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



Mercy Center in Madison CT is the
setting for Oct. 16-18 Retreat

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

Inspiration: Girls in My Circle

When I was little, I used to believe in
the concept of one best friend.

And then I started to become a
woman.

And then I found out that if you allow
your heart to open up, God would
show you the best in many friends.

One friend is needed when you're
going through things with your man.

Another friend is needed when you're
going through things with your mom.

Another will sit beside you in the
bleachers as you delight in your chil-
dren and their activities.

Another when you want to shop,
share, heal, hurt, joke, or just be.

One friend will say, "Let's cry togeth-
er." Another, "Let's fight together."
Another, "Let's walk together."

One friend will meet your spiritual
need. Another your shoe fetish.

Another your love of movies. Another
will be with you in your season of
confusion.

Another will be your clarifier. Another
the wind beneath your wings.

But whatever their assignment in your
life,

On whatever the occasion,

On whatever the day,

Or wherever you need them to meet
you with their gym shoes on and hair
pulled back,

Or to hold you back from making a
complete fool of yourself,

Those are your best friends.

It may all be wrapped up in one

woman. But,

For many, it's wrapped up in several...

One from 7th grade,

One from high school,

Several from college,

A couple from old jobs,

On some days your mother,

On some days your neighbor,

On others your sisters,

And on some days, your daughters.

So whether they've been a friend for
20 minutes or 20 plus years, the next
time you see them, give them a hug
and tell them how special they are to
you.

Breast Cancer Survival Center

Providing Post-Treatment Support and Education

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Coming Events How to Support a Friend Who Has Breast Cancer

Special Speakers Series

Preventing and Treating Lymphedema.

The Role of Message Therapy

Laura Yarish, PT, LMT

March 17, 6:15 p.m., at Soleil Toile

Guided Imagery for Comfort and Inspiration

Adair Wilson Heitmann

April 21, 6:15 p.m. at Soleil Toile

24 Post Road East, Westport CT

Drum Your Way To Wellness

Karin Lewis Cook

May 26, 6:00 p.m., Fairfield County

Women's Center, Room 116, West

Campus, Norwalk Community College

Supportive Discussion Groups

Norwalk Community College

March 24; April 14, 28; May 12

Room 116, West Campus, Norwalk CT

Soleil Toile Discussion Groups

May 19, June 16, 6:15-7:30 p.m.

24 Post Road East, Westport CT

Cancer Survivors Symposium

Bernie Siegel MD, Keynote

Nina Marino, BCSC Clinical Director

Survivors Break-out Session Leader

May 2, 1- 5 p.m.

Wainwright House, Rye NY

One-Day Survivors Retreat

June 13, 9-3, St. Paul's Church, Fairfield.

Weekend Survivors Retreat

Oct. 16-18, Mercy Center, Madison CT

10th Anniv. Celebrate Life!

Fashion Show and Brunch

October 4, Shore and Country Club

East Norwalk CT

Information: (203) 857-7304 (voice)
cancersurvival@aol.com (e-mail), on
the web at: breastcancersurvival.org.

*Thanks to The Reddus Foundation
for underwriting this newsletter.*

by Sheryl Kraft

There are fashion shows. There are walks, runs, ceremonies, benefits, pink ribbons and special luncheons. There is a month devoted to remembering. And everything pink is sold with the promise of an eventual cure.

Are they beneficial to aid the person who is going through breast cancer? Well, yes, or else they would not exist. For one thing, they raise very necessary funds. For another, they tell the world that we exist.

But on a much more personal level there is something much more fundamental to the human spirit; something that sounds so simple but is, in fact, much more complicated than the word implies. It is communication and support.

If you're reading this and you've been through, or are going through, a diagnosis of breast cancer, you understand what I'm trying to say. And if you are reading this and have not experienced the overwhelming feelings that come with a diagnosis of breast cancer, chances are you know someone who has. And you want to help, but maybe don't know how.

I don't think I'm speaking only for myself when I say that I needed and at times, craved, understanding from the outside world. I needed some reassurance that the other person understood, no matter how remotely, what I was faced with. That need continues today, all these years later, because I know that I, for one, will never see the world in quite the same way as I did before my experience with breast cancer.

But the problem is that people are not always prepared to help. I used to think that many people had a hard time communicating with me because I was relatively young when I was diagnosed. Because my friends, most of them in their 30s themselves, had not experienced illness or hardship, I concluded that they couldn't know what to say to me or do for me. And, thinking back, boy, did they make blunders.

What I came to realize is that many people want to help but simply don't know how. That's why I spoke to dozens of breast cancer survivors to get their feedback on this crucial issue. While it's true that everyone is different some women may want to talk while others prefer to keep to themselves.

