



# SURVIVOR TIMES

*A newsletter for cancer survivors, by cancer survivors.*  
Sponsored by The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program.



## *What Cancer Cannot Do*

*Cancer is so limited....  
It cannot cripple love.  
It cannot shatter hope.  
It cannot corrode faith.  
It cannot eat away peace.  
It cannot destroy confidence.  
It cannot kill friendship.  
It cannot shut out memories.  
It cannot silence courage.  
It cannot reduce eternal life.  
It cannot quench the Spirit.*

Author Unknown

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# Letter from the Editor:

**Welcome to the ninth issue of the *Survivor Times*: a newsletter for cancer survivors, by cancer survivors.**

This issue pays homage to the resilience and strength of the human spirit.

While the survivorship journey is distinctly an individual one; there is true grace and honor in sharing your story if somewhere, even one person is inspired by it.

The contributors to this issue have courageously demonstrated that a cancer diagnosis does not have to define the way you choose to live your life...

Their feisty spirits and indomitable approach to living embodies one of my favorite survivorship quotes:

*"Today we fight. Tomorrow we fight. The day after we fight, and if this disease plans on whipping us, it better bring a lunch, 'cause it's gonna have a long day doing it."*

*– Jim Beaver, in *Life's That Way: A Memoir**

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program is part of the many clinical and educational programs and services offered through Cooper Cancer Institute. This program is committed to providing cancer survivors with access to an array of complementary medicine experiences. Our programs are designed to help survivors discover ways to cope with the stress and anxiety of their diagnosis, and to alleviate some of the side effects of their treatment by focusing on healing the mind, body and spirit. My goal through this program is to bring together, empower and engage cancer survivors to incorporate complementary medicine options into their lives.

The inception of this newsletter is the outcome of one such special program offered throughout the year.

**If you would like to submit an article, please contact me at [mehr-bonnie@cooperhealth.edu](mailto:mehr-bonnie@cooperhealth.edu).**

Bonnie Mehr  
Editor, the *Survivor Times* Newsletter  
Manager, the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program



## Why Me? Why Not Me?

**Reflections on my Journey with Cancer** by Donna Forman

On April fool's Day, 2010, my life was forever changed! While on a vacation in Israel with my husband, I found "The Lump" on my right breast while showering. I knew at that moment that something wasn't right. When I got back home my "biggest fear" was confirmed! I was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer. My first reaction was "Why Me?" and how unfair life was. After the initial shock and much research, I learned that 1 in 8 women develop invasive breast cancer over the course of her lifetime. So, "Why not me?" This is when I went into "automatic pilot mode." I was fortunate to find the best doctors from Cooper Cancer Institute,



Donna Forman and husband.

the diagnosis of the "Big C," was the hair loss I would experience from my "chemo cocktail mix." I am the first to admit that I have always been rather "high maintenance" when it comes to my hair. The

Cooper University Hospital. Dr. Grana, my oncologist, sat down with my husband and me and discussed what my world would be like for the next year or so! I felt like my head was "spinning" and was beyond overwhelmed! Fortunately, as my anxieties, fears and questions arose, Ann Steffney, RN, Lead Nurse Navigator/ Breast Cancer Nurse Navigator came to my rescue.

One of the biggest and most difficult issues to grapple with, aside from

thought of me being "bald" and having my children and the rest of the world see me like that was devastating. Ann immediately sensed my anxiety and spent time with me, reviewing the many hair replacement options within our community. I was fortunate to find the best fit for me and my needs.

Somehow, I got through the extensive treatment protocol, consisting of surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and a year of herceptin treatment. I stayed in my "auto pilot mode" and on the surface tried to stay strong and positive for my loving family and friends. My daughters were my biggest inspiration, I wanted to make them proud and be a positive role model for them. I wanted them to see that there was a "light at the end of this journey."

Fast forward, two years later and my treatment is over; my hair is back, and

*(continued on page 10)*



# Signature Class SERIES

A FREE series of classes for cancer patients and their caregivers.

## YOGA STRETCH FOR CANCER SURVIVORS

Yoga Stretch for Cancer Survivors is especially beneficial for people with flexibility limitations due to a variety of degenerative conditions, as well as those recovering from surgery.

