

BITS & PIECES

A PUBLICATION FROM PHOENIX COMMUNITY CANCER CENTER

FINDING THE STRENGTH TO COPE WITH CANCER

Finding out that you have cancer is a terrifying experience. Wondering what the future holds, how you will cope with your treatments, and how you will find the courage to face each day can seem very overwhelming. Realizing that you are not alone in the way that you feel can help. With this in mind, Bits & Pieces will periodically profile individual patients from Phoenix Community Cancer Center. We hope that the stories told by these individuals will give strength, courage and inspiration to others. Below is a portion of a self-profile written by Sandra Goodman of Enfield, a patient at North Central Oncology Hematology, located in PCCC. She has been treated at PCCC since its opening.

My name is Sandra Goodman, and I have been battling Ovarian Cancer for seven and one half years. I had a hysterectomy in 1979 (at the age of 43) for a pre-cancerous condition. The surgeon chose to leave one ovary that he believed to be healthy to prevent an early menopause. Although I faithfully saw my doctors for regularly scheduled check-ups and tests, I slipped right through all of the proverbial cracks. Once I became aware that

something was wrong, my search to find the answer took me to many different gastroenterologists and gynecologists.

Because the symptoms I was experiencing closely mimicked those of stomach problems, I endured five upper endoscopies and two colonoscopies. Several ultrasounds were also taken, but they did not show anything specific. I at last had the good fortune to be referred to a wonderful, thorough and very caring

doctor who was aware of ovarian cancer symptoms. The proper diagnostic tests were performed and my cancer was discovered. Through her, I acquired a whole new team of doctors. I owe my life to all of them.

When the cancer was detected, I was told that my tumor measured 11 cm x 16 cm and 15 cm in length (the size of two telephones back to back). Following



Sandra Goodman pauses for a quick snapshot with her husband Fred — her "staunchest supporter, very best friend and rock."

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WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS? *Treating Prostate Cancer*

*By Jacqueline Lyon, M.D.
Hartford Hospital and Phoenix
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Prostate cancer is now the most common malignancy affecting American males. Because of newer screening techniques available to detect prostate cancer, such as the Prostate

Specific Antigen (PSA) test, men are being diagnosed with smaller tumors that are limited to the prostate gland. This advancement has resulted in the availability of a number of treatment options that offer a cure for early stage prostate cancer. Although this is good news for many men diagnosed with prostate

cancer, it also presents the dilemma of determining what would be the preferable treatment. There are, however, guidelines that can make the decision process easier.

If one presents with a prostate cancer that is low grade, meaning a Gleason score of 2 to 4 (Gleason score

is a grading system that denotes the aggressiveness of the tumor) and a PSA level that is less than 10, one option is actually no treatment, just observation with follow-up PSA levels. This is an especially viable option for an older individual whose life expectancy is less than ten years. The odds that a low-grade, untreated prostate cancer in an elderly male will progress significantly within a ten-year period are low. If the life expectancy is

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FINDING THE STRENGTH TO COPE WITH CANCER

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completion of my initial surgery, I was diagnosed at stage 3C, an advanced stage of ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer is the number one gynecological killer of women. It is also known as the silent killer, because it just quietly and quickly grows and spreads. Unless found at an early stage, the chances for a complete cure are minimal.

Following my diagnosis in 1993, I underwent surgery followed by six months of combination chemotherapy. Follow-up surgery was conducted seven months later, and I was pronounced cancer free. In 1997, I had a third surgery following a recurrence of the cancer. Again, I underwent six months of

Sandra Goodman's Ways of Coping

- I thank God for every day.
- I have a good laugh at least once a day.
- I keep a positive attitude.
- I live life as normally as possible.
- I have 1000 percent trust in my doctors and medical team.
- I talk openly about my disease.
- I do not dwell on my illness, nor do I feel sorry for myself.
- I push myself to do things. If I'm having a sleepless night (and there are many), I attempt to put the time to good use by baking something special, catching up on letter writing, etc.
- I try to get out of the house daily to meet with a group of good friends. Many of them also have serious illness. We joke, laugh, tease and listen to each other. After all, laughter really is the best medicine...

chemotherapy. I had another reoccurrence in June of 1999, followed by ten months of chemotherapy. I am now undergoing treatment for my fourth occurrence.

There have been and continue to be many frightening times. The most frightening time for me is when I have finished all of my rounds of chemotherapy

treatment. As long as the treatment is going on, I feel safe, but when I no longer have the chemo to lean on, I feel I have no control and that the cancer is going to get the upper hand once again. I also get extremely nervous when I undergo tests to track the progress of my disease.

My husband, family and I cope with this disease as we

do with anything else. We keep our daily life as normal as possible and savor every moment that is given to us. My entire life revolves around my family. I have two beautiful daughters, two handsome grandsons and two wonderful sons-in-law. I have my husband of nearly 46 years who is my staunchest supporter, very best friend, and my rock. During this entire battle, he has been by my side for every single blood test, lab test and chemo, and never once complained. He keeps me going when I run out of strength. My nine-year-old Golden Retriever, Boomer, is also a daily joy and great comfort, as are my many friends.

