With the changing recommendations regarding cancer screening and prevention, how do I make the decision that’s right for me? That was the question posed to Dr. James L. Speyer, Medical Director of the NYU Cancer Center at Cancer Support Team’s 12th annual Gayle K. Lee Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon on October 13, 2010 at the Westchester Country Club. Over 300 people attended this educational program to hear the latest information on the types of cancer screening tests and prevention strategies that are considered to be effective.

Over the last year, the usual recommendations on how early and how often we should get a mammogram, pap smear and other cancer screening tests have been called into question by major groups such as the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Many of us have come away from reading about these changes with concern, confusion and questions. In his presentation, Dr. Speyer was very clear: “One size does not fit all” when it comes to cancer screening. Health care professionals must take into account factors such as the person’s age, gender, ethnicity, geographic location and family history so that screening tests can be tailored to the individual. The listener’s takeaway? Talk with your physician about how early and how often to get the variety of screening tests now available.

The following article appeared in The Journal News on November 4, 2010. It is reprinted with permission.

Cancer Team Still Going Strong

Wald’s vision of giving support to those in need remains No. 1 Mission

Dr. Arnold Wald wasn’t the only person fighting cancer in the 1970s who realized that patients need help beyond the treatment of their tumors. A new movement from England called hospice was taking root in Connecticut, showing that even with irreversible illnesses, patients’ quality of life dramatically improved with simple companionship and support.

But Wald was the first person in Westchester to do something about it. His idea was to start a hospice here, but at the time, the state Health Department wouldn’t allow it.

He didn’t give up.

“t always had this feeling that radiation therapists and surgeons and medical oncologists were focusing too
The old adage is true: “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” Things are changing at Cancer Support Team. Dr. Arnold Wald, CST’s co-founder and President of its Board of Directors, is stepping down after many years in his leadership position (He will always remain our co-founder). A visionary in the world of oncology care, Dr. Wald’s mission was to develop support services for his patients in addition to providing them with medical care. He hired the late Gayle Lee, a nurse and patient advocate, and in 1978 together they created Cancer Support Team. With the help of a multitude of volunteers along with a professional staff of nurses and social workers, CST developed into the only Westchester-based home care program licensed by the NYS Department of Health, providing services free of charge and without regard to insurance coverage. We were so pleased and proud this fall when the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services recognized Dr. Wald’s extraordinary leadership by awarding him the Golden Harvest Humanitarian Award.

But what remains the same at CST is Dr. Wald’s vision of providing supportive services to individuals and families affected by cancer. “We can’t just treat the cancer, we have to treat the whole person,” he always admonished. Through our comprehensive services—nursing care management, pain and symptom control, social work counseling, education, advocacy, and financial and transportation assistance—our staff and volunteers strive to provide practical supportive services that help cancer patients and families cope with their illnesses.

So, you see, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Although the leadership is changing, our mission remains the same: to enhance the quality of life of individuals and families living in lower Westchester County who are affected by cancer. We thank Dr. Wald for his dedication to this mission and look forward to working with our new Board President, Carla Volpe Porter. CST continues its work in very capable hands.
Easy! Take two months off from regular life (…not that easy), do something you’ve wanted to do since childhood, with a wonderful group of people who share the same interest, traveling through breathtaking landscapes, eating all you want without restraint, and forget about TV, newspapers, crises, arrangements, responsibilities…and pedal.

That was my bike ride. We, a group of 49 brave souls of all ages, set out from Astoria, Oregon, in June, 2010 and rode for 50 days over 3,800 miles to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, crossing Ontario, Canada, along the way. The challenges were great: many days exceeded 100 miles, up and over mountain passes, across great deserts, sweeping plains, and countless square-miles of cornfields. Of course, we had all types of weather, injuries, mechanical failures and had to exert mind over matter, but everyone made it every day, exhausted and exhilarated…and hungry!

Each day began at 5.30 a.m. with a huge breakfast, then on the bikes by first light while it was cool, biking all day with two refreshment stops. We wanted to be into the designated motel by 3 p.m. before thunderstorms and winds made biking difficult. Dinner was served to the group, school cafeteria style, and it was mandatory to eat a wonderful 6,000 calories a day—or you wouldn’t have the energy the next day. Dinners were filled with laughter and stories and quite adolescent banter. You would never have thought—seeing our group—that we were capable of biking seven hours a day. We had ages ranging from 17 to 79; about 40% were women, some riders carried a few extra pounds (and felt it on the long hills), plenty of gray hair, and all manner of bikes, including a tandem. My bike was affectionately known as “The Tank” for its sturdy appearance and great weight (of which I’m neither).

Many people chose to use the trip as a fund-raiser. I dedicated my ride to Cancer Support Team and raised donations from local residents. I thought often about those kind people in Mamaroneck who had supported me through prostate cancer a year ago, and saw me recover my health to the point where I could fulfill my dream to bike 4,000 miles across a continent.

