SAA’s “Team Clare” Successfully Raises Funds for Cancer Research, Prevention and Treatment

Dr. Richard Davidson, a chiropractor practicing in Harrison, began swimming for Swim Across America in 1997, in the early days of the organization’s history. According to Dr. Davidson, that year approximately 40 swimmers raised nearly $40,000. This year, Dr. Davidson is still swimming, along with Team Clare co-captains Chris Powers and Dennis McCauley and more than 500 swimmers. The Team hopes to help SAA raise over $1 million again this year to support cancer research, prevention and treatment.

Since 1997, Cancer Support Team has been a grateful beneficiary of SAA’s generous support for its free comprehensive services to individuals and families living with cancer. In a recent interview with Judith Dobrof, CST’s Executive Director, Dr. Davidson described the history of his involvement in SAA, as well as the remarkable commitment of members of Team Clare, who have raised over $1 million for SAA.

Dr. Davidson became interested in SAA because he was “always a swimmer” and he decided to put his athletic talent to good use. In 1999, after swimming in SAA events for two summers, cancer hit close to home. Clare Joyce, wife of close friend Michael Joyce, and the mother of four young children, passed away from cancer at the age of 41. Dr. Davidson describes feeling helpless, but at the same time he knew he wanted to do something special to pay tribute to Clare’s life. He came up with the idea of creating a team of swimmers who would swim in Clare’s memory and joined with friends Powers and McCauley—all friends of Michael Joyce since high school—to create SAA’s first dedication team. According to Dr. Davidson, that first summer approximately 90 swimmers joined Team Clare and raised $100,000 for SAA.

As the largest and most successful SAA Team, Dr. Davidson attributes its fundraising achievements to the division of labor among the co-captains. Chris is the “great administrator,” organizing the letters that go out to Team Clare’s swimmers as well as supporters. He describes his friend Dennis, as an “incredible fundraiser,” encouraging others to donate funds in support of SAA’s mission. Dr. Davidson sees himself as a swim “recruiter.” Swimming all year at a variety of pools, he continually recruits other swimmers to join Team Clare in order to raise additional funds.

Today, many more special dedication teams participate in SAA events to honor cancer survivors as well as pay tribute to those who have passed away. SAA’s goal is to one day have its Honorary Teams out number its Memorial Teams. It also hopes to continue successfully supporting CST as well as programs at New York-Presbyterian Children’s Hospital and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. We look forward to this summer’s SAA events and hope to see you there!

Please Celebrate with Us!
National Cancer Survivors Day
Sunday, June 3rd, 10 until noon
Gilda’s Club
80 Maple Avenue, White Plains
Registration required. Call (914) 644-8844
Greetings From the Executive Director

Much has been written lately in the news about prominent individuals who are dealing with a recurrence of cancer: Elizabeth Edwards, wife of former North Carolina Senator John Edwards; Tony Snow, President Bush’s press secretary; and Fred Thompson, former Tennessee Senator. Also reported recently in the media, is the news that the cancer mortality rate is declining in men and women, in part due to the decline in smoking rates, better treatment and medical care, and earlier detection. As National Cancer Institute statistician Dr. Eric Feuer states in an April 8, 2007 New York Times article, “There was a lot of effort, but now it’s finally coming to fruition.”

As is the case many times in the media, there’s good news on the cancer front as well as news of the difficulties that cancer survivors can face. Many survivors are challenged by the prospect of recurrence and, once in remission, how to “move on” so that they are not immobilized by a nagging fear that the cancer will return. Jonathan Alter, reporting in the April 9, 2007 edition of Newsweek, describes “a bit of extra stress” that the news of Edwards’ and Snow’s recurrence brought to him and, he imagined, to many other cancer survivors. He writes poignantly of his experience with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, his constant search on the Internet for information about his illness, the exigencies of dealing with work life while going through a life-threatening illness and the helpful website, caringbridge.org that allowed him to both update family and friends about his progress and have their good wishes channeled back to him. Even his children got involved in postings about his illness.

