

# Soar to Survive

a Publication of Pacific Shores Hematology-Oncology Foundation

Spring/  
Summer  
2008



## Pacific Shores Hematology-Oncology Foundation

[www.pacificshoresfoundation.org](http://www.pacificshoresfoundation.org) • (800) 303-0131

### Upcoming Events

#### ARTIST WITHIN INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBIT

To inspire cancer patients and the community. Free. Open to public.

##### GLENDALE

Host Venue - Brand Art Center  
1601 W. Mountain St.

June 15, 11 am-4:30 pm

##### LONG BEACH

Host Venue - Metropolitan Living  
255 Long Beach Blvd.

June 21, 10:30 am-3 pm

June 22, 12 pm-4 pm



Open Canvas - June 21, 2008

#### OPEN CANVAS EVENING CANCER BENEFIT

Art Exhibit, Live Musical Performances, Gourmet Cuisine and Silent Auction.

**June 21, 7 pm-10 pm**

\$100 donation/person

LONG BEACH (Host Venues)

Metropolitan Living with Ten Salon and Spa. Catering by MoonDance.

**To attend, please call  
(800) 303-0131 by June 14th**

# Our Mission: It's All About Access

The goals of the Pacific Shores Hematology-Oncology Foundation are: To ensure that people with cancer have access to the latest and most effective treatments; to provide transportation and other logistical assistance to ensure that patients have access to their doctors, tests and clinics; to ensure that patients and their families get accurate, comprehensive information about their disease; to ensure that patients receiving care and treatment for their cancer in community centers close to their homes have access to the latest in clinical trials and advanced treatments; to ensure that barriers of lack of health care coverage, lack of resources, language and culture are overcome and treatments are available to all who need them; and to ensure that the treatment and research into cures for cancer proceed forward while maintaining the quality of life for patients, family members and the entire community. For more information or to make a donation please call (800) 303-0131 or visit [www.pacificshoresfoundation.org](http://www.pacificshoresfoundation.org)

## Board Members

**Jennifer Cordial**  
**Peter Ferrera, MD**  
**Nancy Illian**  
**Lois Kearney**  
**Elizabeth Lucas**

**Dick Miller**  
**David Scholer, PhD**  
**Gerry Seckington**  
**Simon Tchekmedyan, MD**  
**Kalust Ucar, MD**

## SOARING TO SURVIVE: Banding Together To Battle Cancer

Whether they research cures for cancer, treat patients, help family or fight their own disease, members of the Pacific Shores Hematology-Oncology Foundation's board of directors are committed to improving the quality of life of everyone touched by the disease.

Making sure everyone has access to the latest treatments and research options moves us closer to cures.

"You can have the best research program in the world, but if the patients don't know about it, it doesn't work," says Dr. Simon Tchekmedyan, co-founder of the PSHOF.

"Even though there is a vast investment into trying to bring about new treatments for cancer, people with cancer do not necessarily have access to these treatments," he says. "That makes a vast investment by agencies that are trying to advance the war on cancer go unused."

Tchekmedyan, Dr. Kalust Ucar, and Dr. Peter Ferrera serve on the foundation's board of directors. Each of them are dedicated to improving treatments for the disease – and that means making sure that treatments get to the people who need them.

"A lot of things doctors do on a daily basis, help the patients, treat the patients, educate the families, go through the usual triangle of patient, family and insurance. But a lot of patients fall outside this triangle. Having the foundation helps fill those gaps," says Ucar.

Other board members have been touched by cancer from the other side – they have survived the disease, have helped family members through the disease, or both. For them, the desire to help the PSHOF is personal.

"I see a potential for a foundation that will be able to really help patients," says Dr. Peter Ferrara, an internal medicine specialist in Long Beach. "I'm also on the board for personal reasons, because my wife passed away from breast cancer. As a physician, I care for people every day, but this is a different way of giving something back."

"This all started because my little sister, Tori Miller-Busch, passed away from ovarian cancer," says board member Jennifer

Cordial, 48, a flight attendant. "She was just a wonderful, warm, bubbly personality. I don't think I ever saw her cry, even on her death bed. It's been a long haul and everyone has been so supportive, so we wanted to give something back."

"We felt so strongly about what the hospital, Dr. T and everyone did for Tori," says Richard Miller, 74, Tori's father. "She was a real bright light over there in the chemo room."

Other board members struggled with their own cancers, and that fight led to their desire to help others.

David M. Scholer, 69, of Pasadena, a professor of New Testament at the Fuller Theological Seminary, has survived cancer for more than six years.

