

# Connections

## Quarterly

See this and previous issues of *Connections* at [www.glensfallshospital.org](http://www.glensfallshospital.org)

## What is Genetic Counseling?

By Jennifer Desrochers, MS



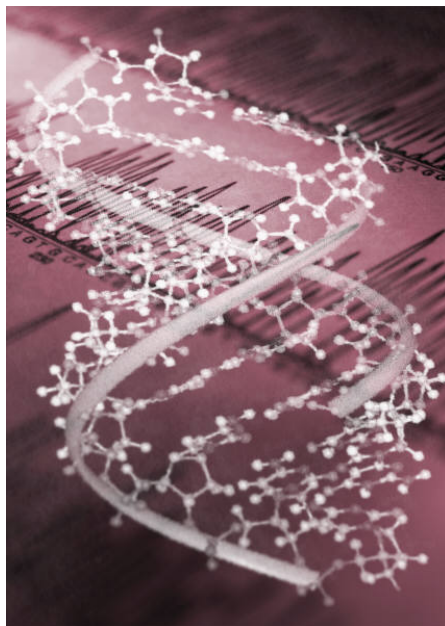
### What is Genetic Counseling?

Whenever I tell people what I do for a living, the most common response is: "So, what is genetic counseling?"

I'd like to tell you about genetic counseling and help you figure out if you and your family could benefit from coming over to see us.

My job is to help families understand if the cancer in their family history is most likely caused by the environment, genetics, or both.

There are some things in the environment that we know can cause cancer such as sun damage, smoking, or exposure to radiation. These things can damage our cells and the DNA inside them. This damage can build up over time and cause a cell to grow out of control into a tumor. Sometimes genetic differences make environmental factors take less time to cause enough damage for cancer to grow. This complex mixture of environment and genetics cause about 90% of cancer. The other 10% of the time, we can trace the increased risk for cancer in a family back to a single genetic difference that was inherited through the generations. By taking a blood sample, we can pinpoint this difference by "proofreading" the DNA inside the cells.



### What kinds of cancer can be hereditary?

There are two main groups or clusters of cancer that are associated with hereditary cancer syndromes. The first group is breast and ovarian cancer. The second group is colon, uterine, and ovarian cancer. Whenever we see any of these cancers in a family, we like to take a closer look at the history to see whether there is a chance that the cancer is due to a single genetic difference.

### How can I tell the difference between cancer caused by the environment and cancer caused by genetics?

Most of the time cancer is caused by the environment. However, genetic counselors are trained to spot "red flags" for cancer to be hereditary. We find these "red flags" by looking at the family history. They include things like:

- Two or more blood-related people with cancer from the groups listed above
- Cancer in more than one generation of the family
- Any of the cancers listed above diagnosed before the age of 50
- A person with more than one kind of cancer listed above
- A person diagnosed with the same cancer twice
- A person diagnosed with a rare kind of cancer i.e. men with breast cancer, women with ovarian cancer

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# Survivorship

## Very Rare

By Angelia Abbott

A year ago, I would have never predicted that at 29 years old I would be faced with two life threatening health diagnoses.

However, last September while I was pregnant it was found that I had a very rare condition, called Vasa Previa, which if undiagnosed results in fetal death 50%-95% of the time and can also cause maternal death. Thankfully it was diagnosed and although my son, Nicholas, had to be delivered 6 weeks early, we were fine.

Three months after Nicholas was born I felt a lump in my right breast while breastfeeding. At first, I didn't think anything of it; I figured it had to be something related to breastfeeding, like a clogged milk duct. The lump was painless, but always easy to find. I waited a few weeks thinking it would go away on its own, but when it didn't my husband, Stephen, pushed me to go to the doctors.

After an ultrasound and biopsy I got the dreaded call from my doctor's office. I was told I needed to come into the office for my results, so I knew it wasn't good. I called Stephen and asked him to go with me. I remember freaking out, wondering why they wouldn't give me information over the phone; I think because deep down I knew the answer. Stephen told me to stay calm. Definitely easier said than done!

Unless it's happened to you, I don't think I can explain what it is like to hear your doctor say, "You have cancer." Just typing it fills me with uneasiness.

From that point things moved fast. I had several appointments and I needed to make decisions on my treatment, but before March 10th. I didn't



even know there was more than one type of breast cancer. I quickly learned that there were several different types, and for the second time in my life I was being told I had something that was "very rare." This time it was that I had Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC).

Only 10%-20% of all breast cancers are triple negative. As I researched, I became frustrated, because besides being young, I did not fit the typical characteristics that were listed for TNBC, which included being an African-American woman and/or having the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene abnormalities.

What caused my cancer? I realized I might never know (and I have slowly begun to accept that). What I did know was that TNBC has no other treatment options available beyond chemo and radiation, so as much as I didn't want chemotherapy, it was my best defense at insuring a recurrence free life. With my son at just 4 months old it was an easy decision to make. I was going to do everything possible to prevent my cancer from coming back and watch my little boy grow up.

