Outlook

BCA Executive Director, Yonni Wattenmaker

I must admit that sitting down to write this letter to YOU is always challenging. How can I encapsulate the hundreds of poignant and powerful moments I have witnessed over the course of a year in a single letter?

I suppose the best way to sum up these last 12 months is to do so with the theme of this year’s Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show: IMAGINE, SUPPORT, CURE...IT ALL BEGINS WITH YOU.

YOU are what makes each day at Breast Cancer Alliance possible. On the pages of this issue, YOU will not only see why there is still such a need to do this work, but the significant impact WE have made thus far.

Some of YOU sit on our Board of Directors, our Advisory Council or our Medical Advisory Board. YOU are my frequent partners and sounding boards, community partners and sages to whom I can turn for advice.

Some of YOU roll up your sleeves and help to plan the numerous and ever-evolving events we run in Greenwich, Florida, DC, Seattle and Los Angeles. It may be a 5K run or golf outing, a fashion show, a symposium or a lecture, or our annual luncheon. YOU help us plan and execute our events to raise critical funds and strategize solutions. YOU donate and support our work, place your trust in us that we are using your donations wisely to fund fellowships, research, education and outreach. This list goes on and on as do the names of the hundreds of volunteers. It is truly amazing.

Some of YOU serve on one of our grant making committees: Education and Outreach, Fellowships or Research.

Together we visit the institutions BCA funds, see the power of our investment firsthand, and diligently and thoughtfully work with our External Scientific Review Committee to decide where our donations are most highly impactful and deserving for the coming year.

No matter what the role, YOU are helping Breast Cancer Alliance change and save lives.

Please join me for our Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show on Monday, October 21 from 11am until 2pm. As always, we will not only celebrate our past achievements but strive for new heights in the coming year. Our co-chairs, Dr. Amy Kappelman Johnson, Nina Lindia and Lauren Schweibold, along with our keynote speaker, celebrity Chef Todd English (about whom YOU can read more on page 10) look forward to welcoming YOU and to spending an inspirational day with YOU! Tickets, donations, sponsorships, and (soon) bidding on our silent auction, can be purchased at breastcanceralliance.org/events. We hope YOU will be a part of it all.

Until then,

Yonni Wattenmaker
**MEET THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF BCA’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

**Hillary Corbin**

Having spent her childhood hopscotching between states, Hillary Corbin’s roots are in Lexington, Kentucky. She made her way to Greenwich by way of Washington, DC where she and her husband lived and were married and has now been a Greenwich resident for nearly 14 years. She is mother to three girls and is the principal of HL Corbin, LLC a boutique firm she founded to guide homeowners through renovations and construction projects as their owner’s representative and project manager.

Prior to construction management, she was a producer for ABC News in Washington, DC and subsequently worked at The Washington Speakers Bureau managing keynote speaking opportunities for notable voices within the worlds of news, business and pop culture. She serves as the current President of the Board of the Field Club of Greenwich, was a two-term member of the Alumni Executive Committee at Westminster School in Simsbury, CT (her high school alma mater) and co-chaired the Breast Cancer Alliance Annual Luncheon in 2017.

Hillary was diagnosed with breast cancer in November 2014 and has since championed fundraising for both BCA and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center where she was treated. Most recently, she teamed up with Nina Lindia, a fellow breast cancer survivor and advocate, in securing a $45,000 grant for BCA from the local charitable giving consortium, Pitch Your Peers. That grant — coupled with an additional generous donation from BCA leadership — is supporting a new Breast Surgery Fellow at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center this year.

**Dr. David Gruen**

is a fellowship-trained radiologist with expertise in breast and body imaging, and is a nationally regarded specialist in breast imaging. Dr. Gruen currently serves as the director of women’s imaging and co-director of his system’s breast care program. He is an expert on all aspects of breast imaging, including 3D mammography, screening and diagnostic ultrasound, breast MRI, high-risk assessment and evaluation, management of complex cases and minimally invasive breast biopsy.

He is a key opinion leader and frequent lecturer on screening for disease and on all aspects of breast cancer detection and women’s health, both locally and nationally, and on social media. He serves on several state and national committees focusing on healthcare policy and economics, patient centered care, breast health and access to breast cancer screening.

Dr. Gruen received both his undergraduate and Medical Degree from Cornell University, completed his residency training at The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, and his post-doctoral fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. He received his Masters of Business Administration from the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts, with a focus on health care management and administration.

A fellow of the American College of Radiology, with a Masters of Business Administration, he is a member of the American College of Radiology Commission on Patient Centered Care, and serves as a national inspector for the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). He is also a mammography and stereotactic biopsy program reviewer for the American College of Radiology, and served previously on the boards of Komen Connecticut and Temple B’Nai Chaim.
Fall 2019

BCA’s New Board Members Continued:

Jordan Rhodes was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas but has lived in Greenwich, Connecticut for almost 13 years. A wife and mother of three young children, Jordan is very active in the community. She has served on the Board of Directors of the YWCA Greenwich and the Development Committee at the Bruce Museum. She has also co-chaired major fundraising events for many organizations including the YWCA, the Waterside School, the Boys and Girls Club, the Greenwich Historical Society, the Junior League, the Putnam Indian Field School and best of all, the Breast Cancer Alliance luncheon in 2017. She has also worked on numerous other events and committees for organizations including the Bruce Museum, the Red Cross, the United Way, the Greenwich Land Trust, the Greenwich International Film Festival and the Greenwich Preservation Trust, and is active at Greenwich Country Day School and Stanwich Church.