"We need every dollar available for research devoted to cancer," Scholer says. "Dr. Ucar is a marvelous oncologist, and I strongly support the effort to raise money."

Gerry Seckington, 69, a Long Beach bank officer, is a 12-year cancer survivor who lost her husband to the disease.

"I'm hoping the foundation can give people more information," she says. "So often, I hear people say, 'No one explains to me anything about my disease and what's going to happen to me.'"

Elizabeth Lucas, 71, the semi-retired founder of Elizabeth Lucas Designs, calls herself "a mom, a grandmother, a widow of a former cancer patient and a cancer survivor myself."

"For years, I've told Dr. T that he should establish a foundation so patients like me could contribute directly to the treatment of cancer," she says. "It's not just about survival – it's about quality of life."

Lois Kearney, 69, of Seal Beach, a survivor of lung cancer, says her goal is "to touch base with anyone we can. There's still a lot of fear associated with cancer; so much unknown, so much to comprehend. If we can take away any of that fear, that's our goal."

And Nancy Illian, an ovarian cancer survivor, says serving on the PSHOF board has given her life a new meaning.

"I've never known what it meant to be passionate before, but I am passionate about doing this, and the foundation has given me a vehicle for that passion," she says.

I have now passed the sixth anniversary of my diagnosis of advanced colorectal cancer. In this journey I have had two surgeries (in 2002 with 40 days in the hospital; in 2007 with 87 days in the hospital). I have been on some type of chemotherapy four and a half of the six years. My cancer is considered incurable; I am currently receiving chemotherapy.

This journey has involved fear, gratitude and hope in dimensions that I had never known in my pre-cancer life.

I am reasonably certain that almost no one wants to die (I realize that many persons in their last days of suffering from a disease or accident might wish to die). My mother liked to say: "Everyone wants to go to heaven, but no one wants to die to get there." The fear of death is real, and when one has incurable cancer, then thinking about facing death is an almost daily reality. The "terror" of fear has overwhelmed me on some occasions; it is crippling. But, then I realize that I am alive, that I do not want to have a "pity party" and, in the context of my faith I believe that the fear of death has been overcome in Christ's resurrection.

I have a greatly increased sense of gratitude for all of the joys of my pre-cancer life – and all of the joys I continue to experience. It is wonderful to recall wonderful experiences of the past and to talk about them with my wife, my children and with friends. But, I do not think that I live in the past. I relish every good and positive task that I am able to do and have the deepest gratitude for my friends and their care. My wife Jeannette (we are getting close to our 48th anniversary) has been, as always, my best companion, lover and caregiver. I could not have done as well as I have the last six years without her. We continue to do so many things together that bring us joy, from playing Scrabble to going on cruises, attending concerts, antiquing, spending time with family and friends and so much more.

I have learned, for the most part, to accept my limits. Thus, I have reordered some priorities and have reduced many of my commitments. I have found it valuable to continue working, which has been encouraged by my gracious employer and colleagues. I love my work and my students; it is energizing to remain involved as long as I am able. It is also important to find ways to serve and encourage others, so I do not focus unduly on myself.



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## Reflections On Fear, Gratitude And Hope

David M. Scholer Professor  
of New Testament, Fuller  
Theological Seminary in  
Pasadena and a Founding  
Board Member

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I am so much more attentive now than I ever was in my pre-cancer life of the reality of life lived one day at a time. We all know that we are mortals, but being an incurable cancer patient has made me very grateful for each day of my life. I enjoy life and do not want to die. My deep faith in God and belief in eternal life and resurrection are a hope and anchor as I look ahead.

Hope is a precious human capacity. Hope springs, for me, from several sources. My faith commitments are the deepest ground of hope. The knowledge and encouragement of my medical personnel have often provided hope in days of despair and in more normal days. The reality of actual productivity gives hope. Even the

smallest achievements bring the rays of hope. More significant accomplishments bring a veritable flood of hope. Hope, even in the midst of difficulties, suffering and the facing of death, is an uplifting balm. There are times of discouragement, discomfort, pain and fear; but they must be put in the perspective that this is a reality for so many people in our world. In fact, thousands and thousands of people suffer far more than I will ever know. I have learned not to ask "Why me?" but rather to accept my realities within the contexts of family, friends and God.

In talking about the importance of family and friends, the issues of boundaries arise. I have certainly needed time alone. There are times when I am simply exhausted by trying to respond to everyone's questions about how I am doing and the like. Learning to set boundaries is difficult, but necessary. Yet, for me, there is a danger in undue isolation. "People need people," as it has been said. We are social beings, for whom interactions are important for good mental and spiritual health.

