



The Belinda Sue Fund®

for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research

YEAR-END NEWSLETTER

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December 2015

A Letter from the Chairman...

Dear Friends,

As we conclude the fourth year since the founding of The Belinda Sue Fund for Ovarian Cancer Awareness and Research, Inc., I continue to be amazed by the incredible generosity of our supporters. This generosity by you has allowed us to, again, achieve our goal of generating over \$100,000 in donations for 2015, including a very generous grant of \$10,000 from the Center for Arab American Philanthropy last March. Thank you so much! I continue to speak with individuals who have learned about our mission through our billboards, website, social media, or by attending one of our events. These conversations continue to inspire us to reach higher in our quest to eradicate Ovarian Cancer. This disease continues to be one of the most lethal of all women's cancers, unless caught early in its development.

In early December I had the opportunity to attend the monthly Ovarian Cancer Support Group at Gilda's Club Metro Detroit in Royal Oak. This group has been led by Brenda Beron for the past eighteen years, and it has provided a safe, supportive environment for many, many Ovarian Cancer Survivors. Unfortunately, in the last ten years, twenty-two of these "Warriors" have not survived, and were taken by this wretched disease. On the night I attended the group, Brenda was honored for her long tenure, as she begins her retirement. For the work Brenda has undertaken over the last nearly two decades, she will be honored as the 2016 Belinda Sue Fund "Teal Tribute" award winner at our Fifth Annual Belinda Sue Fund Gala this coming April. My sincere congratulations to Brenda for a job very well done!

Our partnership with the Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC) continues at a heightened level. Through the partnership with FWC and its access to outstanding researchers, our fully-funded grant, *The Belinda Sue Fund / Mary-Jane Welker Ovarian Cancer Early Detection Research Grant* will be placed with a prestigious research institution in the spring of 2016. We are extremely excited with this development! **We will now be one step closer to the definitive discovery of the elusive screening tool, and your contribution helped make that possible!**

Our two signature events, The Belinda Sue Fund Gala and The Belinda Sue Fund Zoo Walk were successful well-beyond our expectations. We raised over \$45,000 in net proceeds for the combined events, which has allowed us to continue our awareness campaign and complete the funding of The Belinda Sue Fund/Mary-Jane Welker Seed Grant. The Zoo Walk drew nearly 1,000 participants, including 34 very special teams walking for a survivor or for a loved one who has passed. Our third annual Belinda Sue Fund golf outing,

(See "Letter" p.2)

A Fantastic Day at the Zoo!

A picture-perfect beautiful Fall Day with temperatures in the 70's was the backdrop for our 4th Annual Zoo Walk held at the Detroit Zoo on Sunday, September 27th. With close to 1000 attendees which included over 30 teams, individual walkers, volunteers, and vendors, we had another fabulous turnout!

Cheryl Chodun, former WXYZ news reporter, returned for a third year in a row to be our energetic and engaging Mistress of Ceremonies. Cheryl did a great job getting the crowd pepped up and ready to spend an enjoyable morning at the zoo, all for a great cause to spread awareness of Ovarian Cancer and raise money to fund research for a reliable early-detection tool. We couldn't be more grateful to Cheryl who has dedicated her time and talent not only at our Zoo Walks, but also at our Annual Galas held each Spring. And to help Cheryl in getting the crowd engaged, we had Curt Patterson and Richard Ford return for a fourth year as our deejays to provide the lively and fun music; as well as Dena Raptis, fitness trainer extraordinaire of Fit Enterprises, to warm-up the folks and get the juices flowing in advance of the mile-long walk around the zoo. Dena, too, returned for a fourth year and we couldn't be more appreciative of her and Richard & Curt for volunteering their time and talent.

The walk commenced with our traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony which included founder of The Belinda Sue Fund, Tom Nantais and his daughter & granddaughters: Caroline, Sophia & Emma Maykovich. Folks enjoyed the sights of the zoo, where the animals were especially active that morning, and everyone had the opportunity to have group photos taken at the fountain by a very talented photographer, Ray Manning. Both pre and post-Walk, families and friends enjoyed face painting by Fantastic Face Painters, henna art tattooing, teal hair extensions, and chair massages from Mark Bertrand, Barbara Sherrill, and Kimberly Wardell.

