MESSAGE FROM OUTGOING PRESIDENT, MARY JEFFERY

When my children were young and became frustrated, I told them to “use their words” to express their feelings. Today, as I sit at my computer writing my last column as president of BCA, I am trying to choose my words carefully so they best convey the power and importance of BCA’s mission.

In October, I stood at the podium at BCA’s Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show and looked out at 1,100 faces of individuals committed to BCA’s unique and critical mission. Our amazing benefit chairs – Nina Lindia, Amy Kappelman Johnson and Lauren Schweibold – shared their personal stories of how they’ve been impacted by breast cancer. Fifteen Models of Inspiration lifted the attendees to their feet as they walked the runway with gusto and beauty. The passion of purpose in that room was overwhelming and inspiring. The attendance was representative of the thousands more who are connected and united in support of BCA.

Thanks to support for the Benefit, our important Annual Appeal, and a variety of other efforts throughout the year, BCA raised a record amount in 2019 which enabled us to fund more than $1.85 million in grants for:
- Early stage, novel research;
- The training of dedicated breast surgeons;
- Education and outreach to those who might not otherwise have access to services.

As 2020 dawns, BCA enters its 25th year of making a dramatic and important impact in the world of breast cancer. The organization is poised for growth and is working to guarantee that we continue to be strategically on target. Our brilliant Executive Director, Yonni Wattenmaker, our staff, committed board, vast numbers of volunteers, and generous, steadfast supporters will continue to drive medical progress and history. BCA’s incoming president, Meg Russell, will guide BCA with her impressive passion, experience, intelligence, and collaborative spirit. BCA is in good hands all around, and we thank you for your many contributions to our efforts!

BCA grew from an organization founded by brilliant women around a kitchen table into a nationally recognized powerhouse in the world of breast cancer. So my words are simple...thank you for believing in the power of this organization and helping improve the lives of those who have been affected by breast cancer. Our work is not done.

With gratitude, love, and wishes for good health,

Mary K. Jeffery
WELCOME MESSAGE FROM INCOMING PRESIDENT, MEG RUSSELL

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2020 marks the beginning of the 25th anniversary of Breast Cancer Alliance and we couldn’t be more excited about where we stand today. This year, we will be able to grant a record $1.875 million and that is all due to you, our steadfast supporters. Whether you attended one of our medical symposia, a site visit, the Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show or simply made a donation last year, you contributed to the ongoing efforts of BCA to improve survival rates and quality of life for those impacted by breast cancer. For that, we are eternally grateful.

The best way to truly see the impact that our dollars are making is to meet our doctors and hear about the cutting-edge research we are funding.

This spring, we will host our signature events, Kids for a Cause, Golf Outing, 5K Run/Walk For Hope and our Junior Fashion Show. In addition, our well-received medical symposium is planned for Washington, DC again, and just following Breast Cancer Awareness Month in Greenwich wouldn’t be the same without Go For Pink and our 25th Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show, co-chaired this year by Ashley Bekton, Karena Baily, Joy Gregory and Melissa Nisenson. Plans are underway to ensure that these are our most successful events to date.

While we are enthusiastic about our wonderful community events, we are most excited about the opportunity to introduce our current and potential donors to our grant recipients through site visits. The best way to truly see the impact that our dollars are making is to meet our doctors and hear about the cutting-edge research we are funding. You will be encouraged by the advancements being made around the country toward eradicating this insidious disease.

I would like to thank Mary Jeffery for her tireless work and unwavering dedication to BCA these last three years in which she served gracefully as President. She set in motion a plan for the future success of BCA and I’m honored to follow in her footsteps. This prospect is made less daunting with the knowledge that Yonni Wattenmaker, our incomparable Executive Director, is leading the charge. I would also like to acknowledge our incredible Board of Directors, Medical Advisory Board, Advisory Council and scores of dedicated volunteers for the work they continue to do on behalf of BCA.

In this, our 25th year, I invite you to join in our mission to stamp out breast cancer. You can do this by coming to an event you haven’t previously attended or by bringing a friend to an event you enjoy, by joining us at a site visit or by continuing to check our website for updates on our progress. We at BCA are inspired by the passion of our volunteers and the groundbreaking work being done by our grantees. Please help make our 25th year our best yet.