At Cancer Support Team, we have experience with cancer survivors who fear recurrence that never comes or who are actually coping with recurrence of cancer. We learn from survivors how they strive to cope with these fears or how they meet the challenge of dealing with cancer. Like Jonathan Alter, some write about it, finding writing a wonderful way to organize their thoughts or connect with other survivors faced with the challenges of cancer. Some talk about their experience with family and friends, try to read everything they can about their illness or bury themselves in their professional lives. There are probably as many ways to cope with these anxieties as there are people who cope.

On June 3rd, from ten until noon, once again we will celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day with a program of music and survivors’ stories at Gilda’s Club Westchester. (For more information on the program, please call us at 914-777-2777.) Join us in celebrating the many ways of living with and conquering the fear of a cancer diagnosis.

Cancer Support Team is a Community Fund Agency.

For more information about CST Services call 914•777•2777
As CST expands its services this year, we are launching a new case management program to assist patients and caregivers affected by cancer in obtaining the benefits and resources they need to cope with their diagnosis. CST’s new case manager, Mishelle Cisneros, will assist patients and families with such practical issues as applying for medical or disability insurance and will help them access cancer-related community resources. Mishelle is Spanish-speaking and can reach out to Westchester’s growing Latino community and those dealing with cancer. Mishelle comes to CST after many years as a medical interpreter in a variety of New York City hospitals.

With the continued increase in people requesting our services, and with the retirement of Patty Vaughn, RN (see related article on page 6), we are very pleased to welcome Rita Burke, RN, Helen Cuccia, RN and Jamie Schwarzfeld, RN, MSN, OCN to the Team.

Rita has dedicated her nursing career to the field of cancer. She comes to CST after many years of oncology experience, most recently at Memorial Sloan-Kettering’s Ambulatory Care Unit in Sleepy Hollow.

Helen has worked and volunteered in a variety of settings, including as a CST volunteer driver transporting our patients to treatment appointments. Prior to her present position, she was a staff nurse at New York Presbyterian Hospital’s White Plains site.

Jamie has extensive oncology experience in hospital, home care and hospice settings. She has published and lectured on cancer-related issues and is an adjunct instructor at the College of New Rochelle School of Nursing.

Our new staff members bring many valuable experiences to their work at CST. We are very pleased to welcome them to the Team.

Junior League of Bronxville Supports CST’s Financial Assistance Program

The Junior League of Bronxville recently awarded Cancer Support Team a grant to support our financial assistance program to needy families, living in Bronxville and surrounding communities, who are facing the challenges of a cancer diagnosis. CST is one of the only oncology agencies that provide small grants to individuals and families who are having difficulty paying for essential items and services not covered by their insurance. Examples include transportation to treatment appointments, pain medication and medical equipment such as a wheelchair. The Junior League was also very helpful over the last year in compiling children’s backpacks full of school supplies that we gave to families served by CST. In 2006, the League also provided a grant to pay for filing cabinets and a bookcase that helped us organize and display our patient education materials.

Our heartfelt thanks go to members of the Junior League of Bronxville for supporting our programs in so many ways. For more information about the financial assistance program, please call our office at 914-777-2777.

Top Ten Drug Dos and Don’ts

During patient home visits, CST’s nurses spend a great deal of time reviewing and discussing medications because confusion, misinformation and disorganization are common causes of drug errors. Often the wrong pill is taken at the wrong time in the wrong dose, or worse, not taken at all. Below are some dos and don’ts we share with patients.

1. Do ask questions when the doctor prescribes a new medication. What is the purpose of the medication? What adverse side effects might I experience? Under what circumstances should I stop the medication and notify your office? When can I expect to notice an improvement or when should we talk again if I have not seen an improvement? Should I take this medication every day, or can I take it only as needed?

2. Do review special instructions with the doctor or pharmacist. Should it be taken with or without food? Are there certain foods, alcohol, or other medications that I should avoid while on this drug because of possible serious reactions?

3. Do always have an updated list of medications you are taking, along with over-the-counter drugs and herbal or vitamin supplements. Give copies to your doctors (don’t assume they have this information) and carry a copy in your wallet.