In addition, Jordan enjoys a career as a travel journalist for various media outlets as well as her own e-commerce site glimpsseguides.com which is a collection of luxury city guides and forthcoming travel goods for families. In 2018 she founded Give a Glimpse, a foundation which donates all profits from the e-commerce sales to scholarship students in need of travel funds for internships, volunteer opportunities and studies abroad. Having grown up the daughter of a breast cancer surgeon as well as being close to many loved ones affected by the disease, this is a cause very dear to Jordan’s heart and she is honored to serve on the Board of the Breast Cancer Alliance.

Newest Member of BCA Medical Advisory Board:

Dr. Linda LaTrenta graduated with honors from Harvard/Radcliffe with a B.A. in Biochemistry. After attending Cornell University Medical College, she did an internship at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston MA, and finished her residency in Internal Medicine at New York Presbyterian Hospital. She became a board-certified Internist, but decided that her true calling was Radiology. After working as an Emergency Room Physician at New York Presbyterian for one year as a transition, she completed a Radiology Residency and became board-certified in Radiology in 1997. Following a one year breast/body fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, she stayed on as an Attending in the Breast Imaging division at MSKCC for five years.

After moving to Greenwich with her family in 2003, Dr. LaTrenta joined the Radiology Department at Greenwich Hospital where she practices general Radiology and is the Director of Breast Imaging at the Greenwich Hospital Breast Center.

Did You Know?

Breast Cancer Alliance has funded 197 Education and Outreach grants, 119 Exceptional Project research grants, 55 Young Investigator research grants to date.

Breast Cancer Alliance is the Recipient of the Tufts 125th Society recognition for its research grant support.

Breast Cancer Alliance was honored at Massachusetts General Hospital’s The 100 Gala
About 1 in 8 U.S. women will develop breast cancer over the course of her lifetime.

A woman's risk of breast cancer nearly doubles if she has a first-degree relative who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. Less than 15% of women who get breast cancer have a family member diagnosed with it.

A man's lifetime risk of breast cancer is about 1 in 883.

As of January 2019, there are more 3.1 million women with a history of breast cancer in the U.S.

In 2019, an estimated 268,600 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in women in the U.S., along with 62,930 new cases of non-invasive (in situ) breast cancer. 2,670 of those invasive cancers will be in men.

In women under 45, breast cancer is more common in African-American women than white women. For Asian, Hispanic, and Native-American women, the risk of developing and dying from breast cancer is lower.

About 85% of breast cancers occur in women who have no family history of breast cancer.

Eat sensibly and exercise regularly

Decreases in death rates have been seen since 1989 and are thought to be the result of treatment advances, earlier detection through screening, and increased awareness.

Besides skin cancer, breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among American women. In 2019, it's estimated that about 30% of newly diagnosed cancers in women will be breast cancers.

About 5-10% of breast cancers can be linked to gene mutations inherited from one's mother or father. Mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes are the most common. On average, women with a BRCA1 mutation have up to a 72% lifetime risk of developing breast cancer. For women with a BRCA2 mutation, the risk is 69%. Breast cancer that is positive for the BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations tends to develop more often in younger women. An increased ovarian cancer risk is also associated with these genetic mutations. In men, BRCA2 mutations are associated with a lifetime breast cancer risk of about 6.8%; BRCA1 mutations are a less frequent cause of breast cancer in men.

BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE! Perform regular breast self-exams. • Learn about your breast density: Annual breast imaging is generally recommended for women over forty, adding ultrasound or MRI if breasts are dense. Speak to your physician about what is right for you. • Genetic counseling and testing is more available than ever, and some experts are advocating testing for all. • A healthy BMI and exercise are very important, particularly post menopause, as are not smoking and keeping alcohol consumption in moderation.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR when to begin screening and with what frequency
“Without the generosity and support from the Breast Cancer Alliance, The Breast Center Grant Program would not be able to provide these services (no-cost mammograms) to women who desperately need them.”  
Stamford Hospital

“So honored, thankful and excited to be a recipient of an Exceptional Project Grant and the Deborah G. Black Memorial Award from BCA as we continue our efforts to target TNBC using precision medicine approaches.”  
Alex Toker, PhD, Harvard

“I have had the privilege to serve on the Scientific Review Board for Breast Cancer Alliance for the past 8 years. In reviewing proposals to the Breast Cancer Alliance, I have been witness to some of the most creative and transformative new ideas in basic and translational breast cancer research. Many of these ideas are so new that, like the experiences I describe above, the researchers do not have sufficient data to compete for larger grants from the National Cancer Institute, Komen Foundation, or American Cancer Society. The support of Breast Cancer Alliance is absolutely crucial to get this work off the ground. I have also been very impressed with the close involvement and advocacy of the BCA leadership and Board of Directors in support of my work. It is so wonderful that they take the time to visit Yale to discuss my research progress with me and offer their own very informed feedback, questions, and most importantly, their tireless advocacy and encouragement. The Breast Cancer Alliance is a vital catalyst, enabling some of the world’s greatest scientists to take creative new approaches to understand the basic biology of breast cancer and to translate these findings into new treatments.”  
Anthony Koleske, PhD, Yale

“Breast Cancer Alliance is really providing the right type of funding, particularly the Exceptional Project award because it’s enough support that you can really launch something to the level of independent funding...I think BCA is doing it the right way. In our study we were at a point, for example, where we had identified some of the fusions, we had some preliminary data but didn’t yet know whether these were really breast cancer drivers, and it was the support from BCA that allowed us to expand this cohort, to do all the functional studies including a whole bunch of in vivo work, to really get to the point where we could say this needs to be a basket clinical trial, these are breast cancer drivers. This is why major breast centers in the country are now testing for these.”  
Leif Ellisen, PhD, Massachusetts General Hospital

Since 2006, BCA has funded 42 breast surgery fellowships. Of the 73 breast surgical fellowships in 2018, BCA funded 5!