Cancer can teach you many things. It can show you how much you are cared for and how many wonderful and thoughtful people are out there just waiting to help. You get a new appreciation for life and a greater awareness of the beauty and love there is around you. You get a chance to show what kind of stuff you are made of. Be strong! ■

Ovarian Cancer Symptoms

Take action if any of these symptoms last more than 2 to 3 weeks. Experts suggest a combination pelvic/rectal exam, CA 125 blood test, and a transvaginal sonogram.

- Bloating, a feeling of fullness, gas
- Frequent or urgent urination
- Nausea, indigestion, constipation, diarrhea
- Menstrual disorders, pain during intercourse
- Fatigue, backaches

More information about Ovarian Cancer is available in the PCCC Oncology Library, (860) 272-3030.

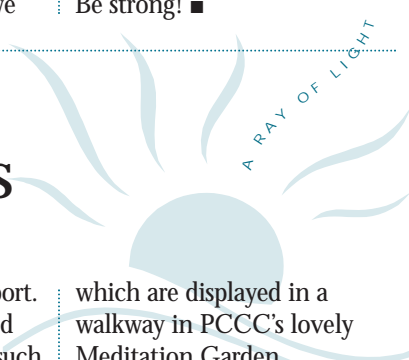
A Ray of Light CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

Now in its third year, Johnson Health Network's A Ray of Light Capital Campaign continues to raise funds in support of Phoenix Community Cancer Center. To date, \$935,000 has been raised towards the Campaign's 1.5 million goal, thanks to the generosity of many community members and businesses that have come

forward to show their support. Funds have also been raised through successful events such as Johnson Health Network's Annual Golf Tournament and Spring Gala, as well as the A Reason for Hope Cancer Walk/Run, which takes place in September at the Cancer Center itself. Additional funds have been raised through the sale of engraved "Bricks of Remembrance,"

which are displayed in a walkway in PCCC's lovely Meditation Garden.

If you would like more information about the A Ray of Light Capital Campaign, upcoming events in support of this effort, or the "Bricks of Remembrance," please call Johnson Development Fund, Johnson Health Network's fundraising arm, at (860) 684-8109. ■



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

Treating Prostate Cancer

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greater than ten years and, in addition, if the tumor is a higher grade with a Gleason score greater than 5 (especially greater than 7), treatment is generally advisable. For those men with a PSA level of 10 or less and a Gleason score of 6 or less, there are three options that give equivalent results. One option is surgery or radical prostatectomy, the second option is 3-D conformal external beam irradiation, and the last option is a radioactive seed implant of the prostate. There are pros and cons associated with each of these procedures.

Surgery obviously involves general anesthesia, is a five or six-hour operation, may result in sufficient blood loss to require transfusions, and may be complicated by infection. Permanent urinary incontinence is also a small risk. Because of these risks, surgery is generally not recommended for men over 70 years of age. The advantages of surgery are that the entire prostate is removed along with adjacent lymph nodes, so that one knows more definitively the extent of the prostate cancer. In addition, there are published studies reporting over 15 years of follow-up on patients who have undergone prostatectomy for early stage prostate cancer with greater than 80% tumor control.

The long-term results for external beam irradiation in selected patients are as good as surgery, but this treatment entails daily treatments five

days per week for seven and a half weeks. The daily treatment takes only 10 to 15 minutes to deliver and is painless. There are side effects during this therapy, with the most common being mild fatigue, loose bowels and frequency of urination. Usually, these side effects are quite manageable and with 3-D conformal radiation, which irradiates much less of the surrounding normal tissues such as the rectum and bladder, they are minimized further.

Finally, a radioactive seed implant of the prostate is the last option. This is a two-hour procedure done in a hospital, which requires general anesthesia. Under ultrasound guidance, anywhere from 70 to 140 radioactive seeds are placed into the prostate gland in a predetermined array. This

procedure is well tolerated, and the patient is usually discharged home after six hours following the implant. The advantages of the implant are that it is a quick procedure, it delivers a high radiation dose confined mostly to the prostate gland with minimum dose to the rectum and bladder, and the five-to-eight-year results analyzing tumor control are quite good — in the range of 90%. The most significant side effect of this procedure is urinary outlet obstruction, sometimes requiring intermittent self-catheterization for as few as several days to as long as six to eight months.

For those individuals with higher-grade tumors with a Gleason score of 7 or higher and/or PSA levels of 10 to 20, treatment options are more limited. Because there is a significant risk of tumor having spread microscopically beyond the prostate to the seminal vesicles and/or lymph nodes, these individuals need

to receive therapy with hormones, which will treat this extraprostatic disease. In addition, it is recommended that they also receive high-dose radiation to the prostate, which may be a seven-week-plus course of 3-D conformal external beam irradiation or a five-week course of external beam irradiation followed by a radioactive seed implant for the prostate. Surgery or a radioactive seed implant alone are generally not recommended, since these therapies inadequately treat the potential extraprostatic spread of tumor.