Sincerely,

Meg Russell

Meg Russell
Dr. Michelle Abadir-Hallock grew up in lower Westchester County. She attended SUNY Downstate Medical School, graduating in 1990 and completed her internship and melanoma fellowship at New York University. Michelle has published in the areas of melanoma and atypical mole syndrome, and completed her residency at Albert Einstein Medical Center. Michelle has continued to serve in her dermatologic community by training dermatology residents at Albert Einstein in the area of dermatologic surgery since 1995. She is in private practice with her mother Dr. Dale M. Abadir, M.D. since 1995 in Rye Brook.

Dr. Abadir was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer in 2013 and continues to be treated at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center by Dr. Jaqueline Bromberg. She has two wonderful sons, Will and Dell, and a loving husband, Peter.

Lois Kelly received her MA in Early Childhood Education from Teacher’s College, Columbia University and her BSN from Molloy College. Lois worked as a pediatric intensive care nurse for five years at New York Hospital, Cornell Medical Center in NYC, caring for critically ill children aged birth to 18 years and then as Pediatric Nursing Educator Clinician, creating and teaching curriculum for nurses working in all areas of pediatrics and facilitating research and education for the institution. Lois grew up in Rockville Centre, New York. She and her husband, Bryan, have resided in Riverside for the past 10 years and have four children. Lois has been extremely active in the school community holding various volunteer positions including PTA President of Riverside School and was nominated for the Essence Award for Excellence in Volunteerism. Lois has been involved with BCA since 2016 and is thrilled to be joining the board of this incredible organization.

Nina Lindia grew up in Syracuse, NY and Florence, Italy. She was lucky enough to find a Greenwich-raised Italian to marry and start a family with in Old Greenwich. Fabio and Nina are parents to two young children, Francesco and Raffaella. Nina majored in Sociology at Bucknell University and went on to complete a Masters degree in International Education at New York University. Prior to becoming a stay-at-home mother, Nina enjoyed working at Clear Channel Radio in promotions and later at Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions, as a Regional Marketing Director of Foreign Medical Programs. While living in New York City, she volunteered at Lighthouse International, an organization devoted to making the world a better place for the visually challenged. After moving to Greenwich, Nina served on the Greenwich Point Conservancy Beach Ball Committee as well as the Make-A-Wish CT Annual Gala Committee and the Breast Cancer Alliance Luncheon Committee. In March 2015, 3 weeks before her breast cancer diagnosis at the age of 35, Nina and three local Greenwich women launched Pitch Your Peers (PYP), a women’s collective grant funding group. PYP’s goal is to identify unmet needs in the community and provide grants worthy of impactful change for local non-profits. Since its inception, PYP has launched chapters in Seattle, WA and Chicago, IL and given away over $500,000 in grants. In 2019, Nina was proud to co-chair (and break fundraising records at) the 24th Annual Breast Cancer Alliance Luncheon and Fashion Show, along with Dr. Amy Kappelman Johnson and Lauren Schweibold. While the worst day of her life was indeed her breast cancer diagnosis, through the BCA she has now also found one of the best days in that luncheon. She is honored, humbled and supremely proud to join the BCA Board and is grateful for the opportunity to give back to an organization so dedicated to improving outcomes in the breast cancer community.

Susan Weis was born and raised in Chappaqua, New York but has lived in Greenwich, Connecticut for almost 25 years. A wife and mother of two children, Susan is very active in the community. She has served on the Advisory Board of the Greenwich United Way and has worked on numerous other events and committees for organizations including the Bruce Museum, the United Way, Greenwich Country Day School, The Greenwich Point Conservancy, Operation Smile, The Junior League of Greenwich and has mentored at Chester Addison in Stamford. In addition, Susan has been involved in her family’s wine business for many years and enjoys marketing, sales and connecting people. Susan was diagnosed with DCIS in 2015 and subsequently became interested in Breast Cancer Alliance as she saw so many people afflicted by this disease and believes in its mission.