**DATES:** September 4 & 25; October 2 & 23;  
November 6 & 27; December 4

**TIME:** 12:00 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.

**LOCATION:** Town Square Building  
931 Centennial Blvd., Voorhees, NJ 08043

## QI GONG

Qi Gong is a modality several centuries old using movement and breath as a way to increase, harness and move the Vital Energy that is within and around us. It can increase focus, improve balance and flexibility, increase circulation, and relax you.

**DATES:** September 11; October 9 & 30;  
November 13; December 11

**TIME:** 12:00 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.

**LOCATION:** Town Square Building  
931 Centennial Blvd., Voorhees, NJ 08043

## MEDITATION FOR RELAXATION

Join practitioner Jo Anna Carey and you will be led on a journey of self-discovery through the deeply relaxing practice of meditation for the purpose of nurturing and supporting yourself through life's stresses and joys. Enjoy experiencing a variety of meditation techniques and breathing exercises.

**DATE:** September 18; October 16; November 20

**TIME:** 12:00 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.

**LOCATION:** Town Square Building  
931 Centennial Blvd., Voorhees, NJ 08043

## LIVE & LEARN

### A New Perspective for the Cancer Patient

**TIME:** 11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

**LOCATION:** Town Square Building  
931 Centennial Blvd., Voorhees, NJ 08043

- Thursday, September 13, 2012:**  
**Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) & Cancer:**  
Learn about and discuss human responses to traumatic events, how to identify when difficulties may be developing, and the currently supported methods for dealing with psychological difficulties related to trauma and a cancer diagnosis.  
**PRESENTED BY:** David Moore MA  
*The Cooper Cancer Institute Behavioral Health Team*
- Thursday, October 18, 2012:**  
**Pyramid to "My Plate:"** Please join us to learn about the new federal guidelines on the American Plate and how eating properly can help you prevent diseases such as cancer, heart disease and obesity.  
**PRESENTED BY:** Alicia Michaux, MS, RD  
*Outpatient Oncology Dietitian, Cooper Cancer Institute*
- Thursday, November 29, 2012:**  
**Holiday Stress? Let's Talk About It...** With the CCI Behavioral health Team. *(Second half of program we will decorate Cupcakes through our Creative Arts for Healing Workshops)*
- Thursday, December 13, 2012:**  
**Annual Holiday Party** For cancer survivors only. Please feel free to bring a dessert for all to share. Limited space available, so please register.

**Pre-registration is required for all workshops.**  
**Please call: 1.800.8.COOPER** (1.800.826.6737).

You can also register for these classes online at  
**events.cooperhealth.org**

*Please note that workshops are subject to cancellation due to inclement weather.*



**World Class Care. Right Here. Right Now.**

George E. Norcross, III ▪ Joan S. Davis ▪ John P. Sheridan, Jr.  
Chairman Vice Chairman President and CEO



# THE DR. DIANE BARTON Complementary Medicine Program 2012



## 2012 Creative Arts for Healing WORKSHOPS

### Location:

Town Square Building, 931 Centennial Blvd., Voorhees, NJ 08043

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. –12:30 p.m.

### Dates:

- **September 19:** Fall Wreaths
- **October 3:** Funky Jewelry
- **October 17:** Decorate 5x7 Picture Frame
- **November 7:** Paint Ceramics
- **November 29:** Decorate Your Own Cupcake

This class is free for cancer survivors and there is no cost for materials. Please register for each class so the appropriate number of supplies can be provided. Please call:

**1.800.8.COOPER** (1.800.826.6737).

You can also register online at [events.cooperhealth.org](http://events.cooperhealth.org).



## Therapeutic Massage & Reflexology Days

**Attention all cancer survivors:** Come enjoy the mind body spirit benefits of therapeutic chair massage and reflexology.

**Dates:** September 11 & 18,  
October 9 & 23, November 13 & 27

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. –1:00 p.m.

