

Our Mission

To ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community.

Upcoming:



**REVLON
Run/Walk**

Sat., May 7, 2011

Join our team for the 2011 Entertainment Industry Foundation Run/Walk for Women. It's time to create Womument!



**SANTA
BARBARA
1/2 Marathon**

Sat., May 7, 2011

Cheer on our Strides For Hope team as we raise money for CSC programs.

SURVIVOR STORY



David and Marty ?

David and Marty ?

Ongoing regular medical appointments with my urologist, Dr. Gene Naftulin, led in June 2007 to a biopsy on my prostate. Yes, I joined the legions of other males who had prostate cancer. I decided to undergo I.M.R.T - Intensive Modulated Radiation Therapy - under the tutelage of Dr. Dan Hovenstine, radiation oncologist at Torrance Memorial Medical Center and chairman of The Wellness Community Professional Advisory Board. In late February 2008 I successfully completed the radiation intervention. Since then there has been close monitoring with excellent results.

My journey with cancer wasn't over. In April 2008 melanoma tumors were discovered in my spleen, liver and colon after a CT/PET scan. I was subsequently referred to the Angeles Clinic and Research Institute and Dr. Stephen O'Day, one of the leading melanoma specialists in the country.

"You have Stage 4C melanoma in your spleen, liver, and elsewhere in your body cavity", Marty and I were told; And then, with tears streaming down my wife's cheeks, "without successful intervention, over 90% of people having these numbers have at most 4 to 6 months."

"Let's make an agreement," I said to Dr. O'Day, "I will give you my body and you will give me 10 years. I want to have a few more years with my wife and want to see my grandkids grow up." Dr. O'Day smiled. "With a positive attitude like that, we will do all that we can to make it happen." And so far, we both have lived up to that agreement.

In November 2008 I began a very experimental Phase I clinical trial. Like many others who have had chemo cocktails, my hair started falling out a few days later. Neuropathy began in my fingers and my feet. Fatigue, listlessness, lack of energy, and "chemo brain" was also a part of my reality.

Nevertheless, I was determined to maintain as much of my quality of life as possible. An integral component of that quality, in addition to my loving and caring wife, Marty, and our family underscored by my faith, exercise and nutrition.

After completing that clinical trial (to no avail), and a very invasive surgery to remove my spleen, Dr. O'Day informed me that no cancer could be detected. This was two days before Thanksgiving 2010.

During my journey with melanoma and prostate cancer, I have had enthusiastic, compassionate support and teachers. At the urging of Marty – perhaps I should say at her demand – I

On April Fool's Day in 1997 my journey with advanced melanoma cancer began and continues to this day. Surgery Three years later, in May 2005, another biopsy from the same area as the two previous surgeries on the top of my head, only this time it was revealed that I had Stage 4 very aggressive melanoma. My wife, Marty, and I were told that time was short unless a successful intervention occurred.

On the recommendation of my dermatologist I saw Dr. Jeffrey Weber at the University of Southern California's Norris Cancer Center. All of the diagnostic efforts resulted in my undergoing surgery to remove the melanoma from the top of my head into the bone.

It was at this point that I received good news and bad news. The good news: it appeared that all of the melanoma had been surgically removed with good margins, etc.; The bad news: the melanoma had metastasized in my neck; more surgery was needed to remove the lymph system in the right side of my neck and shoulder area. Two days later I was back in the hospital having surgery to remove the lymph system in my neck and shoulder area. Metastatic melanoma is a very challenging disease to treat and there have been no significant therapeutic advances in the past 20 years.

The Wellness Community would like to thank our Circle of Support partners, who have each pledged \$25,000 or more per year to our programs



The Word Cancer

As a past participant in 1990 and the Executive Director for 17 years, it will take me some time to start using our new name and not slip up and keep calling us The Wellness Community. Am I excited about the new name? Yes! We have all had to explain to anyone we talk with for 24 years what we are and what we do, and now it says it in our name – Cancer Support Community.

In 1982, when Harold Benjamin, PhD founded The Wellness Community, the word wellness was very innovative and unique. Now it is used for literally thousands of programs. After our recent merger with Gilda's Club, modeled after The Wellness Community, it is perfect timing for us to make this major change. We all believe that more people who need our services will recognize us with our new name making us able to offer our priceless programs to everyone in need after a cancer diagnosis.