In responding to the statements and queries of others, I have often had to face comments that, for me, trivialize my realities (e.g., "do not worry, we all are going to die;" or "I know exactly how you feel"). Some people do not understand, and I have over time learned to smile and be gracious rather than to try to clarify matters. I make a judgment as to whether the person in question is one with whom I want to have a long and serious conversation or not. I am not obligated to explain myself to everyone, but I am not afraid either to talk about my realities, both for the healing it gives me and the possible help it is to others. There are many people who do understand, especially fellow cancer patients or others with serious, life-threatening illnesses. But, even here, we all need to recognize that each person's inner struggle is their struggle; we can walk and talk with them and perhaps understand much with them, but it is arrogant to assert that we "know just how they feel."

Whenever I am asked to share my reflections, I worry quite a bit about the fact that I could appear to be self-centered or pompous. Yet, I want to do what I can to help all of us on our journeys. Thank you for reading, and may you know the blessings of gratitude and hope to confront and to alleviate fear.

# JEANNE BRODEUR: BATTLING CANCER WOMAN TO WOMAN

## A New Campaign For The Pacific Shores Hematology-Oncology Foundation

When Jeanne Brodeur was diagnosed with cancer, she felt confident that at least she was going to have access to whatever treatment she needed to battle the disease.

"I have to say that one of the things I've always been grateful for is that I've had very good insurance and I can afford to pay for whatever needs to get done," said Jeanne, 57, an East Coast native who lives in Manhattan Beach today. The almost four-year cancer survivor serves as the vice-president for development at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, where she oversees fundraising and major donor activities. She notes how grateful she is that everyone there has been extraordinarily supportive from the start.

But Jeanne realized quickly that her good fortune was not shared by others.

"I sit in the chemo infusion room for a lot of hours and, looking around the room, one of the things that struck me is, how do some of the people who don't have access to good medical insurance, who don't have the means to pay for the extra expenses over and above what is covered, how do these people get treatment?" she wondered.

Jeanne did more than wonder. Jeanne decided to put her fundraising expertise to use to help other women who needed help in fighting their cancers. She is starting a woman-to-woman campaign with the foundation to help raise money for those who need assistance in obtaining treatment – or even just getting to the doctor's office.

Jeanne saw that Pacific Shores Hematology - Oncology Foundation's mission – to help patients and caregivers obtain access to education, research, and new diagnostic and treatment modalities, which all improve the lives of cancer patients – meshed with her vision.

The campaign is designed to make sure that qualified women with cancer who meet the campaign's criteria get the tests they need, the treatments that they may not have access to, or the assistance they need just to make it back and forth to the



*"The Woman to Woman Campaign provides deserving and financially needy women undergoing cancer treatment with access to tests, procedures, investigational drugs, and other life-saving medical expenses that can extend their lives and increase their quality of life."*

– Jeanne Brodeur

doctor's office – insurance, it turns out, sometimes doesn't cover basic things like transportation.

"There is so much stress on you when you go through cancer treatment. To add on the additional stress of paying for your medical treatments or paying for medications that your insurance won't fully cover," Jeanne says "is just more stress than anyone should have to deal with. I thought, it's great that we do all this research, but I want to be sure that every woman gets access to the best and latest in treatments and medication."

Jeanne has extensive personal experience with the disease.

She was diagnosed in August 2004 with breast cancer, which then metastasized into bone cancer. Since then, she's had a second breast cancer, and a recurrence of the bone cancer. She is currently in her fourth round of chemotherapy. Her

mother and father died of cancer, and her brother died at 49 from colorectal cancer. Her plans to help cancer patients come from a deep, personal desire to see the disease defeated.

"I honestly needed to think about how I could make it easier for other people who might be going through an even tougher time than I am," Jeanne says. "The only way to survive cancer and the treatments, is not to focus on your own illness."

Being a professional fundraiser, Jeanne has laid out a plan that will create a sustainable assistance fund.

"Our hope is that we will start the ball rolling by finding 100 donors who will commit to donating \$1,000 a year for the next five years," she says.

And what will make this fund different than others, is the connection that donors will have to the efforts they fund. The money will go directly into the Foundation's community of patients who need the assistance to continue their battle against the disease.

"As a contributor, all too often you really have no real connection to where your money goes or what it is doing," she says. "One of the reasons we're taking this approach is that we want the donors to know about who is receiving the benefit of their donations. It's to really give them a sense of what their money is doing. We want them to connect. We want to make it personal."