**Location:** Town Square Building  
931 Centennial Blvd., Voorhees, NJ 08043

## Bonnie's Book Club

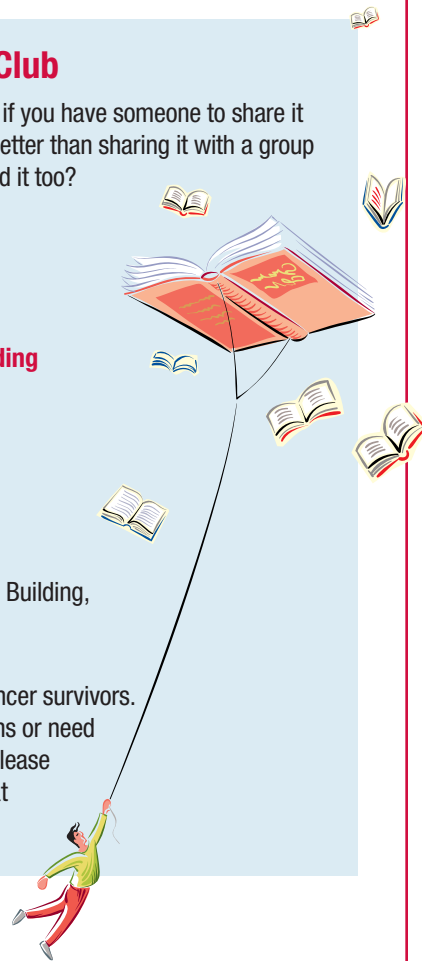
A story is always better if you have someone to share it with... what could be better than sharing it with a group of friends who have read it too?

- **September 19:**  
**Steve Jobs**  
by Walter Isaacson
- **October 24:**  
**The Sense of an Ending**  
by Julian Barnes
- **November 28:**  
**Unbroken**  
by Laura Hillenbrand

**Time:** Noon – 1 pm

**Location:** Town Square Building,  
931 Centennial Blvd.  
Voorhees, NJ 08043

This book club is for cancer survivors. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact **Bonnie Mehr** at **856.325.6646**



 **Cooper**  
Cancer Institute





## Gurl About Town

### Laughter Yoga and Broadway Moves

by Teresa Kao

This spring, the Live and Learn series of the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program at Cooper Cancer Institute offered classes on Laughter Yoga and Broadway Moves. I had never heard of such classes before but they sounded pretty interesting. I couldn't wait to attend the classes.

Now I can say that I am very happy that I went. I am also grateful for the opportunities to experience them.

We all know that laughter is the best medicine; but normally we use our minds to control our bodies. We laugh because something is funny or we feel happy. At the Laughter Yoga class, I learned to use my body to affect my mind, i.e. to use the process of laughing to change how I feel. We went through the motion of laughing regardless of whether we were happy or wanted to laugh. The practice includes several different exercises. Each exercise includes a few repetitions of simple movements of hands and body and laughing. The instructor also told us to look at others in the class and laugh with them. Initially everyone laughed awkwardly and reluctantly. But gradually the laughers became more genuine. At the end, we couldn't stop laughing and even had tears in our eyes. We'd look at each other and laugh uncontrollably all over again. It was such a wonderful and enlightening experience. Now I know the act of laughing actually brings smiles to my heart and lightens my mind.

After a good workout, I always feel elated. But when the exercises were accompanied by uplifting music, funky moves, attitudes of invincibility and camaraderie, I definitely had feelings of euphoria as when I attended the Broadway Moves class in June. It was great fun learning the different moves and putting them together into a show dance. We did the moves standing on our feet or sitting on chairs if our bodies felt like it. The instructor told us to move in a way to show our indomitable spirits. There were quite a few of us in the class. Everyone had smiles on her face. There were so much good feelings among us. I worked up a good sweat. After the class, the day seemed so much brighter to me. The sense of euphoria was with me for the rest of the day.

I've always enjoyed attending the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program's Live & Learn classes. Learning something new/gaining some new perspectives really stimulates my mind, keeps me focused and makes me more appreciative of all the opportunities afforded me. With Laughter Yoga and Broadway Moves, I felt the boost of spirits and energy during and after the classes. I also learned two very effective tools that I can use when I'm in need of a pick-me-up.

## My Other Job by: Barb Dillon



Going through cancer treatment often feels like a full time job. In the beginning, there are many tests and procedures to schedule—the “due diligence” of determining the extent of disease and formulating a treatment plan. Next (for me, anyway) came chemotherapy treatments. My particular chemo started out every two weeks, and then switched to drugs which were given weekly. After that, surgery, recovery, and radiation followed. Of course, appointments and more testing were also thrown into the mix.

Now, I suspect that, like me, most of you are not independently wealthy. Cancer is expensive!! I am fortunate to have very good health insurance which is covered by my husband – no referrals, yay! – but even so, I do have a job... a job that isn't cancer... a job that I enjoy... a job that was in jeopardy because of cancer.