On April 1st, we are celebrating 24 years of service. Thank you all who have made this possible – our dedicated founders, staff, board of directors, donors and volunteers. As we begin our 25th year of service to our community, lets all celebrate our new name and all of the courageous, brave past and present participants who have come to our community with a diagnosis of these words ... "you have cancer". We have been here to support thousands and will continue to offer all of these services to anyone at no cost whatsoever. Our mission and passion will not change. Welcome Cancer Support Community!

Warmly,



Judith K. Opdahl, Executive Director



Judith Opdahl, Executive Director and L.J. Stogsdill, Board Chairman

Cancer is looked upon differently today then it was 25 short years ago. The reason I bring this up is because for over ten years as a TWC board member, I have been urging our national office to have the word cancer in our name. This March 2011 that wish is coming to fruition, as we will be known in the future as Cancer

Support Community (CSC). It may not mean much to you but it does to me. As the Board Chair of Wellness, I have been asked hundreds of times what we do at The Wellness Community. Are you a chiropractic facility, a health gym, a meditation or a yoga group? And of course, I'm asked if we give massages! (I wish.) The name Wellness has run its course from over 25 years ago when it seems we were the only group that used the word wellness through today where it could mean anything. CSC means just what it says; a cancer support community. Yes, we are a support group for those with cancer in a safe and supportive community. We also

support the caregivers of those persons, and the program we offer is at no charge whatsoever to the participant.

I have been on the caregiver end when my wife was diagnosed with cancer and I can truly tell you that TWC was a godsend through those very difficult five years. We faced the many difficult decisions and hard times with our support group right along side. We were blessed with quality time and my wife and I were part of the support group for other people fighting cancer too.

Now when someone asks me what CSC stands for, I can tell them Cancer Support Community, which says it all. I can also tell them of all of the services we provide free of charge in our over 50 communities across the country along with internet dialogue to support those in distant places where there is not a community close by that they can attend.

Warmly,



L.J. Stogsdill, Board Chairman

como el amor, la empatia, la alegría y el gozo. Durante las dos horas que dura el grupo los participantes comparten activamente sus experiencias, aprenden lo importante que es vivir el momento y estar concientes de que hay una correlación directa entre sus pensamientos, emociones y comportamientos. Ellos se dan cuenta que al enfocarse en lo que ellos desean en sus vidas, aun estando en situaciones desafiantes, pueden experimentar emociones saludables.

CELEBRANDO LA VIDA



Maria Gallo, MFT

Celebrando la Vida es un grupo en español para personas con cáncer y para sus familiares. Durante los grupos los participantes comparten sus preocupaciones, sus miedos y comprenden que ellos no están solos, que otras personas pasan por lo mismo y que pueden pasar juntos por este desafío. Los participantes aprenden a ser activos en su proceso de curación. Ellos aprenden a integrar la mente con el cuerpo. Reconocen las emociones que podrían afectar al sistema inmunitario como por ejemplo el miedo o el enojo y aquellas emociones que pueden definitivamente elevar las defensas del cuerpo

New Name – Same Mission

We are changing our name! This name change is the result of The Wellness Community merging with Gilda's Club. We believe our new name better reflects what we do. **NOTHING ELSE IS CHANGING.** We will still offer the same wide range of support services we have always offered, and they will continue to be provided **free of charge** to cancer patients and their families.

Join us in celebrating 24 years of support, education and hope for cancer patients and their loved ones as **The Wellness Community...** and toast to 25 more years as **Cancer Support Community!**



Friday, March 25, 2011 – 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm
109 West Torrance Blvd. - Outside Balcony

There will be music, food, memories and an incredible raffle!

For more information, please call 310-376-3550 or go to www.wellnessandcancer.org
RSVP Mandatory

Message from Tom May, LCSW, Program Director Groups & Programs Away from Our Home-Like Setting

As The Wellness Communities, Gilda's Clubs and Cancer Support Communities have evolved and matured since 1982, providing support groups at other locations that have encompassed many eclectic and creative venues and iterations. Often called Offsite or Outreach Groups and usually serving those affected by cancer who live a distance from our home-like setting at The Pier. These are facilitated by one of our trained and licensed therapists. While not the traditional home-like settings, these groups carry with them the same Patient Active, approach of every program or group. The groups have allowed Community Members to find hope and information while decreasing their sense of being alone with cancer.

These offsite programs are provided to Community Members at several locations in cooperation with area hospitals. The first groups Cancer Support Community-Redondo Beach (CSC-RB) offered continue today. We have collaborated with Torrance Memorial once a month offering a group for those experiencing lymphedema as an after effect to surgery and cancer. The other group is twice monthly at UCLA-Harbor, a general cancer group in English and one in Spanish.

