



Humboldt Community Breast Health Project

Supporting individuals facing breast and gynecologic cancer concerns

Spring 2012

Volume 13 Issue 1

Reflection - Past, Present, Forward

By Julie Ohnemus, MD, HCBHP Founder & Medical Consultant, Family Practitioner, Open Door Community Health Centers

Musing over the 15-year history of the Project, I am struck by how change has remained our constant, and yet our core vision has remained our guiding beacon. In June 1997 a group of women sat around my kitchen table and embraced this vision. Here a single experience joined with seven others to impassion our imagination to build the foundation of the Project. Our humble beginnings started with a red milk crate as our first "office," then to a make-shift room for our first "site" visit, on to a "suite" without a window ... evolving through many places – each increasing in size but always a place of hope, healing, hugs, and information.

Our core values created the four cornerstones on which the Project was built: education, patient advocacy, the wounded healer, and witness. In 1997 there was a void of information on breast cancer, and thus HCBHP became the largest up-to-date resource on breast health and cancer in Northern California—later a gyn resource as well. We developed services to help the client become informed and to be her own best medical advocate. We spoke a new language – healthy survivorship, warmliner, wounded healer, open circle, Amazon warrior....

Our patient advocacy sought to help navigate individual circumstances, and to foster communication with our local medical professionals.

HCBHP's niche was created as a grassroots organization of women, families, and friends who had experienced the upheaval of a cancer diagnosis, and whose tools were the listening heart and our own experience. We understood how the challenge of cancer calls us to the present time and provides us with the opportunity for whole knowing; and the archetype, the wounded healer, enacts a process whereby cancer is the "wound" initiating a path to invincibility rather than vulnerability, with healing through self examination, alignment, and transformation.

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Annual Vacation Raffle

4 Destinations – 4 Winners

Thank you for supporting HCBHP – This could be your year to win!

Destinations include:



Victoria, British Columbia

or



Casita Salate, Sayulita, Mexico

2 nights for two at:



Coho Cabins, Willow Creek, CA

or



a Cottage overlooking the Pacific, Trinidad, CA

**Tickets: \$10 each / 3 for \$25 / 7 for \$50
15 for \$100 / 100 for \$500 / 250 for \$1000**

Buy tickets at local Farmers' Markets, other local venues, HCBHP Office, www.hcbhp.org or call (707) 825-8345

Drawing Saturday, June 2nd Arts Alive! at the Vance Café in Eureka

All proceeds stay local to benefit our community. The annual vacation raffle is HCBHP's largest fundraiser. We count on you to buy and to sell raffle tickets.

Sell a packet, earn a free ticket!

Raffle Sponsors:

Pierson Building Center, Cher-Ae Heights Casino, Wildberries Marketplace, Coast Central Credit Union, Kokatat, Lima's Professional Pharmacy, St. Joseph Hospital, Wing Inflatables, Cloney's Pharmacies, Hospice of Humboldt, City Ambulance, Patterson-Conners Insurance (Lic #0B72732), George Petersen Insurance (Lic #0603247), Almquist Lumber, Brandi Easter Photography, Bucksport Sporting Goods; Hunter, Hunter & Hunt, CPAs, Jackson & Eklund, CPAs, Post Haste Mail Center, Renner Petroleum, Dalianes Worldwide Travel, North Coast Growers Association, Scrapper's Edge. Media: Lost Coast Communications, Bi-Coastal Media, Arcata Eye, KHSU, KMUD, & McKinleyville Press.

Reflection - Past, Present, Forward

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We provided witness to heal with self-honoring and self-caring. Our attitude became our incarnate power. Healing became our choice. In this process, hope was the vital sustenance for the human spirit. This is what the Project offered then and offers now.

Over the 15 years every client story shared, every volunteer, every staff person, and every donor has touched us. We have turned around from nearly total grant funding to funding our budget with 70% of donations from the community. This is both a tribute and a full sense of gratitude to our community. Let's celebrate.

From the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

The Humboldt Community Breast Health Project is celebrating 15 years of providing grassroots cancer support in our community! Since 1997 we have served over two thousand local women and their families as they face breast and gynecologic cancer. We have educated the larger community on early detection of these diseases.