I am proud to say that I worked through 4 out of my 6 months of chemotherapy treatments, stopping only when my side effects began to interfere. I stayed out through the surgery and recovery period, and started back to work the same week I began my radiation. I did not miss any time at all from that, even though scheduling was at times difficult. However, I did miss time while receiving chemo. Again, I was fortunate in several respects: my position is part-time, and my boss suggested I apply for “intermittent leave,” where if I called out sick, it did not go against my attendance record. I am thankful she told me about that; I didn't know that existed. Most importantly, I have a wonderful group of co-workers who were very understanding and helpful during this time period. I wouldn't have gotten through without their support. One of the nicest things that happened was how genuinely happy people seemed to be to see me when I returned (I work in a hospital, so that's a lot of people). It made going back to work easier – I was really nervous about returning!

If you are able to... it is worth it to continue to work during cancer treatment, and I am proof that it can be done. When most of your life is being turned upside down by your cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatment, it is good to have something that is steady that helps you to feel confident in your abilities and reminds you that not everything has to change. It is one more way that we can beat cancer instead of letting it beat us... and we all know that's worth doing.



# Susan's Story

by: Janet Knowles



Call her my "little" sister not only because I'm older, but I'm also taller. However, there is nothing little about her experience with sarcoma. Three years ago, Susan felt a slight pain in her right side and ignored it for a while, later going to the doctor to check it out. After an inconclusive ultrasound and CAT scan, an MRI suggested possible surgery.

Dr. Jenny Grana Director, of Cooper Cancer Institute was consulted, and she recommended David Warshal MD, Head, Division of Gynecologic Oncology at Cooper Cancer Institute.

Initial diagnosis was that

the growth that was seen was nothing serious, but surgery was suggested to remove it, and do a complete hysterectomy at the same time. The surgery was successful in removing the growth, but pathology had to check it out.

It wasn't good news. Susan's "pain" turned out to be a fibro sarcoma in the region of the ovary, and according to statistics, only 1% of the population experiences this type of cancer. Dr. Warshal and his colleagues at Cooper were determined to provide the best available treatment, and consulted with numerous doctors and cancer treatment centers throughout the country.

**"I SPEND MORE TIME WITH MY FAMILY, HAVE BEEN MORE PLACES AND SEEN MORE THINGS THAN I WOULD HAVE BEFORE. I DON'T TAKE LIFE FOR GRANTED, AND I KNOW I AM LUCKY... LIFE IS PRECIOUS."**

Susan had 27 treatments of extremely aggressive chemo. She also had to administer additional medications at home on the days of her chemo. She experienced a 911 call as a

result of an infection of her port, and spent 5 days in the hospital recovering from the infection. She also had several blood transfusions, and platelet therapy. During all of this time,

she was supported by family, and friends and during every chemo treatment, I, her "big" sister sat with her, as did her daughter, Amy, and precious granddaughter, Baylee, who made everyone in the chemo room laugh with her antics.

Three years have passed, and be-

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Susan, Janet and Susan's daughter Amy



Susan and Janet

## I'm Back

by: Sandy Lacher

It's been awhile since I've written an article for the *Survivor Times* newsletter. It will be a year since my last chemo session in March of 2011.

In 2006 I was diagnosed with uterine cancer, and went through the normal feelings of dealing with the dreaded disease and went through the usual chemo treat-

ments. I continued to see Dr. Warshal on a regular basis and was declared cancer free. When this newsletter was started I wrote several articles and I went on with my life.

Fast forward to the year 2010... feeling fine, I went on a cruise with a very good friend. Right before the trip, I had my normal blood work done and wham, my cancer had returned. How do you deal with a second blow? It does knock you down... but fortunately I did not stay down. I had sur-

gery, and then continued with new treatment while trying to get past the constant fatigue. Good friends and family were there to help me get up and keep me up. I never had to drive myself to and from my treatments.

A carpool was formed in my development and every week a different person would drive me to and fro.

Having chemo brain (no joke) is the reason I couldn't even consider writing another article for the *Survivor Times* for awhile. At the time even reading a book



# Our Empty Nest Is Really a Full Glass



by: Dara Marcozzi

As my husband and I head towards the “empty nest,” I have mixed emotions. The end of the summer was spent packing up our three children to send them off to school as we also prepare for our downsize to a smaller home. Our oldest Christine will start her law school career this fall at Villanova. Stephanie will be a junior, at George Washington University in DC, and our baby Anthony is headed to Bucknell, where he will play football for the Bison. I am so excited for all of them and I count my blessings every day.

