Spanish Language Life Lines Now Available

Life Lines: A resource for cancer patients & their families is now available in Spanish. Thanks to generous grants from New York State Assemblyman George Latimer and the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation, and the wonderful translation skills of Ms. Reyna Henaine, Life Lines has been translated into Spanish. This effort comes in response to Westchester’s growing Latino population affected by cancer.

Life Lines is the only informational guide of its kind focused primarily on local Westchester County oncology organizations and resources, as well as those that are regional and national. Published by Cancer Support Team since 1984, it was recently redesigned to provide user-friendly and up-to-date information on topics such as home care, caregiver and family support services and legal, financial and transportation assistance.

Life Lines provides easily accessible information on supportive services for people living with cancer, as well as their family, friends and caregivers.

To order a copy of Life Lines in Spanish or English, please call our office at 914-777-2777.

Coping With Fatigue (Contributed by Patty Vaughn, R.N.)

Fatigue is a complaint of a majority of cancer patients, including patients recovering from surgery or illness or people of advanced age, and it can occur for a number of reasons. It is important to explore possible causes of fatigue with your doctor and to work with him/her to find ways of treating the problem. Accurately communicating all your symptoms and giving a clear picture of how fatigue affects your daily functioning and quality of life can help doctors diagnose the possible causes. It will also be useful to share specific examples of what you can and can’t do: for example, “As soon as I finish shaving, I have to lie down again” or “I’m so tired by dinnertime that I don’t even have enough energy to chew my food.”

The following suggestions include specific and practical ways you can help yourself to deal with the problem of fatigue in your daily life. As you read, you will undoubtedly think of other ideas and can modify suggestions to meet your specific needs.

Energy Conservation

• Set priorities. What are the most important things to be accomplished today? This week? List them in order of importance and tackle the top of the list first.
• Determine those times during the day when you have the most and the least energy. Keeping a log of your activities and energy levels for a week might help you assess this. If a pattern becomes apparent, you will then be able to schedule your activities at the times you are most alert and least fatigued.
• Balance each activity with a rest period, spacing activities throughout the day (or week).
• Be realistic about your plans for activities. Don’t set goals you can never meet. It will only increase your frustration as well as fatigue.
• Learn to ask for help with necessary chores and errands that sap your energy and give you no pleasure. If someone asks (Continued on page 6)
Greetings From the Executive Director

This year’s Cancer Support Team Benefit Gala held on May 11th at The New York Botanical Garden (more to come in our fall newsletter) was called a “Celebration of Hope.” Why celebrate hope?

Hope is a topic frequently found in writings on cancer survivorship and frequently treated with varying perspectives. In an article in The New York Times (2/22/04) entitled “Hope and Clarity,” Abraham Verghese cites studies that find that those with a cancer diagnosis who have hope do not have better medical outcomes than their less hopeful counterparts. We learned from Dr. Jimmie Holland at last fall’s Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon and from her book, The Human Side of Cancer, that cancer survivors often experience the tyranny of positive thinking—they are told to be hopeful or their cancer will worsen. Dr. Holland discounts this notion, saying that each person’s unique way of coping with cancer should be respected. Conversely, Dr. Jerome Groopman, in The Anatomy of Hope, writes about the importance of hope as he follows patients. He writes, “True hope has proved as important as any medication I might prescribe or any procedure I might perform.” Margit Esser Porter, in her book, Hope Lives! The After Breast Cancer Treatment Survival Handbook, describes her thoughts on life after breast cancer: “It is not merely about existing, but about living life fully. The tool I use and value most is hope!”

Hope makes an important contribution to the recognition of National Cancer Survivors Day, on June 4th, when we will celebrate cancer survivorship by gathering together with family, friends and colleagues. At CST we see the value of hope every day as those we serve face the many challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

In The American College Dictionary, the word hope is defined as “desire accompanied by expectation.” So, what is it that we wish for and expect? We wish that all cancer survivors will be able to meet the challenges of their disease with the support and resources they need. We hope for continued medical advances until all cancers are easily curable and Cancer Support Team no longer needs to exist. We hope that until that day arrives, we can continue to offer education, counseling, advocacy and other supportive services to those in need.

In keeping with the botanical theme of our Gala, here is Rachel Carson from The Sea Around Us writing about hope: “The symbols of hope are not lacking even in the grayness and bleakness of winter…Dig down through the snow into the earth. There are the dormant seeds from which will come the grass, the herb, the oak tree.”

