



The Belinda Sue Fund[®] for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research

YEAR-END NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Issue 2

December 2014

A Letter from the Chairman...

Dear Friends,

As we conclude the third year since the founding of The Belinda Sue Fund for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research, Inc., I continue to marvel at the unending support of its mission. The overwhelming generosity we have seen from our donors like you has allowed us to, again, achieve our goal of generating over \$100,000 in donations for 2014! Moreover, during the three year history of the Fund, we have received over \$330,000 in monetary donations! After accounting for our event/fundraising expenses, The Belinda Sue Fund generated net proceeds of \$192,000. **Thank you so much!** The majority of these proceeds focused on Ovarian Cancer Awareness, via our billboard and community outreach campaigns, as well as the funding of numerous research projects via our annual "Making a Difference Award," and the initial seed funding of the Belinda Sue Grant via the Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC). The continuing comments I receive weekly around newfound awareness regarding Ovarian Cancer are exactly what we hoped for. This disease continues to be one of the most lethal of all women's cancers, unless caught in its early stages.

Our partnership with FWC continues at a heightened level. Through this partnership, and FWC's access to outstanding researchers, we have been able to start seeding The Belinda Sue Grant, centered around the development of an early-detection tool for Ovarian Cancer. So far, 25% of our \$50,000 funding target has been fulfilled. **Can you imagine if the Belinda Sue Grant makes the definitive discovery of that elusive screening tool and your contribution helped make that possible?!**

In September, we participated in MIOCA's annual Ovarian Cancer "Turn the Towns Teal" campaign, with special emphasis on the City of Dearborn. In October, The Belinda Sue Fund, represented by several of our Board members, was invited to be the designated charity at the annual Sterling Heights High School Football Team's Cancer Awareness Game. It was a great opportunity to tell our story! Also in October, our Fund participated in FWC's Gynecologic Cancer Survivor's Course at Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital...another great event at which our Board was well represented. In early November, some of us also attended FWC's National Race to End Women's Cancer in Washington, DC. With 2,000 walkers on the route, walking up Pennsylvania Avenue toward the U.S. Capitol Building, it was a sight to behold! It was truly a humbling experience, as walkers included survivors, family members, and friends dedicated to this most worthy cause.

(see "Letter" p. 2)

Another Successful Zoo Walk!!

The beautiful weather in early September helped to make our 3rd Annual Walk at the Detroit Zoo another amazing event. With over 1,000 in attendance we couldn't have asked for a better day to help raise awareness of Ovarian Cancer. Cheryl Chodun, once again, was gracious enough to be our guest emcee. She did a wonderful job engaging the crowd and raising the energy level. Dena Raptis, for the third year in a row, warmed up folks with some fun exercises in advance of the Walk start. A special thanks to our deejays, Curt Patterson & Richard Ford, who kept the atmosphere lively and fun with upbeat music. After Tom and his daughter, Caroline, spoke some heartfelt words, the 1-mile Walk began. Katy Rand and Chelsea Jenkins of Kathe Pictures were there to photograph and videotape the Walk, while Ray Manning was on hand to take some great pictures of families and teams in front of the fountain. All photos are available on our Facebook page ([facebook.com/thebelindasuefund](https://www.facebook.com/thebelindasuefund)).

The kids not only enjoyed the sights and sounds of the Zoo, but were also occupied with entertaining activities and games. Many thanks go to Lauren Messner, who oversaw the kids' area, which also included a "green screen" where people could have their photo superimposed next to a giraffe. The face painting, teal hair extensions, and henna art were also a huge hit!

It was truly a wonderful day where, all in all, we raised \$25,000 in net proceeds toward Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research. A special thank you goes out to all of our sponsors, vendors, donors, and volunteers for helping to make it so successful. We are looking forward to next year's event which will be held on **Sunday, September 27, 2015** so be sure to save the date!!

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"Letter" (con't)

Our two signature events, The Belinda Sue Fund Gala and The Belinda Sue Fund Zoo Walk, were successful well beyond expectations. We raised over \$25,000 in net proceeds for each event, which has allowed us to continue our awareness campaign and the funding of The Belinda Sue Seed Grant. The Zoo Walk drew over 1,000 participants, including over 25 very special teams walking for a survivor or a loved one who has passed. Our Second Annual Belinda Sue Fund Golf Outing in November was also a huge success. We hosted 70 golfers in a scramble format on a beautiful 75 degree sun-filled day in Tampa, Florida. We raised nearly \$10,000 at that event as well.

As we look forward to 2015, our fundraising focus will continue to be on awareness, through our events, as well as the periodic use of billboards and increasing opportunities to spread the word via television and other media outlets. But, we would also like to complete the funding of The Belinda Sue Seed Grant and achieve our \$50,000 goal. This type of grant seeding often results in additional seven figure contributions from pharmaceutical research arms. Additionally, we will, again, place a Belinda Sue Fund billboard on I-95 between New York and Florida as "snowbirds" make their way south in January and February. Our first billboard was located in North Carolina this past February, and we received several emails from folks letting us know they saw it. Remember...awareness, awareness, awareness!

As the Holiday Season is upon us, I, again, thank you for your generous support as we continue on our compelling mission. As you think about your year-end charitable contributions, please consider helping us complete the seeding of The Belinda Sue Grant. By identifying Ovarian Cancer early, women have a fighting chance. We believe the outcome of that Grant funding will provide that fighting chance. I wish all of you a joyous Holiday Season and a prosperous 2015! Please spend time with your loved ones....that is what really counts in life!