There was a great outpouring of emotion at the final dinner on the last evening as we prepared ourselves to say goodbye to some brilliant friendships and resume regular life and return the bikes to their place in the garage. And in our emails that followed, we all expressed the same conviction: that we must have dreams, that they can be realized, and that one adventure is worth years of routine living.

*You might remember from last spring’s Update that Andrew, a CST volunteer and cancer survivor, was heading out over the summer to bicycle across the country with the goal of seeing the sights while raising funds for CST.

Andrew Dyson pedaling away with the Grand Tetons in the background.

2010 Grants

Lin and Suzie Chen Foundation
The Community Fund of Bronxville, Eastchester, Tuckahoe
Hudson Valley National Foundation
Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation
MAXX Management
MBIA Foundation
New York State Department of Health
Reformed Church of Bronxville
Rye Presbyterian Church
Scarsdale Women’s Club
Sole Ryeders & Friends Fund
Swim Across America
Westchester Community Foundation
Team CST Makes a Splash at Lake Isle

For the second consecutive year, Cancer Support Team staff, their family members and friends joined forces to participate in Swim Across America of Long Island Sound’s (SAALIS) efforts to support cancer research and services. Team captain, Katie Shields, a Cancer Support Team nurse (whom you might remember from past Update articles, only recently learned to swim), led the way, swimming one mile at Lake Isle Country Club on July 31st. Shields describes the experience: “It was so uplifting to feel the excitement of all the team swimmers and to be part of such a worthwhile cause.” The youngest member of the team, Tommy Meade, age 10, explains why he is a member: “I swim for Swim Across America for my grandfather and because the money helps people with cancer. Also, I love swimming.” All together, Team CST raised $9,925!

Since 1997, SAALIS has supported CST’s free services to the local community. Our deepest gratitude to SAALIS’ many swimmers, boaters and volunteers for their continued commitment to helping us achieve our mission of enhancing the quality of life of those affected by cancer. We thank all of the members of Team CST: Paulina Arriaga, Eileen Cagner, Gerald Conlon, Kaitlyn Conlon, Judith Dobrof, Bonnie Markey, Rob Matsuoka, Rosalie Matsuoka, Julie Meade, Tommy Meade, Katie Shields and Tony Sibio.

This summer’s swim events will be held at:

- Saxon Woods       June 25
- Orienta Pool Swim  July 23
- Long Island Sound Swim  July 30

The dates are yet to be decided for:

- Bronxville Field Club
- Clarkstown
- Lake Isle Country Club
- N.Y.A.C. Travers Island
- Westchester Country Club

For more information on how you can participate and donate, log onto www.swimacrossamerica.org/long_island.
Dr. Speyer focused on three types of cancers where screening has been proven to be beneficial, citing the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force data: breast, cervical and colorectal cancers. He outlined the risk factors to be considered for each of these cancers, prevention strategies for each and the Task Force’s recommendations for screening.

In the realm of cancer prevention, Dr. Speyer adamantely stated that the most important strategy that anyone can take to prevent cancer is to abstain from smoking. Smoking prevention efforts go a long way toward decreasing the incidence of cancer in the general public.

Dr. Speyer also was concerned about those individuals who do not have access to screening tests, including the approximately 30% of the U.S. population without health insurance. He commended Cancer Support Team for its commitment to reaching out to those who are uninsured to help them secure health care services.

If you missed our luncheon, please call the CST office at 777-2777 to borrow the DVD of Dr. Speyer’s presentation. For more information on cancer screening and prevention, go to www.cancer.org.

Luncheon Honorary Co-chairs, Mary Jane Arrigoni and Sherry Wiener, and Luncheon Co-chairs, Bonnie Gould and Michele Power, along with the entire Luncheon Planning Committee did superlative work organizing a very informative educational program.

DID YOU KNOW?
CST offers free, ongoing supports groups for women with breast or ovarian cancer.
- explore ways of coping with the diagnosis and subsequent treatments
- receive and provide encouragement and support
Call our office at 777-2777 if you are interested in learning more about these helpful groups.

Still Going Strong...


After some trial and error, which included bringing in a psychologist to speak to his patients, he met a nurse named Gayle Lee who had a background in patient advocacy and who helped turn his vision into a mission.

"She was very gregarious and met a lot of people and attracted them to help her," said Wald, a father of seven. "I realized something much broader than my practice was needed."

And so in 1978, Wald and Lee launched Cancer Support Team in Mamaroneck, offering free home-based cancer services such as transportation assistance, nursing help and companionship.

At the time, it was the only Westchester-based organization of its kind.

It still is.

"I do feel that it is important work and that it is one of the most satisfying things I have ever done in my practice," said Wald, who recently announced he is retiring as president of Cancer Support Team’s board of directors.

Wald will continue to serve as president emeritus of the nonprofit organization, which has staffs of nurses, social workers, case managers and volunteers.

Before he began his own practice, Wald thought he would become a family doctor like his father. But a stint in the Navy and an introduction to nuclear physics got him interested in diagnostic and therapeutic radiology.

Looking back, he realizes that his true motivation is helping people.

"That is my main interest," he said.