And it is all thanks to you.

As a grassroots organization, we respond to local needs, and we are fueled by local volunteer energy and funding. Because our services are free of charge but not free of cost, we rely on local donations and fundraising. Not everyone is aware of this.

"I was told that most of HCBHP's fundraising goes out of the area, is this true?" a recent caller asked one of our volunteers.

"Not true. We are 100% local," is the answer.

HCBHP does not receive funds from--nor do we raise money for--out-of-area cancer organizations. Every penny we raise stays right here at home. So, if local services are important to you, we encourage you to make sure your hard-earned dollars are being used here, in our community.

HCBHP does not do cold call solicitations, nor do we hire professional fundraisers to ask for donations. We are committed to being good stewards for your financial and volunteer contributions. We plan to be here for our neighbors and loved ones facing breast and gynecologic cancer for many years to come!

With gratitude,
Rose Gale-Zoellick, Executive Director



New Dimensions of Eating Right

By Julie Ohnemus, MD, HCBHP Founder & Medical Consultant,
Family Practitioner, Open Door Community Health Centers

Comprehensive cancer care moves beyond eradicating the cancer cells with surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. We can also target our body's internal environment, so the cancer cells are less able to grow or sustain themselves. Evidence based nutritional & botanical approaches towards wellness are defining a state called "oncometabolic syndrome." This is a cluster of factors and conditions within our body's chemistry that cancer requires to thrive, and nutrition can modify. Thus eating right is taking on new dimensions.

We still should eat fruits, vegetables, and fiber to provide us with anti-oxidants and promote bowel health. However, we need to make more informed choices in our foods, spices, oils, and herbs/supplements to:

- a. Lower inflammation
- b. Reverse high levels of glucose and insulin
- c. Increase our vitamin D3 levels
- d. Lower our tendency towards increased clotting

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HCBHP Staff

Executive Director Rose Gale-Zoellick, MSW, MPH
Client Services Director Mary Meengs, MD
Client Services Coordinator Brenda Elvine-Kreis
Office Manager Barbara Sage
Volunteer Coordinator Mary Flowers
VISTA Outreach Coordinator Alice Mao
GYN Cancer Support Group Facilitator Rebecca Zettler, RN

Volunteers

Volunteer Information Specialist Sue Mossman
Warmline Volunteers – Chris Angell, Jane Crosbie, Vicky Dodge, Bonnie Etz, Teresa Graber, Joy Hardin, Linda Marlow, Rinda McClure, Felicia Oldfather, Mary Oswell, Sheryl Sandige, Sandy Sweitzer, Jean Wichelman

Board of Directors

Officers *President* Eva Laevastu
Co-Vice Presidents Liz Lara-O'Rourke and Suzanne Pasztor
Secretary Gretchen Stadler
Treasurer Steve Engle
Board Members Rosemary DenOuden, Cathie Gillen, Bojan Ingle, Melissa Jones, Allan Katz, Carolyn Lane, Teddie Lyons, Koreen Nagle, Brea Sorrells, Melinda Wilson

New Dimensions of Eating Right

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- e. Suppress cancer's ability for angiogenesis, creating its own blood supply
- f. Modify the influence of estrogen
- g. Boost innate immune surveillance and resistance
- h. Enable pathways in our body to influence our gene expression

These factors can be measured in our bodies, and individual plans can be developed, but the concepts & diet strategies are applicable to all of us.

Inflammation refers to how our immune system responds to all we encounter. Only with a healthy immune system can we live a healthy life. From our first breath to our last we are constantly training and utilizing our immune system. Without balance in our immune system we get unhealthy inflammation: allergies, arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, chronic pain, etc.... Disease involves either an over-response or an under-response of our immune system. We are discovering some very specific targets that can lessen the harmful inflammation. For example, the master switch for inflammation and cancer is "nuclear factor kappa beta". It can be dampened by: certain seasonings and nuts, avoiding pro-inflammatory omega-6 fats and utilizing anti-inflammatory omega-3 fat; decreasing the glycemic load in our diet, and regulating our blood sugars.