Special thanks to everyone who helped plan our May 11th gala, “A Celebration of Hope,” at The New York Botanical Garden. Photos and more about the gala in our next newsletter!
CST Board of Directors Welcomes RuthAnn Brazill

CST Board of Directors is pleased to announce that RuthAnn Brazill, of Bronxville, joined the Board in January of this year. RuthAnn has spent 27 years at AT&T in Law and Government Affairs. She is active in her community and has volunteered for a variety of charitable organizations. Presently, she is Vice chairman of the Bronxville Non Partisan Committee for the Nomination and Election of School Board Trustees. She serves on The Youth Council and The Chancel Guild of The Reformed Church along with coordinating shopping, delivery and preparation of food for homeless New Yorkers as part of the Church’s participation in Midnight Run.

She brings many years of experience in volunteer fundraising including acting as Benefit Gala Co-Chair for the past three years for the Foundation for Educating Children with Autism and for four years co-chaired the Gala Benefit for Heartsong, a program for developmentally disabled children. She has jumped into her CST Board activities by co-chairing our upcoming Benefit Gala in May. RuthAnn is married to Dr. George Brazill and has a 15 year old son Trey. RuthAnn brings warmth and wonderful skills to CST and we are pleased to welcome her.

Jr League of Bronxville Helps CST House Patient Education Materials

The Junior League of Bronxville has awarded a grant to Cancer Support Team to purchase a file cabinet and bookshelf so that our nursing and social work staff will be better able to organize and display books, pamphlets and other resource materials for our patients and families. Staff can more easily access the materials, as they research information needed by clients or disseminate the materials to them. Heartfelt thanks to The Junior League members for their support of our efforts to provide community residents with the information they need to cope with a cancer diagnosis.

Priscilla Taveras Joins CST Staff

In April, Cancer Support Team launched a new case management program to help those with cancer obtain the many government benefits and community resources available to them. Priscilla Taveras, CST’s case manager, joined our nurses and social worker to help patients and families obtain benefits such as Social Security Disability, Medicare Part D and Medicaid. She will also help us ensure that patients are referred to the many other Westchester resources that provide supportive services.

Priscilla speaks Spanish fluently and will be a great asset as we become more responsive to lower Westchester’s growing Latino community. Most recently, Priscilla was a case manager at the New York City Treatment Alternative to Street Crime. She has a bachelors degree in Psychology and Spanish Studies from Fordham University and is enrolled in Iona College’s Masters Program in Criminal Justice. We welcome Priscilla to the Team!

Health Walk ’06 to Raise Money for Those Affected by Cancer

On Saturday, May 20, 2006 from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., Cancer Support Team will participate in Health Walk 2006, to be held at nearby White Plains High School. Over 1000 people will join together to walk for their favorite charity. Walkers who designate CST as their “charity of choice” will support our free services to individuals and families affected by cancer. The Walk itself takes about an hour to complete.

Please join us, enjoy free breakfast refreshments and do something good for yourself and our patients. Health Walk 2006 is sponsored by United Way of Westchester and Putnam, Westchester Business Volunteer Council and The Volunteer Center. For more information, call CST at 914-777-2777.

Tina Moskwa (r.) joined CST as an intern from Sarah Lawrence College’s Health Advocacy Program. Tina works with staff learning about our homecare program and the services we provide. She assists in researching national and community resources for our patients and gathering information on grant funding opportunities.

Save the Date!

Saturday • May 20, 2006 • 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.
Health Walk 2006
Cancer Support Team in 2005

2005 was a very busy and exciting year for Cancer Support Team. Here are some highlights. Over the last year, our staff:

- Served 328 patients as well as many more family members, friends and caregivers supporting these patients;
- Provided over 1,000 in-person nursing and social work visits;
- Increased by 25 percent financial grants offered to patients to help pay for items and services such as medications, medical equipment and transportation to their medical appointments;
- Provided over 200 rides to treatment appointments through our volunteer driver program;
- Held the 7th Annual Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon featuring Jimmie Holland, M.D., Attending Psychiatrist, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center;
- Distributed over 2,000 copies of our redesigned and updated *Life Lines: A resource for cancer patients & their families* and began work on translating it into Spanish;
- Held educational workshops for patients and families on applying for government benefits such as Social Security Disability;
- Co-sponsored with the Cancer Coalition of Westchester events such as Survivors Day and a workshop for older adults on cancer-related issues;
- Collaborated on a variety of County-wide initiatives including the Westchester Colorectal Cancer Screening Campaign and Minority Cancer Awareness Day.