Nevertheless, I get teary-eyed as I take down family pictures and carefully pack all of our kids’ belongings into boxes, memories of their childhood rushing over me like a giant wave. I long for the days when our home was filled with noise and laughter, even – the hair pulling, biting and temper tantrums – the times years ago when my son and



Dara Marcozzi and family

**I WILL ALWAYS BELIEVE IN HOPE AND WILL ALWAYS TRY TO PASS IT ON TO OTHERS. ALTHOUGH I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN THOSE DARK DAYS, I PUT THEM BEHIND ME LONG AGO. I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF MANY DAYS AND HOURS AND MINUTES WITH MY FAMILY. I NEVER TAKE THAT FOR GRANTED.**

his friends discovered that it would be funny to shove their shirts down the toilet bowl and flush. I will miss the constant activity that made up the fibers of our daily life. I will miss seeing the smiling faces of my children every morning – and I will miss the good night hugs most of all. Yet I also realize that I have waited for this momentous occasion for so long. That moment when we could feel that sense of relief at having helped all of our children to cross over into adulthood, the moment when you just know that they will be able to stand on their own two feet.

There was a point when I believed that it would be impossible for me to celebrate any of these major milestones, a time when the fate of our family rested gingerly in the balance. This time 19 years ago a cancer diagnosis

suddenly turned our world upside down. Christine was nearing her 3rd birthday and Stephanie was 18 months old. I had just found out I was pregnant again and at 11 weeks, I had a routine ultrasound to date my pregnancy. The technician spotted something alarming on the screen. The rest is history... surgery when I was 16 weeks pregnant to remove the baseball size tumor and my ovary before the tumor ruptured – then came decisions about whether to terminate the pregnancy, whether to undergo a second surgery or have chemotherapy while I was pregnant... We agonized over those decisions. There were no clear answers – no great options. We prayed and hoped and took a leap of faith. We gave our son some time to grow in the womb and then I delivered him 6 weeks early. I had a hysterectomy and cancer staging at the same time at Cooper. I hugged our girls and said good-bye the morning of my surgery, and I got one quick glimpse of my baby in the delivery room before the anesthesia kicked in. At that moment I was at peace. I finally knew our Anthony was okay. I knew that my girls were surrounded by people who loved them. I

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was impossible. I’m fine now, and so happy to be able to write this article. I want to thank all the people who have helped me deal with a tough year.

This past December I went on another cruise with a group of eight other women; five of whom were also cancer survivors.

I feel like I have my life back, and it proves you just have to keep on trucking through a cancer journey.



# Further The Adventures of Loretta O'Donnell



by: Loretta O'Donnell

My love of travel and adventure has been stronger than ever since my diagnosis over two years ago, as I look to try new things without caring whether I will be good at them or not. New places and experiences help me to live in the present, create cherished memories and bring a powerful sense of freedom and fearlessness. I think to myself, "What the h---, why not?"



The past couple years have been especially busy including parasailing with my daughter over the Atlantic, mushing through snow at the Winter Carnival in old Quebec City, hiking up a lookout hill to view the Smoky Mountains and walking on the glass floored Skywalk high above the Grand Canyon.

My first sight of the Grand Canyon was an unforgettable moment as I felt a timeless divine presence of heaven meeting earth. A wonderful sense of peace came over me and feeling of connection and gratitude to experience this inspiring wonder with my family.

These adventures are a welcome distraction from chemo, giving me something to look forward to and plan. They are especially meaningful when our son Mike and daughter Laura can join us, bringing the family "back to full strength." My husband Bill says with a laugh, "I'm just holding on to her coat tails."



Loretta O'Donnell with husband Bill



Loretta parasailing with daughter

Donning the Mrs. Incredible costume for a recent party made me feel like a powerful superhero for the day. Also known as Elastigirl from the movie *The Incredibles* a few years ago, she comes out of retirement to save her husband and kids.





# A Different Kind of Love Letter

by: Michele Lucas

After being diagnosed with stage 4 cancer in 2009 I was very, very upset...I felt alone and scared.

