and lung cancer, and in many instances they are rejecting coverage or at least delaying decisions.

"Study Challenges Tie of Estrogen Use To Breast Cancer," *Wall Street Journal*, April 12, 2006.

For many years doctors have warned that using the hormone estrogen during menopause puts a woman at higher risk for breast cancer. Now data on thousands of women suggest that the warning may have been unnecessary. Investigators in the federally funded Women's Health Initiative found that using estrogen doesn't increase the risk of breast cancer and may even lower it. Estrogen users were 20% less likely to develop breast cancer after an average of taking the drug than women taking a placebo, according to results reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

"Drug Cuts Cancer Risk," *Hartford Courant*, April 18, 2006.

The osteoporosis drug raloxifene offers women at high risk of breast cancer as much protection against developing the disease as tamoxifen, the current standard of cancer prevention, according to a recently released study. The Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene, or STAR trial, tracked health outcomes for more than 20,000 postmenopausal women and was one of the largest breast cancer prevention trials ever undertaken. Researchers found that women who took raloxifene, sold under the brand name Evista, were also at lower risk of contracting uterine cancers or blood clots, two rare side effects of tamoxifen.

Spring Appeal

Your Help is Needed

Did you know that a third of breast cancer survivors gradually stop getting annual mammograms, according to a study by the American Cancer Society? "They're fearful that something else is going to be found," said oncologist Dr. Kathryn Edmiston, a breast cancer specialist.

Did you know that about 2.3 million U.S. women have been treated for breast cancer and are considered at three times the risk for tumors in the other, unaffected breast, than women with so such history?

Did you know that of the millions of dollars raised annually for Breast Cancer, only an infinitesimal portion of it is targeted toward helping survivors return to a "normal" life?

Public awareness about breast cancer in terms of prevention, and research towards a cure, have increased a hundred fold. However, once diagnosed and treated, it remains a survivor's private, often lonely, journey.

That's why we need your help.

The Breast Cancer Survival Center is the only direct service non-profit organization in Connecticut - and one of the few in the entire country - devoted exclusively to post-treatment issues.

The center has operated with an all-volunteer staff, many of them cancer survivors themselves, since 1999. We have led the way in recognizing that the need for edu-

cation and information does not end when treatment ends. That is only the beginning of the survivor's journey.

The Breast Cancer Survival Center, based in Fairfield County, is not affiliated with any hospital or medical center, and is open to any survivor no matter where or how long ago treatment took place. Programs are held in space generously donated by Norwalk Community College and other locations throughout the state.

During October, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we present our annual *Celebrate Life!* fashion show and brunch, featuring models who are all breast cancer survivors. The show helps fund the center's survivor programs, including bi-weekly support groups, weekend and day retreats for survivors, young survivors and mothers of survivors, our buddy program for follow-up doctors' appointments and mammograms, and our special speakers series.

BCSC is a not-for-profit charitable organization that relies on tax deductible contributions to support its mission. Your generous donation will increase our capacity to help more survivors on their cancer journey.

The fear does not go away when treatment ends. For many survivors, it's just beginning.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors

Scenes from 2005 Survivors Fashion Show



Photos: John Galayda Connecticut Post

Contributed photo

Want to be a Supermodel?

The special events committee of the Breast Cancer Survival Center is busy planning a seventh annual *Celebrate Life!* fashion show and brunch, which will be held on Sunday, October 1, from 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Shore and Country Club on Long Island Sound in East Norwalk. Talbots in Westport will be providing the gorgeous clothes once again. If you are a breast cancer survivor who would like to be a superstar model this year, we'd love to have you!

Interested? Please contact us at 203-857-7304, or e-mail us at cancersurvival@aol.com, as soon as possible. The committee guarantees that you will have a fabulous, life-affirming time!

Looking Into The Mirror: How I survived Cancer, Built My Business, and Realized My Dreams.



By Marlene Stern

New Book Published To Benefit Breast Cancer Survival Center.

Marlene Stern of Stamford, a frequent participant in BCSC programs, has written a poignant memoir of her cancer journey and the important lessons she has learned, The book has just been published, and all proceeds from its sale will benefit the Breast Cancer Survival Center. Cost per copy is \$10, and it is available by contacting Marlene at stamfordrealtor@aol.com. We are so grateful to Marlene for sharing her story, and being our "Publishing Angel."

Following is an excerpt from the book:

My Support Group: The Breast Cancer Survival Center

One of the first things I did was to look for a support group. I read an article in my local newspaper, the *Stamford Advocate*, about the Breast Cancer Survival Center, which focuses on women after they have been treated for breast cancer. I went to a retreat run by the group's founder, and knew I had found my group. The other women were so 'alive,' so positive about life. We shared the same attitudes, same outlook, and same hopes about life. I became a member, and participated in the group's activities.

The Center holds two support and discussion group sessions per month, retreats, and ceremonies to mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October). We invite special speakers to talk to us about nutrition, meditation, chiropractic and medical matters, and other issues. Last year, we held an all-day workshop, *The Power of Empowerment: Taking Back My Life after Cancer*, to help breast cancer survivors become responsible for their own lives and happiness.

BCSC runs an annual benefit fashion show to raise funds to support its programs. The fashions are provided by Talbot's, and the models are all breast cancer survivors. I was a model in 2005, and really enjoyed myself. The excitement of the show and being honored as a survivor made me truly feel good about myself. I felt as if I was 'coming out of the closet' as a breast cancer survivor, and knew that I could now pick up with the rest of my life. I realized that life is fun and needs to be celebrated all the time.