Dr. Stoutenburg told me the chemo drugs I needed would cause my hair to fall out, which devastated me. At first, I thought of ways to hide my cancer diagnosis and treatment from friends and co-workers, but when I watched a video online of another young mom with TNBC giving a speech at a cancer fundraiser I changed my mind. In it she said she didn't wear a wig because she had nothing to hide or be ashamed of. Her statement completely changed my views on having cancer and I realized no one with cancer should feel they have to hide or be ashamed.

So, I went to work (The Post-Star) and proposed to my publisher and editor that I do a video blog on Poststar.com of my journey through breast cancer. I wanted to help educate others in the community

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# Your Cancer Center Care Team



**Lauren Lorio, RN**

Lauren recently joined the Oncology Inpatient Staff Tower 2. She received an Associates in Applied Sciences for Nursing at Adirondack Community College in 2010. Lauren has a Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts from College of New Rochelle. She worked as a Graphic Designer prior to pursuing a career in Nursing. Lauren worked as an RN Supervisor at Westmount Health Facility from June 2010 to June 2011. She plans to become Oncology Certified and pursue a Masters Degree in Nursing.

Lauren and her husband, Vinny, live in Glens Falls. She enjoys many outdoor activities including, kayaking, hiking and gardening and spending time with family and friends. She is an avid New York Jets fan.



**Jennifer Desrochers, Genetics**

Jennifer recently joined the Medical Oncology Practice Group as a Genetics Counselor. Jen received a Bachelors Degree in Biology at Brandeis University in 2008. She received a Master's Degree in Genetics earlier this year. Jen worked as a Research Technician in a Molecular Genetics Lab from 2004—2011. She interned as a Cancer Genetics Counselor at Women and Infants in Providence, Rhode Island.

Jen lives in Glens Falls with her 2 cats, Meowzer and Fluffernutter. Her parents, her brother and his family live in Vermont. She has a niece and nephew and is awaiting the arrival of a new nephew soon. Jen enjoys yoga, reading and knitting in her free time.



**Ciara Tabor, CNA**

Ciara recently joined the Oncology Inpatient Staff on Tower 2 as a Nurse Aide. She graduated from Queensbury High School and Southern Adirondack BO-CES Health Occupations Class in June 2011.

Ciara previously worked as a Life Guard at Great Escape Lodge. She is very excited to be working in the medical field and hopes that she can bring care and comfort the patients. Ciara has been dancing for thirteen years. She enjoys Tap, Jazz, Ballet and Hip-Hop dancing. Ciara plans to continue her education and hopes one day to become a physician.



**Amanda Reed,  
Eligibility Specialist**

Amanda recently joined the Cancer Services Program part-time. She received a Bachelors of Science Degree from the University of Albany, May 2011. Amanda also works per diem as a Unit Secretary in the Snuggery.

Amanda and her fiancé live in Glens Falls and are planning a March wedding! She enjoys reading, shopping and trying new foods while traveling. Amanda's future plans include pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Health or Physician Assistant Studies.



# Food for Thought

## Organic Food and Cancer



You're at the grocery store and see two of all types of produce. There's either 'conventional' or organic'.

You've seen claims that you should only eat organic food. Others say it doesn't matter. How do you decide if it's worth it to spend the extra money on organic?

### Are Organic Foods Better for Your Health?

Conventional refers to produce that may be grown with the application of pesticides as part of the farming process. When it comes to health benefits, there have not been any direct studies on humans to show that organic foods can prevent cancer or other diseases, any more effectively than conventionally grown foods. So far, there is also no con-

sistent evidence that organic food is any more nutritious (higher in vitamins, minerals and other nutrients) than conventionally grown foods. Given this information, why would someone choose organic? We know that organic foods have:

- Lower pesticide residues
- Lower amounts of synthetic (man made) food additives
- Better stewardship of natural resources like land and water.
- Better stewardship of human resources means being socially considerate of the working and living condition of laborers, needs of rural communities and health of consumers.

### Organic Food Facts

Here is a good comparison of conventional vs. organic foods that the Mayo Clinic put together:

Conventional	Organic
Apply chemical fertilizers to promote plant growth	Apply natural fertilizers, such as manure or compost, to feed soil and plants
Spray insecticides to reduce pests and disease	Use beneficial insects and birds, mating disruption or traps to reduce pests and disease
Use herbicides to manage weeds	Rotate crops, till, hand weed or mulch to manage weeds
Give animals antibiotics, growth hormones and medications to prevent disease and spur growth	Give animals organic feed and allow them access to the outdoors. Use preventive measures such as rotational grazing, a balanced diet and clean housing to help minimize disease



The US government monitors the organic label. It can be an expensive process for the farmer to go through in order to be able to make the organic claim. Therefore, many smaller farms that you find in your area

may not be able to afford the official organic claim. If you shop at farmer's markets or coop where you can talk to the farmer, they can tell you if they use organic farm practices.

### The Most Contaminated Foods

The Environmental Working Group has put together a very practical approach to buying organic. If you are trying to avoid pesticides in your food, purchasing the produce listed under the "Dirty Dozen" in organic form will help you get the most bang for your food buying buck. The "Clean 15" are the lowest in pesticide residues, so the difference between organic and conventional versions of these foods isn't as great. You may be more comfortable buying the "Clean 15" as conventional.

