



Helping with the hard conversations

"I thought talking to my daughter about my cancer would be difficult, but it turned out to be easier than telling my elderly mom. I was trying not to worry either one of them, but I was so scared and anxious myself. Both were the hardest conversations I've ever had."

Talking to family members about a cancer diagnosis is stressful and emotional, and it affects everyone in the household. Day-to-day routines are disrupted, there are unexpected tensions, rollercoaster moments and, in many families, financial setbacks.

At Cancer CAREpoint, our social workers meet one-on-one with cancer patients and family members to talk about the trauma of cancer in your life. Separate support groups for cancer patients and caregivers provide a safe, caring environment outside the family where feelings and fears can be openly and honestly shared. Last year, a pilot support group for teens who have a parent battling cancer was highly successful in helping them deal with their anxieties and the common reactions of feeling angry, sad, guilty and unfairly burdened.

Cancer CAREpoint social workers Laura Crutchlow, LCSW and Amy Goldsbury, MSW have many ways of helping families. "We give our clients tools to help them communicate with their families," said Amy. "We listen to their concerns and give them guidance on what they might want to say."

Sian's cancer diagnosis was difficult for her family. As individuals and as a family, they took advantage of Cancer CAREpoint services to support them through "the serious conversations we needed to share about my disease," Sian said. "Cancer CAREpoint brought us closer together and better able to face the future."

Following are a few helpful suggestions from the Cancer CAREpoint social workers:

- Be honest about your cancer diagnosis. It is okay to say the word "cancer" and to deliver information about the disease in an age appropriate way. "Children can sense when something is going on that they haven't been told about. They will imagine what it could be - which is often worse than the truth," Laura said. "You don't have to have an answer for all of their questions. You can say 'I have to think about that,' or 'I will find the answer and let you know.' Just be sure to get back to them soon."
- Don't be afraid to express your emotions in front of your children, even crying if that is what you feel like doing. "You are modeling how to express your feelings in a healthy way," said Amy.

continued on back page



Photo Credit: Retrospect Images

What do you say about cancer?

Recently I met a retired physician who said when he started working with cancer patients early in his career, he would have to whisper the word "cancer" rather than say it out loud. He then commented on how times have changed.

Certainly times have changed, at least about the public discussion of cancer. Almost every day there are news articles about cancer, celebrities make public declarations when diagnosed with cancer, and TV show plots portray what it is like to live with cancer.

What hasn't changed is our private discussions about cancer. When someone is diagnosed it is still incredibly difficult to communicate that information – whether to a spouse, family member, friend or co-worker. Patients must decide what to say, who to say it to, and how to say it – or whether to say anything at all.

I know one patient who provides detailed reports of his cancer treatment, hopes and fears on his Facebook page. Another would only

share her cancer diagnosis with a few close family members and carefully avoided neighbors because she didn't want them to know. And yet another patient said that when she started losing her hair, complete strangers would come up to her and ask her questions regardless of whether she wanted to talk or not.

These types of communication issues are something that we know intimately at Cancer CAREpoint. Every day we work with patients and their loved ones to explore the difficult terrain of communicating about cancer. It may be in a private counseling session with one of our social workers, in a support group or our survivor's program, or even in a therapeutic massage session.

“There is something I need to tell you...”

Often, patients and family members find that just being in our warm, inviting Resource Center, away from the clinical setting of a hospital, encourages them to open up and talk. A cancer diagnosis impacts the patient, family members and their entire social network in many different ways. But finding a way to talk about cancer is a personal and difficult decision that each patient must confront.



As always, if you have any comments, please feel free to contact me directly at rob@cancercarepoint.org. We are here for you.

Rob Tufel

Rob Tufel, MSW, MPH
Executive Director

Double your donation!

If you work for any of the following companies, they will match your donation to Cancer CAREpoint. Thank you for supporting the programs that help anyone in Silicon Valley whose life is touched by cancer.