The common theme was that just knowing someone out there cares is often comfort enough, and sometimes the perfect words are none at all.

One survivor offers this: "As far as what people can do to help when someone is diagnosed, my answer is, anything. Don't turn away. Some family/friends don't know what to do or say. They rationalize that they don't want to intrude, so they back away."

A person who is going through breast cancer is emotionally raw and frightened. She needs support at this time. If you turn away, she is being hurt twice: once, from the diagnosis and then again from your (implied) rejection.

Don't know what to say? Even a simple, "I don't know what to say," is better than ignoring the person outright. It is not a rejection, but rather, an admission of caring.

So, instead of letting fear of saying or doing the wrong thing make you do absolutely nothing at all, here's how you can help you help someone:

DON'T tell the person just diagnosed that you know a woman who just died, had a negative mammogram or recently had a scare. Don't tell her that you know just how she feels (unless you've also gone through a similar experience.) You may be the most empathetic person in the world, but you can't possibly know.

DO admit that you might not know just what to say, but that you are here for her nonetheless. Let her know that you are willing to do anything she might need, even if it's just listening.

DON'T label the person as though they are sick. Many women are so inundated with medical procedures, tests, etc., that they want to get back to "normal" as much as possible. One survivor told me, "I still see people who say, 'And HOW do YOU feel?' as if I'd just recovered from the plague. I even had a friend who introduced me to someone as, 'My friend who has cancer.' I'd had my surgery and was moving on."

DO remember to ask the person about her life, her children, her activities, anything that gives her joy outside of what she is going through.

(continued on page 3)

Speaking Up for Survivors

Letter from the Director

Things are looking up for cancer survivors. After years of being overlooked, we have a unique opportunity to speak up and identify what we need.

First, the Connecticut Cancer Partnership, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, is conducting a statewide assessment to determine the needs of Connecticut adults who have ever been diagnosed with cancer.

If you are 18 years of age or older and have ever been diagnosed with cancer, they would like to hear from you. Please tell them about your needs by taking a few minutes to answer a short survey available at the following link:
www.ctcancercareneeds.org

If you would like a paper copy of the survey, please contact Tara Chetock at 203-787-4700 (extension 103). Your feedback and comments will help guide decisions about where to focus resources, services and programs in the future. Your participation is voluntary; answers will be kept anonymous.

On a national level, actor Patrick Swayze, currently fighting against pancreatic cancer, is mounting a campaign to make cancer a national priority.

In an letter in the February 9 *Washington Post*, he talks frankly about his own diagnosis and notes that Congress is about to decide how much money to allocate for medical research. Some may question the wisdom of allocating such funds in this tough economic time. But Swayze points out, life-threatening illnesses deprive the economy of hundreds of billions of dollars of lost work time and productive output. Investment in medical research will cut that loss dramatically. The University of Chicago economists Kevin M. Murphy and Robert H. Topel recently estimated that reducing cancer deaths by just 1 percent would provide a \$500 billion benefit to the economy in production gains and lower health care costs.

We need to let our representatives know how we feel. *Susan Santangelo*

Retirement Can Be Murder

Retirement Can Be Murder is the first in the new series of cozy mysteries by BCSC founder and author Susan Santangelo. It offers a light-hearted look at the turmoil of two of America's 78.2-million baby boomers, facing life-changing decisions as they approach retirement age.

"Everybody I know is talking about some phase of retirement," said author Susan Santangelo. "When retirement looms, some couples may have trouble adjusting to changes in their daily living schedule, particularly where the husband went to work and the wife stayed home to care for the children. All of a sudden that husband is home with nothing to occupy his time, and it can cause tension in the relationship. It's a huge adjustment."

A portion of the proceeds from sales of **Retirement Can Be Murder** will benefit the Breast Cancer Survival Center.

Publication date: April 2009. Price \$14.95. Publisher: BBM Press. Don't miss out. Reserve your copy today at www.babyboommysteries.com.

Save the Date

Sunday, October 4

**10th Anniversary
Celebrate Life!
Fashion Show and Brunch**

Shore and Country Club
East Norwalk, CT

Details to follow.

Ice Cream Bread

Prep time: 5 minutes.

1 pint (2 cups) ice cream, softened.

Flavor: your choice.

1 ½ cups self-rising flour.

Stir together ice cream and flour just enough so that flour is thoroughly moistened.

Spoon batter into a greased and floured 8x4 inch loaf pan.

Bake at 350 for 40 to 45 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center of bread comes out clean.

Remove from pan and cool on a wire rack.

This two-ingredient bread is great any time of day. It can be served as a dessert topped with some whipped cream and chocolate or other flavored sauce, or toasted and used as a side dish to a meal.