## Pharmacy Corner

# Arzerra™ for Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia and Halaven™ for Metastatic Breast Cancer

By Andrew J Winchell, Pharm.D. Student  
Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Arzerra™ (ofatumumab) is a monoclonal antibody that was approved by the FDA in October, 2009 for the treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). It is reserved for treatment in patients who have previously failed first line therapy.

Arzerra™ works by binding to the surface of leukemia “B” cells, staying there a bit longer and in the process forming channels within the target cells. These channels allow water to rush in the cell and increase the volume, causing the cell to burst. Common side effects with this medication include: increased risk of infection, fever, cough, diarrhea, fatigue, rash, and nausea. Infusion reactions can be a major limitation with Arzerra™ and therefore patients should be pre-medicated.

In preliminary studies forty-two percent of patients had a positive response lasting roughly 6.5 months. Minimal drug interactions were found during the study and the main concern regards live vaccines, which should be avoided due to a decrease in patients’ immune function.

A controversy surrounding Arzerra™ stems from the \$98,000 price tag for a standard 6 month regimen (12 doses given intravenously). It was approved under the FDA’s accelerated process and further studies are needed to find its exact role in treatment.



The FDA has recently (November 2010) approved another weapon in the fight against metastatic breast cancer. Halaven™ (eribulin) is a drug that was discovered off the coast of Japan from a marine sponge called *Halichondra okadi*.

The excitement surrounding Halaven™ stems from its unique ability to block cell division in a manner yet to be seen from previous cancer medications. The drug is administered intravenously two out of three weeks per cycle and repeated until the doctor deems it no longer effective.

Halaven™ is currently indicated for use in patients whose cancer has metastasized and have also received multiple previous treatments. It is considered a last line defense in the fight to help metastatic breast cancer patients live a little longer.

In a randomized trial of 762 patients, those receiving Halaven™ saw a median increase in survival of 2.6 months as compared with the control group. A single treatment of Halaven™ costs approximately \$7,000 (treatments occur on days 1 and 8 of 21-day cycle).

Due to the risk of potential drug interactions, be sure your doctor is aware of all medications you are currently taking. Common side effects from the medication include: decreased white blood cells, weakness, hair loss, nausea, nerve pain.



The aforementioned drugs may not provide a cure, but they represent promise in the fight against cancer. While expensive, they may provide an increased duration in the patients’ quality of life and that is something we cannot put a price on.

## What is Genetic Counseling?

(Continued from page 1)

### When should I see a genetic counselor?

If you see any of these “red flags” in your history and would like to ask more questions about it, you can either set up an appointment to see us or ask your doctor for a referral if your insurance company requires it. If you or your family members don’t live in the area, we would be happy to help you find a genetic counselor closer to your location.

### When is genetic testing right for me?

We use genetic test results to make recommendations about cancer screening and surveillance. For some types of cancer, we can screen more closely and more often. In some cases, we may recommend surgery to remove the tissue that is at a higher risk for cancer. There are many options for reducing your risk of cancer if you have a hereditary predisposition. Many people feel empowered by making the decision to take control of their cancer risk.

### When isn’t genetic testing right for me?

For some people, their family history shows that their chance of having a hereditary predisposition to cancer is very low. We would not recommend genetic testing for those individuals. For others, even though they have a higher chance of having a hereditary cancer syndrome, the idea of genetic testing is scary or doesn’t feel right. Perhaps they don’t want to know this kind of information ahead of time or maybe they are under a lot of stress at home or at work. There are many reasons why someone may decide not to get genetic testing. That’s okay. My job is to answer all of the questions you have about hereditary cancer and genetic testing and to help you make an informed decision.

### How could genetic testing affect my health insurance?

A federal law was passed in 2008 called the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), making it illegal for health insurance companies to increase your premiums or deny you coverage based on genetic test results. It also prohibits employers from discriminating against their employees based on genetic test results. The kinds of

## Organic Food and Cancer

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<b>Dirty Dozen (Buy These Organic)</b>	<b>Clean 15 (Lowest in Pesticides)</b>
Apples	Onions
Celery	Corn
Strawberries	Pineapples
Peaches	Avocado
Spinach	Asparagus
Nectarines (imported)	Sweet Peas
Grapes (imported)	Mangoes
Sweet bell peppers	Eggplant
Potatoes	Cantaloupe (domestic)
Blueberries (domestic)	Kiwi
Lettuce	Cabbage
Kale/Collard greens	Watermelon
	Sweet Potatoes
	Grapefruit
	Mushrooms

### Local Food

Another option for your fresh fruits and vegetables is to buy local. This option can be just as important for environmental and health choices as organic foods. Local foods tend to be higher in nutrients because they are usually picked fresh and sold to you soon after picking. This is different from the food at the grocery store which may be picked before it's ripe so that it can make the long trip to the distribution center and then on to your grocery store. Another benefit to buying local food at a farmer's market or direct from the farmer is that it is often cheaper than buying it at the grocery store – whether organic or conventional! Find a location for your local foods at [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org).

### References:

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/organic-food/NU00255](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/organic-food/NU00255)  
[www.foodnews.org](http://www.foodnews.org) (from the Environmental Working Group)

# Komen for the Cure Foundation<sup>®</sup> to Fund Washington County Breast Cancer Retreat

Thanks to a generous grant from the Komen for the Cure Foundation<sup>®</sup>, the C. R. Wood Cancer Center is proud to present our 2nd Annual Washington County Breast Cancer Retreat.