Molly Zola holds a BS in Finance from Boston College and an MBA from Harvard Business School. She spent most of her career at Morgan Stanley in the investment banking department from 1990 to 2007. In her last position, she worked as the COO of Global Capital Markets. Molly took two years away from Morgan Stanley (1995-1996) to work at McKinsey & Company as a consultant. Molly is on the board of the Weekapaug Chapel Society and the St. Catherine’s Players. She is also on the board of Rocking Appalachia Mom Project, a non-profit organization that works to alleviate childhood hunger in Martin County, KY. In addition, she is a co-coordinator of the St. Catherine of Siena Church chapter of Walking With Purpose, a Catholic women’s bible study. She is currently attending Fordham University working toward her Masters in Social Work. She lives in Riverside, CT with her husband and three children.
RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT:
STEFFI OESTERREICH, PHD,
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MEDICAL CENTER,
2019 BCA EXCEPTIONAL PROJECT GRANT RECIPIENT

Understanding the importance of estrogen receptor fusion genes in metastatic breast cancer

The estrogen receptor (ER) is expressed in the majority of breast cancers and is a major regulator of breast cancer development and progression. Hormone therapy is one of the most efficacious and least toxic treatments for ER-positive (ER+) breast cancer, however, resistance is a major clinical problem. Even when breast cancers become resistant to current anti-hormone therapies, they often remain dependent upon ER itself, when two genes are joined together and the new protein that is made often has novel functions. In the case of ER fusions, the ER protein loses the part that normally binds anti-hormone therapy and the remaining ER becomes hyperactive. As a consequence, tumors with ER fusions can grow fast and are resistance to hormonal therapies.

With this BCA award, we aim to understand the importance of ER fusions in hormone resistant metastatic breast cancer. We are expressing the fusion proteins in a series of breast cancer cell lines and other models and will then monitor their effects on cell growth, drug response, and downstream effects on expression of genes. Further, we plan to identify compounds which can inhibit the action of ER fusions. Successful completion of our studies will lay the foundation to identify new therapies for patients with ER fusion positive breast cancer.

Successful completion of our studies lay the foundation to identify new therapies for patients with ER fusion positive breast cancer.
HELPFUL THINGS TO SAY WHEN SOMEONE IS ILL

Lauren Brown, a founding editor of Quartz, died of breast cancer at age 37 in 2019. In 2016, during Breast Cancer Awareness month, she made a list of things well-meaning people should avoid saying to someone with cancer. More importantly, she made a list of things you should say. This was her list:

• I love you.
• I’m here for you.
• Let me know if you want to talk.
• Would you like to go see a movie?
• Can I come to the doctor with you?
• I’m thinking about you.
• How was your day?
• Do you need a ride?
• I’d like to tell you about my day.
• How are you feeling?
• We’ll get through this.

Lauren also wrote: “Most Friday nights I go to the gym or see a movie by myself instead of going on dates or out for happy hours. I have learned to take stock of my choices, big and small, to make sure I’m doing exactly what I want. Feeling comfortable and confident about that, even when your choice is uncool or unpopular, goes a long way in daily contentment…Sure, this approach means that much of the time, you’re faking happiness before you feel it. But that’s when it’s most important.”

YOUR TUMOR AND MEDICAL RECORD COULD UNLOCK DISCOVERIES

The Metastatic Breast Cancer Project is a research study that enables patients anywhere in the U.S. and Canada to contribute to breast cancer research by sharing their samples, medical records, and voices with researchers. If you have metastatic breast cancer, you can join the project by clicking “Count Me in” at MBCproject.org and completing a simple online form to answer some questions about yourself and your cancer. After joining, you will be asked to fill out an online consent form that requests permission to obtain copies of your medical records, and a portion of your stored tumor tissue. We will do the rest—we’ll contact your doctors and hospitals and send you a simple kit to collect a saliva sample. De-identified data generated from the project are made publicly available for all researchers to use to accelerate research.

We want to thank the more than 5600 people who have joined the MBCproject, and the more than 3200 patients who have agreed to share their samples, medical records, and voices. Every sample and medical record we receive is a piece of your story that will help transform our understanding of metastatic breast cancer.