“I was very fortunate to receive a Young Investigator Grant from the Breast Cancer Alliance three years ago. This was a critical time in my career as I was establishing my own lab and independent research program. BCA’s grant provided important seed funding that allowed my lab to explore why ER+ breast cancer becomes resistant to targeted therapies. With BCA’s support, we were able to use cutting-edge genomic technology to characterize tumor samples from patients who developed resistant breast cancer, with the goal of identifying their resistance mechanisms. Three years later, my lab continues to explore these findings and develop therapeutic strategies in resistant breast cancer, and I am thankful to the Breast Cancer Alliance for its support that enabled these discoveries.”  
Nikhil Wagle, PhD, Dana Farber Cancer Institute

“Breast Cancer Alliance has funded more than $27 million in grants to date.

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Nikhil Wagle, PhD, Dana Farber Cancer Institute

“I am thankful to the Breast Cancer Alliance for its foresight in supporting the work of my laboratory, which seeks to determine mechanisms of resistance to CDK4/6 inhibition in breast cancer. While CDK4/6 inhibitors have markedly improved progression-free survival for ER-positive breast cancer patients, cells eventually become resistant to this therapy. Using mouse models and other novel tools, we are seeking to understand why this cancer progresses, and how we can stop this from happening. I believe this to be cutting-edge science; because I am just starting out my laboratory, it is difficult to find foundations who are willing to support such new approaches to treating breast cancer. As such, I am incredibly grateful to the Breast Cancer Alliance for awarding me with a Young Investigator Grant, which has provided me with the seed funding that is necessary to propel my investigations forward.”  
Shom Goel, MD, PhD, Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia
INSIDE LOOK:
BREAST CANCER ALLIANCE RESEARCH GRANTS

By Donna Hagberg M.D., Karen Lowney Ph.D., J.D., and Lisa Matthews, BCA Past President, Research Grant Committee Co-Chairs

What type of research does Breast Cancer Alliance fund?

There are two types of BCA Research Grants: Exceptional Project Grants, and Young Investigator Grants. The unique goal of these grants is to encourage innovative, high-impact, early-stage research that is typically otherwise difficult to get support for, to bridge the gap between early research with preliminary results to launch the research to federal funding.

Exceptional Project Grants are one year grants of $100,000 that recognize creative, unique and innovative research from researchers at any stage of their career. Clinical doctors and research scientists whose primary focus is breast cancer are invited to apply.

Young Investigator Grants are two year grants of $125,000 (total) that are meant for research scientists at an early stage in their research career to help provide seed funding for the research required to apply for larger, longer term grants, and to help establish the recipient as an independent researcher. Clinical doctors and research scientists with a primary focus in breast cancer and who, following completion of their training, will not have held a faculty position for more than four years at the start date of the grant are invited to apply.

For the 2018 grant cycle, BCA first opened its grant applications to institutions across the US. Due to the unique niche of funding BCA provides, it wanted to welcome a greater number of applicants within that area of focus. That year we received 74 LOIs, of which 31 were invited to submit full Exceptional Project applications, and 22 Young Investigator applications. Those numbers increased in 2019, but due to a new limitation on number of applications permitted per institution, in the 2020 grant cycle, we have so far received 69 LOIs for Exceptional Project Grants, of which 31 were invited to submit full applications. The final count on Young Investigator applications was not available as this article went to print.

What is BCA’s selection process?

We have an External Review Committee, comprised of a large number of exceptional clinicians and research scientists with experience in the field of breast cancer research at many leading institutions throughout the country. This committee provides objective feedback regarding the applications and the review process follows an objective grading criteria, emphasizing impact and innovation.

Who comprises the External Review Committee?

These experts hail from universities and research centers across the country, some of which currently include Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine, City of Hope, Dana-Farber, Beth Israel-Deaconess, Indiana University, Massachusetts General Hospital, MD Anderson, Memorial Sloan Kettering, Mt. Sinai, NYU Langone, Princeton University, Texas A&M, University of North Carolina, University of Pennsylvania, Wayne State, Weill Cornell and Yale University.

What departments or disciplines within breast cancer do they represent?

Radiation Oncology, Cancer Biology, Pathology, Molecular and Cell Biology, Breast Surgery, Surgical Oncology, Internal Medicine, Department of Anatomy and Structural Biology, Population Science, Epidemiology, Stem Cell Biology and Cancer Biology, Biomedical Research, Genomics and Computational Biology, Therapeutic Radiology, and Exercise Science.

Is there a trend in new research applications?

In general terms, the most prevalent category among grant applicants in the past two years is breast tumor cell biology as it relates to possible treatment regimens. This covers a number of more specific areas, such as metastasis, tumor microenvironments, and resistance to cancer drugs. In more specific terms, the largest single cell biology category among recent applicants is the identification and targeting of genes or metabolic pathways involved with the development of breast tumors, tumor acquisition of resistance to traditional therapy, and the process of metastasis. In the treatment category, we typically receive a significant number of applications relating to immunotherapy in breast cancer.

We have also recently started receiving an increased number of applications in the area of radiological screening and imaging. Of particular interest are applications relating to deep learning or computer vision, i.e., training computers to recognize images or patterns in breast tumors that are not detectable by traditional visual inspection, so as to enhance screening and diagnoses. Applications relating to lifestyle factors, such as diet, nutrition, exercise and stress, which may have an effect on prevention of breast cancer or its recurrence, have also recently increased in number.

How many applications does BCA receive each year?

For the 2017 grant cycle, which restricted applications from institutions within a 200 mile radius from Greenwich, we received 33 Letters of Intent for Exceptional Project Grants, of which 19 were invited to submit a full Exceptional Project application, and 10 Young Investigator applications.
BCA FUNDED RESEARCH: SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Jose Silva, Columbia University and Mt. Sinai, Dissecting the fingerprint of inflammatory breast cancer

Our original research proposal funded by the BCA was focused on inflammatory breast cancer (IBC). IBC is the most lethal form of breast cancer (~2-5% of all breast cancers). Almost all women with primary IBC have lymph node involvement, and at diagnosis, approximately 25% of patients with IBC will already have distant metastases. The 5-year survival rate is only 40%, compared to the 85% survival rate among non-IBC patients. Despite its lethality, IBC remains poorly understood. Consequently, there are no current targeted therapies specific to IBC and systemic disease management relies exclusively on chemotherapy.