Being a breast cancer survivor not only affects you physically, but it also affects you emotionally, and it is harder to cure the emotional part. But having a support group helps you with your emotions and helps you deal with everyday life. It takes away the dark clouds and helps you see life afterwards.

As a Survivor

The fear for my life will be there, until Western medicine finds a cure for breast cancer.

I still sometimes feel very sad and have nightmares because of my illness. But my group helps me get through the difficult moments and stay positive.

I have learned that having breast cancer really changes how you look at life and how you treasure life. I now have more goals, more purpose, more I want to accomplish. I have learned to live one day at a time, and I truly enjoy every moment with my family and friends.

Having cancer also makes you think about what comes next. I found myself motivated to push even harder to succeed and to make sure that I did what I needed to do to reach my goals and dreams.

Donor Update

We Deeply Appreciate the Support

What do Academy Award winning actor Paul Newman and Gabriel Krieger, a 17-year-old senior from Canton, CT, High School, have in common?

They have both made a recent contribution to support the Breast Cancer Survival Center.

Newman's contribution came as a result of a friendship between survivor Janet Torres of Norwalk, who frequently comes to BCSC programs, and Lissy Newman, daughter of Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward. Janet spoke so highly of the support she had received that she convinced Lissy this was a program to help.

Gabriel Krieger decided to do a community service project to raise money for breast cancer survivors. The disease has touched family members, and he wanted to help. He found us on our web site, and realized it was the only one of its kind in Connecticut.

On April 14, Gabriel presented a concert at a local Elks club in Canton to raise funds for our program. More than 100 of his friends and family attended. "It was awesome," said Gabriel. "And I felt I was really doing something to help the cause." Not only did he charge a \$10 admission fee, he also passed out envelopes at the event to raise additional funds for BCSC. We really appreciate the support.

Meditation Minute

Fran Palumbo

A Peaceful Night's Sleep

As you are relaxing deeper and deeper, imagine a beautiful staircase. There are ten steps, and the steps lead you to a beautiful yard with a lovely garden full of strong trees. Under the trees is a peaceful hammock that is waiting to rock you to sleep.

Ever so gently count backwards from ten down to one and you can imagine taking the steps down and as you take each step, feel your body relax, more and more, feel it just drift down, down each step, and relax even deeper, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...deeper, deeper relaxed.

And now imagine that you have entered into a beautiful yard with a lovely garden and trees all around. The evening sky is clear on this pleasant summer evening night. Feel the summer night breeze. Under the trees, notice the hammock just waiting for you to lie down and relax and enjoy the pleasant summer evening night.

Go over in your mind and lie down into the hammock. Feel the body sink into the hammock. As you lie there feel the support, you feel so safe and protected. You are alone, and there is no one to disturb you. This is the most peaceful place in the world for you.

Imagine yourself lying there on the hammock as you feel a sense of peace flowing through you. Experience the wonder as

your body and mind respond with tranquility, poise and grace. Your heart rate is calm, your thoughts are serene as you lie there in your hammock, continue to relax deeper and deeper.

Imagine the hammock as it is holding you, feel the comfort as the hammock rocks you to sleep. Feel the hammock as it rocks you to sleep, feel it sway from side to side. Slowly and gently from side to side. You feel so rested and relaxed.

Feel the body move with the rhythm of the hammock. The hammock sways from side to side gently and peacefully. Just sways from side to side, you feel the summer night's breeze, soothing the entire body. You sway from side to side, swaying and swaying deeper and deeper, completely relaxed.

Your eyes feel so heavy and relaxed, relax and go deeper. With each sway from the hammock you go deeper, and deeper into a undisturbed sleep. Feel the body being rocked to sleep, slowly and gently you are in a deep sleep state. You sway from side to side, so peaceful. Enjoy your peaceful, restful night of sleep, knowing when you awake you will feel so renewed, feeling refreshed after a long peaceful night's sleep.

Fran M. Palumbo is a meditation coach and certified hypnotist and a frequent presenter for the Breast Cancer Survival Center. Her office is at 2226 Black Rock Turnpike, Suite 208, Fairfield, CT 06825.

June Retreat

June Retreat for Survivors at Mercy Center Madison, CT

The Breast Cancer Survival Center will hold a weekend retreat for survivors June 2-4 at Mercy Center in Madison, CT. Nina Marino, BCSC Clinical Director, and Lee Fallet, BCSC Assistant Clinical Director, will be co-facilitators.

Cost is \$225 per person, which includes a private room at Seascapes, on Long Island Sound,

and six full meals. Accommodations are limited, so please register as soon as possible to be sure of a place.

This is a wonderful healing opportunity for all survivors! A registration form is included in this newsletter. Questions? Phone us at (203) 857-7304, or e-mail us at cancersurvival@aol.com.

Quick Survey

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please help BCSC to plan future events by answering this simple questionnaire.

Which of the following topics would be of interest to you or any members of your family:

_____ Couples Retreat/Workshop

_____ Young Survivors Retreat/Workshop

_____ Mother/Daughter Retreat/Workshop

_____ Mothers of Survivors Retreat/Workshop

_____ Sibling Retreat/Workshop

_____ Women who have had a Recurrence Retreat/Workshop

_____ Journaling/Writing Workshop

_____ Special Speaker On _____

Which format do you prefer:

Weekend Retreats _____

One-Day Workshops _____

E-mail your responses/suggestions to us at cancersurvival@aol.com.

Thanks for your help.