The Answer to Cancer: A Physician Survivor Speaks

In her presentation, Dr. Runowicz particularly focused on the importance of prevention and early detection. She encouraged attendees not only to get mammograms, but to find out what kind of mammogram they are getting. For those with fatty breasts, regular mammograms are adequate. However, younger women who tend to have dense breasts should make sure that they are receiving a digital mammogram, a type of mammogram designed to enhance readability with dense breasts. She discussed high risk factors for breast cancer, such as older age and being of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry. Family history is a less important risk factor and in fact, over ninety percent of women with breast cancer do not have a family history. She encouraged her audience to go onto the National Cancer Institute website (www.cancer.gov), which includes information about calculating one’s risk for breast cancer. Her message (Continued on page 4)

CST’s Ninth Annual Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon Focuses on Prevention and Survivorship

Cancer is never an emergency. This was one of the many powerful messages presented by Carolyn Runowicz, M.D. at Cancer Support Team’s ninth annual Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon. Dr. Runowicz, a cancer survivor herself, is Director of the Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center and Professor, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Division of Gynecologic Oncology at the University of Connecticut Health Center.

Dr. Runowicz described how she learned this lesson first-hand when she was diagnosed with breast cancer fifteen years ago: she had to learn to “take a breath” and go through her treatment as a patient, not the physician expert that she is. The experience, according to Dr. Runowicz, taught her to be a better—but tougher—doctor. Although she empathizes with the struggles of her patients, she also tells them that they can cope—just as she did.

Start the Year Off Right!

The New Year is a time to embrace positive lifestyle changes and recommit to being a happier and healthier you. Lindsey Marcus, a nationally certified Personal Trainer and Nutrition Specialist working in Westchester County, offers a few steps that will assist you in achieving that goal. Please see page 6 for her timely suggestions.

Save the Date

CST’s 30th Anniversary Benefit Gala
An Elegant Evening at the NY Botanical Garden
May 29, 2008, 6:30 p.m.
Greetings From the Executive Director

Forty-seven million and growing...That is the latest figure on the number of people in the US who are uninsured. Many more are underinsured and without comprehensive insurance to obtain adequate preventive and treatment-oriented care. At Cancer Support Team, every day we see the consequences of this growing health care crisis. Women who delayed getting a mammogram because they did not have medical insurance, call us for help now that they have been diagnosed with late stage breast cancer. Many are working, but their employer does not offer health benefits. Others contact us for assistance because their insurance does not begin to fully cover the treatments that are required. They face mounting medical debt problems and need help in sorting out how they will pay their bills.

Everywhere we turn—in the media, at local coffee shops, in discussions in our communities—there is a focus on the problems of the un- and underinsured. David Lazarus, a columnist for the Los Angeles Times who focuses on healthcare reform, writes of his recent personal experience being diagnosed with diabetes. He was immediately referred to an expert physician only to learn that the physician did not take his insurance. He writes about dealing with the “…quirks and complexities of the insurance system [that] border on madness.” (Los Angeles Times, 10/7/07)

Closer to home, Alfred Tinger, M.D., President of the Westchester County Medical Society, argues in the Society’s recent newsletter (October, 2007) that physicians must focus on the “big picture” problem of so many who lack adequate insurance. He calls universal access to health care a “number one priority.”

This is why CST has joined the Access to Health Care Coalition, a local coalition of non-profit groups, business and union leaders and government officials. Our goal is to educate the public and brainstorm regarding different options to increase access to cancer prevention, early detection and treatment services. Knowing that many options exist to increase access, the Coalition hopes to encourage dialogue as well as changes in the health care system so that people with cancer are able to get the care they need. Led by the American Cancer Society, the Coalition sponsored the first of three conferences on November 16th focusing on the problem of lack of access as well as proposed solutions. By joining this important Coalition and talking about the challenging experiences of those we help, we can help others to focus on the big picture issues of so many who lack adequate health insurance.

