



The Belinda Sue Fund[®]

for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 1

July 2016

An Evening to Remember!

On Saturday, April 16th, The Belinda Sue Fund hosted its 5th Annual Gala: An Evening of Masquerade – Unmask Ovarian Cancer. And what a night it was! Close to 200 attendees filled the ballroom of The Henry in Dearborn wearing fabulous and fun masks in keeping with the masquerade theme. We were delighted to have the Orchard Lake Philharmonic Orchestra return for a fourth year to serenade us during the cocktail hour while Anthony Grupido, a talented magician, showed off his skills with entertaining magic tricks.

Following a delicious dinner, the evening's program commenced with the return of Cheryl Chodun, former WXYZ reporter, as the Mistress of Ceremonies. We are so grateful for Cheryl's continued support of The Belinda Sue Fund in returning each year to emcee our gala. We also couldn't be more pleased to have awarded very special honors to Brenda Beron who received the Teal Tribute Award and Dr. Ramandeep Rattan who received the Making a Difference Award. Ms. Beron, an Ovarian Cancer survivor, committed more than 18 years of service to Gilda's Club Metro Detroit as facilitator of the Ovarian Cancer Support Group. Her dedication to the service of fellow survivors and their families is both remarkable and commendable. She couldn't be a more worthy recipient of the Teal Tribute Award which embodies the exact qualities that Brenda exemplifies. Dr. Rattan, research scientist at Henry Ford Women's Health Services, is a passionate and dedicated individual making great contributions in Ovarian Cancer research. Her passion and commitment only confirmed for us why she so deserving of the Making a Difference Award. We are truly honored that Dr. Rattan received the award and look forward to her continued contributions in the field.

The evening's program concluded with a very exciting live auction where items such as tickets to an Adele Concert, a sailboat excursion on Lake St. Clair, and a Shinola watch were enthusiastically bid upon. The silent and live auctions, coupled with ticket sales and personal donations, resulted in net proceeds of nearly \$15,200, for the evening. A wonderful and memorable time was enjoyed by many with event-goers dancing to the sounds of the band "Generations," and enjoying funny moments at the photo booth provided by Memory Snappers.

We truly thank you for your continued support which will help us to further our mission in promoting awareness and in funding research in finding that necessary reliable screening tool so that Ovarian Cancer can be detected in its earlier stages, and thereby allowing more lives to be saved from this deadly disease.

(See Page 3 for photos from the gala)

5th Annual Zoo Walk – Sep 18th!

Get ready to don your walking shoes! Our 5th Annual Zoo Walk at the Detroit Zoo is less than two months away! Each year we have seen our Walk continue to grow in participants, and we believe this year will surpass our expectations. With September being National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, what better way to bring awareness to this deadly disease while kicking off the autumn season than spending a beautiful day with family and friends at the Zoo?

We will have entertainment and activities, vendors selling their wares, and Cheryl Chodun will, once again, guest emcee the event. There will also be a post-walk program with prizes and recognition. In previous years we have had upwards of thirty teams which were formed either walking in memory or honor of a loved one with Ovarian Cancer. We anticipate a large number of teams to, again, turn out this year for our 5th Annual Walk!

Online registration is now open! For more information and to register, click on the link below: [Zoo Walk Information & Registration](http://www.belindasuefund.org) or go to www.belindasuefund.org to access the link there.

Also, as in previous years you will be able to fundraise online. For any family members or friends who cannot attend the Walk but would still like to support this worthy cause, please use the link below to create your own online fundraising page to ask for donations. It is a simple process to set up your page. Don't forget to select The Belinda Sue Fund as your charity. **Here is the link to create your fundraising page: <https://www.everydayhero.com/us/>.**

So mark your calendar for Sunday, September 18th. Gates open at 7:45am and the Walk begins at 9:00am. Take advantage of early bird registration and save \$5.00 per ticket now through Aug 21st. Early bird tickets are \$30 for adults (age 15 and older) and \$20 for children (ages 2-14). We hope to see you there!!

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A Personal Message

Every issue we feature a special message or personal story of someone who has been affected by Ovarian Cancer either directly or indirectly. In this issue we highlight the story of Jody (Kolbe) White, a young Ovarian Cancer survivor.

The pain was too much. At 17 years old, Jody (Kolbe) White was scared she had appendicitis. In February of 2007, she called her mom, Peggy Kolbe, to take her to the hospital to be evaluated. When she arrived, she was placed on a stretcher in the hall, feeling deserted and afraid. She recalls walking around the Emergency Department with a Foley catheter in her bladder waiting for test results to tell her why she was having abdominal pain. After her first ultrasound, she was told that she needed a gynecology consult. Upon further examination, she learned that she had a softball-size ovarian cyst that would need to be drained or possibly removed, but the procedure would have to wait until the following day as the physician would have to postpone his golf lesson. She recalls her anger as she relives the pain. At one point, she told her medical team, "If you're not going to take it out tonight, just give me a scalpel and I will do it myself." She was set up for the procedure the next day.

Afterward, she was informed that one of her ovaries had to be removed as she had developed an Immature Teratoma, a type of Ovarian Cancer that typically afflicts younger women. In fact, her gynecologist completely cleared her afternoon schedule to bring Jody and her parents into her office to discuss treatment options. Feeling completely blindsided, she heard the word cancer and Chemotherapy for the first time. She learned the words "stage" and "grade." Her only thought was "WOWZA." From that point on, things happened "pronto."