E-Mail Updates

Are You on our E-mail List?

As newsletter postage and printing costs continue to escalate, BCSC is depending more on e-mail to get the word out to survivors about our important program offerings in a timely fashion.

Be sure you're on our e-mail list to receive this information.

Please e-mail us at:
cancersurvival2@aol.com
to get our very latest program news. Don't miss out.

Please give us your full name, and indicate if you are a survivor. Thanks for helping us to help you.



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

Reprinted from **Retirement Can Be Murder**, by Susan Santangelo,
www.babyboommysteries.com

Cancer Symposium May 2

Dr. Bernie Siegel will be the keynote speaker, and Nina Marino, LCSW, and our clinical director, will lead a breakout session at special symposium on May 2 from 1 to 5 p.m. at Wainwright House in Rye, NY. The symposium offers current, in-depth information on the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of cancer and its toll on individuals and families. It is sponsored by the Norman Vincent Peale Foundation, Gilda's Club Westchester and Greenwich Hospital for Integrative Health.

Dr. Siegel will be speaking on "Lessons Learned." His talk will focus on his use of art therapy to determine prognosis and the potential for the development of other health-related problems in the patient. He feels that mental imagery is more useful than a battery of lab tests to assess a patient's disease state and prospects for recovery. Dr. Siegel's latest book, *Faith, Hope and Healing*, which includes survivor stories and his reflections on what they teach us, will be published later this year.

Nina Marino will conduct a breakout session geared specifically for cancer survivors. She has been a licensed clinical social worker/psychotherapist for over twenty years. A breast cancer survivor herself, Nina's post graduate studies include the Exceptional Cancer Patients (EcAP) Training for Health Professionals. She has given talks on breast-cancer-related issues in a variety of places in Fairfield County, at Food For Thought in Norwalk on "Cancer as a Family Crisis," and "Finding the Healing Path". In addition to designing and facilitating BCSC retreats, Nina facilitates BCSC's support groups at Norwalk Community College and Soleil Toile in Westport. She has a private practice in NYC and Norwalk.

Also at the May 2 event will be Dr. Barry Boyd, founder and director of Integrative Oncology at Greenwich Hospital, who will be speaking on "Nutritional Support for Cancer Patients." For more information, or to register for the May 2 symposium, visit Wainwright House's website, www.Wainwright.org, or call 914-967-6080.

Beat Stress, Have Some Fun, and Drum

Join us for a drum circle on Tuesday, May 26, 6 p.m., at the Fairfield County Women's Center, Norwalk Community College. We will gather together under the leadership of Karin Lewis-Cook to make music with drums and other percussion instruments. No previous drumming experience is required. Everyone is welcome. Bring a drum if you have one. (Check your child's closet or toy chest.) But don't

worry – there'll be plenty of instruments available if you don't have one of your own. You'll learn some new rhythms, do some improvisations and make some great sounds. This is a unique way to get in tune with yourself and others, express yourself, and have a lot of fun.

To register, e-mail us at cancersurvival2@aol.com

BCSC Hosts Telephone Discussion Group

The Breast Cancer Survival Center's regular groups at the Fairfield County Women's Center and Soleil Toile take a break in July and August.

But many survivors have expressed a need to keep in touch over the summer. With that in mind, BCSC is launching a toll-free telephone group, to be held the second Tuesday of July and August from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. If you want to participate, e-mail us at cancersurvival2@aol.com for our number and access code information.

How to Help (cont. from p. 1)

Invite her out to lunch, to a funny movie, for a day of shopping—anything that will take her away from the medical and put her back into everyday life.

DON'T shy away by ignoring the facts of the disease. It's frightening. Plain and simple.

DO acknowledge the person's fear. After all, it's real and appropriate. It's OK to say, "You must be scared." Talk about the cancer with her (if that's what she wants). If you've just read something pertaining to the subject, ask first if she'd like you to share the information with her. Follow her lead. You'll be able to tell in no time what she needs by simply listening.

DON'T drop out of sight or stay away.

DO be there, any way you can. Stay in touch, even if it's just by notes or cards. While a phone call is nice, too, if you're not sure if the person feels like talking, a note or a card is unobtrusive yet caring. Or, make a donation to a cancer research organization in honor of her. It's a touching reminder that you're thinking about her.

And finally, remember this. Everyone needs different things. Try to take your lead from them. Sometimes just being there, listening and being supportive are the greatest gifts you can offer.

Reprinted from www.healthywomen.org.

Sheryl Kraft, a Wilton resident and former member of the board of BCSC, is a professional freelance writer specializing in health, lifestyle and fitness. She is now blogging at <http://www.healthywomen.org/blogs/midlifematters/>