



The Belinda Sue Fund®

for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research

NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 1

Summer 2017

A Blue Jeans & Bling Blast

It was a fun-filled evening on Saturday, May 13th as close to 200 supporters, decked out in their finest blue jeans and bling, helped make strides towards “stomping out” Ovarian Cancer.

The evening began with the sounds from musicians of the Orchard Lake Philharmonic Society entertaining the guests during the cocktail hour. Many wonderful items were donated for both the silent and live auction, from beautiful pieces of jewelry to sports memorabilia, sail boat cruises to concert tickets, and even a fabulous Shinola watch. Guests were able to bid on some amazing items making the auctions very successful and bringing in over \$10,000 in winning bids.

Following a delicious dinner, the evening’s program got underway where our signature awards were presented to two very deserving recipients. The “Teal Tribute” award was given to Cheryl Chodun who graciously accepted it with heartfelt emotion and gratitude. Cheryl has been a solid supporter of The Belinda Sue Fund for over 5 years, emceeing our Zoo Walk in the Fall and our Annual Gala in the Spring. We couldn’t have found a more deserving individual to receive the Teal Tribute award. We were also very honored to have Dr. Rebecca Liu from the University of Michigan attend and to whom we presented the “Making a Difference” Award. Dr. Liu’s research is focused on circumventing resistance to chemotherapy in Ovarian Cancer and is truly making strides in helping to eradicate this insidious disease.

The remainder of the evening was all about having fun! Following the exciting live auction, the energetic entertainment of the band “Generations” helped folks get their groove on the dance floor. Guests also enjoyed getting their photos taken in the Memory Snappers’ photo booth with great props making for memorable photo strips that they could take home. And the evening was completed with a candy table filled with delicious treats allowing folks to satisfy their sweet tooth before going home. All in all, it was a memorable evening that everyone very much enjoyed. We cannot thank you enough for your support, whether it be time, talent or treasure, in helping to fulfill our mission of increasing Ovarian Cancer awareness and helping fund research in finding an early detection tool for this dreaded disease so that women’s lives can be saved!

(See reverse for photos from the Gala)

Get Your Walking Shoes Ready for the 6th Annual Zoo Walk!

Our 6th Annual Zoo Walk is just around the corner on **Sunday, September 17th** at the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak. Online registration is now open. You can access our registration page at www.belindasuefund.org. And just like in years past, when you register for the Walk, you will also be given the option to create your own fundraising page where you can get family and friends who are not able to attend the Walk to donate online. It will be a very simple process that will allow you to help us raise more money.

We are looking forward to a wonderful event filled with fun and fellowship. We will have entertainment and a fitness warm-up before the Walk and activities for the kids, including face painting. And to start the morning off, there will be morning snacks and coffee. The actual Walk will begin at 9am with a ribbon cutting ceremony, after which everyone will enjoy a non-competitive stroll through the Zoo for about an hour. Following, there will be a post-Walk program where we will award the individual or team who raised the most money a prize. Everyone attending will be automatically entered into a raffle for a gift basket as well. We also anticipate a good number of vendors in attendance selling their wares, with a portion of their sales at the event going back to The Belinda Sue Fund.

We have been blessed to have had five very successful Zoo Walks. Your continued support in this event will go a long way in achieving our mission. So let’s honor those women battling this disease while remembering our fallen heroines who are cheering us on from above.

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Seed Grant Update

Below is a thank you letter from Dr. Sophia George, the researcher from the University of Miami for whom we co-funded a seed grant supporting her research in early detection.

"I am writing this letter to thank you and everyone involved in The Belinda Sue Fund organization and the donors for supporting my work. I am grateful and honored that I was selected as a grantee in the 2016-2017 cycle through the Foundation for Women's Cancer grant cycle. It was extremely important to receive the initial influx of funding for a new investigator like myself, who just established a laboratory to study fallopian tube epithelial cells from women with BRCA mutations and non-carriers.

As you may know, the fallopian tube is thought to be the site of origin of serous ovarian cancer. Since this discovery about 10 years ago, Scientists and Clinicians have begun to study different aspects of the biology of these cells.

Because of this grant and the unwavering support of the Chief of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology, Dr. Brian Slomovitz, at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center in Miami, we have established a cohort of 100 fallopian tube epithelial cell lines cells. These tissues came from women with known high-risk mutations with not just BRCA1 and BRCA2, but RAD51D, PALB2 and Lynch Syndrome: genes known and suspected to

See "Seed Grant" next column

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increase a woman's risk to develop breast and/or ovarian cancer. The women who have consented to participate represent the racial and ethnic (including women from Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Asia) spectra of women burdened with developing this disease.

From our study, we have generated models of the earliest known genomic events to occur – precursor nonmalignant lesions in the fallopian tube. We have identified that a mutation in the p53 gene, a gene that normally prevents cells from proliferating, along with a BRCA mutation decreases a class of antioxidant genes. This class of antioxidant genes are important in protecting the cells' DNA from damage.





We plan on expanding this project to understand:

1) how these antioxidant genes and proteins are changed with these genetic mutations; 2) how the use of chemopreventative (diet or otherwise) measures can increase functionality of these antioxidant genes to improve DNA protection in women with BRCA mutations and 3) how tumor cells use these parts of the antioxidant programs to protect their own DNA from chemotherapy-induced damage resulting in disease recurrence.

I am committed to studying and investigating the biology of the fallopian tube, and to continue advocating and sharing knowledge to different stakeholders in my community, nationally and internationally about early detection and risk reduction strategies associated with ovarian cancer development."

Forever grateful,
Sophia

Did You Know?

-  Ovarian Cancer is diagnosed annually in nearly a quarter of a million women globally, and is responsible for 140,000 deaths each year
-  Diagnosis at an early stage vastly improves a woman's chance of survival
-  Many women mistakenly believe a cervical smear test (or Pap test) will detect Ovarian Cancer
-  Ovarian Cancer is often diagnosed in later stages because a woman may delay seeking help thinking that her symptoms are due to 'the time of the month,' 'menopause,' 'something I ate,' or confused with other common stomach and digestive complaints

Facts taken from www.ovariancancerday.org

Make a Donation!

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

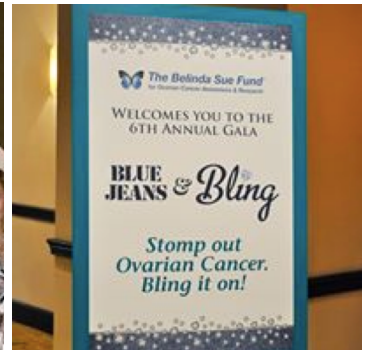
Save-the-Date!!

Event: 6th Annual Zoo Walk

Sunday, 9/17/2017

Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak

Register at: www.belindasuefund.org



To see more photos from our 6th Annual Gala, visit www.facebook.com/thebelindasuefund