Remarkably, we found that survival of IBC cells depends on histone deacetylase 6 (HDAC6) function. Importantly, we demonstrated that the leading HDAC6 inhibitor (Ricolinostat), which is being tested in clinical trials for other tumor types, inhibits the growth of IBC cells in vitro and in vivo.

Thanks to the initial funding provided by the BCA we were able to obtain critical data that was used to successfully compete for additional grant support (over $2 million) and continue with the research.

Moving the research forward:

1) Our research has a translational component and thus, we assayed different combinatorial therapies with the HDAC6 inhibitor Ricolinostat. These studies demonstrated the synergistic effect between Ricolinostat and chemotherapy and especially its anticancer activity when combined with taxanes.

2) We uncovered that HDAC6 activity is strongly enhanced in IBCs. Furthermore, we developed an algorithm (HDAC6-algorithm) based on expression profiling to quantify HDAC6 activity and we demonstrated that the HDAC6 score is a predictive biomarker of the response of cancer cells to the HDAC6 inhibitor Ricolinostat. Importantly, by using this biomarker to investigate more than 3,000 breast cancer samples, we found that -15-25% of all breast cancer can be sensitive to HDAC6 inhibitors. Importantly, we confirmed this observation in experimental models, in vitro, and in vivo.

Based on this exciting data, we initiated an investigator-initiated phase-Ib clinical trial (NCT02632071). Although this is an early stage clinical trial which the main goal is to determine the maximum tolerated dose and evaluate the safety and tolerability of Ricolinostat with nab-paclitaxel, it also has a secondary goal to investigate the correlation of the HDAC6 score with patient response. Remarkably, we have already observed a positive clinical response in a group of patients with high HDAC6 score. This data will be presented in December this year at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium of the AACR.

Dr. Gerburg Wulf, Weill Cornell Medical Center and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Combination treatments that include PI3K-inhibitors for endocrine resistant breast cancer

I am a physician scientist dedicated to research that improves treatment and outcomes of patients with metastatic cancer. I believe that this goal can be achieved if one understands the mechanisms that drive an individual patient’s cancer and offers combinations of treatments tailored to eradicate the patient’s cancer. I have particular expertise in treating triple negative and metastatic breast cancer. Funding from the Breast Cancer Alliance allowed me to tackle a research question that emanated directly from my clinical work: Why do some patients with BRCA-related breast cancer respond to Parp-inhibitors, while others do not? How can we modify treatments so that more patients benefit and remissions last longer?

Together with my colleague Dr. Ursula Matulonis at Dana Farber Cancer Institute, we spearheaded the combination of a PI3K- and a Parp-inhibitor, first in the laboratory and then translated it into a clinical trial. The combination of a PI3K- and a Parp-inhibitor became the prototype for a whole suite of studies that followed, all of which evaluate concurrent inhibition of DNA damage repair mechanisms and mitogenic signaling.

(continues on page 8)
Two drugs, the Parp- and the PI3K-inhibitor were investigational new agents when the Breast Cancer Alliance funded us, and they are now FDA-approved agents to treat breast cancer. In addition to clinical trials development, we were able to discover the mechanisms that link the metabolism of sugar with defective DNA damage repair and cancer development.

In my ongoing research, I aim to develop further Parp-inhibitor combinations that extend the indication for Parp-inhibitors and improve their longterm outcomes.

A particular focus is the combination with immune checkpoint inhibitors which is currently ongoing in the laboratory and is the subject of an ongoing collaboration with the phase I group at Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

Dr. Richard Hynes, MIT, Development of diagnostic and prognostic approaches exploiting metastasis-specific ECM proteins

We have built on the earlier research supported by BCA in a number of ways.

We have expanded our proteomic analyses of breast cancer – both from mouse models and human tumor samples, including metastases. The work on metastases conducted by Jess Hebert, a graduate student who successfully defended his PhD thesis a couple of months ago and is moving on to do postdoctoral research, defined the extracellular matrix (ECM) niches of triple-negative breast cancer metastases to four different sites (lung, liver, brain and bone) and showed that each metastatic site showed increases in specific ECM proteins (as well as some that increased at all metastatic sites. We were also able to distinguish which of those proteins were made by the tumor cells themselves and which were induced in the cells of the tumor microenvironment (stroma).

Jess then tested a number of these elevated proteins to see if any conferred metastatic tropism. The most impressive data concerned metastases to the brain – an ECM-associated protein, SerpineB1, produced by the tumor cells is selectively increased in brain metastases and to a lesser extent in lung metastases and, when knocked down by CRISPR/Cas9, was shown to be necessary for brain metastases, less so for lung metastases and not at all for bone metastases.

The data from this work provides a rich harvest of information about other potential contributors to breast cancer metastasis and the paper is about to be submitted for publication (Hebert et al, Ms to be submitted). Jess has also shown that another intracellular scaffold protein, IQGAP-1, which we showed was upregulated in metastatic cells, significantly enhances metastasis of both breast and melanoma metastases at least in part by enhancing extravasation at the secondary site.