Heartfelt thanks to our many volunteers and supporters. With your assistance and unending support, we will continue to strive towards our goal of enhancing the quality of life of individuals and families living with cancer.
Heartfelt Thanks to Our 2005 Donors

Cancer Support Team heartily thanks the many individuals, corporations, foundations and government agencies who support our services and programs through their generosity. While space allows us to list only donors of $250 or more, we wish to express our appreciation to all who have given so generously. Every effort has been made to ensure that names appear correctly in the appropriate donor category. In case of error or omission, please contact us at the CST office, 914-777-2777.

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Pro Bono Partnership

Visit our website at www.cancersupportteam.com
Coping With Fatigue (con't)
how he or she can help, be specific about what you need.

• Consider compromising; try shorter, easier versions of
activities you enjoy, rather than eliminating them altogether.
For example, if you love cooking, don’t give it up. Instead,
cook simplified meals.

Sleep and Rest
If sleep disruption is a problem, determine the cause.
If you find you are getting up during the night to go to the
bathroom, try eliminating fluids after 6:00 p.m. If pain keeps
you awake, discuss better pain management with your doctor
and take medication that is prescribed. If you find you
often need more medication during the night, place the dose
within reach of your bed, next to a glass of water.

• Develop good sleep habits; keep a regularly scheduled
bedtime. Pre-bed rituals like warm milk, herbal tea, or a
warm bath can set the mood for sleep.

• Don’t think about your problems or try to tackle bills
or insurance forms right before bed. Chose restful activities
in the evening to encourage relaxation.

Exercise and Activities
A moderate exercise period each day, as tolerated, can
help to reduce fatigue. Bear in mind, however, that it is im-
portant to discuss any new exercise plan with your doctor.

• Alternate sitting and standing; minimize unnecessary
bed rest.

• Choose a variety of activities during the day to avoid
boredom and lethargy: visiting with friends, reading, seeing
a movie, sitting on the porch.

• A moderate pace with any activity is often better and
less tiring than rushing through to get it done.

Nutrition
Rather than 3 large meals, space 5-6 smaller meals
throughout the day.

• If you find you become progressively more fatigued
as the day goes on, try eating the majority of your calories
earlier in the day. Best at this time are foods you like and
foods that are easy to chew and digest.

• If you find that fatigue has seriously affected your ap-
petite and that you are taking in less food than your body
needs, consider nutritional supplements (Ensure, Sustical,
Carnation Instant Breakfast). These can be found at your
drug store or supermarket; they will increase your caloric
intake without the effort required to eat large portions.
Supplements can be used as mid-morning snacks, or as an
extra meal if your energy level is low.

• Drink plenty of fluids.

• If your taste has been affected by chemo or radiation
therapies, try experimenting with different kinds of foods.

• Utilize the services of a nutritionist, if necessary.

Change Your Environment
• Reorganize clothes, personal care products, or kitchen
equipment so you eliminate extra trips upstairs or lots of
bending and walking in the kitchen. For example, have a
toothbrush and an extra sweater downstairs or place the
pots and equipment you use most in cooking on the counter top.

• Consider moving your bedroom temporarily downstairs
or closer to a bathroom.

• Make use of equipment to conserve your energy. An
electric bed, chair lift for the stairs, commode, shower stool,
raised toilet seat, portable phone, intercom, etc., can save
you extra effort.

• If you are alone, just getting up to answer the door can
be a problem because it expends energy. Think of ways you
can use a hidden key or garage door code to let expected
visitors in. A lock box similar to the ones used by real estate
brokers may be a possibility.

Stress Reduction
• Communicate problems to your doctor and share your
feelings with an understanding family member or friend.
Sometimes attending a support group can help decrease the
feelings of frustration and isolation and help you learn new
ways of coping with stress-related issues.

• Get information: understanding the causes and options
for dealing with fatigue may assist you in making better
medical decisions and feeling less helpless. Find resources
and groups that can help.

• If worrying about problems is really draining your
energy, prioritize them and put some of them on the back burner.

• Don’t fall into the trap of relieving stress by increasing
the use of cigarettes, alcohol, drugs or caffeine.

• Pleasurable diversions can be energizing and restor-
ative—a walk, a ride in the car, a trip to the park, music, a
funny movie, a short visit from a friend.

• Try to accept that your family and friends may not
always understand what you are feeling. Try to let them
know what would be most helpful for you at this time.