Elevated fibrinogen, which promotes clotting in our blood, provides a velcro-like stickiness that cancer cells use for metastases. There are natural inhibitors of fibrinogen.

Cancer cells require the creation of blood vessels in order to grow. This process requires copper, which cancer cells produce for their survival. There are anti-angiogenic foods and nutrients. Plus you may want to filter your water if you have copper plumbing. Too much estrogen in your system causes elevated copper. Thus modulating estrogen is important: eating cruciferous vegetables, using curcumin or turmeric, decreasing constipation, using melatonin and vitamin D3, etc. There are phytonutrients that act like the aromatase inhibitors.

On HCBHP's website I have provided you with lists of the dietary choices that affect these factors. Too, in August the Project is bringing Rebecca Katz, author of *The Cancer Fighting Kitchen*, for a day-long workshop where you will learn how to prepare delicious health-supportive meals addressing these concepts. Here's to the spice of living!

Limited Seating **REGISTER TODAY**

for

Healing Journeys'



Cancer Fighting Kitchen Workshop



with



Authors Rebecca Katz, MS & Lise Alschuler, ND

Saturday, August 4, 2012

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Wharfinger Building, Eureka

Who Should Attend

- Anyone wanting to promote healing of body, mind, and spirit.
- Women and men touched by cancer or any life-altering illness.
- People supporting friends or family coping with cancer or other illness.
- Healthcare providers.

Workshop Includes

- Cooking demonstration
- Information about healthy qualities of various ingredients in food,
- Catered lunch by *Uniquely Yours Catering* (formerly Hurricane Kate's) will include examples of foods from the cooking demonstration.

Tickets are \$89 - Early Bird by July 16

\$109 Registration by July 31

\$125 Late Registration after July 31

(if space available, may not include lunch)

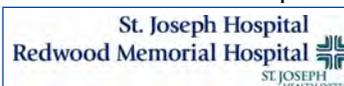
Limited number of partial scholarships & work exchanges available

To register or for more information go to:

www.healingjourneys.org

or call 1-800-423-9882 or 916-391-0549.

Sponsored by:



A Client Reflects:

My Feelings

One doesn't feel alone anymore.

One feels surrounded by love and friends, even though we have never met, just a voice on the telephone helps our fears, and that truly helps Enormously.

The word CANCER is not as terrifying for us, because we feel that you at the HCBHP have all gone through what we are going through, and are surviving, so with the support of all the volunteers at the HCBHP YOU GIVE US HOPE I believe in Angels, and you surely are.

It is a given that whoever has the LUCK to have found you, were truly blessed, as I personally felt. What support you give, to we scared people, when we are first diagnosed, of course you think not me, but of course, why not me

HCBHP

What a LIFELINE YOU ARE

BLESS YOU ALL AND THANK YOU

Love, Billie
Leggett, CA



Being Young & Diagnosed with Cancer

By Brenda Elvine-Kreis, Client Services Coordinator

No matter how old you are, being told you have cancer is like a slap on the face, but each phase of life comes with its own set of issues and events to be dealt with while confronting cancer. Young women are often dealing with starting and building careers, new relationships, young children, or the decision about whether to have children. They can benefit from the support of peers in similar circumstances.

Last year the Humboldt Community Breast Health Project reactivated a support group especially for young women who have been diagnosed with breast or gynecologic cancer. In this case, “young” is defined as anyone diagnosed before age 45. As with most things at HCBHP, this group grew out of a need. We had more than a handful of young women who were dealing with issues and concerns that were different from those in our other support groups. While women dealing with a life threatening cancer diagnosis certainly have many things in common, young women often have considerations that are no longer as dominant in older women’s lives.

A young, single woman without children may hear something like this: “You have cancer.” And then: “Do you plan to have children?” Not only is she confronted with a life changing diagnosis, she now has to make a major life decision, often without sufficient time or information, because her treatment may impair fertility. This can be a decision she is not ready to make.