The Washington County retreat will be held from December 2nd to the 4th at the Christ the King Spiritual Life Center in Greenwich, NY. This retreat is free of charge to any breast cancer survivor who lives in Washington County. Karen Cook, Oncology Social Worker and Vickie Yattaw, Oncology Resource Nurse of the C. R. Wood Cancer Center, lead the retreat.

This retreat encourages and enables women living with and beyond breast cancer to set aside the stressors of their everyday life and focus on their physical, emotional and spiritual healing. Each participant will have the opportunity for massage, reiki and other wellness experiences. Through a diverse array of group activities and personal time, participants learn important tools to manage their stress and to improve the overall quality of their lives.

For more information or to sign up for this free retreat, contact Vickie Yattaw, RN at (518) 926-6639 or email: [vyattaw@glensfallshosp.org](mailto:vyattaw@glensfallshosp.org).

## Glens Falls Hospital Forms Partnership with CaringBridge

Glens Falls Hospital is pleased to announce a new partnership with CaringBridge, an online social networking tool that specializes in connecting people experiencing a significant health challenge to family and friends, making each health journey easier. CaringBridge websites offer a personal and private space to communicate and show support, saving time and emotional energy when health matters most.

The CaringBridge service enhances our patient and family support system. CaringBridge simplifies communication and reduces stress for patients and family members by providing a centralized location for posting updates, as well as a place for friends and family to send messages of love and support. This means family and friends can spend

less time fielding phone calls and more time focusing on the patient.

“CaringBridge offers our patients a safe, secure, free and tangible way to stay connected with family and friends during their health challenge,” Says Mike Aliotta, Administrative Intern.



CaringBridge is recommended to patients and families in all types of medical situations including cancer, premature birth, organ transplant, extended hospitalization, stroke, rehabilitation and more.

CaringBridge can be accessed through the Glens Falls Hospital website under the “For Patients” tab or by typing in the address bar, [www.CaringBridge.org](http://www.CaringBridge.org).

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### What is Genetic Counseling?

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insurance that are not covered under GINA are elective insurances such as life insurance or long-

term care insurance. You may wish to sign up or make changes to these policies before you get genetic testing.

If you have any questions about genetic counseling, please call Jennifer at 926-6574.

## *Offering Support Services in Concert with Medical Care*

For general questions about cancer or support services available, please call Oncology Resource Nurses:  
Vickie at 926-6639 or Paul at 926-6629

### **Services for Individuals by Appointment**

#### *Care Management*

For: Continuing care needs, transportation and financial concerns

Info: Patty Godnick, RN ~ **926-3316**  
pager ~ **969-1211**

Donna St. Hilaire, RN ~ **926-3322**  
pager ~ **926-5038**

#### *Nutrition Counseling*

For: Nutrition advice for cancer prevention and during or after cancer treatment

Info: Joan Butler, RD, CSO, CDN, CNSC, CDE  
~ **926-2609**

#### *Patient Financial / Insurance Assistance*

For: Referrals, prior authorizations, billing, insurance questions

Info: Michele Stauches ~ **926-6637**

#### *Psychosocial Oncology*

For: Counseling for patients and/or their families

Info: Gerry Florio, Ph.D. ~ **926-6529**  
Karen Cook, LMSW, OSW-C ~ **926-6619**

#### *Resource Nurses*

For: Individuals & family diagnosed with any cancer

Meets: By appointment or stop by (office is across the hall from the Cancer Center Library)

Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, OCN® CBCN~ **926-6639**  
Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ **926-6629**

#### *Uniquely You® Boutique & Salon*

For: Any cancer patient  
free wigs, hats & turbans, skin & hair care

Meets: By appointment on Tuesdays in the C. R. Wood Cancer Center

Info: Call **926-6640** for an appointment

#### *Look Good ... Feel Better®*

##### *American Cancer Society*

For: Women Cancer Survivors

Meets: C. R. Wood Cancer Center Library

Info: Call **1-800-395-LOOK** for date and time

#### *Spa Services at Cindy's Healing Place (Reiki and Massage Therapy)*

For: Cancer patients during and after treatment

Meets: By appointment in Cindy's Healing Place

Info: Call **926-6640** for an appointment

### **Special Programs Pre-Registration Required**

#### *Annual Survivors Events*

**Breast Cancer Survivor Luncheon** - October  
Call Vickie at **926-6639** for information

**Spring Survivorship Celebration Breakfast**  
Call Paul at **926-6629** for information

#### *CG Men's Retreat*

For: Men living with and beyond cancer

Meets: One weekend each year in the Fall

Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ **926-6629**

#### *Cindy's Comfort Camp*

For: Children and teens ages 6-17 years who have experienced the death or serious illness of a parent or close relative

Meets: One weekend each Spring and Fall at the Double "H" Hole in the Woods Ranch in Lake Luzerne, NY

Info: **926-6515 / www.cindysretreat.org**

#### *Cindy's Retreat*

For: Women living with and beyond cancer

Meets: One weekend each Spring and Fall at Silver Bay on Lake George

Info: Karen Cook, LMSW ~ **926-6619**

**www.cindysretreat.org**

#### *Tobacco Cessation*

Whether you're thinking about quitting or ready to quit, call the NYS Smokers' Quitline for help and support.