For more information about CST Services call 914•777•2777
Swim Across America Records Another Successful Year

SAA Celebrates 15 years of fundraising for research and supportive services

Swim Across America of Long Island Sound celebrated its 15th year by once again raising over one million dollars for cancer research and supportive services. Through its swimming-related events, at the New York Athletic Club Pool, Orienta Beach Club and in the Long Island Sound, 590 swimmers and numerous volunteers participated with dedication and enthusiasm. A total of 39 teams swam in memory or honor of loved ones. At the July 28th Sound swim, swimmers chose a one-mile, four-mile or six-mile swim, supported by a multitude of kayakers, boaters, land volunteers and cheering family members and friends. It truly was a wonderful day!

This year also marks the ten-year anniversary of Cancer Support Team’s partnership with Swim Across America. CST is a grateful beneficiary of these events; they support our free, comprehensive services to those affected by cancer living in lower Westchester County.

Sarah Yergeau, CST’s summer intern, took part in her second Long Island Sound event, swimming one-mile. Sarah describes her experience: “The atmosphere of Swim Across America is what drew me back for a second year, plus having the personal connection to CST as an intern, which made my swim even more meaningful. Being at the event and hearing the myriad of reasons people are swimming was the most inspiring part of the event.”

In addition to CST, other beneficiaries include the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center’s Swim Across America and DeMatteo Research Laboratories and The Tommy Palazzo Fellowship for Pediatric Oncology Research, New York-Presbyterian Children’s Hospital.

Drivers Needed!

Like to drive? Then please help us by volunteering to drive our patients to their treatment appointments. If you can help once a week or once a month—whatever time you can give, we would love to hear from you. Please contact our office at 914-777-2777 if you are interested in assisting those with cancer who need help getting to their appointments.

Visit our website at www.cancersupportteam.org

SAA 2007 Dedication Teams strike a pose after finishing successful swim.

N.Y.A.C., Travers Island - July 13, 2008
Orienta Pool Swim - July 19, 2008
Long Island Sound Swim - July 26, 2008

To Swim: Call 914-632-3236
To Donate: SAA, P.O. Box 217, Larchmont, NY 10538
www.swimacrossamerica.org
was that understanding one’s risk for breast cancer and implementing risk reduction activities, such as digital mammography when indicated, are good prevention strategies.

Dr. Runowicz also discussed the advent of the HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer and the research being conducted on a blood test to pick up proteins in the blood that may indicate ovarian cancer in its early stages. She was adamant about the importance of colonoscopies for people over fifty in order to prevent colon cancer. Finally, all women should be eating lots of fruits and vegetables and getting exercise as other cancer prevention methods.

In her latest book, The Answer to Cancer, written with her husband, Sheldon Cherry, M.D., Dr. Runowicz provides extensive guidance on other ways to reduce one’s risk of getting cancer as well as ways to arrest it at an early stage. The book can be borrowed through CST’s lending library (see related article on page 6) and is a helpful guide to prevention as well as coping with a variety of cancer diagnoses.

The Honorary Co-chairs for this year’s Luncheon were Mary Jane Arrigoni and Patty Vaughn, R.N. The Luncheon Planning Committee was co-chaired by Lisa Edmiston and Stephanie Piccone. Underwriters for the event included BMW, Eileen Fisher, Hudson Valley Bank and Ray Catena Lexus. The Community Fund of Bronxville, Eastchester and Tuckahoe also provided a generous grant to help with the costs of implementing the event. We thank our Honorary Co-Chairs, Luncheon Co-Chairs and Planning Committee and our supporters for their help in making our Luncheon such a successful educational program.

Note: Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon photos by Leslye Smith.
We Ask Our Readers…

Future editions of our newsletter will include this new column, which we hope will contain useful information and advice. The column will include a question for our readers who have cancer. The question may focus on one of several issues, such as coping with a particular side effect of treatment, dealing with anxiety that often times accompanies the diagnosis or how to talk with one’s children about their cancer. We will include as many responses as we can in the next newsletter.