Our most ambitious efforts began in 1998 and have been to maintain weekly groups serving the Long Beach area. Initially offered away from a hospital, the group for people with cancer and a separate group for loved ones are offered at Long Beach Memorial. More than nine years ago, we began offering a Prostate Cancer Networking Group on the 2nd Wednesday at Kaiser-South Bay Medical Center in Harbor City.

More recently, CSC-Redondo Beach has partnered with two hospitals, Providence Little Company of Mary-Torrance and Providence Little Company of Mary-San Pedro, and began offering a group at each location. We collaborate on a weekly group for women with cancer at PLCM-Torrance and a weekly breast cancer group at PLCM-San Pedro.



*Tom May, LCSW
Program Director*

Along with offsite groups, we have been able to offer several mind-body, stress reduction and exercise activities. These are "Cancer Wellfit" with Spectrum Club-El Segundo; "Wellness Walkabout" through ShapeShift By The Sea Pilates Studio-Redondo Beach; "Fit and Well Worth It" End Results Health & Wellness Center; and "Zumba" at Spectrum Club in Redondo Beach.

With the acceptance of offsite programs and groups, the groups have expanded an effort to reach more Community Members affected by cancer, while networking with hospitals and other organizations in the South Bay. More details can be found at www.cancersupportredondobeach.org

The Cancer Support Community Launches Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Spotlight on Breast Reconstruction

The Headquarters for Cancer Support Community (CSC) conducted a survey of 762 women with breast cancer who were eligible for breast reconstruction and found that 43 percent of patients do not receive information about breast reconstruction options when making treatment decisions at diagnosis. Findings also suggested that a credible, accessible and validated single resource for patients on the topic of breast reconstruction is not available. To address this need the CSC has launched Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Spotlight on Breast Reconstruction on January 30th, in partnership with its affiliate in Westlake Village, CA, The Wellness Community-Valley/Ventura. This program will be rolled out to all 50 affiliates shortly. For more information on the program, go to: <http://www.cancersupportcommunity.org/hc/News/Breast-Recon-Launch.aspx>

Survivor story *Continued from page 1*

became a very reluctant participant in The Wellness Community (TWC). In fact, I was brought in “kicking and screaming” (that is only a phrase) because I was not really interested in doing the “group thing”.

That all changed as time progressed and other participants took me in as a part of the “community”. Some, such as our beloved Group facilitator, Dr. Christine Winkler, and many of my brothers and sisters in this journey including Judy, Don, Bob, Suzie, Andrew, Karen, Elizabeth, Keith, Claire, Richard and many, many others, too numerous to name, have shared and inspired with their words, knowledge, and inspirational “stories.”

From my now over 5 years experience, one of the best things about TWC is the care and concern we – my brothers and sisters in the journey – all have for one another. In a real sense, we are all each other’s ‘significant other’ in this journey. We have a stake in the

recovery of each person. We value each other. We protect each other. We strengthen and inspire each other. Our fellowship – our community – becomes our family, our fortress, and our energizers.

There is a wedding prayer that says, “Now our joys are doubled, because the happiness of one is also the happiness of the other. Now our burdens are cut in half, since when we share them we divide the load.” In our TWC program and meetings, we double our joys and cut our burdens in half.

Members of TWC are the pacesetters on a track that infuses the healing process for ourselves and our team mates: those we honor and love. There is no place in this race for false hope. The victory lap begins and ends in the mind, as well as in the heart and soul.



PARTICIPANT WALL OF FAME



Michael and Arlene Walachy celebrate "Cancer Survivor Day"



Participants and Staff model fashions at "Wrapsody in Pink" Event



Participants enjoy TWC Holiday Party



Wayne and Vicki Verrell – greet "Survivorship Day" with smiles



Australian Rock Band "Juke Kartel" visits TWC

PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES 2011



Family Transition Group led by Steve Lottenberg, PsyD, MD



Participants enjoy the benefits of Pilates led by Cheryl Mansfield

weekly support programs the ♥ of our program

Family Transition – Bereavement
Cancer Patient
Family/Partners
Newly Diagnosed Breast Cancer

workshops & events

“Frankly Speaking About Lung Cancer:” Ronald Natale, MD
“Getting Organized as a Caregiver” Sarah Banks
“Laughing Yoga” Genie Nakano
“Holistic Techniques” Chris Elisabeth Gilbert, MD
“The Healing Art of Reflexology” Marina Dabcevic
“Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Liver Cancer”,
Richard R. Lopez, Jr. M.D., F.A.C.S