Also, it may be difficult for a young woman to find support among her peers, who are much less likely to have dealt with cancer in a friend or loved one than an older person. Imagine being in your 20’s, when the expectation is to be carefree and active, and plan for a happy, fulfilling, future. Who wants to hear about the “C-word”?! There is a risk that cancer can define

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Want More Contact with HCBHP?



Humboldt Community Breast Health Project
VOLUNTEER NEWS
Creating Opportunities for Healing through Volunteering

Subscribe to our monthly Volunteer eNews

- *Paperless and no cost to subscribers*
- *Current Calendar of Activities*
- *Relevant monthly themes*
- *Volunteer Spotlight*
- *Lots of ways you can lend a hand*

Email volunteer@hcbhp.org and we will add you to our e-newsletter mailing list.

You can also



Being Young & Diagnosed with Cancer

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relationships; some friends may be so overwhelmed with the situation that they can't see who the survivor is beyond her cancer, while others withdraw altogether.

Like anyone diagnosed with a serious condition, a young woman has to decide with which of her friends she shares her story; those who don't know may make insensitive remarks or assumptions. She may be suffering side effects of treatment, or feeling afraid or lonely, but be too embarrassed or fearful to be open. The impact of what she's going through on existing or potentially intimate relationships can be huge and can result in more isolation and anxiety.

A separate set of concerns arises for us who have young children at the time of diagnosis. Mothers naturally worry and want to protect their children, and often put the welfare of their family before their own.

I was 39 when I was diagnosed with breast cancer; my daughter was 6 and due to start kindergarten. As my husband and I tried to digest the terrible shock of my diagnosis, my thoughts quickly turned to my daughter. *What would we tell her?* I certainly didn't want my "baby" to worry about her mommy, or to be scared.

In an attempt to protect our children from the scary reality of our situation, we do everything we can to normalize life for them – often at our own expense. I know a mom who didn't miss a single one of her son's basketball games; another who wore a wig in 100 degree weather, so as not to frighten her child with her bald head. In my case, I forced myself to ride my bicycle to school with my daughter every day because I wanted her to see me as a strong, healthy mommy – even though I was exhausted and bald. Because we tend to "hide" our fear and anxiety from our children during treatment, I worry that mothers in treatment are not able to fully deal with their own emotions about their cancer.

Our young women's support group is a safe and welcoming place to honestly share all of our feelings, experiences, and coping strategies. There is always compassion, understanding, respect and support, and sometimes even fun. The group has filled a niche in our community. Please contact us if you want more details. We are here for you!

Resources for Families with Children

Cancer affects the entire family. It is not an easy subject to talk about and many parents may try to avoid the topic for fear that they will scare or upset their children. When a parent is diagnosed with cancer, it is important that children be helped to understand what is happening in the family. Children do best when they know the truth. Trying to keep information from them may do more harm than good by jeopardizing trust and feeding young imaginations.

Meeting their children's needs can be a particular challenge for parents, at a time when they are under significant stress from the illness. At the Humboldt Community Breast Health Project, we strive to be up-to-date on resources for families dealing with a cancer diagnosis. In addition to in-person support from those who have confronted this challenge with their own children, we have a variety of literature for parents, teens and young children in our library. Furthermore, we have compiled a comprehensive list of local, national and online resources that we hope will be of help to parents as they address this issue with their children. If you, or a family you know, is in need of support or other resources, please give us a call. You are also welcome to stop by the project to pick up a list, browse our library or, simply go online and check out our list of "Resources" on our website: www.hcbhp.org

Brenda Elvine-Kreis, MA
Client Services Coordinator



Support Groups

Meetings held at the Project Office, 987 8th St., Arcata, unless otherwise noted. Meeting times may change. Call 825-8345 to confirm or add your name to our support group reminder call list.