**1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487)**

## ***Open Support Groups***

These groups are open-ended and you may come as you wish.  
You may want to call if you are new or you have not come for some time to make sure that the schedule or location has not changed or that a special event has been scheduled.

### **Discussion Groups**

#### ***ABC Support Group (After Breast Cancer)***

For: Individuals with breast cancer  
Meets: 4th Monday each month  
6:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Waiting Room  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN® ~ **926-6639**

#### ***Blood Cancer Support Group (Leukemia & Lymphoma Society)***

For: Individuals & family diagnosed with lymphoma, leukemia or multiple myeloma  
Meets: 2nd Wednesday each month  
6:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Karen Cook, LMSW, OSW-C ~ **926-6619**  
Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ **926-6629**

#### ***Family Connections***

For: Children, teens and parents facing life after illness or loss of a loved one  
Meets: 3rd Thursday each month during school year  
5:30 P.M. ~ Moreau Elementary School  
Info: Gerry Florio, PhD ~ **926-6528**

#### ***Living with Hope***

For: Individuals with advanced or recurrent cancer  
Meets: 3rd Thursday each month  
1:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Gerry Florio, Ph.D. ~ **926-6528**

#### ***Prostate Cancer Awareness Group (American Cancer Society - Man to Man)***

For: Men with prostate cancer and their families  
Meets: 3rd Thursday each month  
7:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Waiting Room  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ **926-6629**

#### ***Rays of Hope***

For: Women with ovarian cancer  
Meets: 3rd Wednesday each month  
4:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Mary Davis ~ **656-9321**  
Carol Smith ~ **793-0565**

### **Activity Groups**

#### ***Circle of Hope Knitting Group***

For: Cancer Survivors who want to learn to knit and crochet. Teachers available for new knitters  
Meets: Wednesdays ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN® ~ **926-6639**

#### ***Healthy Steps***<sup>®</sup>

For: Gentle exercise for individuals with a cancer diagnosis  
Meets: Weekly for six weeks on Tuesdays at 10:00 am Auditorium B/C  
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN® ~ **926-6639**

#### ***Monthly Meditation and Relaxation Group***

For: Individuals & family diagnosed with any cancer  
Meets: First Thursday each month 1:00 P.M.  
The Chapel on 1Central  
Info: Gerry Florio, Ph.D. ~ **926-6528**

#### ***Twisted Twirlers***

For: Individuals diagnosed with any cancer who would like to join this Hall of Fame twirling group  
Meets: 11:30 A.M. ~ First and Third Tuesday each month  
Info: Carol Newton ~ **854-9860**

#### ***Tai Chi***

For: Anyone interested  
Meets: Monday afternoon at 3:30 P.M. and 5:30 P.M.  
Crandall Park Pavilion (during the summer)  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ **926-6629**

#### ***Ways of Seeing - Art Workshop***

For: Individuals & family diagnosed with any cancer who want to enjoy the life affirming pleasures of making art  
Meets: 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month  
11:30 A.M. ~ Cancer Center Library  
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ **926-6629**

#### ***Mindfulness Meditation Group***

For: Anyone interested  
Meets: 1st and 3rd Wednesday evening each month at 6:30 P.M. at The Chapel on 1 Central  
Info: Rev. Jeffrey Palmer ~ **926-3531**

## Local Jeweler launches “*Inspiration Collection*”

Ed Levin Jewelry, based in Cambridge, New York, has partnered with the Glens Falls Hospital and the C. R. Wood Cancer Center to launch the new “*Inspiration Collection*”. Ed Levin began creating innovative and distinctly original jewelry in 1950. He started designing jewelry while living in Buenos Aires and working with a master Florentine jeweler. He brought what he learned back to the United States and founded Ed Levin Jewelry. He has passed his artistic vision and skills on to the next generation of master craftsmen who carry on his legacy at Ed Levin Jewelry. Their jewelry is still handcrafted using age-old techniques and only the finest materials - inspiring the wearer with its alluring and inventive design.

Breast cancer has touched the lives of the Ed Levin family and has *Inspired* the wonderful artisans to create the new *Inspiration Collection*. This collection will be made of hand-forged silver with a pink CZ stone. The collection includes a bracelet, earrings and a necklace. All pieces are heirloom pieces and come with a lifetime warranty. A portion of the proceeds from the *Inspiration Collection* will be donated to the C. R. Wood Cancer Center to offer financial assistance to patients undergoing treatment.

You can find this wonderful line of jewelry at the Glens Falls Hospital Gift Atrium, Jacqueline’s Bridal Shop in Glens Falls, Scoville Jewelers in Glens Falls and the Silo in Queensbury. For more information please contact Vickie at 926-6639

# Coming This Fall...

## *Inspiration*



Ed Levin Jewelry has been inspired by courageous individuals and families whose lives have been changed by cancer and by the passion of their medical specialists and caregivers.