We are also grateful for the invaluable support of our advocacy partner, the Breast Cancer Alliance.

We have recently also launched an interactive Patient Data Browser, which enables anyone to browse patient-reported survey data submitted by over 1,000 patients about their disease and experience. We’d love to hear your feedback (data@mbcproject.org). https://www.mbcproject.org/data-release#databrowser

To every patient, supporter, and Breast Cancer Alliance—thank you.

A note from Breast Cancer Alliance:
If you are a metastatic breast cancer patient, we encourage you to join this project by visiting MBCproject.org. Please feel free to share this information widely as well.
BCA LUNCHEON AND FASHION SHOW 2019
2019 LUNCHEON (CONTINUED)

OUR MODELS OF INSPIRATION!
**EXCEPTIONAL PROJECT RESEARCH GRANTS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Supporter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary L. Disis, MD</td>
<td>University of Washington, Seattle</td>
<td>Vaccination Targeting Breast Cancer Stem Cells</td>
<td>Supported by Susan Bevan &amp; Tony Daddino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poulikos Poulakakos, PhD</td>
<td>Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai</td>
<td>Targeting SHP2 as a converging node of targeted and immune therapy in TNBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hani Goodarzi, PhD</td>
<td>University of California, San Francisco</td>
<td>Leveraging circulating cancer-specific orphan RNAs for screening of women with BRCA1/2 mutations</td>
<td>The Walsh Family Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jose Silva, PhD</td>
<td>Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai</td>
<td>Alterations in microtubule dynamics: the Yin and Yang of chemoresistance in triple negative breast cancers</td>
<td>Supported by Tami Eagle Bowling and Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junran Zhang, MD</td>
<td>Ohio University</td>
<td>Interruption of Squalene Epoxidase and DNA Damage Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sichun Yang, PhD</td>
<td>Case Western University</td>
<td>Drugging the undrugged for advanced ER-positive breast cancer</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Marriott Radiation Oncology</td>
<td>Vanderbilt University</td>
<td>Novel mammary organoids to examine radiation-induced recurrence in TNBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Spring, MD</td>
<td>Massachusetts General Hospital</td>
<td>The Neoadjuvant Model as a Translational Tool to Improve outcomes in ER+ Breast Cancer</td>
<td>Deborah G. Black Memorial Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas O'Sullivan, PhD</td>
<td>University of Notre Dame</td>
<td>Smart Breast Clips for Personalized Breast Cancer Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enid Toska, PhD</td>
<td>Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center</td>
<td>Elucidating the role of ARID1A in lineage plasticity and endocrine therapy resistance in ER+ breast cancer</td>
<td>Deborah G. Black Memorial Grant</td>
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**YOUNG INVESTIGATOR RESEARCH GRANTS**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colt Egelston, PhD</td>
<td>City of Hope</td>
<td>Tumor-derived T cell receptors for engineered T cell therapy of breast cancer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pengda Liu, PhD</td>
<td>University of North Carolina</td>
<td>Targeting the deubiquitinase OTUD6B in basal-like breast cancer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas O'Sullivan, PhD</td>
<td>University of Notre Dame</td>
<td>Smart Breast Clips for Personalized Breast Cancer Treatment</td>
<td>Supported by Jill &amp; John Coyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marjan Rafat, SB, SM, PhD</td>
<td>Vanderbilt University</td>
<td>Novel mammary organoids to examine radiation-induced recurrence in TNBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Spring, MD</td>
<td>Massachusetts General Hospital</td>
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**BREAST SURGERY FELLOWSHIPS**

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Fellowship Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angeleke Saridakis, MD</td>
<td>Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center</td>
<td>Rodkin Family Breast Surgery Fellowship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Abghari, MD</td>
<td>Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas O'Sullivan, PhD</td>
<td>University of Notre Dame</td>
<td>Smart Breast Clips for Personalized Breast Cancer Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Ponto Shubeck, MD</td>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td>Mitchell Family Breast Surgery Fellowship</td>
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**EDUCATION AND OUTREACH GRANTS**