- Adobe Matching Gifts
- Apple Matching Gifts through Benevity
- Bank of America Employee Giving Program
- Cisco Matching Gifts Program through JustGive
- IBM Matching Grants Program
- KLA Tencor Foundation through EasyMatch
- LinkedIn Matching Gifts Program through EasyMatch
- Oracle Matching Gifts Program through EasyMatch
- SanDisk Corporation Matching Gift Program through EasyMatch
- VMware Foundation Matching Gift Program through EasyMatch

Help your employer become a matching donor by contacting Rob@cancercarepoint.org

A new Family CARE program is coming to Cancer CAREpoint. Read about it on page 8 and watch for schedule details on cancercarepoint.org.



**SV Gives...
It's back!!**

Please mark **May 5, 2015** on your calendar, when Cancer CAREpoint is participating in the second Silicon Valley Gives regional fundraising event for local nonprofits. More details to come, but last year there were multiple matching grants that could double or triple your donation. It's a great opportunity to support our programs that are helping so many in our community.

Cancer gave me a surprising new outlook

Sonya Sokolsky knows it's a strange thing to say, but she credits cancer with making her "a stronger, smarter, better person. Cancer is hard thing to go through, but it has made me the person I've become."

Sonya was just 18 and on a break from school while she figured out what she wanted to do with her life when she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Cancer forced her to get past old emotions and negative thoughts and look at things with a new perspective.

"Bad things happen," she said. "You can try to numb yourself or be angry, or just learn to take it as it comes."

This positive outlook did not appear overnight. When she first started chemo, Sonya spent most of her time at home reading, watching TV and feeling depressed. She remembered seeing an announcement about yoga for cancer patients at Breathe, her yoga studio, and decided try it out. It was the start of a whole new phase of healing.

"Everyone at Breathe welcomed me with open arms," she said. "I learned how tremendously important it is to have a community to support you."

Sonya also began to take advantage of other support services at Cancer CAREpoint's Resource Center including counseling with a social worker, nutrition classes, massage therapy, healing touch, the Wig Bank and additional yoga classes.

Now that her treatment is over, Sonya is attending De Anza College and making plans to transfer to U.C. Irvine to study cognitive science. She feels she is getting stronger every day, but says there is still more healing to be done.

"Being in remission is almost as big an adjustment as starting treatment," she explained. "I lost trust in my body



Sonya found hope throughout her cancer treatment from the loving care of her father and the support services provided by Cancer CAREpoint.

For information on yoga classes for cancer patients and survivors at Breathe Los Gatos and the Cancer CAREpoint Resource Center, visit cancercarepoint.org. In addition to free yoga classes for patients and survivors, Breathe also offers a discount to Cancer CAREpoint clients for its other classes.



when I was so weak during chemo and I have to build up confidence in myself again. It's emotionally tough to do."

Recently Sonya posted on her Facebook page a new year's reflection on her cancer journey that included special thanks to Cancer CAREpoint, the "place that made me feel safe when I couldn't even be alone with myself," and yoga instructor Lorien Nearing whose "words of wisdom and support are with me at all times."

"Lorien's classes taught me, for the first time in my life, that it is okay to allow ourselves to be weak, and it is okay to ask for help," she wrote. "It may not sound like much, but this was a huge breakthrough for me. I am not exaggerating when I say that it has changed and saved my life."

"I learned how tremendously important it is to have a community to support you."

Monday nutrition classes soar in popularity

Cancer CAREpoint's weekly cooking classes are often standing room only, as more and more cancer patients and their caregivers discover how helpful they are in creating meals that are healthy and appealing.

Frequently the Monday classes are offered twice. Additional classes and Q&A sessions with the nutritionists are being added to the schedule of programs at the Resource Center. The evening Eating for Health nutrition program for survivors will be offered several times this year.

Check the monthly calendar on cancercarepoint.org for more class information. Pre-registration is required by emailing Sheryl@cancercarepoint.org or calling 408.402.6611.



Persian cooking, in honor of the Persian New Year in March, is one of several nutrition classes focused on dishes appealing to Silicon Valley's diverse population.

