



The Belinda Sue Fund®

for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research

NEWSLETTER

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Spring/Summer 2014

Our 3rd Annual Gala – What An Enjoyable Evening!

The Belinda Sue Fund's 3rd Annual Gala was held on Saturday, May 17th at The Henry in Dearborn, Michigan. It was a great evening where guests enjoyed the sounds of string music from the Orchard Lake Philharmonic Society quartet during the cocktail hour. Folks spent time mingling about and bidding on some great silent auction items which included tickets to a couple of Tigers games, great jewelry, beautiful artwork, gift certificates to some popular metro Detroit restaurants, and overnight hotel stays just to name a few! And to make the silent auction even more accessible to those who could not attend the gala, an online auction preceded the event giving people the opportunity to peruse the items and bid online in advance of the event.

Following the cocktail hour and dinner, we were delighted to have Cheryl Chodun, retired news reporter from Channel 7 Action News, be our guest emcee. Cheryl is a dynamic speaker and did a wonderful job engaging the audience with heartfelt emotion tempered by a great sense of humor and a lively spirit. And topping off the evening's program was the presentation of awards and the live auction. David M. Gershenson, MD of University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center received the "Making a Difference" Award for his contribution to Ovarian Cancer Research. In addition to the award, The Belinda Sue Fund presented Dr. Gershenson with a \$5,000 check to further advance his research in Ovarian Cancer. The second award presented that evening was the "Angel on Earth" Award given to Judy Tibbits, sister of Cathy Swain who is an Ovarian Cancer Survivor. Judy has gone above and beyond in caring for her sister who has been battling Ovarian Cancer for the past seven years. The evening's program concluded with the live auction which included a sailboat cruise on Lake St. Clair, a ladies Movado watch, and Jimmy Buffett concert tickets with dinner just to name a few items. Cheryl Chodun and Tom Nantais conducted the live auction which made for an exciting time! During the remainder of the evening, attendees enjoyed dancing to live music by the band, Generations, and taking pictures in a photo booth complete with props from Memory Snappers.

Overall, it was a very successful night. Approximately \$25,000 was raised from the event. And to date, The Belinda Sue Fund has received over \$275,000 in monetary contributions! We are very appreciative of you, our supporters, who are helping to make a valuable difference in Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research!

(To see a few photos of the event go to page 3)

Our 3rd Annual Zoo Walk is just Around the Corner!

Well, here we are again!! While in the heart of the dog days of summer, we are gearing up for our 3rd Annual Zoo Walk taking place on Sunday, September 7th at the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak, Michigan. We anticipate this year's event to be even larger than our previous two Zoo Walks. Registration has begun. And this year you will not only be able to register, but you can also create your own fundraising page where you can get family and friends who are not able to attend the Walk to donate online. It's a very simple process when you register. Please go to www.belindasuefund.org and there will be a link to take you to the registration and fundraising websites.

There will be plenty to do in addition to the Walk itself. We will have a variety of kids' activities, breakfast food, a fitness warm-up, music, and Cheryl Chodun will, again, emcee the event. The Mama Bear Team will be donating baskets for our raffle and recognition prizes. And the Wayne State Baseball Team & Women's Basketball Team will be on hand to help with volunteer activities. Also we will have several vendors who will be selling their wares with a percentage of their sales for the day being donated back to The Belinda Sue Fund.

And for those folks who cannot make it to the Zoo Walk, but would still like to contribute, please go to www.everdayhero.com and create your own fundraising page. It's a very simple process which you can do through email or your Facebook account. Thank you for your continued support as it is only with the donation of your talent, time, or treasure that we can accomplish our mission!

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What's New in the Medical World

Genetic counseling for hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer for those women at high risk is not often received. Researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center have stated that only a small amount of women who qualify for BRCA1 and BRCA 2 genetic counseling actually receive the services. In addition, many women with a family history of Breast and/or Ovarian Cancer underestimate their own risk. Data was collected from 486 women over the course of two years. Of these women, 22 met the criteria for BRCA genetic testing. Yet, only 1 actually received genetic counseling and only 1 had reported prior genetic testing. In addition 27% of the women considered high-risk felt their actual risk for getting Breast or Ovarian Cancer was "low" and 32% of those at high-risk felt their actual risk was "lower than average." This is alarming information considering the fact that the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations account for 25% of hereditary Breast Cancers and most hereditary Ovarian Cancers. The United States Preventive Services Task Force says that primary care physicians should screen for hereditary cancer risk. John Quillin, PhD, MPH and lead study investigator says that too few women are following through with the BRCA counseling services, services that could ultimately save their lives. Quillin goes on to state, "We need to examine whether patients are fully aware of their family history, and if there are ways to optimize family history collection in clinical settings. This will help determine if educational interventions are needed for providers, patients or both."