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>College Name</th>
<th>Supporter</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Cancer Support Team</td>
<td>Hartford Hospital</td>
<td>Hospital of Central Connecticut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danbury Hospital/New Milford Hospital</td>
<td>Hospital of Central Connecticut</td>
<td>Middlesex Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gilda’s Club Westchester</td>
<td>Greenwich Hospital</td>
<td>Norma F. Pfriem Breast Cancer Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Griffin Hospital</td>
<td>Griffin Hospital</td>
<td>Norwalk Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Door Family Medical Center</td>
<td>Stamford Health</td>
<td>White Plains Hospital</td>
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SAVE THESE DATES

To register for all BCA events go to: breastcanceralliance.org/events

Celebrity Poker Tournament
Thursday, April 2, 6pm
GlenArbor Golf Club, Bedford Hills, NY

BCA will host its inaugural Poker Night at GlenArbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY. This fun evening will begin with cocktails and appetizers followed by a private poker tournament. There will be outstanding prizes for the top 5 winners. Come face off at the poker table and effect meaningful change in the breast cancer landscape by raising impactful funding to further BCA’s mission.

Kids for a Cause Carnival Day
Sunday, March 1, 3pm
Round Hill Club, Greenwich, CT

Kids for a Cause is an afternoon of family fun to raise funds for Breast Cancer Alliance. We anticipate a crowd of over 300 attendees with children up to age 10. The highlight of this 2-hour event is a runway show with models between the ages of 3 and 10 who are generously styled by Hoaglands of Greenwich. In addition to the fashion show the event will feature an enhanced indoor kids’ carnival and other fun, hands-on activities for all of the children to enjoy: magic, arts and crafts, arcade games, balloon animals, face painting and more!

Walk-ins are welcome, but RSVPS are preferred as tickets are selling fast!

Hot Topics in Breast Cancer

Hot Topics in Breast Cancer: Medical Symposium
Monday, April 20, 11:30am
The Mayflower Hotel, Washington, DC

Breast Cancer Alliance will hold its third annual Hot Topics in Breast Cancer symposium in Washington, DC with this year’s panel discussing recent advances in, and suggestions for, prevention, educating our attendees so they can take action against breast cancer for themselves, family and friends. A portion of the proceeds from the day will be given to the Ourisman Breast Center to help allay the financial burden of breast health care screening, and other related costs, for underserved women in the DC area.

• Judy Woodruff, PBS Newshour, Moderator
• Dr. Ana Barac, MedStar Georgetown
• Dr. Elizabeth Nichols, University of Maryland
• Dr. Kim Robien, The George Washington University
• Dr. Angela Pennisi, Inova Schar Cancer Institute
To register for all BCA events go to:
breastcanceralliance.org/events

SAVE THESE DATES

Teen Fashion Show
April 24, 6pm
Richards, 359 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich
Now in its 16th year, the Junior Fashion Show is a great opportunity for local teens representing different high schools in Connecticut and Westchester to wrap up a year of involvement by taking to the runway to raise money for BCA grants. Carnegie Prep Private Tutoring & Classes will be sponsoring the annual show, hosted and styled by Richards.

Windows of the World Wine Course and Dinner with Kevin Zraly
Friday, May 1, 6pm
Burning Tree Country Club, Greenwich, CT
Learn from the best as Kevin Zraly, Wine Director of Windows on the World from 1976–2001, Director of the Sherry-Lehmann/Kevin Zraly Master Classes and of the Kevin Zraly Wine School, teaches a master class, presented by Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits and Horseneck Wine & Spirits. Cocktails, dinner and a live auction will round out the evening as we kick off BCA’s 25th year.

5K Run/Walk for Hope
Sunday, May 17
Greenwich, CT and Where You Live!
The Breast Cancer Alliance Annual 5K Run/Walk for Hope is dedicated to honoring and remembering loved ones who have battled this disease. Exercise, mental and physical wellness are critical components for both the prevention of and recovery from disease. This run/walk is a perfect blend of fundraising for a cause and engaging in a fitness event as a community. Join Platinum Sponsor Omnicom and hundreds of participants, from grandparents to children, individuals to teams, come out to support this effort.