Monday, March 2

Eat to Boost Energy

Monday, March 9

Nutritional Smoothies

Monday, March 16

Healing Herbs and Spices

Monday, March 23

Persian Cooking, celebrating Persian New Year

Monday, March 30

Kick the Sugar Habit

A special nutrition class for young adult cancer survivors, ages 18-39(ish), will be held at the Cancer CAREpoint Resource Center on **Saturday, March 28**, at 1 p.m. in partnership with American Cancer Society's Healthy Young Attitude group. Sign up through cancercarepoint.org.

Recipes from past nutrition classes, including smoothies, salads, soups, desserts and international cuisine from other countries can be found on cancercarepoint.org/services_recipes.html.

U.C. Fellows come onboard

Cancer CAREpoint is proud to be accepted into the U.C. Berkeley Board Fellows Program. Two Fellows, graduates of the U.C. Berkeley Haas School of Business, are volunteering their time to work with the Cancer CAREpoint Board on strategic plans for our future. Jessica Mancini and Marcelo Oliveira are working closely with Board Vice-Chair Victor Adint (also a U.C. Berkeley Haas School of Business alumnus) on a special project analyzing different revenue models that can provide sustainable financial support for the programs that Cancer CAREpoint provides in the community.

Creating or updating your estate plan?

Please consider including a gift to Cancer CAREpoint

When you make an estate gift to Cancer CAREpoint, you are making an investment in an important local resource for cancer patients and their families in our community.

There are several ways you can provide for Cancer CAREpoint in your estate:

- Include Cancer CAREpoint as a beneficiary in your will or trust
- Name Cancer CAREpoint as a beneficiary in your retirement plan

- Make a donation to Cancer CAREpoint from your IRA when you need to make a Required Minimum Distribution (consult your Tax Advisor)

Questions? Please contact Rob Tufel, Executive Director, at rob@cancercarepoint.org or 408.402.6282 if you are interested in making a gift that will sustain a strong community resource and leave a lasting legacy.



Research shows physical activity beneficial to cancer patients

Cancer CAREpoint offers more exercise classes

Multiple studies over the past few years have found that cancer patients who engage in moderate exercise, such as walking, bicycling, swimming or yoga, for a few hours each week are experiencing significant benefits. Their overall health improves and in some research groups, physically active cancer patients had better survival rates.

The February 2015 issue of the *International Journal of Cancer* reported that irisin, a hormone released after vigorous exercise, significantly reduced the number of aggressive breast-cancer cells in laboratory cultures and enhanced the effects of a chemotherapy drug commonly used to treat breast cancer.

In response to client requests and research findings, Cancer

CAREpoint has expanded its offerings of free exercise and yoga classes at the Resource Center:

Gentle Movement with Cheryl Reed
Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Yoga with Lorien Neargarder
Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.

Yoga with Linda Toeniskoetter
Thursdays, 9-10 a.m.

Please email info@cancercarepoint.org or call 408.402.6611 to confirm the schedule.

Also available to our clients are two free, cancer-specific yoga classes taught by Lorien Neargarder every Monday and Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. at Breathe Studios, 14107H Winchester Blvd, Los Gatos. For information on classes at Breathe, call 408.370.9642.



Yoga is a natural way to help you relax and cope with stress, anxiety and depression.

Yoga instructor Lorien Neargarder and client Sonya Sokolsky (see page 3) strike a pose

Cancer CAREpoint collaborates



Cancer CAREpoint partners several times a year with the "Look Good . . . Feel Better" program of the American Cancer Society. Check the Cancer CAREpoint calendar for dates and times. At "Look Good . . . Feel Better," volunteer beauty professionals lead small groups through hands-on experiences to learn about make-up, skin and nail care, and how to deal with hair loss.



The Northern California International Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia Foundation held its first support group meeting in the South Bay at Cancer CAREpoint at the end of January. The event featured a talk by Dr. Thomas Chen, a private practice oncologist, and a welcome by Rob Tufel of Cancer CAREpoint who described services available at the Resource Center. Waldenstrom Macroglobulinemia is a rare type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma.