Cancer Support Team helps about 450 cancer patients and their family members each year.

For his work, Wald received the Golden Harvest Humanitarian Award from the Westchester Private/Public Partnership for Aging Services.

The award, presented to him this month, recognizes outstanding and lasting contributions to seniors.

"Arnold built a wonderful model, and even in times of recession, it works because this is a generous community," said Judith Dobrof, executive director of Cancer Support Team. "The wonderful advantage of Arnold getting accolades is it raises awareness for what we do."

(Article by Rob Ryser)
With this edition of the newsletter, we are introducing a new column that poses questions to our staff. All of our readers are invited to call us with a question or email us at jdobrof@cancersupportteam.org.

I am a colon cancer survivor and sometimes find that my memory isn’t what it used to be. My doctor says it might be due to the after effects of the chemotherapy. How do I cope with this?

Judy Delehanty, LCSW and Katie Shields, RN respond:

Problems with memory during treatment and even after treatment are informally referred to as “chemo brain.” In addition to memory loss, it is not uncommon to have trouble paying attention, trouble finding the right word, and difficulty with new learning and managing daily activities.

The exact causes of “chemo brain” are uncertain, though some possible factors are:

- low blood counts
- stress
- depression
- anxiety
- fatigue
- medication to treat side effects

The best approaches to coping with symptoms of “chemo brain” involve finding ways to help oneself remember things better and engaging in activities that keep one’s memory sharp.

Here are specific tips and hints for combating “chemo brain”:

- make lists
- use a portable planner or wall calendar
- keep a “reminder” notebook that includes memory “musts,” such as tasks to do, appointments, medications, names of people you meet
- organize your environment with a specific place for things you use most often
- keep your mind active by going to a lecture or doing crossword puzzles
- train yourself to focus by taking time to think about and picture what you are doing: e.g. “I am putting my keys on my dresser.”
- exercise, eat well and get plenty of rest; these things help your memory work best
- share with a family member, friend or health professional what you are experiencing, as they may be able to help and encourage you

While time frames vary, most people do report an eventual increased clarity post-treatment.
CST Welcomes New Board Member Mike Rice

Mark Rice joined Cancer Support Team’s Board of Directors in October, 2010. Mark is Senior Vice President and General Manager of the Tamale business unit at Advent Software, Inc. Tamale is a research management system used by financial investment firms to manage their internal, proprietary research and investment decision making processes. Mark was the CEO of Tamale Software, Inc. prior to Advent’s acquisition of Tamale in 2008. Since 2004, he has overseen the growth of the company from start-up to 90+ employees; from one location to six offices globally; from four to over 150 clients. Before Tamale, Mark worked for 20 years at Morgan Stanley, Inc. and was Managing Director and global CTO for the Prime Brokerage Division. He earned his undergraduate degree in Mathematics at Williams College. Mark lives with his wife, Helen (an active participant in organizing our 2010 Benefit Gala) and their three children in Rye.

CST Makes a Difference!

At the Volunteer Luncheon in June, 2010, Carol Mitchell, a former Cancer Support Team patient, talked about the difference that Cancer Support Team’s staff and volunteers made when she was going through treatment for cancer. With her permission, we are publishing a portion of her presentation.

“It would have to take something really incredible to get me to stand up in front of people and talk…well, that something incredible is all of you from Cancer Support Team.

My chemo and radiation treatments were aggressive and many. There was no possible way for me to get there on my own and for so many days. I made some calls and finally was given the CST phone number. My tears became smiles after the very first call. I could not believe how kind and caring Gini and (other staff members) were.

Your wonderful volunteers who provided the transportation to and from my treatments also brought their smiles, comfort and encouragement. It didn’t stop there. The visits from Katie, my nurse counselor/angel, followed. The words “support team” became a reality.”

Please Help Us Help Those Affected by Cancer

Although you can certainly give an unrestricted donation to ensure that CST continues to provide free nursing, counseling and cancer-related support services now and for years to come, you could also consider a donation to support CST’s special funds:

The Barbara Philbrick Memorial Fund supports our free in-home nursing services. CST nurses help with cancer-related concerns such as the side effects of treatment and offer education and support to individuals and families.

The Rita Grunbaum Memorial Fund focuses on assisting older adults by providing financial grants to help them maintain an independent lifestyle as possible during and after their cancer treatment.

Please log on to www.cancersupportteam.org and click on DONATE NOW or send your donation to CST at 875 Mamaroneck Ave., Ste. 204, Mamaroneck, NY 10543. If you’re supporting one of our special funds, please remember to indicate to us which one.

A bequest is another simple way to support CST. As you discuss your estate plans with your lawyer or financial advisor, you could consider including the following language in your will: “I give and bequeath to Cancer Support Team, Inc. $__________ (or _______ percent of my total estate.)

For more information on bequests, please contact Judith Dobrof, DSW at 914-777-2777, ext. 15 or jdobrof@cancersupportteam.org.
Celebrating 33 Years of Service 1978 - 2011

2010 Gayle K. Lee Luncheon Planning Committee