With that in mind, we ask you, our readers:

Can you provide some tips for dealing with the nausea that may arise when one receives chemotherapy treatments?

Please send your responses to Judith Dobrof, D.S.W., in any of the following ways:

mail: 875 Mamaroneck Ave, Suite 204, Mamaroneck, NY 10543
email: jdobrof@cancersupportteam.org
fax: 914-777-2780

We will not publish your name with your response unless you wish us to.

And, please feel free to send us questions that you would like us to pose to our readers. Thanks!

Post Treatment Fitness and Exercise Program

A supervised program of exercise specifically for individuals who have finished radiation or chemotherapy.

Where: Forme
1075 Central Park Ave., Suite 301
Scarsdale

When: Wednesdays from noon - 1 p.m.
Cost: Free of charge

This unique program is administered by a staff of licensed physical therapists and exercise physiologists who work closely with clients to set goals that are consistent with their specific abilities and needs.

For information and to register, call Julie Rosen at 914-723-4900.
Barbara Melamed Library Offers Resource Materials

The Barbara Melamed Memorial Library offers patients and caregivers cancer-related books, videos, and other educational materials. The library honors the memory of Barbara Melamed, a former Cancer Support Team social worker and cancer survivor who counseled those facing the challenges of living with cancer.

Library materials can be borrowed, so please stop by and browse through our offerings. We have listed below some recent additions:

**The Answer to Cancer: Stop It before It Starts, Arrest It in Its Earliest Stages, Prevent It from Coming Back**

**On His Own Terms: A doctor, his father, and the myth of the “good death”**
Joseph Sacco, M.D., Caveat Press, 2006.
A physician writes about his experience as his father is dying from lung cancer.

**A Breast Cancer Journey: Your Personal Guidebook**
A step-by-step guide through the emotional and physical aspects of breast cancer.

**Stories of Illness and Healing: Women Write Their Bodies**
A collection of stories in the form of poetry, essays, short fiction, short drama and oral testimonies of women who have medical and psychiatric illnesses and disabilities.

Cancer Support Team is a Community Fund Agency.

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**Start the Year Off Right!**
*Suggestions for a happier healthier you in 2008…*
*By Lindsey Marcus*

**Balanced Diet:** Fall back on the basics of good eating: Increased fiber, decreased levels of fat, reduced levels of processed foods, lean proteins, and plenty of fruits and vegetables. Watch your serving sizes, opting for five to six smaller meals throughout the course of the day.

Do not overwhelm yourself with counting calories or limiting yourself too much. Don’t forget about water, which helps flush the body of toxins and waste. Slowly work your way up to eight servings of eight ounces of water daily. Make small changes that you can live with for the long term.

**Exercise:** Ideally, you should aim for thirty-minutes of exercise five days a week, but if you are a beginner, start out slowly. Doing too much too soon may lead to injury. If the idea of working out for an extended period of time seems daunting, don’t fret. Instead, aim for three ten-minute daily sessions, three days a week.

In a week, increase this goal to four days a week. Try out a different routine with each ten-minute burst of activity. Dancing, walking, biking, playing tag with your children and walking the dog are great forms of cardiovascular exercise. Try adding some resistance training to build and maintain muscles. Everyday household items can substitute as exercise equipment. Use cans of food for bicep curls, or try sitting on the edge of your chair and slowly stand up without using your hands—you just did a modified squat!

Of course, remember to talk with your physician first before embarking on any physical fitness regimen.

**Accountability:** Keep a journal, detailing the duration and intensity of your workout, your food intake, and your mood throughout the day. Set mini goals for yourself, such as trying a new vegetable or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Recruit a friend or family member to become your exercise buddy. Research indicates people have a better chance of maintaining an exercise regimen if they have someone joining them.

Whatever steps you decide to take in the new year, be true to what is realistically attainable. It is not about losing a set number of pounds in a specific time frame, but finding ways to incorporate healthy changes into your already busy life. Wishing you only the best in 2008!
CST Makes a Difference!