If you don’t live near Greenwich, you can still participate where you live! Email info@breastcanceralliance.org for details.

Annual Golf Outings — Choose your coast!
Tuesday, June 2, 11am
Purchase Golf Club, Purchase, NY
Monday, June 22, 11am
Wilshire Country Club, Los Angeles, CA

25th Annual Benefit Luncheon and Fashion Show
Monday, October 19, 2020, 11am
Hyatt Regency Greenwich
Fashion Show presented by Richards
Exciting details to follow...
I was first diagnosed with a DCIS (Ductal Carcinoma in Situ, called ‘Stage Zero Cancer’ by my radiologist) in 2008. I was living in South Africa where I had access to great doctors. My breast cancer specialist there was very aggressive and encouraged me to have a double mastectomy which seemed extreme to both me and my friend who was working at Memorial Sloan Kettering at the time. After a lot of soul-searching, I decided instead to have a lumpectomy and committed myself to regular follow-up. I had ten years of clear mammograms and ultrasounds.

In March 2018, after moving to Boulder, Colorado and a year after my last clear mammogram, I began feeling really crummy. I was having digestive issues and modified my diet, thinking I had developed a gluten intolerance or something.

Then one morning over tea with my husband before he left for an overseas trip, he said that he thought I looked sort of yellow. I booked an appointment with my family practitioner.

Three days later, after a blood test and abdominal CT scan, Dr. Berger called while I was having lunch and told me there were masses in my liver. He said it looked like metastatic cancer although it was premature to say what kind. If I were lucky, it would be metastatic breast cancer (MBC) which offered treatment options that liver cancer didn’t.

I texted my husband, Charles, who was asleep in a hotel room nine time zones away and called my kids and my dad. The next few days were a hellish blur of more scans, Charles traveling back to be with me, and me getting sicker and sicker.

Within two weeks, I was in “visceral crisis” (organ failure of my liver) from MBC and was admitted to the hospital. For ten days, doctors worked to determine the extent of my illness, placed a stent to try and drain my liver and body of toxic bile, and started me on chemotherapy that would attack the cancer without further damaging my liver. It was hell but it worked.

Two months later, the chemo had stopped being effective, but it had cleared my liver enough that I could start taking drugs that were designed to target my estrogen-receptive tumors. Four months after that I was declared “NEAD” — no evidence of active disease — and I had a fabulous, joyful period of hope. And the roller coaster ride had begun.

Within a few months my cancer stopped responding to the hormonal treatment, and I’m now on a broader-spectrum oral chemotherapy that has helped my cancer recede once again, though it’s stubbornly persistent in my bones, from my scalp down to my shins.

After a year with my first oncologist, I switched doctors. I know this is a decision that other women may contemplate. It wasn’t an easy choice but for me it was a good one. I’ve found someone who’s more optimistic about my treatment options and that’s been hugely helpful psychologically.

Despite the extent of my cancer, most of the time I haven’t felt “sick.” There’s been nausea with the recent medication, but for the most part I haven’t looked or felt like I have an illness. I haven’t lost my hair. The nausea has helped me get down to a normal weight (I appreciate the good, no matter where it comes from.) It’s nice to look healthy, as it means I don’t have to explain my situation to people. I like going through my life and my errands without attracting unwanted attention or concern.

The biggest effects of my cancer wouldn’t be obvious to anyone else. They show up in my feelings, like my love toward my husband, Charles; my children, Max and Sarah; my dad and friends. (My dear mom died of lung cancer in 2016). I’m more devoted to them than ever.

One reason I’m such a passionate supporter of BCA is its priority on supporting new research. One of those discoveries might just be what saves, or at least extends, my life, which I love so dearly.
I have battled physically when the cancer returned and before I went on this latest version of chemo, and that makes life hard. (Pain is just a distracting, consuming kind of challenge that even my optimism can’t affect. I’ve found some relief for the pain through acupuncture. I really hate the side effects of pain medication.) I dropped my personal family coaching business while in the hospital last year, knowing there was no way I could be there for others in the shape I was in so I lost a sense of meaning and joy that had meant so much to me.