(See "Zoo Walk" p.2)

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"Letter" (con't)

Tee Off for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research, held in November was also a huge success. We hosted 62 golfers in a scramble format on a beautiful 75 degree sun-filled day in Tampa, Florida.

As we look forward to 2016, our fundraising focus will continue to be on awareness via our events, as well as the periodic use of billboards and increasing opportunities to spread the word via television and other media interviews. Additionally, we will continue supporting *The Belinda Sue Fund / Mary-Jane Welker Ovarian Cancer Early Detection Research Grant*, in an effort to accelerate the work conducted by an outstanding research team. This type of grant seeding often results in additional seven figure contributions from pharmaceutical research arms.

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 continue our quest of funding early-detection Ovarian Cancer research. 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 2016! Please enjoy special time with your families and take time to reflect how you have helped make a difference by your continued support of The Belinda Sue Fund for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research!

All My Best,
Tom

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 journey of Jasmine Bridges, a young Ovarian Cancer survivor.

In October 2014, Jasmine Bridges was invited to a cancer event because her aunt was being honored as a lung cancer survivor, and each member on the panel of survivors spoke about their accounts and battles with the disease. There was one resounding phrase from each survivor, regardless of age, race and even type of cancer, and that was, **"Early detection is key."** At the time, Jasmine did not know how this would impact her life or why this stood out. But the week following the event that phrase kept replaying in her mind; so much so that Jasmine decided to make an appointment with a new primary physician.

In the past, doctors always told Jasmine that her health problems such as irregular menstrual cycles, unwanted facial hair, and acne were normal for her age and body size and that losing weight could possibly help with her health issues. After prayerful thought, Jasmine met with this new primary physician. She realized after speaking to this doctor for just ten minutes that she was already more thorough than any other doctor she had ever seen prior. At the end of the appointment that physician had diagnosed Jasmine with PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) and gave her a prescription for metformin to help with her weight and the other symptoms of PCOS.

Jasmine also had an annual OB/GYN appointment scheduled the following month, again with a new doctor, and hopefully she would confirm the PCOS diagnosis. This new OB/GYN, too, was very thorough and agreed that it did sound like PCOS based on the symptoms. However, she wanted to confirm this so Jasmine underwent a transvaginal ultrasound. The ultrasound showed that she had a solid mass tumor on her left ovary and Jasmine was required to have an MRI. She had the MRI whose results showed that the tumor had completely invaded her left ovary. Her doctor advised immediate surgery. Jasmine discussed the surgery with her husband who encouraged her to undergo the procedure. But she hadn't quite gotten over the shock that at just 25 years old she had to make such a life-altering decision. She also wondered how this would affect her chances of conceiving a baby as well as the effects on her hormones and overall emotional well-being.

(See "A Personal Message" next column)

"A Personal Message" (con't)

On February 23, she underwent surgery which confirmed a granulosa cell tumor, staged at IC. The surgeon left intact the normal portion of Jasmine's ovary, but it was decided that a gynecologist-oncologist would remove the rest of the ovary and other organs, if necessary, in two weeks. Two weeks later Jasmine underwent a second surgery where the remainder of her left ovary, fallopian tube, appendix, omentum and eighteen lymph nodes were removed along with bursting a cyst on the right ovary. Jasmine spent a week in the hospital following this surgery, depending on both family and friends for basic care.

During that time in the hospital, Jasmine continued to rely on her strong and abiding faith, and her supportive husband, who is a minister, to help her through this. Upon discharge from the hospital, Jasmine received great news: Her pathology report came back clean with no signs of any further cancer.

It's wonderful to hear that Jasmine's journey has a happy ending, and that she listened to her body along with the words at her aunt's cancer event that *"Early detection is key."* Ovarian Cancer can strike at any age, and while it typically affects post-menopausal women in their 60s and older, it does not discriminate and can affect women of any age. So all women should listen closely to their bodies and trust their instincts. If they feel something is not right then see a physician. Most importantly, be your own advocate!

To learn more about Jasmine's journey, visit her blog site: www.tealweovercome.org.

"Zoo Walk" (con't)

We are also thankful for the many vendors who sold their wares with a percentage of their sales that morning being donated back to The Belinda Sue Fund. The post-Walk program concluded with a raffle where many beautiful baskets were given away along with recognizing Dana LeBar and Team LeBar with a beautiful basket for raising the most money online in advance of the Walk!