Arcata Breast Cancer Support Group

2nd & 4th Thursdays of the Month, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Gynecologic Cancer Support Group

2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the Month, 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Young Women's Breast Cancer Support Group

1st and 3rd Thursdays of the Month, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Advanced Group

For those living with Stage 4 Disease
Every Monday, 11:00 am-12:30 pm

Amazon Writers, a Peer-Led Group

2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the Month, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Fortuna Breast Cancer Support Group

Visiting Angels Office, 1719 Main Street
1st Wednesday of the Month, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Reflections on 15 Years – Voices from our Grassroots

Julie O. put the wheels in motion for this endeavor 15 years ago, but it is the women who have passed that I want to thank. Shelah Benson had fire in her belly and was our most vocal activist. Sherry Dabrowski was poor and broken but was a poet, artist and survivor extraordinaire. Maria Carrillo took her passion and put it to good use as our first employee, while struggling with her own cancer journey. Virginia Higgins fought the good fight and taught us that the good die young but with grace. Phyllis Ericson gave her heart and soul to the Project but asked nothing in return when her time came. And Gloria Molina was my mentor, from the beginning, and taught us all unconditional love. With their deaths, I learned a little bit more about living.

Melinda Wilson, founding mother, early client, current board member

I'm remembering what it was like to come to a Breast Health Project meeting. It feels like you are coming home, to a safe haven, like home. Once you have gone through the experience of the breast cancer journey with the Project, you change your priorities. You care about who is coming to your door. The people matter most, not the other stuff. Whenever I write someone a note I include in it a tea bag so that whoever receives the note will take some time to have tea, time for herself. We always did this at the Project. A woman would come in and we would offer her a cup of tea.

Mary Scott, early client and board member, first Client Services Director staff

I remember in the early days of the HCBHP our resources to fund raise were limited. Sherry was a jewelry maker, Joyce taught art classes, and Maria designed the Amazon warrior logo for T-shirts and jewelry. Anything could be sold but the numbers were small in comparison to today's efforts with the raffle and Sales for Survivors. Our budget has grown and the creative ideas to keep up with the growth have become bigger and better as well.

Jeanne Vidad, early support person and long-time supporter

Little did we know, as the Project began, that we'd celebrate 15 years. We were simply thinking about a grant deadline or the need to score a file cabinet. The efforts and dedication of so many over these years have grown this grassroots organization in an ever-widening circle of support, both for and from the community.

The core principles of the Project have always been information and support, anchored in the "warmliners" and support groups with services provided free-of-charge. To connect with others who have navigated their own cancer journey can be powerful comfort and guide to one newly diagnosed. For me, as a support person, each journey encountered has been life-changing and life-affirming. I am so grateful for each and every connection I've made through HCBHP.

Every single thing
Changes and is changing
Always in this world.
Yet with the same light
The moon goes on shining.
(Zen poem)

Jenifer Pace, early support person, volunteer and former board member

When I walked through the door as a client, the Project was still a small circle of women. Each came with a different need, and some of us discovered that it was really something else that we needed most. We learned from one another. We weren't afraid to listen. I grew past my fears, and possibilities for change were awakened.

We had "a beginner's mind." When something needed to be done – keeping office hours, or fundraising with a raffle – someone found a way to do it. HCBHP has grown a great deal, but this hasn't changed: "the Project" will always be what those who participate in it make of it.

Bojan Ingle, early client and board member, outreach volunteer & current board member

Whenever I'm at the Project, I receive care and loving support, and I see care and loving support given to others. There is sharing of wisdom and practical information. We draw strength and hope from one another, and there is space for healing. As I sit each week with women struggling with treatment decisions, or trying to cope with side effects of treatment or disease, I also witness their determination and strength, their acceptance. These women never lose hope, and continue to embrace and treasure their ordinary daily lives. There are tears and disappointments, but there is also time for laughing at ourselves. Being with these women, I have felt a profound awe and a deep connection to what is beyond self. I am learning that, even with one breast, I can have connections that nurture, connections that I am passionate about, and connections that help keep me balanced and feel whole.