Shortly thereafter, I met another cancer survivor in the waiting room of the physical therapist's office. Her name was Diane Hatoff and she really encouraged me with her story as a stage 4 cancer survivor.

To meet another person with a stage 4 cancer diagnosis with her positive attitude and experience changed my world.

While she gave me hope that day, she could see that what I really needed was some encouragement and support. In an act of extreme compassion and kindness, Diane wrote me a letter and gave it to the physical therapist to give to me during my next appointment. Never could Diane have dreamed that I would keep that letter, and pull it out and re-read it during my darkest moments for inspiration during the past two years. I also took her wise advice, and began to attend as many of the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program classes as I could.

Fast forward to a Wednesday afternoon in November of 2011 where I was taking a Creative Arts for Healing class through the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program. I was sitting among a large group of cancer survivors working on a very relaxing art project and chatting away when I realized that one of the ladies looked familiar. I said "Is

your name Diane Hatoff?" She said "Yes" ...I said "It's me, Michelle..." We hugged... I thanked her and told her that I still had her letter and what it had meant to me these past two years. She said she was not sure it even gotten to me... but she was thrilled it had, and that it had made a positive difference. The survivors that attended the class that day realized they had witnessed a very special reunion. I would like to share with you excerpts from the letter Diane Hatoff wrote to me.



From: Diane Hatoff  
Thursday, July 16, 2009

Dear Michele,

I hope you are starting to feel a little better.  
Take one day at a time. You will get there.

You will meet this very great challenge and beat this most difficult disease; cancer.

Remember, I am a stage 4 cancer survivor and I beat it!

I am enclosing information concerning the wonderful programs that Cooper Cancer Institute offers.

The Dr. Diane Barton complementary medicine program has provided many tools for me to help feel better about myself. They helped me build up more self confidence during my journey with cancer. I know it will do the same for you! Remember...one day at a time. Look over these programs; you can attend all of them if you are up to it. If you have any questions I will be glad to help you.

With Warm Regards,  
Diane Hatoff



Michele at Creative Arts for Healing class.



## Why Me?

(continued from page 2)

looking great, thanks to my stylist. I now reflect upon my journey with cancer! I try each day to find my "new norm." I talk openly about my cancer and share my emotions and experiences with others. I have integrated this "cancer" into my world, realizing it is just another part of what has shaped me into who I am today. I have gotten actively involved in the Pink Roses Teal Magnolias fundraiser for Cooper University Hospital. Joining forces with this group of strong and inspirational women, each with their own personal stories, relating to cancer has been a wonderful and uplifting experience for me. This "sisterhood" and bond has helped me realize that life is unpredictable and we don't have a crystal ball to foresee our future. We can only live and experience each day to its fullest! I have learned to appreciate the beauty of the little things we often take for granted like sunsets, good and bad hair days, and the sound of the ocean on a quiet evening. Most importantly, I take the time to cherish each moment with my family and friends! I am appreciative and grateful that I have beat this cancer! As they say YOLO (you only live once), and I plan on doing just that.

### Susan's Story

(continued from page 6)



cause of the extraordinary care received from Cooper University Hospital, their doctors, nurses, and staff, Susan is still enjoying the antics of her first and now second granddaughter, Amber.

Susan has commented that "I learned to live for today and enjoy life. Every day, I do something I like to do. I don't worry about cleaning the windows and washing the floor. I spend more time with my family, have been more places and seen more things than I would have before. I don't take life for granted, and I know I am lucky...life is precious."

And so is my "little" sister.

# Girls, (Oops) Women Just Want to Have Fun



by Louise Flannery



Louise Flannery and family.

As I think back to all the fun activities I have participated in over the last 8 or 9 years with the other cancer survivors in the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program, facilitated and managed by our beloved Bonnie Mehr, I am overwhelmed with such a sense of gratitude. I want to pay tribute to all the amazing and wonderful people and survivors that I have encountered on my path from diagnosis of cancer to the present time.

During a recent Creative Arts Gathering... now was it the Swarovski Crystal Necklace or the Mini Herb Garden project? I was engrossed in what I was doing but something made me look up. I gazed around the table wonderingly and saw a group of women who were chattering away just like any other group and they were laughing and having fun! While we were all brought together by a common bond, we were such a diverse group of different personalities, backgrounds, etc. We had each experienced our own unique form of cancer, suffered the ups and downs of treatment but you didn't hear any type of complaining. Looking at all the smiling faces, I could see healing taking place right before my eyes.