I’m really grateful for the training I got while becoming a positive psychology coach because it helped me develop daily practices that have helped me enormously, such as keeping a gratitude journal and making sure that every day I focus on what really matters: my relationships, primarily.

I also followed the advice of one of my favorite psychology writers and chose to look at my circumstances from the point of view of the creator rather than the victim. If anything can make you feel like a victim, it’s out-of-the-blue Stage 4 cancer. On January 1, 2019, I started a Facebook blog called “Creating Every Day,” and every single day I did something that grew from me, whether it was a blog post, knitting project, new recipe or just a photo of something I loved. It’s been a great experience and I even wound up inspiring a few other people besides myself.

Just the other day, I decided to start coaching again. I’m designing a little tiny coaching program to help other people struggling with challenges of any kind, by helping them lean into their inner strengths. My strengths of creativity, optimism and gratitude have been immensely helpful in getting me through this journey and I’d love to be able to pass on that kind of self-sufficiency to anyone else who needs it.

I believe that we’re here to grow our souls no matter what happens to our bodies. Cancer is one thing that’s been given to me to grow through. Helping others is one way I’m leveraging this circumstance in the service of something bigger than myself — a kind of legacy I’d love to leave in addition to just loving the heck out of my family and friends for as long as I can.

One reason I’m such a passionate supporter of BCA is its priority on supporting new research. One of those discoveries might just be what saves, or at least extends, my life, which I love so dearly.

The biggest effects of my cancer wouldn’t be obvious to anyone else. They show up in my feelings, like my love toward my husband, Charles; my children, Max and Sarah; my dad and friends.
RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT:
DR. ADRIAN LEE,
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MEDICAL CENTER,
2019 BCA EXCEPTIONAL PROJECT GRANT RECIPIENT

Brain metastases (BrM) occur in 10-15% of patients with metastatic breast cancer and present a major clinical challenge, highlighted by a relatively short survival. Limited therapy options exist for patients with BrM and current management consists of surgical resection, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. HER2-positive BrM have demonstrated promising responses to anti-HER2-targeted therapies in recent clinical trials, but more studies are needed. Unfortunately, in patients with HER2-negative BrM, no targeted therapies have shown even modest benefits. Clearly, there is an urgent need to better understand the mechanisms of breast cancer metastasis to the brain and to define novel therapeutic targets.

We have recently characterized 21 sets of patient-matched pairs of primary breast cancer and subsequent BrM. Through this analysis we identified a receptor, RET, as increased in BrM, and for which there are inhibitors in clinical trials or clinical use. The protein that activates RET is expressed at high levels in the brain and has a critical role in brain development and normal function. We hypothesize that the high levels of RET allow breast cancer cells to colonize and grow in the brain. In our Breast Cancer Alliance proposal we are testing whether RET is critical for breast cancer growth in a cell culture model of the brain microenvironment, and developing data that will further the testing in animal models and humans.

Therapeutic targeting of novel pathways in breast cancer brain metastases

Clearly, there is an urgent need to better understand the mechanisms of breast cancer metastasis to the brain and to define novel therapeutic targets.

Professor, Department of Pharmacology and Chemical Biology
Director, Women's Cancer Research Center, University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute
Pittsburgh Foundation Chair in Precision Medicine

BCA’S LEADERSHIP CIRCLES

DIAMOND LEADERSHIP CIRCLE
Deborah G. Black (1952-2017)
Pamela and Robert Burton, Sr.
Joanne and Michael Masin
Lisa and Mark Walsh

PLATINUM LEADERSHIP CIRCLE
Lucy and Nat Day

GOLD LEADERSHIP CIRCLE
Jane and Alan Batkin
Cynthia G. Biondi
Courtney and Christopher Combe
Carol and George Crapple
Lile and John Gibbons
Ilda and Robert Goergen

Susan and Stephen Mandel
The Mitchell Family
Mary and Garrett Moran
Gloria and Dan O’Connell
Barbara and Gary Rockin
Peggy Van Munching
PEER MENTORING QUESTIONNAIRE

1 Would you be interested in volunteering to provide peer mentorship to a breast cancer patient, patient’s spouse or caregiver?