Our newest design, “Inspiration,” handcrafted by skilled craftspersons in New York’s Adirondacks using age-old techniques and the finest materials, now benefits The C. R. Wood Cancer Center at Glens Falls Hospital.

**Ed Levin**  
JEWELRY

Look for the Inspiration line this fall at local retailers and The Glens Falls Hospital Gift Atrium.

## Uniquely You 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Breast Cancer Survivors Luncheon

The C.R. Wood Cancer Center will be hosting their 19<sup>th</sup> annual Breast Cancer Survivors’ Luncheon on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 am until 2:00 pm at the Queensbury Hotel. The luncheon will have speaker Sam Lurie helping us use our own inner resources for hope and healing. The talented musical group “The Boobie Sisters” will also entertain us again this year. The Boobie Sisters are a group of Breast Cancer Survivors from Plattsburgh New York. Pre-Registration is required for this program by invitation. If you would like to attend and have not received your invitation please contact Vickie Yattaw, RN at 926-6639.

# Save the Date: Spring Survivorship Celebration Breakfast

April 21, 2012 - Fort William Henry

Featuring Brett Leake - At Least I've Still Got My Health: The 4 H's of Humor-Heart-Hope-Health: This laughter stimulating, thought-provoking, life-affirming presentation is just what the doctor ordered for all of us! It will be a perfect follow-up to the presentation last year by Dr. Joel Goodman from The HUMOR Project.

When Brett set out to become a comedian, a reporter wanted to know how long a man with muscular dystrophy could stand the rigors of a traveling stand-up comic. Brett supposed he had about 7 years. That was 29 years ago! Brett attributes his laughing longevity to the healing power of humor. We know that you will absolutely love this session... as this sit-down, stand-up comic weaves his hilarious humor with a heartfelt message.

## Symptoms of Inner Peace

Watch for signs of Peace. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to it, and it seems likely that we could find our society experiencing it in epidemic proportions.

### Some signs and symptoms of inner peace:

1. Tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fear based on past experiences
2. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment
3. Loss of interest in judging other people
4. Loss of interest in judging self
5. Loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others
6. Loss of interest in conflict
7. Loss of ability to worry (a very serious symptom)

8. Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation
9. Contented feelings of connectedness with others and with nature
10. Frequent attacks of smiling through the eyes from the heart
11. Increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen
12. Increased susceptibility to love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it

If you have all or even most of the above symptoms, please be advised that your condition may be too far advanced to turn back. If you are exposed to anyone exhibiting several of these symptoms, remain exposed at your own risk. This condition of Inner Peace is likely well into its infectious stage. Be forewarned!



## C. R. Wood Cancer Center Support Group and Staff Holiday Party



For all cancer survivors and their guest(s) and staff of the C. R. Wood Cancer Center

Wednesday December 7, 2011 5:00pm – 7:30pm

at the C. R. Wood Cancer Center Waiting Room and Library

Please bring a dish to share (pot luck).

Bring a gift (under \$10) for our Secret Santa (if you wish to participate in the gift exchange).

We will provide beverages and tableware.

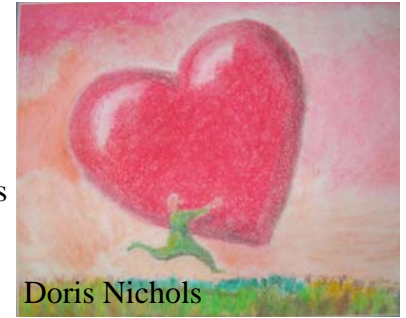
Please call Vickie (926-6639) or Paul (926-6629) if you have any questions

# Ways of Seeing Art Workshop Featured in Annual Report

Artwork from the Ways of Seeing Art Workshop was featured in the 2010 Cancer Program Annual Report. In an effort to highlight all of the support groups and special programs offered here, Nancy Normandin, Oncology Data Management, included photographs of some of the work done in the Ways of Seeing Art Workshop. Specifically, Eileen Amara, Jean Baulsir, Carol Newton and Doris Nichols had their work published in the report.



The Ways of Seeing group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month from 11:30 - 1:00 in the Cancer Center library. We work with a variety of media and have materials on hand with instruction offered as much or as little as each individual wishes. So if you have an interest in joining us, just show up. The class is very low key and you do not have to be “an artist” to join us, just an interest in trying something new in a very relaxed setting. Please call Paul Miller at 926-6629 if you would like more information about this class or any other support program offered here at the C. R. Wood Cancer Center.



You can view the report and see their work online: just go to [www.glensfallshospital.org](http://www.glensfallshospital.org) - click on “services” - click on “cancer center” - then click on “cancer center annual report” and a PDF of the report will download, resplendent with color images of the artwork.



Meanwhile, we hope you take a moment to enjoy the work shown here.



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## The Sixth Annual C. G. Men’s Retreat

The Sixth Annual C. G. Men’s Retreat was held September 7th through the 9th at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center in Greenwich, New York. Eight men attended the program which was filled with group discussion and activities.

Several group discussions on Coping with Cancer for Men and Maintaining Flexible Perceptions were offered. A discussion on art was held on creativity and flexible thinking while different art styles were examined. In addition to the group discussions, relaxation techniques were practiced including chair yoga, tai chi and guided imagery. The men also enjoyed massages, a first for the men’s retreat.