Jody received Chemotherapy every day for five days, then she had a two-week break. She followed this schedule for three months. Since she was so young, she was placed in a separate room that she best describes as a closet, but was grateful for the segregation. She did not want to be sitting in a "Chemo circle" talking with the older people discussing death and dying. She was 17, after all, with her whole life ahead of her. She recalls her first day of Chemotherapy with a fond memory, however. When she walked into the clinic, she was greeted by an older lady, another patient, who presented her with a teddy bear. Her mother, Peggy, smiles as she recalls her daughter's new friend, "She held on tight to that bear and took it everywhere!"

Jody's course had many unexpected events, including developing a "wicked cough" after her first cycle of Chemotherapy. One of her chemotherapeutic agents had to be stopped to prevent permanent damage to her lungs. Later when she had lost a great deal of weight, she



(See "A Personal Message" next column)

"A Personal Message" (con't)

developed a blood clot in her leg when she was once hospitalized for dehydration. It was during that hospital stay that she learned she had two different genetic clotting disorders. Jody felt strong throughout her entire journey. She took on each new day with stoicism and optimism. However, she had had enough when she learned she now had a blood clot in her leg, requiring a procedure she describes as running a RotoRooter from her knee caps to her kidney to rid her of the large clot. She would have to be on yet another drug to prevent further blood clots. That day was the first time throughout her entire journey that Jody cried.

However, her journey was also filled with happiness along the way. When her hair started to fall out, some of her close friends came to her home, wielding scissors, and cut her hair so that she did not have to see it on her pillow every morning. She had a big party at the end of her treatment, and again smiles fondly as she remembers her nurses. The only food Jody could eat to relieve the nausea from her Chemotherapy was Little Caesars breadsticks. Six months after completion of Chemo, with a little help from her parents, Jody started to feel normal again. She picked up the pieces of her life and started to live again.

This month Jody gave birth to her first child - a healthy baby boy, Lane Michael White. Since she had so much Chemotherapy nine years ago, she was seen by High Risk Obstetrics. She decided to forego testing on her baby, as she did not want to know ahead of time if there were any birth defects in her child resulting from the Chemotherapy's effects on her remaining ovary; nor did she want to know the sex of the baby. While fertility preservation was never discussed prior to starting Chemo, she was told that her chances of conception after Chemo were low. She sees her newborn son as nothing short of a miracle. She and her husband, Kyle, will love Lane with all their heart. Jody smiles adding, "There are so few chances for true surprises in life."



Belinda Sue/Mary-Jane Welker Grant Funded

We are happy to announce that the Belinda Sue Fund/Mary-Jane Welker \$50,000 seed grant was officially awarded to Sophia George, PhD of the University of Miami at the [Society of Gynecologic Oncology \(SGO\)](#) Annual Meeting on March 20th in San Diego. Dr. George's work is focused on early detection research in the fallopian tubes where Ovarian Cancer may begin. Specifically, fallopian tube cells obtained from BRCA1 mutation carriers will be studied to understand the effect of the TP53 mutation (most commonly mutated gene) in normal cells and to evaluate the differences in women who do not have a BRCA1 mutation. While we have reached a milestone in delivering this grant and are very excited about Dr. George's research, our work continues to fund this and other research grants in hopes of finding that early detection tool. Your support is so very critical in helping to successfully achieve our mission!



Pictured from L to R: Thomas Nantais, Dr. Anil Sood, Dr. Sophia George, Dr. David Mutch

Did You Know?*

- **Stage 1** Ovarian Cancer means that the cancer is contained to one or both ovaries or fallopian tubes
- Only 15% of Ovarian Cancers are diagnosed at Stage 1
- **Stage 2** means the cancer is in one or both ovaries or fallopian tubes and has spread to other organs (such as the uterus, fallopian tubes, bladder, the sigmoid colon, or the rectum) within the pelvis. It has not spread to lymph nodes or distant sites.
- **Stage 3** means the cancer is in one or both ovaries or fallopian tubes, and one or both of the following are present:
 - has spread beyond the pelvis to the lining of the abdomen
 - has spread to lymph nodes in the back of the abdomen (retroperitoneal lymph nodes)
- **Stage 4** is the most advanced stage of Ovarian Cancer. In this stage the cancer has spread to the inside of the spleen, liver, lungs, or other organs located outside the peritoneal cavity. (The peritoneal cavity is the area enclosed by the peritoneum, a membrane that lines the inner abdomen and some of the pelvis and covers most of its organs.)

**Facts taken from the American Cancer Society*

Make a Donation!

To make a tax-deductible donation, go to www.belindasuefund.org and click on the "Donate" tab or mail a check to Belinda Sue Fund PO Box 210159 Auburn Hills, MI 48321.

PLEASE NOTE: You have the option of making a one-time or recurring donation!

Save-the-Date!!

Event: 5th Annual Zoo Walk

Sunday, September 18, 2016
 Detroit Zoo, Royal Oak, MI
Online registration is now open:
www.belindasuefund.org

Event: 6th Annual Gala

April 2017 (exact date TBD)
 Location TBD
*On-line registration to open
 & invitations to be mailed
 in early March 2017*



*The Belinda Sue Fund's 5th Annual Gala held on April 16, 2016
 For more photos of the Gala visit our website: www.belindasuefund.org*