networking groups

after treatment breast cancer networking
brain tumor
carcinoid & neuro-endocrine tumor
colo-rectal networking
gynecological networking
leukemia, lymphoma & multiple myeloma
living with chronic cancer
lung cancer
lymphedema support group at TMMC
prostate cancer
prostate cancer at [kaiser permanente](#)
sarcoma alliance

stress reduction and mind-body activities provided at other locations

“Zumba”
“Fit And Well Worth It”
“Wellness Walkabout”
NEW! “Cancer Wellfit”

nutrition lunch

“From Laboring to Savoring”, David Matthew Brown
“Social Security Disability and Cancer”, Sarah Myles, M.Ed.
“Cancer Pain Management”, Noel Lee Chun, M.D., Q.M.E.
“Through A Different Lens: A New Way Of Seeing And Being”, Pam Hale, MA
“Getting to Wellbeing with Acupuncture, Herbs and Nutrition”, Sharon Pruss
“An Art Therapy Experience”, Jeannie Beaumont, LFMT, ATR
“The Art Of Happiness: The Story”, Wendy Treynor
“Presentation II: Don’t Believe Everything You Think: Ten Illusions That Prevent Us From Finding True Happiness”, Wendy Treynor
“Nutrition And Cancer: Myths, Controversies And Realities”,
Carolyn Katzin, Ms, Cns, Mnt

groups & programs provided at other locations

Torrance Memorial Medical Center (TMMC)
Lymphedema Support Group
Providence Little Company of Mary - Torrance
“EMBRACE” Cancer Survivorship Support Group
Providence Little Company of Mary - San Pedro
Breast Cancer Support Group
Kaiser Permanente Parkview Building
Prostate Cancer Support Group
Harbor - UCLA Outpatient Cancer Clinic
General Cancer Support Group
Long Beach Memorial Medical Center (LBMMC)
Cancer Patient Group
Family Support Group

stress reduction and mind-body activities

morning yoga
hatha yoga
pilates
relaxation & visualization: early yoga
relajación y vizualizción guiada
mindfulness meditation
gentle hatha yoga
healing through writing
reiki energy circle

Out and About



"Chefs for a day" - Stacy Rice, Mindy Stogsdill, Kathy Grogan, Mary Nickerson

Undiscovered Chef's Dinner

The 2nd annual Undiscovered Chef's Dinner was held on January 16, 2011 at Trump National Golf Club in Rancho Palos Verdes. A collaboration between The Wellness Community – South Bay Cities and Trump National Golf Club, this extraordinary event was once again a triumphant evening, bringing in more than \$40,000 from ticket sales, silent and live auctions. Twenty-two amateur chefs spent the day slicing and dicing a 3-course dinner for their family, friends and more than 250 guests under the tutelage of Executive Chef Jean Pierre Vincent. Thank you to our Circle of Hope Sponsor Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center Torrance and The Capital Group for their generous support.

Revlon

Join the Cancer Support Community & The Southern California Wellness Communities' Team! The 2011 Entertainment Industry Foundation Run/Walk for Women is on Saturday, May 7, 2011 and registration is now open. We will have 2 buses that will transport our team from the Redondo Beach Pier to the race and back. It's time to create Womentum!

Santa Barbara 1/2 Marathon

Cheer on our Strides For Hope team as we raise money for CSC programs. On May 7, 2011, our team will get to enjoy this spectacular course running from downtown Santa Ynez through Los Olivos into the Danish-settled town of Solvang for the post-race Wine and Music Festival.

Celebrate Wellness

The 15th annual Celebrate Wellness, a food and wine tasting garden benefit event will be held on July 10th at the South Coast Botanic Garden. Enjoy an afternoon of wonderful food, wine, fabulous live and silent auction items, entertainment and fun.

Hops for Health

The 2nd annual Hops for Health, a "Guys only" fundraising event will take place on August 11th at the Double Tree Marriott. A study from Oregon State University suggests that beer may help prevent prostate cancer. Highlights of the event will include a "Hole in One" putting contest, a meal and a souvenir pint glass.