These projects are examples of a large body of work from our lab on diverse tumor types showing important roles of ECM proteins in various steps of tumor progression and metastasis. In order to exploit this large body of information, we have been making nanobodies (single-domain antibodies isolated from alpacas) to target the ECM of tumors and metastases and we have published papers showing that these nanobodies are powerful reagents for selectively imaging tumors and in particular early tumor lesions and metastases by PET/CT and are more sensitive and more tumor-selective than the standard FDG-PET imaging in standard clinical use (Jailkhani et al, 2019). We have chosen to focus on ECM antigens that are overrepresented in metastases of multiple different types of tumors and have shown that we can image and target both different tumor types (most notably breast and pancreas), and can detect early lesions and metastases as small as 2.5mm. While the imaging results are themselves of value and we are now collaborating with oncologists to assess whether they have clinical utility, they also serve as proof-of-principle for targeting other things to tumors. Since the ECM of tumors is accessible and stable and many of the ECM antigens on which we are focused are expressed in the ECM of diverse tumors, we can use the nanobodies to deliver other moieties such as high-Oenergy isotopes, drugs, toxins, immune modulators etc. As an early foray into such applications, we built a CAR-T cell using an ECM-targeting nanobody and showed in mouse models that it can inhibit tumor growth (Xie et al, 2019). This is the first demonstration that one can target immunotherapy to the tumor microenvironment rather than neoantigens on the tumor cells themselves and offers promise for improving immunotherapy of solid tumors that have lots of ECM but few neoantigens and have been rather resistant to standard immunotherapy. We are following up on these exciting results.

In summary, the work supported by the BCA award provided an invaluable basis for a much larger body of work on breast cancer but also extended beyond it and showing excellent promise for applications to human cancers and we are very grateful for the support.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR ANNUAL DINNER

Breast Cancer Alliance held its Annual Dinner at The Field Club on Wednesday, April 3. The evening, which included members of the Board of Directors, Medical Advisory Board and Advisory Council, was an opportunity to reflect on the success of the last year and present opportunities and goals for the next. New Board and Medical Advisory Members were officially welcomed and outgoing Board Members Susan Bevan, Mary Quick and Nancy Smith were honored. Dr. Leif Ellisen, research grant recipient from Massachusetts General Hospital, shared important updates on this BCA-funded research along with new advances in the field of breast cancer.
One of the most decorated, respected, and charismatic chefs in the world, Todd English has enjoyed a staggering number of accolades during his remarkable career. He has been recognized by several of the food industry’s most prestigious publications, established one of the best-known restaurant brands in the nation, published critically acclaimed cookbooks, and produced his own TV show for PBS. He will share his connection to breast cancer with us in October.

In 1991, English caught the culinary world’s eye when the James Beard Foundation named him their National Rising Star Chef and subsequently named him Best Chef in the Northeast in 1994. Nation’s Restaurant News named English one of their Top 50 Tastemakers in 1999. In 2001, English was awarded Bon Appetit’s Restaurateur of the Year award and was named one of People Magazine’s 50 Most Beautiful People. Todd also has been named to the James Beard Foundation’s Who’s Who in Food and Beverage in America.

English has created an astonishing list of successful restaurant concepts. Following the success of Olives, English created Figs, for which English was awarded the “Hot Concept” award from Nation’s Restaurant News. Todd English Enterprises also includes Tuscany at Mohegan Sun, blueZoo at the Walt Disney World Resort’s Dolphin Hotel; Todd English P.U.B. at the Westin Hotel Birmingham, AL; and MXDC his first Mexican themed restaurant in Washington, DC. Summer 2010 brought the opening of the highly anticipated, European-inspired Todd English Food Hall located at the iconic Plaza Hotel, followed by a second Todd English Food Hall in Manila.

English is also a celebrated host and chef for high-profile entertainment and charity events, now adding Breast Cancer Alliance to that esteemed list! A dedicated philanthropist, Todd is very involved with several local and national charities, and founded The Wendy English Breast Cancer Research Foundation in honor of his sister.

There is much more about Todd to come... join us on October 21!
2019 BCA Raffle Packages

ALL TWELVE PRIZES INCLUDE ONE DOONEY & BOURKE SIGNATURE BCA LEATHER TOTE

STAYCATION! $1465 VALUE
Enjoy a little local getaway with some of your closest friends or family. This package includes 2 rooms, each for a one-night stay for two, at Greenwich's own JHouse. After lounging by the pool with your picnic lunch from Ada's Coffee, take a friend for a manicure or use part of your 5-class pack for a workout at Belly & Body. Head back to Tony’s at the JHouse for a delicious Italian dinner for 4.

AROUND THE TOWN $1481 VALUE
Sip and cycle your way through Greenwich, beginning with your 5-class pack to SoulCycle, toting along your gem water bottle. Refresh after your classes with a quick bite at The Granola Bar using your $40 gift certificate, then get your haircut with Jennifer at Warren Tricomi, and one of 5 manicures at Coco Nails. For another day of glamour and dining, stop at Jaafar Tazi for color, highlights and Kerastase treatment with Almedina and a haircut and style with Violet before enjoying lunch for 2 with your $50 gift certificate to Elm Street Oyster House. Afterwards head home for your 1-hour wardrobe consultation with Maria Turkel.

FOX-Y LADY $1408 VALUE
Start your morning with a spa mani and pedi at Dream Spa so you'll be prepped and ready to sparkle when you redeem your $750 gift certificate at Steven Fox Jewelry. JLo Salon’s face frame balayage with gloss, moisture treatment and blow dry by Evelyn will leave you feeling perfectly primped for your romantic dinner for 2 at Saltaire courtesy of your $500 gift certificate. Finish the night at Moderne Barn or Sushi Soba with your $50 gift certificate, and enjoy it served up on your pretty Julia Knight tray and napkins from Splurge.

GLAMOROUS GAL $1528 VALUE
Start your morning with one of your 1-month unlimited yoga classes at Kaia Yoga. Afterwards, enjoy a facial and clean beauty products from Sherwood Green Life and a light lunch at Pasta Vera with a friend using your $45 gift card. Head home and slip into something more comfortable courtesy of your $100 ThirdLove gift card. Rejuvenate with your products from Lancome, which you can arrange on your beautiful new sterling silver and mahogany wood mirrored vanity tray from Michaelangelo.