(Continued on page 7)
Cancer Support Team Recap 2006

With the mission of enhancing the quality of life of individuals and families in lower Westchester affected by cancer, our staff has been busy offering nursing, social work and other supportive services. In 2006, we:

- Served 14% more individuals and families than in 2005;
- Provided 1,083 visits in the home or at our office;
- Awarded 177 grants to financially-needy families to help pay for items and services not covered by insurance such as medications, medical equipment and transportation to medical appointments;
- Coordinated over 900 rides to life-saving cancer treatments through CST’s unique Volunteer Driver Program or through a grant from the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation providing taxi transportation for women undergoing treatment;
- Distributed over 3000 copies of our redesigned and updated Life Lines: A resource for cancer patients & their families, in English and Spanish;
- Collaborated on a variety of county-wide initiatives including implementing workshops on survivorship and estate planning and a celebration of National Cancer Survivors Day;
- Held the 9th annual Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon featuring Harold Burstein, M.D. of Harvard Medical School.

Heartfelt thanks to our many volunteers and supporters. Through your assistance and unending support, we will continue to provide essential services to those living with the challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

Computer Corner

Can you help us upgrade our computers?
- CST is looking for new or almost new computers for our staff (PC compatible, running Windows 2000 or higher). If you are interested in donating a computer, or if you would like to make a restricted donation to help us purchase computers, please call our office at 914-777-2777, or send a donation to CST at 875 Mamaroneck Ave., Mamaroneck, NY 10543.
- Please indicate that you are contributing to the purchase of computers.

Would you like to be contacted by email?
- We can save on postage and paper by emailing you notices of upcoming events and programs. Please email us at cst@cancersupportteam.org with your email address.
Heartfelt Thanks to Our 2006 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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Patty Vaughn Retires After 18 Dedicated Years of Service

I
n April, after 18 years of superb service to Cancer Support Team’s patients and families, Patty Vaughn, R.N. retired from her position as staff nurse. Patty joined CST in 1989 after working for many years as Associate Director of Parents for Parents, an organization focused on supporting families of children with cancer and other illnesses. Consistently going above and beyond the call of duty, Patty provided CST’s patients with a wealth of information about how to cope with the medical and emotional impact of a cancer diagnosis. Patients and families benefited from Patty’s extensive knowledge of community resources. Staff members frequently consulted her “little black book” that overflowed with phone numbers and addresses of helpful resources.

Patty was instrumental in increasing public awareness of our services and creatively developing new programs to help those we serve. Happily for us, with Bonnie Markey, LCSW, she will continue to lead the monthly Ovarian Cancer Support Group, the only one of its kind in lower Westchester. Among her many other accomplishments, Patty developed a wellness retreat for breast cancer survivors and, in collaboration with the Jewish Community Center of Mid-Westchester, implemented a fitness program for women with cancer. In addition, Patty has been on CST’s Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon Planning Committee since its inception and has been an active organizer of the Luncheon’s Honorary Committee. In honor of her on-going commitment to the Luncheon, this year Patty will be Honorary Co-chair of the event on October 11th.

We are very pleased that Patty will continue to be involved with CST through her leadership of the Support Group as well as her membership on the Luncheon Planning Committee. We wish Patty and husband, Mike, all the best as they spend time with family and friends, travel and enjoy retirement.

For more information about CST Services call 914•777•2777
Cancer can bring many physical and emotional challenges and for Mrs. G. this was especially true. Mrs. G. initially called Cancer Support Team two years ago when she received her cancer diagnosis. She hoped that talking about her experience might help her better cope with her disease. At her initial meeting with a CST social worker, she talked about feeling frightened and the difficulty of living with the uncertainty that cancer can bring. She also asked for help in dealing with the impact that the cancer was having on her husband and her eight-year-old son.