Cancer CAREpoint joined Good Samaritan Hospital, the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley Women's Philanthropy and community leaders to sponsor a special film screening in early February of "N.E.D. - No Evidence of Disease," a documentary about six cancer surgeons who form a rock band to raise awareness about gynecological cancers. The film has been called "an amazing work of art" that mixes humor and raw emotion into an educational and inspirational experience.

Volunteering to make a difference in people's lives

Every other Monday morning, Mike Culcasi can be found at the front desk of the Cancer CAREpoint Resource Center where he greets clients, answers the phone, and cheerfully does "anything else they need me to do."

"I almost feel selfish in spending my time there," he said, "because it makes me feel so good to help others."

The retired account manager with a 30-year career at Varian Semiconductor has been a volunteer with Cancer CAREpoint from its earliest days.

He was familiar with the concept of support services for cancer patients from his involvement with a similar type of organization a few years earlier. When he heard about the mission of Cancer CAREpoint, his interest was piqued.

"I knew of the benefits of these services to cancer patients and their families, and Cancer CAREpoint was being organized by people I knew and respected," he said. "It's magnificent to see the growth it has experienced in the number of clients served and expanded services."

Having lost his father and a close friend from college to cancer and knowing others whose lives have been affected by cancer, Mike believes there could not be a better way for him to give back to the community.

"When you help others, you help yourself," he said. "I want to be sure that every person who walks through that door sees a smiling face, receives a friendly greeting, and feels welcome to come back at any time."

Mike also volunteers for First Tee, a program that teaches children life skills through the game of golf, and is the lead facilitator for the San Jose Prostate Cancer Group.



Mike Culcasi

Couple is proud to support "a great service to the community"

Dr. John (DJ) and Edna Herman have been enthusiastic about Cancer CAREpoint from before its inception. Since the Resource Center opened, the Los Gatos couple has invested in the mission of the organization and sing its praises to everyone they know.

"It is such a great service to the community," said Edna. "People are so desperate when they are diagnosed with cancer. They don't know what to do, where to go, what to eat. It is fantastic that Cancer CAREpoint is there for them."

John, who was diagnosed with leukemia more than 20 years ago, was one of 200 cancer patients, caregivers and health care professionals who participated in focus groups that identified the need for support services for people in Silicon Valley whose life is touched by cancer. The results of those focus groups led to the development of Cancer CAREpoint.

In addition to their financial support of Cancer CAREpoint, John is the artist who painted the beautiful watercolors that decorate the walls of the Resource Center. He attends many Cancer CAREpoint programs and shares his experience with cancer and his perspective as a retired physician.

"We knew from the first time we heard about it that we wanted to be involved with this organization," Edna said. "It is helping so many people."



"I will do anything I can to support this organization, I really want to help," said DJ Herman.

Picking up the pieces of your life



Cancer CAREpoint's pilot program last fall of the Survivorship series, "Picking up the Pieces," was extraordinarily successful. Participants experienced a safe venue to share feelings, hopes and fears while receiving practical tools and resources to move forward post active treatment.

"The group was understanding," said one participant. "We could tell the truth and weren't judged. It is the ONLY place I can talk about the things that really bother me, no matter what it could be."

This eight-week series will be offered several times in 2015, and each series is expected to fill quickly. For program information, email Sheryl@cancercarepoint.org or call 408.402.6611.

Our Community Cares

Thank you to the many individuals, businesses and community groups who are supporting Cancer CAREpoint and making a difference in the lives of cancer patients and their families.

A one-year anniversary party for the Cancer CAREpoint Wig Bank, hosted by **Libbie Cilker, Cristal Hernandez** and **Donna Spagna** (pictured below), raised \$3,000 to support the program. Donna coordinates the Wig Bank with the help of a team of dedicated volunteers. Together they have helped more than 100 women experiencing chemo induced hair loss regain confidence and ease with a new coiffure.