Sue Mossman, early client and Board member, Information Specialist and support group co-facilitator

For a long time the Humboldt-Del Norte Unit of the American Cancer Society only had one cancer support group that was for patients and their families and/or caregivers. Then we had some men that wanted to start a prostate cancer support group and shortly after I was asked if we could have a breast cancer support group. We had a Reach to Recovery program for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients, and I thought a breast cancer support group would be a wonderful thing. We had just gotten it going when Julie Ohnemus came back

from Stanford with a vision of what could really happen for breast cancer patients. Julie started the ball rolling and put together this marvelous Humboldt Community Breast Health Project. It wasn't too many years before they included gyn cancer patients. I can't say enough about this wonderful organization. We gave them our books and our donated prostheses. We get referrals for assistance from them, but they are there with arms outstretched for women who are told, "You have cancer." They can and have done so much more for women than we were able to do at ACS.

Working with HCBHP has been a great partnership. How fortunate we are to have such a supportive group for women who have to face breast and gynecological cancers. Congratulations on 15 years of caring and heartfelt service, may you continue on for many more years---until a cure is found.

Sylvia Jutila, long-time supporter and former ACS Executive Director

We Are Forever Grateful to Our Contributors!

Space allows a partial listing of foundation and event funders from the past eight months. To receive a copy of our 2011 Annual Report with a complete listing of contributors, please call us at 825-8345 or view the program and fiscal reports at www.hcbhp.org in May.

- American Cancer Society, local Hospitals & Radiologists for Free Mammogram Drawing participation
- Andre Wagner Trust
- Baroni Designs
- Bear River Rancheria
- Blue Angel Entertainment
- Blue Lake Casino
- Cher-Ae Heights Casino
- Fall Concert Sponsors
- Health Care Providers who participated in January's Cervical Cancer Awareness Month Promotion
- Humboldt Mobile Massage
- Humboldt Redwood Company
- Levin Foundation
- Mad River Brewing Company
- Mattole Valley Women's Club
- MiaBo Foundation Fund
- Miller Farms Nursery
- Northcoast Co-op
- Northtown Books
- Om Shala Yoga
- Redwood Curtain Brewing Co.
- Safeway Foundation
- Sales for Survivors business participants
- See's Community Fund
- Six Rivers Brewery
- Smullin Foundation
- Soroptimists International groups in Eureka
- Times Standard
- Union Labor Health Foundation



✂ Calendar of Upcoming Events ✂

May 10 5: 30 pm Face-to-Face with Marge O'Brien, RN, HCBHP Office

June 2 Atalanta's Victory Walk and Run

June 2 8 pm Vacation Raffle Drawing Vance Café, Old Town, Eureka

June 23 Afternoon Tea at location TBA

June 24 Bidding for Good On-Line Auction Closes

August 4 Healing Journeys' Cancer-Fighting Kitchen

September 22 Fall Concert, Calvary Lutheran Church Eureka

October Month-long Sales for Survivors Campaign

X

Humboldt Community
Breast Health Project
987 8th Street
(Corner of 8th & J)
Arcata, CA 95521



(707) 825-8345
(707) 825-8384 FAX

Office Hours
Mon-Fri 9 am-2 pm
After hours by appointment

E-mail: info@hcbhp.org
Website: www.hcbhp.org

Email us at volunteer@hcbhp.org
to subscribe to our monthly
e-mail *Volunteer News*.



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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

HCBHP's First On-Line Auction

www.biddingforgood.com/HCBHP OR www.HCBHP.org

Runs June 10th – June 24th



• *Sampler Quilt from Open Heart Quilters*



• *Painting by Chris Charney*

• *Palmer Acoustic Guitar*



• *Nicaraguan Beach House 5-day Vacation*

- *Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book, 5th Editions*
- *And more... Check it out!*

For more information call Barb Sage, Office Manager, at HCBHP--825-8345

How You Can Support our Services

- Leave a legacy gift via our fund for the HCBHP at Humboldt Area Foundation.
- Give a gift from Baroni Jewelry: www.baronidesigns.com
- Search the internet and shop online with Good Search/Good Shop: www.GoodSearch.com www.GoodShop.com
- Make a monthly pledge via credit card or Pay Pal from our website, or by using HCBHP's pledge envelopes.
- Host an HCBHP benefit fundraiser to celebrate your birthday or in honor of healthy survivorship - a yard sale, a gourmet meal, a dance party, a softball tournament.
- Contribute your volunteer skills.