All My Best,
Tom



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 would like to feature a young woman in the public eye, Diem Brown. While Diem has recently lost her battle with Ovarian Cancer, she left behind a wonderful legacy which gives hope to others who are battling health-related issues.

Diem Brown was a fighter; in fact she called herself "a warrior." Brown first splashed onto the public scene in 2006 when she competed in an MTV Reality Show called "Real World/Road Rules Challenge." But Ovarian Cancer can strike at any age. Just three weeks prior to the filming of the show in 2005, Diem was diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer at the very young age of 24. In her debut challenge during the filming of the show she revealed her illness, much to the surprise of her castmates and the production crew. While battling her disease, she and her partner went on to place fourth in the competition. The star subsequently received multiple rounds of chemotherapy. As she was completing her cancer treatment, she competed in a follow-up MTV challenge series the next year called "The Duel." A short time thereafter, Diem was considered in remission from Ovarian Cancer.

In June 2012, Diem received a call from her physician letting her know that the cancer had returned. The star was determined to beat cancer again. She said, "I'm stubborn, I'm southern, and I'm coming after this thing full force." After several rounds of chemotherapy, she was told in February 2013 that she was, again, "cancer-free."

Diem knew it was important to not only continue her own personal battle, but also to help others who may not have

(See "A Personal Message" next column)

"A Personal Message" (con't)

the access to resources while fighting their own health-related challenges. So she created MedGift (www.medgift.com). The motto of MedGift is "Skip the flowers and give the gift of support." MedGift provides online support tools for those battling any sort of health-related issue from cancer to autism to MS to elderly/aging needs with physical, emotional, and/or financial support. Diem took the question of family & friends asking, "How can we help?" and answered that question by bridging the gap between those who want to help and those who need help, as explained on MedGift's website: **Through our MedGift support page, the person experiencing a health related hardship or need can list their Financial, Physical and Emotional needs allowing friends and family to select the areas they can help them with, including those listed in a personalized "registry."**

As MedGift continued to grow in its success with helping others around the world, Diem once again faced a third diagnosis of Ovarian Cancer in the Summer of 2014. The prognosis, unfortunately, was more bleak as the cancer had spread to her colon and lining of her stomach. However, the poor outlook given by her doctors did not stop Diem from continuing to fight until the very end -- up until her last breath on November 14, 2014 at the young age of 34.

But while Diem may have lost this battle, the war with Ovarian Cancer wages on and the hope is that one day it will be defeated. And Diem's fighting spirit lives on through her legacy and MedGift. Helping, in even the smallest of ways, others who are ailing can not only lift their spirits, but give them the hope and courage to continue on through their adversity. What a wonderful legacy Diem Brown left behind!

(Taken from articles in People Magazine & US Magazine, and Medgift.com)

A Fantastic Golf Outing!

Fore!! What a picture perfect day for golf in Florida with sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-70s! Roughly 70 golfers attended our second annual Tee Off for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research Golf Tournament at Westchase Golf Club in Tampa on November 15th. A delicious lunch of Cuban sandwiches, stuffed potatoes, and deviled crab kicked off the tournament which featured fun on-course contests, a silent auction, and fantastic raffle prizes. Golfers were treated to a delicious barbecue chicken dinner and deejay entertainment after returning to the clubhouse. Many thanks to our sponsors, donors, and volunteers who really helped make the quality of this tournament second to none. Overall, we collected approximately \$10,000 in monetary support!




National Race to End Women's Cancer


On November 2, 2014, Tom Nantais and Michele Munkarah of The Belinda Sue Fund attended the National Race to End Women's Cancer in Washington DC sponsored by the Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC). The Belinda Sue Fund is currently in the process of funding a seed grant through FWC towards research in finding an early-detection tool for Ovarian Cancer. Although the weather was brisk, it was a well-attended, successful event!





Did You Know?

 Research suggests a relationship in the number of menstrual cycles in a woman's lifetime and her risk of developing Ovarian Cancer. A woman is at increased risk if she:

- Started menstruating at an early age (before age 12)
- Has not given birth to any children
- Has had her first child after age 30
- Experienced menopause after age 50
- Has never taken oral contraceptives¹

 Infertility also increases the risk of Ovarian Cancer¹

 Ovarian Cancer rates are highest in women aged 55-64 years¹

 Various studies have looked at a relationship between obesity and Ovarian Cancer. Overall it seems that obese women (i.e. with a Body Mass Index of 30 or greater) have an increased risk of Ovarian Cancer²

¹ www.ovariancancer.org

² www.cancer.org

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

The Belinda Sue Fund

PO Box 210159 Auburn Hills, MI 48321

Help us fund our seed grant!!

Save-the-Date!!

4th Annual Gala

Saturday, 4/18/2015

The Henry, Dearborn, MI

Online registration will open & invitations will be mailed in February 2015

4th Annual Zoo Walk

Sunday, 9/27/2015

Detroit Zoo, Royal Oak, MI

Online registration will open in July 2015

3rd Annual Golf Tournament

November 2015 - exact date TBD

Westchase Golf Club, Tampa, FL

Online registration will open in September 2015



The Belinda Sue Fund's 3rd Annual Zoo Walk held on September 7, 2014
For more photos and a short video visit our website: www.belindasuefund.org