Some other activities which I have found to be very helpful but certainly not limited to are: yoga, clay sculpture, book club, chair massage and reflexology. We also had many sessions with a family therapist who was so helpful in so many ways especially helping me in recognizing and dealing with toxic relationships in my life. Each session was filled with warmth, wisdom and a good dose of humor thrown in.

I am thankful for all the different activities since cancer is not just a disease of the body but also of the mind and spirit and has to be addressed on all three levels for healing to occur. I am grateful for the opportunity to write these articles and share insights I have gained, finding my voice.

Many, many thanks to the legacy of Dr. Diane Barton.



# Feel Better Soup

## Ingredients:

- 2 heads of fresh escarole, mustard greens, watercress or Napa cabbage, torn & washed 3 times.
- 2 bunches of bok Choy or baby bok Choy
- 1 teaspoon canola oil
- 4 cloves of garlic, sliced
- 1 branch fresh lemongrass, split in two (optional)
- 2 large(48oz.) cans of low sodium or sodium free chicken stock or vegetable stock
- 2 packages of Japanese Udon noodles or 1 package of wide rice noodles
- Freshly cracked white pepper
- Thinly sliced scallions for garnish
- Thinly sliced chicken may be added to this soup for extra body
- Dark toasted sesame oil for garnish (optional)

*What's better than a steaming bowl of soup?*

In a large stock pot, add ginger and heat over a medium flame for 1 minute. Add garlic and sauté without browning until fragrant. Remove garlic from the pan with a slotted spoon and set aside.

Return pan to heat and add escarole and baby bok Choy. Sauté quickly to wilt. Add chicken

Stock and bring to a boil. Add rice noodles and cook another minute until noodles are soft. (If a clear soup is desired, cook noodles in boiling water before adding soup.)

Serve garnished with fresh scallions and if desired, a drizzle of sesame oil.

## Options:

All oil may be omitted by simmering stock with ginger and lemongrass instead of sautéing.

## If preparing soup for freezing:

Omit noodles until the day you are serving. Add fresh greens to refresh the healthfulness of the soup.

## Our Empty Nest

*(continued from page 7)*

dozed off to sleep as my family waited nervously in the waiting room for 8 hours. By the grace of God and at the hands of talented surgeons, Anthony and I both survived. I started chemotherapy the following month. I have been cancer-free since 1994. Our friends and family, the doctors and nurses, had all picked us up and carried us through the storm.

I will always believe in hope and will always try to pass it on to others. Although I have never forgotten those dark days, I put them behind me long ago. I have been given the precious gift of many days and hours and minutes with my family. I never take that for granted. My life has become a glass full to the brim. As we enter this new chapter, I am overcome with emotion as I "cut the cord," but I also feel very lucky to have reached the point in life where we can celebrate our empty nest.

## Be a Monthly Sponsor of the Tea Cart

**Your donations of ShopRite gift cards are appreciated. We have expanded the tea cart in Voorhees to 5 days per week!**

Every delicious snack given to our patients while they are receiving their chemo is given from the heart. Our patients are always pleasantly surprised when sitting in the outpatient chemo unit for hours and perhaps feeling a little down, when a beautiful flowered cart filled with free juices and snacks, program updates and the Survivor Times, and many more surprises, comes along and serves them a little spot of sunshine. It's an inspirational initiative through the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program along with Cooper Cancer Institute employees that voluntarily give up part of their lunch time to make a positive difference in the quality of each patient's journey. It serves as a testament of the spirit that defines Cooper Cancer Institute's commitment in providing Excellence in Patient & Family-Centered Care.

For more information please contact; Bonnie Mehr, Manager, the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program at 856-325-6646 or mehr-bonnie@cooperhealth.edu

You may mail your ShopRite gift card donations to: Attn: Bonnie Mehr Cooper Cancer Institute, 2017 Piazza Main St., Voorhees, NJ 08043



# I am a Survivor!

by: Ingrid Tornari



I shall never forget the first time I met Dr. James Aikins, gynecologic oncologist at Cooper Cancer Institute. He entered the exam room smiling, placed his hand on my shoulder, and asked, "How are you?" What a kind and compassionate question during such a devastating time. It was fall 2010 when I heard the dreaded word – recurrence.