"Girls Night Out" Attendees – TWC Executive Director, Judith Opdahl; TWC Operations Manager, Kristin Conforti; Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center-Board Chair, Suzi Gulcher; Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center Torrance-Director of Business Development, Deborah Fehn



Attending "Celebrate Wellness"- Redondo Beach Mayor, Mike Gin; TWC Executive Director, Judith Opdahl; CEO Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center Torrance, Michael Hunn; Restaurateur Michael Franks; Los Angeles Field Deputy, Steve Napolitano; Director of Business Development, Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center Torrance, Deborah Fehn

Girls Night Out

In its 9th year, our wildly popular Girls Night Out, "Ladies only" fundraising event will take place on October, 3rd, 4th and 5th at The Comedy & Magic Club in Hermosa Beach. Held in conjunction with Breast Cancer Awareness Month, in an effort to raise awareness about the disease and celebrate survivorship. A night of laughter each night as an array of comedians take the stage. The evening includes dinner, live and silent auction.

The Pink 100

Step on over to Body One Fitness for the 2nd Annual The Pink 100. Lou Sidella, owner of Body One Fitness partnered with The Dumbell Man, a commercial exercise equipment provider, hosted the first "The Pink 100", charity event to raise awareness of breast cancer. More than \$11,000 was raised last year. The event will take place the last week in October at Body One Fitness in Redondo. The pink 750T Cybex treadmill ran for 100 continuous hours. Skechers donated a pair of shoes to each participant.



"Partners in Pink" Michael Garvey, President, The Dumbell Man, and Lou Sidella, Owner Body One Fitness



"Comrades in Pink"- Theresa Plakos, Raylene Prout, Judith Opdahl

Celebrating 100 hours - Michael Garvey, Theresa Plakos, Raylene Prout, Lou Sidella, Judith Opdahl, Joe Gordon

facilitator's corner

I have been so very fortunate to be a facilitator at the Wellness Community South Bay Cities since January, 1998. During this time I have learned so much about what I consider to be the true essences of life from so many courageous and soulful cancer participants and family members. At the root of the journeys taken by many of these group members is somehow to accept at least some aspect of the fact that there is no way to get through life without very challenging phases to deal with. These phases present what I like to refer to as a series of "new normals" in life that we are challenged to adapt to and in our community these "new normals" often include deep physical and emotional issues. I truly am amazed each and every group, how fellow human beings are able to adapt somehow, someway in a very courageous way. Our groups allow a safe place to help one to release fears, anxieties and anger that lead to this adaptation.

It certainly feels so much healthier for us human beings to have a place like our community to make sure they can release what's inside rather than keep it stuffed inside where it can harm our bodies and our souls. After one hears the word cancer, approaches to life can be changed forever and we work together in our groups to both work on immediate challenges and to focus on many new positive coping mechanisms that will benefit one's life in the future. I hear so many times about couples and family members growing closer together through the cancer journey. Cancer can be such a humbling experience and at the same time I have seen many group members turn their lives around in such an empowering way. I so much treasure getting to experience how group members remove their "masks" and what is left is very real people sharing their true selves with each other. This to me is such a gift that we can all experience here at the Wellness Community.



Stephen Lottenberg, PsyD, MD

At any given time, men and women will come to our Cancer Community wanting and needing to talk about their disease, their illness, treatments and symptoms. They want to rebuild their bodies and their hopes. I am always inspired by facilitating groups of courageous people whose lives are changing every day as they deal with cancer. Our program is hugely successful because we are helping cancer patients and their families cope with their physical and emotional needs while they navigate this new territory which has no road map. When people come in to group, their brains are often hijacked by the impact of the disease and treatment options. There is no agenda for dealing with a cancer diagnosis. Fear of the unknown and living with the uncertainty has a hugely stressful impact on the immune system. The ability of coping with stress and managing it is the most important factor in the psychobiology of health and illness.

Each week I watch people help each other in the most loving and caring ways to move from a fearful place to a hopeful present. To see the relief that comes over people when they hug each other at the end of each group, makes me so grateful for being. When it all comes down to improving our health status, sometimes all that matters is when someone cares!



Christine Winkler, PhD, MFT

Our Mission

To ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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Tom May, LCSW, Program Director
Scott Bonnel, LMFT, Program Manager
Kristin Conforti, Operations Manager
Denise Harkins, Accounting Coordinator
Nida Padilla, Office Coordinator
Theresa Plakos, Public Relations/Outreach Manager
Mary Wadman, Graphics Coordinator

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A Food and Wine Tasting Event in the Garden

Celebrate Wellness...

A Food and Wine Tasting Event
celebrating 24 years of serving cancer
patients and their loved ones

Sunday, July 10, 2011

4 pm to 7 pm

South Coast Botanical Garden

\$120 per person (must be over 21)

Enjoy an afternoon of wonderful food,
wine, fabulous live and silent auction
items, entertainment and fun.

To participate, donate or for more
information call 310-376-3550