Full article at <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/276648.php>

A Personal Message

Every issue we feature a special message or personal story of someone who is affected by Ovarian Cancer either directly or indirectly. In this issue we highlight the story of Marcie Paul, an Ovarian Cancer Survivor.

The path leading to Marcie Paul's Ovarian Cancer diagnosis is, unfortunately, an all too familiar one for many women battling this disease. In 2009, Marcie noticed a mass in her abdomen. Because of its location in the middle portion of her abdomen and the fact that the mass would "come and go," Marcie assumed it was a gastrointestinal (GI) issue and consulted a GI doctor. Following some instances of intense abdominal pain, Marcie's internist eventually ordered a CT scan which confirmed the tumor. Not even Marcie's OB/GYN could clearly feel the mass even after being identified by the CT scan. It took five long months from the time she first noticed the mass until she had a definitive diagnosis of Stage IIIC Ovarian Cancer. She was just 51 years old at the time.

Marcie underwent debulking surgery (removing as much of the tumor as possible), 6 rounds of chemotherapy, plus a year of maintenance chemotherapy with Taxol. In addition, she also underwent genetic testing for the BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutated genes. As a Jewish woman, Marcie knew testing for the mutated genes was important as Ovarian Cancer risk is increased in women of Ashkenazi Jewish descent. Testing positive for either of these genes puts a woman at up to 87% greater risk for Breast Cancer and 44% greater risk for Ovarian Cancer. To put these statistics into perspective, the general population's risk of Breast and Ovarian Cancers is 12% and 1%, respectively. Fortunately, Marcie tested negative for both the BRCA1 and BRCA 2 gene mutations.

Since Marcie's diagnosis, she has committed herself to being an advocate for Ovarian Cancer in order to create more awareness and increase research funding. Marcie has stated that she could not control *if* she had cancer but she could control *how* she had cancer. She discovered it was important to find a balance between forging ahead without letting cancer define her or prevent her from living fully, while still remaining open to the life-altering lessons of the experience. Primarily among them, she felt compelled to spend more time purposefully.

Marcie has taken the cancer fight beyond her personal battle and has become an Advocate Leader for the Ovarian

see "A Personal Message (next column)"

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Cancer National Alliance (OCNA), a presenter in their Survivor Teaching Students Program, and a grant reviewer for the US Department of Defense's Ovarian Cancer Research Program. Because OCNA did not have a Partner Member in Michigan, she was also instrumental in building the Michigan Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MIOCA) as one in 2011. Marcie is also a patient mentor for the MD Anderson Network, the Jewish Family Service, and MIOCA's Survivor-to-Survivor Support Network. She is often paired with newly-diagnosed women and stresses the importance of staying hopeful and being your own advocate as this will help to make you a more knowledgeable and proactive patient. Marcie often adds, with a bit of tongue-in-cheek, that the advocacy is actually one of the most self-serving things she does because her life depends on it. But beyond believing that as a survivor it's her responsibility to fight this disease on the larger scale, she's also found it empowering, fulfilling, and healing.

Marcie also has a wonderful husband, Stewart Shevin, and daughter, Shera, supporting her. Shera was just 12 years old when her mother was diagnosed. While Marcie was terrified she might grow up without a mother, she was nevertheless determined her daughter would somehow learn something positive from the life-threatening experience and how best to face adversity. Shera is now preparing to head off to college. Marcie feels her daughter has gained a level of maturity and social conscience that she might not otherwise have possessed so soon had it not been for the challenges her family faced in battling this disease. Shera's own strength and courage was manifested when she participated in a national fundraising walk in New York while her mom was still in treatment and has continued to be participatory throughout her mother's battle. It is obvious that Marcie has instilled some strong values in Shera, and has been a wonderful role model for her young daughter.