Back in March 2009, I went to the emergency room with severe abdominal pain and within two weeks, received the jaw-dropping diagnosis of Stage 3-C Ovarian Cancer. I was 39 and my children were not even 2 and 4. I was on "autopilot," shuffling from surgery to chemo, fighting nausea, side effects, and other issues. One recurrence, four surgeries, and over two years of intense treatment later, I gratefully scream – I AM A SURVIVOR!

How did I survive? Faith, Family, and Friends! My faith is strong – it comforts, guides, and strengthens me. My family is the biggest blessing: my husband Michael has helped me walk again, literally peeled me off the bathroom floor, dried my tears, helped me buy a wig, been to every doctor appointment, and tirelessly cared for and loved our children. The list is endless and no words can convey how grateful I am for Michael. My children (Lucia, 6 and Vincent, 5) have been my beautiful rays of light during very stormy times. Having seen my absolute worst, they showered and strengthened me with endless kisses and "knock-knock" jokes! Michael and I are so blessed with amazing parents, siblings, and cousins who have risen up to lift us up and keep life as "normal" as possible for our children. My dear cousin Nancy showed what a true sister is by attending every treatment with me, being a rock for Michael, and sharing all of the tears, prayers, and laughter along the way. My friends and church family have given unending love and support from delivering meals to spending time with my children. It all means the world!

Cooper University Hospital has been a constant positive to me during these last 3 years. The infusion center became my second home and the



Ingrid Tornari with husband Michael, Vincent and Lucia.

friendships I have made are true blessings. I consider my chemo nurses and the staff my family and love them all.

Being a Cooper patient has opened my eyes to their wonderful programs and workshops. I have participated in survivor support groups, yoga classes, and others. The positive experiences and special friends I have made through Cooper have brightened my way.

Enjoying life, playing with my children, planning our first Disney vacation, and giving thanks keeps me busy these days.

I have received tremendous care from all of the Cooper Gyn/Oncology physicians: Drs. Thomas Rocereto, David Warshal, Meredith Crisp, Robin Wilson-Smith, and of course, Dr. James Aikins who always has a smile and takes time to listen with no question being too strange. His compassion and outward concern for his patients' quality of life distinguish him. He knew when to give me breaks from treatment so I could regroup, continue to "fight like a girl," and put this cancer back in its corner. Another one of Cooper's stars, the world's best colorectal surgeon, and my dear friend, Cooper's Dr. Benjamin Phillips, used his superpowers on multiple occasions to put me back together and allow me to focus on fighting and living.

My advice to anyone new to this cancer world is: Don't EVER give up. Keep fighting and asking questions, educate yourself, and exercise (yes, it really works!), and most of all, allow yourself to feel all of the anger, sadness, joy, etc... Keep fighting!

## About The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program

The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program enhances the quality of life and wellness of individuals touched by cancer – including patients, their caregivers and family.

It utilizes therapies that focus on mind, body and spirit while supporting mainstream medical care. The complementary therapies offered through CCI are designed to lessen the pain, stress and anxiety associated with cancer. Therapies also assist in managing the side effects of traditional treatments such as radiation and chemo-therapy. While complementary therapies cannot cure cancer, many patients have found them to be helpful in managing and coping with their cancer. While traditional medicine and healthcare treat the illness, complementary medicine therapies help promote wellness in the whole person.

In addition to the therapeutic benefits, taking part in complementary medicine therapies empowers participants – providing survivors with an opportunity to take a positive, active role in their care and treatment.

All therapies and programs offered through the Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program are available at no cost and are open to all cancer patients and their caregivers, regardless of where they receive their treatment. These programs, lectures and activities offer patients access to social, educational and support opportunities. Programs are offered weekly throughout the year. Our outpatient complementary medicine programs include:

- Restorative Yoga
- Therapeutic Chair Massage
- Meditation for Relaxation
- Qi Gong
- Body Movement Classes
- Behavioral Health Workshops
- Creative Arts
- The Tea Cart (brought to outpatients while receiving chemotherapy)
- Educational Seminars
- Horticultural Therapy

**This program is wholly funded through philanthropic support. As the reputation and demand for our programs and services grow, so does our need for funding. If you are interested in learning more about The Dr. Diane Barton Complementary Medicine Program or would like to make a donation, please contact, Bonnie Mehr, Program Manager, at 856.325.6646.**