- Yes
- No

If yes, your preferred method of contact (check all that apply):

- E-mail
- Phone
- Text
- Skype or Facetime-like video connection
- In-person support group
- Other __________________________________________

2 If you are a current patient, spouse or caregiver, would you be interested in receiving peer mentorship from a volunteer?

- Yes
- No

If yes, your preferred method of contact (check all that apply):

- E-mail
- Phone
- Text
- Skype or Facetime-like video connection
- In-person support group
- Other __________________________________________

3 Please check any of the following areas of support that interest you, whether it be as a volunteer or as someone receiving help:

- Surgical: mastectomy, lumpectomy, reconstruction, going “flat”, etc.
- Treatment: chemotherapy, radiation, lymphedema, holistic, etc.
- Fertility: Hysterectomy, oophorectomy, chemo-related issues, etc.
- Spousal/caregiver support
- Male breast cancer
- BRCA 1/2 positive
- Living with Stage 4 breast cancer
- Recurrent disease
- Diagnosis under age 40
- Talking to kids about diagnosis
- Other __________________________________________

4 If you are interested in volunteering, please provide contact information and anything you are willing to share about your experience so we can gauge interest.

Name: __________________________________________

Preferred Contact Information: __________________________

______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________

BREAST CANCER ALLIANCE

PEER MENTORING:

Breast Cancer Alliance is fortunate to have a supportive community of women and men who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and want to be able to support those newly diagnosed, and loved ones and caregivers of those patients.

In an effort to build this into a more formalized program, we have created the following questionnaire to gauge interest in both receiving and offering mentorship. Some of those participating in the mentoring side are licensed social workers so small group settings based on similar circumstance are a possible offering as well.

Please mail, fax or email your responses back to the
Breast Cancer Alliance
Greenwich office
48 Maple Avenue
Greenwich, CT, 06830
Fax: 203.861.1940
Email: info@breastcanceralliance.org
GRANT RECIPIENTS TO DATE*
Albert Einstein College of Medicine • American Cancer Society • American Health Foundation
Ann’s Place • Beth Israel Deaconess • Beth Israel/St. Luke’s Roosevelt • Boston Children’s Hospital
Boston Medical Center • Breast Cancer Research Foundation • Brigham and Women’s Hospital
Cancer Support Team • Canercare Connect Center For Hope in Darien • Case Western Reserve University
City of Hope • Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory • Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center • Columbia University
Corporate Angel Network • Dana Farber Cancer Institute • Drexel University College of Medicine
Fox Chase Cancer Center • Georgetown Medical Center • Gilda’s Club • Greenwich Hospital
Griffin Hospital • Hartford Hospital • Harvard Medical School • Harvard School of Public Health
Hospital of Central Connecticut • Hospital of St. Raphael • Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai
Johns Hopkins Oncology • Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson • Lombardi Cancer Center at Georgetown University
Maimonides Cancer Center • Massachusetts General Hospital • Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MD Anderson Cancer Center • Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center • Middlesex Hospital
Mount Sinai Beth Israel • Mount Sinai School of Medicine • New York University Medical Center
Norma F. Pfriem Breast Center • Northern Westchester Hospital • Norwalk Hospital • Ohio State University • Open Door
Family Medical Center • Penn State College of Medicine • Penn State University • University of Pittsburgh
Princeton University • Queens College • Robert Wood Johnson• Rockefeller University • Rutgers Cancer
Institute of New Jersey • Sacred Heart University • St. Vincent’s Medical Center • Stamford Hospital
State University of New York At Albany • Strang Cancer Prevention Center • The Witness Project
Thomas Jefferson University • Tufts University • UNC/Linberger Comprehensive Cancer Center
University of California, San Francisco • University of Connecticut Health Center • University of Hartford
University of Illinois • University of Massachusetts • University of North Carolina • University of Notre Dame
University of Pennsylvania • University of Vermont • University of Washington, Seattle • Vanderbilt University
Weill Cornell • White Plains Hospital • Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research • Wistar Institute
Yale Cancer Center • YMCA, Greenwich • YMCA, White Plains

*Most grantees have been funded multiple times.