Over many months, Mrs. G. attended regular counseling sessions with the social worker. She focused on coping with surgery and chemotherapy as well as her desire to support her husband and son. The social worker discussed ways in which she could help her husband, even as she also benefited from his caring and support of her. She also talked with Mrs. G. about how to explain the diagnosis to her child in an honest and yet reassuring manner and referred the family to other community resources that would benefit them. The social worker connected Mrs. G. with a CST nurse who periodically met with her when a new medical issue arose or when she had questions about ways to manage treatment side effects. In addition, as a professional with a successful career at a major corporation, Mrs. G. worked with the social worker on her efforts to continue her career even in the face of her diagnosis and its treatment.

More recently, the social worker has been helping Mrs. G. cope with the recurrence of her cancer and the long term effects of physical changes that the cancer brings. Mrs. G. continues to work on dealing with the ups and downs of treatment and worries about the future. At Mrs. G.’s request, her CST nurse referred her to complementary medicine specialists, including a nutritionist and acupuncturist. In addition, the social worker is helping Mrs. G. with her relationship with her busy oncologist who is not always as available or responsive as she would like. They discuss ways to ask questions and make clear to the physician her need for information about her illness. She also continues to talk about the impact on her family and her efforts to spend time with her son, including volunteering often in her son’s classroom.

Mrs. G. continues to meet with her social worker in regular counseling sessions and with her nurse as needed to discuss her concerns. Since the diagnosis, she has benefited from ongoing support of CST’s trained professionals as well as referrals to other supportive services. At CST, she found a source of comfort and support that has been available throughout her illness.

For many individuals facing the challenges of cancer, CST makes the difference!

Dos and Don’ts (con’t)

4. Do write a description on each medication bottle to remind yourself of the drug’s purpose (i.e., “for pain,” “for nausea,” “stomach pills”) because drug names often look very similar and can easily be confused.

5. Do take medications at the same time every day, and exactly as instructed: 4 times a day is different from every 6 hours.

6. Do not skip medication or double up on the pills because you skipped the previous dose. Call the doctor’s office and get advice on how to handle the problem.

7. Do keep current medications separate from medications you are no longer taking and periodically go through all medications and toss outdated ones.

8. When tests or procedures are scheduled, do remind the doctor of the medications you are taking and ask if any need to be stopped beforehand. Drugs like aspirin, ibuprofen and anticoagulants often need to be temporarily discontinued before a procedure can safely be done.

9. Do be organized. Those plastic pill boxes with days of the week and times of the day are very useful for managing multiple medications.

10. Do educate yourself. The following websites are good resources for information on your medications:

   www.webmd.com
   www.rxlist.com
   www.medlineplus.gov
   www.pdrhealth.com
   www.healthtouch.com
   www.pharminfo.com

(Note: Article written by Patty Vaughn, RN)

In Memoriam

Cancer Support Team notes with deep sadness the death of Bob Marshall, husband of Mrs. Mildred Marshall, a long time CST volunteer and former member of its Board of Directors. Bob was very supportive of Millie’s return to school in her 60’s to obtain a degree in health advocacy from Sarah Lawrence College. In addition, Bob and Millie provided ongoing and generous support for our services to patients and families. We send our sincerest condolences to Millie and the Marshall family.

Cancer Support Team wishes to acknowledge the generosity of the families of the following people who have designated CST for memorial donations:

   Anne Gaffney
   John Wolfson

Preparation of this newsletter was donated by Sandy Dewey /DeweyInk.
Swim Across America of Long Island Sound is in its 15th year of raising funds and awareness for cancer research, prevention and treatment through swimming-related events. Cancer Support Team is a grateful beneficiary of these efforts.

**N.Y.A.C., Travers Island - July 15, 2007**
**Orienta Pool Swim - July 21, 2007**
**Long Island Sound Swim - July 28, 2007**

To Swim: Call 914-632-3236
To Donate: SAA, P.O. Box 217, Larchmont, NY 10538
www.swimacrossamerica.org

****Save the Dates****

***CST’s Ninth Annual Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon, Thursday, October 11, 2007***
Carolyn Runowicz, M.D., The Neag Comprehensive Cancer Program, University of Connecticut

**The Answer to Cancer: A Physician Survivor Speaks**
For more information and underwriting opportunities, please call 914-777-2777.