• Complementary therapies can be beneficial. Massage,
yoga and meditation are other ways you can reduce stress
and replenish your energy.

Talk With Your Physician
• Pain, nausea, vomiting, or side effects from medications
or treatments (like constipation) might be contributing to
your fatigue. Getting control of these problems can be ben-
ficial physically and emotionally. Let your physician know
what you are experiencing.

CST’s Eighth Annual
Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon
Friday, October 20, 2006

Featured speaker: Harold Burstein, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School

For more information and underwriting
opportunities, please call the CST office at 914-777-2777.
Mr. G. called Cancer Support Team to ask for help for himself and his family after being diagnosed with colon cancer. He had arrived from Ecuador many years ago and had worked in construction since then. He described himself as a hard worker and told his nurse, “I could build a home from beginning to end.” When he contacted CST, he was too weak to work and was worried about providing for his wife and two daughters, aged 16 and 14. He asked for help with his financial situation and needed information about his medical treatments.

In the first visit, a CST nurse assessed his medical condition and talked with Mr. and Mrs. G. about his diagnosis. She brought pamphlets that would provide information about colon cancer and his chemotherapy treatments. She listened to the couple discuss the difficulties of coping with Mr. G.’s illness, especially because he was the breadwinner for his family. Over the next few week’s, the nurse collaborated with a variety of community agencies to help the G. family get medical insurance and assistance with the rent while Mr. G. was not working. She advocated for the patient to ensure that he received the government benefits to which he was entitled after many years of work. CST provided financial assistance to the G. family to help pay for items not covered by the insurance such as medications and transportation to medical appointments. The nurse regularly visited Mr. G. to monitor his medical condition and frequently spoke with his doctor as she became the doctor’s “eyes and ears” between his appointments. By visiting him once per week, she saved Mr. G. more frequent trips to his doctor whose office was located in New York City.

Since cancer, like many chronic illnesses, is a family affair, all the G.’s were affected by the diagnosis. With this in mind, the CST social worker also visited the G.’s to provide support and counseling regarding the impact of the illness. Mr. G.’s oldest daughter was especially troubled by seeing her father so ill and met privately with the social worker to discuss her concerns.

Today, Mr. G. is feeling stronger and better able to cope with his diagnosis. His family has the information and support they need from the CST staff. For many families facing the challenges of cancer, CST makes a difference!

Cancer Support Team Offers Educational Programs for Patients

This spring, Cancer Support Team participated in a variety of educational programs, in collaboration with other community-based organizations.

In March and April, Patty Vaughn, R.N. partnered with the Jewish Community Center of Mid-Westchester to organize a wellness and fitness class for those with breast and ovarian cancer. Participants were offered exercise classes and use of the JCC pool. On April 25th and for three subsequent sessions, CST nurses, Lucille Winton, R.N. and Katie Shields, R.N. worked with Nicki Weiss, L.M.S.W. and Shari Birnbaum, L.C.S.W. of Westchester Jewish Community Services to organize a family caregiver support and education program. The program covered topics such as providing

“hands-on” care, caregiver stress and home care options. On April 26th, in collaboration with the Cancer Coalition of Westchester, CST helped to implement an educational workshop on cancer survivorship.

“It has been wonderful to work with such dedicated professionals to offer the education and support that cancer patients and their families need,” stated CST Executive Director, Judith Dobrof, D.S.W. If you are interested in finding out about upcoming educational programs, please call our office at 914-777-2777.

Preparation of this newsletter was donated by Sandy Dewey and DeweyInk, a desktop publishing company.
CST at Health Walk ’05

(L. to R.) CST Executive Director Judith Dobrof, D.S.W., Gina Bruce, Henry Young, Gini Ricca, R.N., Nancy Stoer, R.N., Katie Shields, R.N., Jim Smith, Louise Hendry and Bunny Gartner at Health Walk 2005.

****Save the Dates****

Swim Across America of Long Island Sound is in its 14th year of raising funds and awareness for cancer research, prevention and treatment through swimming related events. CST is a grateful beneficiary of these efforts.

N.Y.A.C., Travers Island - July 15, 2006
Orienta Pool Swim - July 22, 2006
Long Island Sound Swim - July 29, 2006

TO SWIM: CALL 1-914-632-3236
TO DONATE, Send your tax-deductible check to:
SWIM ACROSS AMERICA
P.O. BOX 217
LARCHMONT, NY 10538

Or visit their website at www.swimacrossamerica.com

CST’s Eighth Annual
Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon
Friday, October 20, 2006