It has been 5 years since Marcie's diagnosis and today she is considered cancer-free. While grateful, she lives with the reality that it could change at any moment because nearly 75% of late-stage patients who survive Ovarian Cancer will relapse. But that will not stop Marcie from (1) continuing to fight the battle through advocacy & awareness, (2) giving another "teal sister" hope and encouragement, and (3) being a role model for not only her daughter but all of those women, men, and families who have been directly or indirectly affected by this terrible disease. We wish Marcie only the best as she continues on her life's journey.

Come Play Golf In Florida with The Belinda Sue Fund!

Get your golf clubs ready because on Saturday, November 15th, The Belinda Sue Fund will be hosting the **Second Annual Tee Off for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research Golf Tournament** at Westchase Golf Club in Tampa, Florida.

The shotgun start will begin at 12:30pm. Golfers will be treated to lunch beforehand as well as dinner after the tournament. There will be unique and fun on-course games as well as Hole-In-One prizes and Longest Drive & Closest to the Pin contests to name a few. We anticipate some great silent auction items again this year as well as a 50/50 raffle, entertainment, and just plain good fun. Online registration will open in mid-August. So check back on our website (www.belindasuefund.org) then to register for the event.

What better way to spend a Saturday in November than outside on a Florida golf course! Many golfers who attended the inaugural tournament can't wait to return as they really enjoyed themselves. We hope to see you out there!!

Did You Know?

- One of the risks for Ovarian Cancer is being of Ashkenazi (European) Jewish descent.
- There are more than 30 different types of Ovarian Cancer which are classified according to the type of cell from which they start. Most tumors start from one of the three common cell types within the ovaries:
 - **Surface Epithelium** – cells covering the lining of the ovaries; account for 85%-90% of all cancers of the ovaries
 - **Germ Cells** – cells that are destined to form eggs; these malignancies occur most often in teenagers and women in their twenties
 - **Stromal cells** – cells that release hormones and connect the different structures of the ovaries; this is a rare malignancy with 70% of these tumors presenting at Stage I.
- The cancers that most often affect women are Breast, Colorectal, Endometrial, Lung, Cervical, Skin, and **Ovarian** Cancers.

The Belinda Sue Fund & Baseball Join Up in Florida!

On June 28th, The Belinda Sue Fund was invited to a Minor League baseball game at Steinbrenner Field in Tampa, FL. It was a Star Wars-themed evening where the home team, Tampa Yankees, battled the Dunedin Blue Jays. We had a table set up in the breezeway just as folks entered the stadium where we were able to promote the upcoming Belinda Sue Fund golf tournament in Florida on November 15th. Local volunteers handed out goodie bags to attendees that contained information on Ovarian Cancer, the upcoming golf tournament, Belinda Sue Fund bumper stickers, awareness bracelets, and pens. The Tampa Yankees also auctioned off a signed jersey of New York Yankees major league pitcher, CC Sabathia, who was pitching in the game while rehabilitating an injury. And the proceeds from the auction were donated to The Belinda Sue Fund by the Tampa Yankees. Overall it was a wonder evening for baseball and promoting awareness of Ovarian Cancer, and we cannot thank the Tampa Yankees organization enough for allowing us to participate!

Make a Donation!

To make a tax-deductible donation, go to www.belindasuefund.org and click on the "Donate" tab

Save-the-Date!!

Event: 3rd Annual Zoo Walk

Sunday, 9/7/2014

Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak

Online registration is now open at www.belindasuefund.org

Event: 2nd Annual Golf Tournament

Saturday, 11/15/2014

Westchase Golf Course, Tampa, FL

Online registration opens mid-Aug 2014

Event: 4th Annual Gala

This event will take place in April 2015; exact date & location TBD; date & location will be posted on our website soon!

Invitations to be mailed & online registration to open Feb 2015



Judy Tibbits, Tom Nantais, Dr. David Gershenson



Orchard Lake Philharmonic Society String Quartet



Cheryl Chodun & Tom Nantais Conducting the Live Auction

The Belinda Sue Fund's 3rd Annual Gala held on May 17, 2014
For more photos visit our website: www.belindasuefund.org