Other group sessions were held and opportunities for less formal interaction were provided and encouraged.



# Cancer and Positive Thinking

By Bob Riter  
bob@crcfl.net

*from the Ithaca Journal, April 24, 2010*

Whenever someone is diagnosed with cancer, people feel compelled to say, "You gotta stay positive!" (This is usually said with an enthusiastic pump of the arm).

I'm a pretty positive guy and I'm all in favor of positive thinking, but I cringe whenever I hear those words.

First of all, telling someone to be positive has never transformed anyone into actually being positive. I've yet to hear someone respond, "You're absolutely right. I've never thought about being positive, but now that you mention it, I see the wisdom in it. I will become positive and change my outlook on life." That just doesn't happen, at least not in my world.

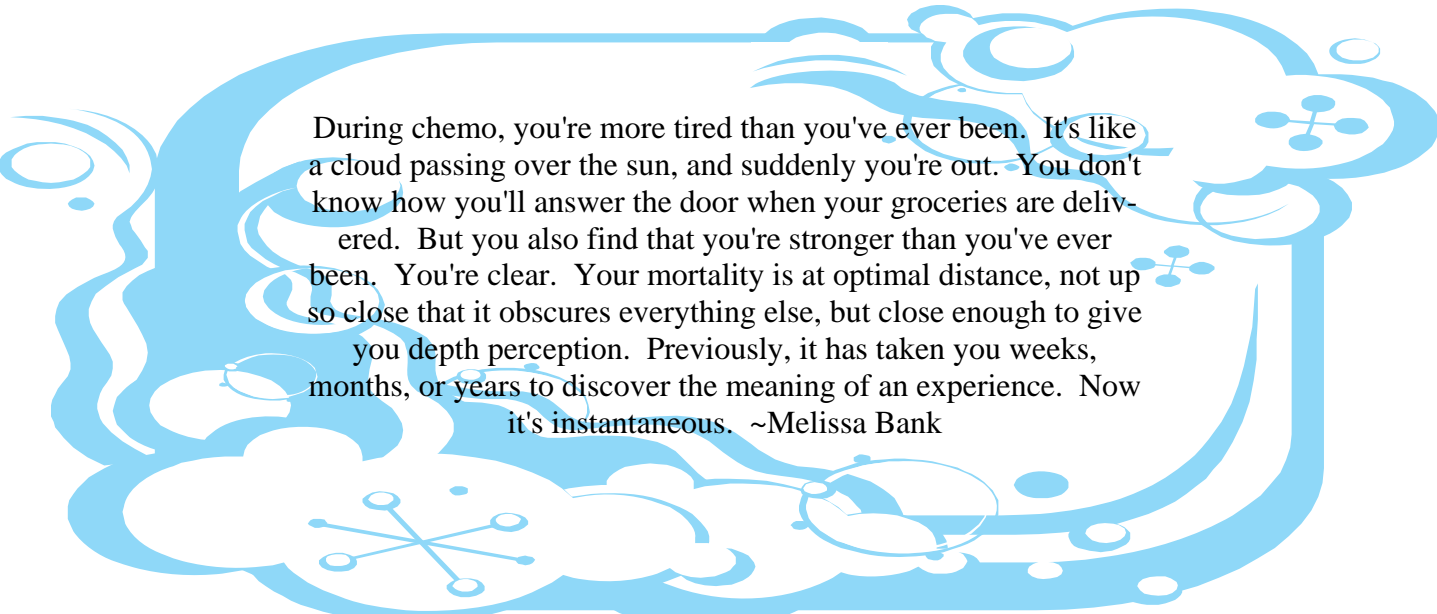
My real concern is for people with cancer who may blame themselves for not being positive enough. How does one make sense of a recurrence if positive thinking is supposed to help? I hope no one sees their recurrence as the result of not thinking enough positive thoughts. People with cancer don't need another reason to beat themselves up.

Don't get me wrong - I think it's great to have a positive attitude when dealing with cancer. I did and I'm sure it was helpful in my recovery. If my cancer returns, I will again be positive. If there's only a five percent chance of survival, I figure that I'm going to be in that five percent. But attitude is largely a function of personality, and you are who you are. Positive people enjoy having other positive people and positive energy around them. People who aren't so positive don't necessarily want or benefit from cheerleaders in the room.

And even the sunniest, most positive people will have down days when dealing with cancer. It's a scary, life-changing event and filled with uncertainty. Rather than telling them to be positive, acknowledge and share in their sadness on those days. Doing so makes an honest connection. Cancer is no different than every other aspect of life. We need to face it in our own way and on our own terms.

And our dearest friends and family members will accept those terms, and support us and love us no matter what.

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During chemo, you're more tired than you've ever been. It's like a cloud passing over the sun, and suddenly you're out. You don't know how you'll answer the door when your groceries are delivered. But you also find that you're stronger than you've ever been. You're clear. Your mortality is at optimal distance, not up so close that it obscures everything else, but close enough to give you depth perception. Previously, it has taken you weeks, months, or years to discover the meaning of an experience. Now it's instantaneous. ~Melissa Bank

## Very Rare

(Continued from page 2)

about cancer, because before I was diagnosed I knew so little. I also wanted a way to stress the importance of self-exams, which I myself had not been doing. I only found my tumor as early as I did because I was breastfeeding.