Given the array of treatment options that are now available for men with localized cancer of the prostate gland, it is imperative that the patient consult not only with a urologist, but with a radiation oncologist and, sometimes, even with a medical oncologist. Being well informed will enable one to ultimately make the right treatment decision. ■

COMMUNITY CANCERCARE WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As you may know, radiation therapy at Phoenix Community Cancer Center is provided by a partnership of four hospitals known as Northeast Regional Radiation Oncology Network (doing business as Community CancerCare). The hospitals involved in this partnership include Johnson Memorial Hospital, Hartford Hospital, Manchester Memorial Hospital and Rockville General Hospital. In addition to providing services at PCCC,

Community Cancer Center also operates a radiation therapy service in Manchester at the John A. DeQuattro Community Cancer Center.

Recently, Community CancerCare has welcomed aboard a new Executive Director, **Frances N. Friend**. Ms. Friend holds offices in both Manchester and Enfield and oversees the operation of the radiation therapy program at both facilities. She came to Community CancerCare with extensive experience in

business and network development and operations within the healthcare industry. Immediately prior to joining Community CancerCare, she was Vice President of Business Development for the Lahey Clinic in Burlington, MA. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT, and a master's degree in health care administration from Framingham State College in Framingham, MA. ■

PCCC Thanks United Technology Fundraising Group

Phoenix Community Cancer Center would like to extend a sincere thank you to Dave Gauthier and the employees of United Technologies Research Center's Fabrication Services and Design Engineering Services Department. This group of individuals organized a fundraising group four years ago through which they select and fundraise for a non-profit organization each year. The money they raise is used to purchase "wish list" items for the designated organizations. In 2000, the group chose to support Phoenix Community Cancer Center. Items donated by the group included a large-size wheelchair for the North Central Oncology Hematology office, a CD player for the radiation therapy area, and a portable TV and VCR to provide education programs to both radiation therapy and chemotherapy patients at the Center. They also made a gift of \$300 towards the purchase of a pulse oximeter. This generosity is appreciated by both the staff and patients at PCCC. ■



Shown above with the new wheelchair (left to right): Holly Phanuef, R.N., and Reanne Burke, R.N., of PCCC, and Kevin Feagin and Dave Gauthier of United Technology Research Center.

Finding the Support You Need: Events, Programs and Support Groups

Phoenix Community Cancer Center sponsors a variety of programs, events and support groups to assist local residents with cancer, to educate community members, and to increase community awareness. Unless otherwise noted, all of the programs listed below are FREE and are held at the Phoenix Community Cancer Center. For more information or to register, please call PCCC at (860) 272-3030.

FEBRUARY

Introduction to Massage Therapy
Tuesday, February 20
from 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Presenter: Linda DeGray, R.M.T.

MARCH

Osteoporosis Lecture
Wednesday, March 14
from 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Presenter: Registered Nurse from
Novartis Pharmaceuticals

Relaxation Through Meditation
Tuesday, March 27
from 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Presenter: Jocelyn Lebowitz,
A.P.R.N.

APRIL

Acupuncture
Wednesday, April 11
from 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Presenter: Bailling Li, Licensed
Acupuncturist

JUNE

Survivor Celebration Day
Sunday, June 10
Details will be available in the
months ahead.

ONGOING

Support Groups
A general Cancer Support Group meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month in the Phoenix Community Cancer Center Conference Room.

A support group specifically for those who have been newly diagnosed with cancer is now in the development process. If you are interested in participating, please call PCCC at (860) 272-3030.

Look Good, Feel Better Program
Women coping with hair loss, dry skin and fatigue as a result of either radiation or chemotherapy treatments are invited to participate in this American Cancer Society (ACS) program. A trained cosmetologist works with participants to teach them about various makeup techniques, skin care, and wig styles. If you would like more information or would like to make an appointment, please call the ACS at 1-888-511-3311.

AT YOUR SERVICE: American Cancer Society Representative Now at PCCC on Friday Afternoons

The American Cancer Society offers many services to cancer patients, their families and community groups. Mary

Ann Vanderjagt, the American Cancer Society's Co-Coordinator of Patient Services here in Connecticut, is at the

Phoenix Community Cancer Center Library on Friday afternoons. She is well acquainted with all the services that the Society has to offer and is available to provide free instructions on how to best utilize and access cancer information on the American Cancer Society website. Please take advantage of the opportunity to work with Ms. Vanderjagt to access the

information you need.

The PCCC Library offers many informational books, videos and pamphlets as well as free wigs for cancer patients. For more information, please call the Center at (860) 272-3030. The American Cancer Society offers free, comprehensive information 24-hours a day at 1-800-ACS-2345 or online at www.cancer.org. ■

Phoenix Community Cancer Center • 142 Hazard Avenue, Enfield, CT 06082 • (860) 272-3030

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