PRIMP AND PARTY $1492 VALUE
Be the hostess with the mostest when you throw a fabulous affair using your $100 gift certificate to Garden Catering, $35 gift certificate to Villa Nuova, $100 gift card and gourmet gift basket from Citarella, and 8" special occasion cake from Black Forest Pastry Shop. You’ll be pampered and ready after your hydrafacial, manicure and pedicure at Williams & Co. Salon and highlights with Maria and haircut with Dominick at Maria Livesay. Serve the treats on your lovely lacquer tray from Housewarmings and light your FLIKR personal fireplace to set the perfect mood.

WEEK-NIGHT GETAWAY $1626 VALUE
Get away on an overnight for 2 at beautiful Winnvam Farm. Before you go, suit up in something stylish courtesy of your $50 in gift cards to Sport Tech as you enjoy 1 of 5 classes at Core Pilates Westport. Your man will be stylish as well when he uses the $125 gift certificate to J. Hilburn. You’ll both be in perfect getaway condition!

DINERS CLUB $1427 VALUE
Start the morning right with a dozen bagels a month all year from Upper Crust Bagel Co. Dining will be delightful wherever you are with a variety of fabulous restaurants to choose from. Enjoy lunch for two with a $60 gift card at Morgan’s Fish House in Rye, $100 at bartaco in Port Chester or your $100 gift card to Fortina. While in Greenwich, dine with a $150 gift card to Boxcar Cantina, a $50 gift card to The Ginger Man, a $400 gift certificate to To Eastend, or dinner for 2 along the water with your $175 gift certificate to L’escale.

RHODE ISLAND RETREAT $1479 VALUE
Visit the Cliff Walks in style! Start with 5 classes at CST50 and then head to the Ritz-Carlton Westchester for a 90-minute relaxation massage, one of three pedicures from New Hill Top Nails, and relax with one of your two sessions at Salt Cave of Darien. Spring for a little something at B. Chic with your $50 gift card to go with your pink tank, Lokai bracelet and tote bag, and give your man a cool Lazyjack Press tie to match. Now that you are primped and looking your best, head to Gurney’s in Newport for a 1-night mid-week stay. Choose to frame your favorite photograph with $250 gift certificate from R. Van Loan. Finally, take in a movie with your $40 gift certificate to Regal Cinemas.

SAX AND THE CITY $1590.62 VALUE
You won’t be singing the blues on this day in NYC! Spend your morning at The Waxing Spot using one of 3 gift certificates for a brow and lip wax, head to STILE in Armonk with your $250 gift certificate to pick up a little something cute to wear, and then pop over to Hott Blowdry for a stunning finish. Plan for a couple of days in the city to enjoy some great dining with $200 to Carmine’s, $100 to Hillstone and $200 to Hill Country BBQ. You and three friends can end a night with a little jazz with your four VIP passes to Blue Note.

IN FINE FORM $1415 VALUE
Are you over 40 but want to feel 21? Beauty comes from within but a little help on the outside never hurts. Use your $500 gift card from Greenwich Medical Spa and round it off with 3 classes at Core Pilates. Greenwich to tighten and lift it all, wearing a cute new outfit from Athleta with your $100 gift certificate. Finish the pampering at home when you pick up dinner at Sushi Soba with your $50 gift certificate, and enjoy it served up on your pretty Julia Knight tray and napkins from Splurge.

STEPPING OUT $1478 VALUE
Dreaming of dancing with the stars? You will be the star with this package! Turn your two left feet into twinkle toes with an Arthur Murray dance class for you and 11 of your friends. Then fox trot your way to John Christopher Salon with your $120 gift certificate for a haircut and blowdry with Vera for some extra sparkle. Top it off with one of two mani/pedis from Posh Spa and save one of two blowouts and some products for a rainy day from Plush Blow Dry. Take one of 5 barre classes at Form Barre Fitness and swing by Back 40 Mercantile to spend your $50 gift card. Finish the night at Moderne Barn or Rafele, where you have $100 to spend at each. You’ll look cool carrying your navy anchor tote while you do.

GOLFER’S DELIGHT! $1998 VALUE
Grab three friends for 18 holes of golf at the Golf Club of Purchase. Your spectacular day includes greens fees and use of golf cart followed by lunch for four (caddy fees, alcohol and gratuities not included).

USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

Fall 2019
Imagine being the “first woman” in the world to have both BRCA1 and BRCA2 inherited genetic mutations? Twenty-one years ago, this extraordinary revelation drastically changed my life forever. I didn’t have cancer then, but I’d become a pioneer on a journey where I’d navigate uncharted territory. This provocation became a mission of perseverance and hope that would one day have greater significance and impact the world.

On a blistery cold day in January of 1998, I proceeded down the West Side Highway towards my grandmother’s house to bring her to visit my terminally ill older sister, Susan, for the last time. The anticipation of our poignant parting and goodbye created immense distress and I had little to no sleep the evenings prior.

I called my rabbi en route about making Shiva at my house in Bedford, New York immediately upon Susan’s demise. She had lost her battle with both breast and ovarian cancer just as my mother had in 1970, when I was a little girl. While on the phone, call waiting interrupted. It was my geneticist.

Earlier that prior year, The Human Genome Project (HGP) was an international scientific research project that isolated the bio-genetic mutations called BRCA1 and BRCA2. This made it possible for a newly available genetic test to identify whether you carry the inherited genetic mutation BRCA1 and/or BRCA2, responsible for the majority of hereditary breast and ovarian cancers. I insisted on getting tested.

My geneticist and I investigated our family tree and realized that my mother must have had the gene. She died of ovarian cancer at age 38. It was assumed my maternal grandfather carried this genetic marker because in the early 1900’s, his father’s brother had four daughters, who all died very young.