My blog, which I named Slaying The Beast ([poststar.com/slayingthebeast](http://poststar.com/slayingthebeast)), has not only allowed me to document my journey, it has also been therapeutic for me. I use it to express my inner thoughts and feelings, and connect with others in the community. And someday, if I decide to, I

will be able to show it to my son so he can see what mommy went through when he was too young to remember (*thank goodness!!*).

As cliché as it sounds, I believe there is a reason for everything. Some reasons are easier to spot than others. So, although this year has been tough, it has also allowed me to connect with some amazing people and shown me that I have an inner strength that cannot be broken by anything. And, best of all, this year has given me the greatest accomplishment, blessing, and source of strength in my life- Nicholas. He is my miracle baby! I look at him and see how truly blessed I am. And, being truly blessed is also very rare.

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## Your Cancer Center Care Team

(Continued from page 3)



**Robyn Gates, Medical Secretary**

Robyn joins the Breast Center as a full-time Medical Secretary. She previously worked in Medical Imaging as a Secretary for a year and a half.

Robyn and her husband, Myron live in Gansevoort. They have two daughters and expect their fourth grandchild in May. She enjoys reading and spending time with family. Robyn is excited to be working with the Breast Center Staff.



**Karen Emmons,  
Scheduling Specialist**

Karen recently joined Medical Oncology. Karen has been employed at Glens Falls Hospital for over 28 years. She has held several positions, including Licensed Practical Nurse, Patient Access Registrar and, most recently, Scheduling Training Educator.

Karen and her husband, Jim, have one son, Rob, one granddaughter, Sharron (5) and expect a new grandchild in December. She enjoys reading, cooking, camping and NASCAR.

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## Changing Places

### Darrow "Darr" Hanks, RN Cancer Treatment Center

Darr recently joined the Cancer Treatment Center team. He worked on Tower 2, Inpatient Oncology, for the past eighteen months. Darr received an Associate's Degree in Nursing at Adirondack Community College in 2009.



Darr lives in Salem with his wife, Kara and children, Chloe (11), Hannah (9) and Dillon (5).

### Kim Shaw, RN Cancer Treatment Center

Kim recently joined the Cancer Treatment Center team, working part-time. For the past four years, she worked per diem on Tower 2, Inpatient Oncology. Kim received an Associate's Degree in Nursing from Adirondack Community College in 2007.



Kim lives in Wilton with her husband, David and their two boys, Alexander, (15) and Daniel (12).

# We Promise...to hear you now!

Effective August 30<sup>th</sup>, calls made to our C. R. Wood Cancer Center have been answered right away by hospital staff and directed to the appropriate person in the Cancer Center. In this way, we've been able to best serve our patients' and their families' needs and do away with the automated answering system. When you call 926-6620, the operator greets you and asks what you're calling about. She has the Cancer Center schedules and specific instructions from us. You may be asked to leave a message for the nurse; please know that they'll call you back as soon as



they're able to. Your call is a priority.

Cancer care is complicated; a phone call should not be. Once you call 926-6620, we will take it from there! Our hope is that this new process will reinforce the doctor-patient relationship and reduce the number of times a caller needs to be transferred. Once we give the new system a chance to thrive, there will be a patient survey to find out how we can make it even

better.

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## Cancer Services Program (CSP)

Glens Falls Hospital provides a New York State Department of Health Cancer Services Program grant that funds breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings and follow-up testing at no cost for

uninsured women and men. If you or someone you love is without health insurance, call today at: 1-800-882-0121 or (518) 926-6570.

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**The information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only and is not intended to be used as medical advice. Please consult your physician for questions regarding your treatment.**

If you are unable to view us on the internet and would like to receive *Connections* at home please call, write, or e-mail:

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Please let us know if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.

# Commission on Cancer - Cancer Program Accreditation

By Nancy Normandin, CTR,  
Oncology Data Manager

The Commission on Cancer (CoC) Survey is a comprehensive evaluation of the entire scope, organization, and activities of the cancer program. A physician surveyor who is specially trained to evaluate compliance with the 36 required standards performs a survey every three years. Our program survey was September 8<sup>th</sup>. The CoC has continuously accredited us since 1987, earning commendation status each time.

Applying for and maintaining CoC accreditation is a voluntary commitment that ensures that the patients and their families will have access to the full scope of services required to diagnose, treat, rehabilitate, and support patients with cancer. This continuous evaluation reaffirms the commitment of the C. R. Wood Cancer Center to provide quality cancer care.

Accredited programs receive national recognition through the CoC from other quality control organizations such as the TJC - The Joint Commission, ACS - American Cancer Society, CMS - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, NQF - National Quality Forum and the NCI - National Cancer Institute.

Patients, families and the community can feel assured that the C. R. Wood Cancer Center and the entire cancer program provide comprehensive care including complete state-of-the-art services, a multidisciplinary team approach to coordinate best treatment options, clinical trials information, access to early detection programs, cancer education, and ongoing monitoring and improvements in cancer care.

The C. R. Wood Cancer Center is the center of quality care close to home.

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