Mr. J. contacted CST when his cancer recurred. Two years earlier, he had been diagnosed and he had responded well to treatment. Now, with this news from his doctor, he was overwhelmed by the thought that the cancer was back. In his first call to us, he requested a nursing visit to discuss his current condition. He said that both he and his wife were having difficulty with the news and wanted to talk with someone who would help them sort through their concerns, some of which were financial.

The next day, the CST nurse went to his home and answered many of the questions that Mr. and Mrs. J. presented about the recurrence. Since Mr. J.’s physician was recommending that he again receive chemotherapy, the nurse discussed potential side effects and how to manage them. She also gave them educational materials on chemotherapy that they could read when they had time. Over the next few months, as Mr. J. was receiving treatments, the nurse made frequent visits to monitor his side effects and help him manage their impact. She also referred the couple to CST’s social worker for counseling so they could better cope with the stresses that the illness placed on their relationship, and on each of them individually. Due to the financial hardships that Mr. and Mrs. J. were experiencing, CST provided them with financial assistance for medications as well as a chair that Mr. J. could use in the shower when he became fatigued.

Seven months later, the CST nurse continues to follow Mr. J. and his wife to ensure that they have the information and support they need to cope with the illness. They benefit from the home visits and the nurse’s expertise and accessibility.

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

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

Anthony Lofaro
Salvatore Mastrogiacomo
Arthur Sammartino
Pamela Turco
Eliza Warren

Special Thanks

Cancer Support Team services are offered without charge to all patients and their families, regardless of ability to pay. CST programs are funded through community contributions, memorials, fundraising events and through grants from local corporations and foundations. CST would like to acknowledge the following organizations, corporations and government entities for their generous grants in 2007:

The Community Fund of Bronxville, Eastchester, and Tuckahoe
Lin and Susie Chen Foundation
Citigroup
Eileen Fisher, Inc.
Jewish Communal Fund
Junior League of Bronxville
James A. McDonald Foundation
Hudson Valley Bank
Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation
The Morrison & Forester Foundation
New York State Legislative Grant/Honorable Suzy Oppenheimer
New York State Department of Health
Nordstrom
Osterman Community Foundation
Pharmion
Rye Presbyterian Church
St. John’s Episcopal Church
Swim Across America
United Way of Larchmont & Mamaroneck
Westchester Community Foundation

Updating our Mailing List, Contact by Email and Donations

We like to keep our supporters up-to-date on CST happenings and at the same time be cost-effective. Please let us know if you change your address or no longer wish to receive the newsletter.

Would you like to be contacted by email? We can save on postage and paper by emailing you notices of upcoming events and programs. You can call us at 914-777-2777 or send your email address to us at cst@cancersupportteam.org.

Would you like to spread your donation to CST out over the year by charging a portion of your donation to your credit card each month? Any gift to CST is greatly appreciated, and we want to make it as easy for you to give as possible. Please call us if you’d like more information about this option.

For more information about CST services, visit our website at www.cancersupportteam.org.

Preparation of this newsletter was donated by Sandy Dewey/DeweyInk.

Visit our website at www.cancersupportteam.org
Cancer Support Team’s 30th Anniversary Benefit Gala
May 29, 2008, 6:30 p.m.
An Elegant Evening at the New York Botanical Garden

10th Annual Women’s Health Awareness Luncheon
October 15, 2008 at noon
Westchester Country Club
Speaker: Jane Brody, The New York Times
“Living the Great Life After Cancer”

Westchester’s 2nd Annual End-of-Life Conference
Stand by Me: The Palliative Care Concept and Approaches
April 4, 2008, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
New York Medical College School of Public Health, Valhalla, NY
For the public and professionals

For more information or to learn about underwriting opportunities, please contact Judith Dobrof at 914-777-2777, ext. 15, or jdobrof@cancersupportteam.org.