At that time, in order to be eligible to test, a first generation relative currently with breast or ovarian cancer had to test positive. Only then could I get tested. So, when I approached Susan about getting tested and the importance of knowing, she said, “What difference does it make, I’ve already got cancer.”

Naturally, my heart broke with her words. “But Susan, what about me and your two daughters? I have three children and our brother has three children, all whose lives are potentially at stake, please?” I begged. Eventually, she tested and was found positive for BRCA1.

The next obstacle I faced was genetic discrimination of the health insurance industry. If our health insurance company knew I tested positive for a genetic mutation, they had the legal right to terminate our family’s medical benefits and deny further coverage. Our identity became a coded number and we had to make sure any and all paperwork was void of our name(s), so that we couldn’t be traced.

I was on my way to see Susan when my geneticist asked me to come in to get my test results. Susan insisted I get the results and visit the next day. I exited the off ramp at 186th Street in a huff. I had the bizarre notion that there was no way that I too would be faced with the same cancer challenges as my mother and sister. How naive to think that three out of three would not get cancer. I had hoped luck was on my side.

I marched into my geneticists office and a young female psychiatrist came in. She introduced herself, saw my tears and without thinking said, “How does it feel to be the first and only woman in the world to be diagnosed with both BRCA1 and BRCA2?”

“What?” My eyes widened and mouth dropped; I was shocked, like I’d never been before. My geneticist looked at her with distain and said, “I hadn’t told Shari yet of her results. Those tears were about her sister dying.” She was asked to leave.

My results meant I had a 60-80% risk for breast and/or ovarian cancer, times two! Medical options left me intensely frightened. Once we concluded our meeting, I immediately turned my thoughts to Susan. Her impending death gave me the courage to face reality and be immediately proactive.

I dialed my sister and told her. “Well, my dear, I too have the gene.” I felt no need to tell her I had both. “That’s so unfair and really sucks. You make sure to take care of yourself,” she warned me.
Her words provoked a storm of intense feelings. I realized that her cancer had enabled me to choose my destiny, unlike she and my mother, who didn’t have the opportunity. What struck me most was the magnitude of what was ahead.

“You will face many defeats in life, but never let yourself be defeated.”
- Maya Angelou

I walked into my house and was greeted by two golden retrievers and my 3, 5, & 7 year old children with joy, hugs and kisses. I knew then, as a woman and mother, it was my obligation to encourage women to understand their genetic history and not let fear overtake their lives. Later that evening, I declared to my husband that once Susan died I would consult with the best surgeons and put a team together.

Two days later, Susan’s battle and suffering had come to an end. This journey had been relentless. I’d been given a cruel twist of fate which I felt with much trepidation and painful loneliness.

After several weeks of medical research, I was confident in my decision and new doctors assured me that prophylactic surgery would reduce my risk for either breast and/or ovarian cancer to 1%. I was fortunate to have a wonderful team of surgeons at Saint Lukes Roosevelt: Dr. Allison Estabrook, Breast Surgeon, Dr. Mark Sultan, Reconstructive Plastic Surgeon, and Dr. Maureen Killackey, Gynecological Oncologist. We set a surgery date for everything to be done at once several weeks later.

Everyone shared their fears about what I was doing, so I used humor to help with my decision, which alleviated the anxiety and panic within. I had never been defined by my tiny AA breast size, and surely offered no visual interest. Since I would never entertain the idea of breast augmentation, having a mastectomy gave me the opportunity to proportion out my figure. I knew that ovarian cancer was nearly impossible to detect early, so it was worth going into early menopause to remove my ovaries, cervix and uterus. The risk of no estrogen was the unknown that I’d have to deal with.

At the same time, I knew this challenge was a story with a much greater purpose. It had the power to move people to a new narrative. Women didn’t know that options like the one I selected existed. My mission was to use my story as a vehicle to bring about awareness to both the medical field and our society at large. Through media exposure, I would deliver one of the most meaningful accounts of what it’s like to be proactive; to take measures that could ultimately save one’s life from getting breast and/or ovarian cancer.

My story spellbound audiences after CBS aired the Sunday Evening News Special “Shari’s Story” on April 26, 1998. The timing was prudent. It was a week prior to the first NYC 5K Revlon Run/Walk for Women. The evening my story aired, I was back in the hospital preparing for the first of what was to be several corrective surgeries. Watching the story in a hospital bed felt odd and I cried when they aired photos of my deceased mother and sister. Early Monday morning, I got a call from a family member saying that Howard Stern was on air and made me the subject of his show — a controversy, which I didn’t appreciate at all. Later that week, when I put my eldest son on the school bus, he asked, “Mommy, are you going to die?” Each day thereafter, my perspective changed and resolved to be there for my children.

My mission was to use my story as a vehicle to bring about awareness to both the medical field and our society at large.

A week later, I went to the walk. It was surreal to see thousands of women walking with names of family members and friends who’d had breast cancer written on their backs. People recognized me from the news and thanked me for being an inspiration. This public platform undoubtedly provided much needed information to create the shift in mindset. Some said I was heroic, but I didn’t feel that way since I was mourning my sister and my body which had changed dramatically.

Three weeks after surgery, I was a guest speaker at a Breast Cancer Conference. I was bandaged and newly in radical post menopause but did not hesitate to attend. It was the largest international breast cancer conference held at New York - Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. Many thousands of doctors and scientists attended. It was very intimidating, but it was a chance to make an impact on the most trusted surgeons in the world.

I was introduced following a surgeon’s speech. On the screen was a terrifying image of a little girl in the arms of her dad with the headline, “Dad, when will I get cancer?” This image was imprinted in my memory from when I was much younger, and saw it on a cover of a magazine. I walked up to the podium, teary and shared the same story written here. I didn’t feel waiting to get cancer was a choice. I had no option. I wanted to live.