We are so grateful to everyone who supports us in making this endeavor such a success! We are especially thankful for the walkers who come out in droves each year to help us raise awareness of this deadly disease in hopes that we find a reliable early-detection tool so that many more lives can be saved! And don't forget to mark your calendar for next year's 5th Annual Zoo Walk which will be held on **Sunday, September 18, 2016** with registration beginning in July 2016. We hope to see you there!!

The Sharon Elaine Foundation

The Belinda Sue Fund had the great pleasure of meeting Shantel Pinchem, founder of the Sharon Elaine Foundation. Shantel's mother, Sharon Elaine, was diagnosed with Stage IV Ovarian Cancer and after a hard-fought battle passed away in October 2011. Sharon Elaine was a crucial part of creating Remy Girls, Inc. (www.remygirls.com) and the driving force in bringing quality human hair extensions to the metro Detroit community. It was during the startup of Remy Girls that Sharon Elaine, unfortunately, learned she had Ovarian Cancer. In her mother's memory, Shantel created the foundation whose mission is to help women and children who are cancer survivors and currently in treatment or recently diagnosed by donating custom wigs. Their goal is to provide 100% human hair wigs to these individuals. We are so grateful to have met Shantel and her family who are making such a selfless and incredible commitment in Sharon Elaine's memory. Those individuals receiving wigs, we know, are truly grateful for such generosity.

To learn more about the Sharon Elaine Foundation or to make a hair donation, visit their website: www.sharonelaine.org or Facebook page: www.facebook.com/sharonelainefoundation.

Did You Know?

-  Ovarian Cancer is diagnosed in nearly 250,000 women *globally* each year
-  Ovarian Cancer is responsible for approximately 140,000 deaths *globally* each year
-  Unlike some other cancers, developing and developed nations are similarly affected by the disease
-  The ratio between cancer mortality and cancer incidence is highest with Ovarian Cancer as compared to Breast Cancer and other women's "below-the-belt" cancers both nationally and globally:

- **Uterine Cancer: 26%**
Incidence: 288,387 Mortality: 73,854
- **Breast Cancer: 33%**
Incidence: 1,384,155 Mortality: 458,503
- **Cervical Cancer: 52%**
Incidence: 530,232 Mortality: 275,008
- **Ovarian Cancer: 62%**
Incidence: 224,747 Mortality: 140,163

**Facts taken from WHO GLOBOCAN*

A Great Day for Golf!

We couldn't have asked for a better day for our 2015 Tee Off for Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Research Golf Tournament held in Tampa, FL on November 14th. We returned for a third year to Westchase Golf Club where 62 golfers had a great time driving, chipping, and putting for Ovarian Cancer awareness and research. Bill Currie Ford returned for a third year as our "Hole-in-One" Sponsor where they offered up a 2015 Ford Mustang if someone were to make a hole in one. We had a few close shots but, unfortunately, no one drove off in the Mustang. We also want to thank Sullivan Cotter and Associates and American Strategic Insurance for their Birdie Sponsorships, as well as Wimberly Claims and Winthrop Liquors for being Beverage Cart Sponsors. The golfers were treated to a fabulous lunch of Cuban sandwiches, deviled crab, and stuffed potatoes from Brocato's Sandwich Shop at the outset of the event. The evening concluded with a delicious barbecue chicken dinner and awards ceremony. Fantastic raffle prizes were given away and great silent auction items were bid on. Overall, we raised about \$6,500 in net proceeds and are looking forward to next year's event!

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

Save-the-Date!!

Event: 5th Annual Gala

Saturday, 4/16/2016

The Henry, Dearborn, MI

Invitations to be mailed and on-line registration to open February 2016

Event: 5th Annual Zoo Walk

Sunday, 9/18/2016

The Detroit Zoo, Royal Oak, MI

On-line registration to open July 2016

Event: 4th Annual Golf Tournament

November 2016 (specific date TBD)

Westchase Golf Club, Tampa, FL



The Belinda Sue Fund's 4th Annual Zoo Walk held on September 27, 2015
For more photos of the Zoo Walk and Golf Tournament visit our website: www.belindasuefund.org