Nicole Dow-Macosky, who started **Project Chemo Crochet** as a tribute to her late mother, held a workshop for volunteers and clients on Feb. 6, to crochet squares that are sewn together to make comfy blankets for cancer patients. Visit cancercarepoint.org for new workshop dates.



World renowned pianist **Katya Grineva**, who has played at Carnegie Hall 14 times, provided multiple opportunities to help Cancer CAREpoint in February. Her activities included performing for patients at Good Samaritan Hospital and a private concert at the Milpitas home of **Bill and Liz Cilker**, who purchased the event at Cancer CAREpoint's Garden Party last summer. While here, Katya also performed for the second year at Montalvo Arts Center evening of "Chopin, Champagne and Chocolate" and donated a portion of the proceeds to Cancer CAREpoint. Saratoga Chocolates donated some of the chocolates for the special event.

Tara Nader founded **Longeva Skincare** after radiation treatment left her skin parched, damaged and burned. She did not want to use products with synthetics or chemicals and so used her background in math and science to create her own line of botanical creams. Tara organized a fundraising event for Cancer CAREpoint at **Bella Rosa** boutique in Los Gatos, hosted by store owner **Gina Barsanti Alves**. Refreshments and a generous gift certificate for the Cancer CAREpoint nutrition program were provided by **Whole Foods, Los Gatos**.



Cancer CAREpoint Board Chair Allison Jones Thomas, Executive Director Rob Tufel, and Tara Nader.

A grant from **Saratoga Rotary** to support Cancer CAREpoint's nutrition program has added new chef equipment to the demonstration "kitchen" at the Resource Center used for weekly nutrition classes.

Shampoo Dolls, a San Jose hair salon, selected Cancer CAREpoint to be one of four recipients of its annual "Lend A Hand" charity event. The stylists educate their clients about the services provided by the nonprofits and request donations.



Executive Director Rob Tufel thanks the Rotary Club of San Jose for its donation.

Cancer CAREpoint was selected to receive a grant of \$8,000 from the **Rotary Club of San Jose** to cover the costs of a mobile Wig Bank display/storage unit, display equipment for community health fairs and outreach events, and more seating for educational activities at the Resource Center. Executive Director Rob Tufel spoke about Cancer CAREpoint and said thank you to the 400+ members of the downtown San Jose organization at a January meeting.



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Mission Statement

Cancer CAREpoint is dedicated to transforming support for cancer patients, families and caregivers in Silicon Valley through personalized, one-on-one Counseling, Assistance, Resources and Education.

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www.cancercarepoint.org

HR exec is new Board member



Theresa Dadone-Carlsted

Theresa Dadone-Carlsted has joined the Cancer CAREpoint Board of Directors. She has more than 20 years of experience in technology companies, including her current post as Chief Human Resource Officer for Accuray, Inc., a radiation oncology company.

Family communication about cancer is important

Continued from page 1

- Explore the special websites that allow patients to use blogs to update family and friends on their illness. Patients determine who can view the postings and what content is posted. "It is a convenient way to give people in your life information without having to retell the story over and over," Laura said.

For information on how to set up an appointment with a Cancer CAREpoint social worker, call 408.402.6611. Support groups meeting dates and times are posted on cancercarepoint.org.

New program for parents with cancer

Later this year, Cancer CAREpoint will debut a new Family CARE program focused on communication between parents (one of whom has cancer) and their children – the how, what and when of talking about cancer with kids. The program will cover the initial conversation about a cancer diagnosis, talking about treatment, anticipating side effects and returning to health after treatment is over. Teens and younger children will have separate activities geared to their age groups.

Watch for information about start date and registration on cancercarepoint.org.



A cancer diagnosis should be explained to children in ways appropriate to their age.

Amy said they also like to remind caregivers and other family members that the patient is "the driver of the bus. Ultimately the patients have to make the decisions that are right for them. Your job is to be supportive even if you don't agree."