I received a standing ovation and about 30 world-renowned surgeons lined up to thank me for coming forward to speak; I even got hugs. Most said my story transformed their thinking, practice and relationship to patients going forward. The amazing thing for me was regardless of all I had been through, having the tenacity to convey awareness and choice superseded the minutiae of surgery and recovery. It became clear that I gave hope for the future and inspired change in people’s narrative.

Years later, Federal legislation passed a bill that protects individuals from genetic discrimination in health insurance and employment. That was the game changer. You can’t control what happens to you in life, but you can choose to be resilient, strong and persevere through difficulties that come our way. I feel so blessed that I had the opportunity to take a leap of faith and become the survivor I am today.
BCA EVENTS

KIDS FOR A CAUSE

Our most adorable event of the year just keeps getting bigger and better! BCA’s Kids for a Cause Carnival Day welcomed hundreds of excited, snazzily dressed littles ones and their families on a gorgeous spring afternoon for face painting, balloon animals, arcade games, arts & crafts, music, and the cutest children’s fashion show with models ages 3-10 outfitted by Hoagland’s. Mark your calendars now for March 1, 2020 from 3-5pm!

JUNIOR FASHION SHOW

High School teens rocked the runway in the hottest spring fashions at Richards to raise money for, and awareness about, BCA. Unlike other high school groups, this Junior Committee brought together students from Brunswick School, Fairfield Prep, Greenwich Academy, Greenwich High School, Hackley School, Harvey School, Iona Prep, Sacred Heart Greenwich & Stanwich School. These students always inspire and serve as great role models for the younger attendees. Save the weekend of April 24, 2020 to cheer them on!

GOLF OUTING

It was a picture-perfect day at the Golf Club of Purchase for our 7th annual golf outing. This year’s event was the most successful yet, raising over $150,000 for breast cancer research, and selling out with a record 100 golfers! We look forward to being back at Purchase on June 2, 2020 and in Los Angeles on February 3, 2020!

RUN/WALK FOR HOPE

With gratitude for our supporters, particularly Platinum Sponsor, Omnicom Group, our 5K Run/Walk for Hope on Sunday, May 19 hosted again by Richards, was fabulous! From babies in strollers to avid runners, 2 dj’s, a rockin’ warmup and more, it was a beautiful and festive morning as hundreds of neighbors and friends came together with hope of a better future for breast cancer. Thousands of dollars were raised through this community fitness event to be dedicated to eliminating barriers of access to care for underserved women. If you are a runner, or just avid fan, and want to get involved with next year’s planning, please contact BCA at info@breastcanceralliance.org. Get ready to run on Sunday, May 17, 2020!

MEDICAL SYMPOSIA

This past April, Breast Cancer Alliance again hosted two exceptional panelists of experts in the field of breast cancer, both in Washington, DC at The Top of the Hay Adams and at Old Oaks Country Club in Purchase, New York. To view a video of the NY program, go to: https://breastcanceralliance.org/resources

Both locations will host symposia again in Spring 2020.

See you in DC on April 21 at The Mayflower

Stay tuned for a NY date!
GoForPink is a series of events BCA dedicates to Breast Cancer Awareness Month with the mission to bring the Greenwich community together to raise awareness and critical funds to support the goal of eradicating breast cancer.

On Thursday, October 3 at 10am, Richards in Greenwich will host a complimentary BCA GoForPink Educational Program and Community Breakfast, featuring journalists and authors, Allison Gilbert and Lee Woodruff. This follows the BCA flag raising ceremony with First Selectman Peter Tesei and Dr. Barbara Ward at Greenwich Town Hall at 9am. RSVP for breakfast preferred: info@breastcanceralliance.org

Special shopping and dining events span the month of October.

Detailed information and Merchant Registration is available at BCAgoforpink.org

Allison Gilbert

Allison Gilbert is an Emmy award-winning journalist and one of the most thought-provoking and influential writers on grief and resilience. The author of numerous books including the groundbreaking, Passed and Present: Keeping Memories of Loved Ones Alive, the first to reveal 85 uplifting opportunities for remembering the family and friends we never want to forget. She serves on the Board of Directors for the National Alliance for Grieving Children and the Advisory Board for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, the preeminent national organization providing grief support to families of America’s fallen heroes.

Allison lost her mother, grandmother, and aunt to breast and ovarian cancer, tested positive for BRCA1, and underwent a preventative double mastectomy and hysterectomy. You can learn more about Allison by visiting www.allisongilbert.com.

Lee Woodruff

As a journalist, author and public speaker, Lee Woodruff has spent her career in the media and marketing world. A contributor for “CBS This Morning,” she has also reported for “Good Morning America” and hosted various radio shows.

Woodruff garnered critical acclaim for her best-selling book In an Instant, the compelling and humorous chronicle of her family’s journey to recovery following her husband Bob’s roadside bomb injury in Iraq while reporting on the war. Her best-selling book Perfectly imperfect, was followed by her first novel.

As co-founder of the Bob Woodruff Foundation, she has helped to raise more than $68 million to help military veterans and their families successfully reintegrate into their communities and receive critical long-term care.

Woodruff has penned numerous magazine articles on a variety of business and feature subjects and she runs a successful media training consulting business in New York.
BCA ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIFT BOUTIQUE

Please join us on Tuesday, November 12th from 12pm until 8pm and Wednesday, November 13th from 9am until 3pm for the BCA annual Holiday Gift Boutique at Christ Church.

As always, we will have an excellent array of items, many returning and many new. All vendors exhibiting their wares will donate 15% of their sales back to BCA.

Cocktails will also be served on Tuesday evening from 5pm to 8pm.

For more information email info@breastcanceralliance.org or call 203.861.0014