

The Palchak Connection

Hope for a Cure... Begins with Research

Spring 2015

THE JACQUALYN PALCHAK
CANCER FUND

Volume 4 Issue 1



PCR
ONCOLOGY

Clinical Trials Updates

David Palchak MD

In the Fall 2014 newsletter, I wrote about Novartis selecting us to work on their Phase II drug development program, testing new drugs aimed at specific cancer-causing genes. Since then, these trials have been nicknamed "basket trials" and have made the news as a very promising line of research. We have enrolled three patients in these trials (probably the first patients in SLO County to receive treatment in "basket trials".)

In March 2015, we joined the National Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP), essentially establishing a small satellite of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in Pismo Beach. This increases access to new NCI-sponsored clinical trials for local patients. Because of efficiencies in the NCORP, overhead for the research program will decrease, permitting us to use more of our resources for research and patient services.

We have also been discovered by United Bioscience Corporation and asked to participate in clinical trials they oversee, and we remain active in the Mayo Clinic's Academic and Community Cancer Research United (ACCRU) network.

As a result of these changes, more patients have chosen to participate in clinical trials in the last 6-months than ever before.

Fundraising Campaign Gets Results

As we wrap up our fiscal year, the Board of Directors of the Jacquelyn Palchak Cancer Fund (JPCF) would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the generosity of our local community.

Cancer research programs have had a significant impact on the care and treatment of cancer patients. This research would not be possible without the support of nonprofits such as the JPCF.

The JPCF is a nonprofit organization of which every dollar donated goes directly into local cancer research programs and the care of our local cancer patients.

Last November the Board of Directors mailed 900 letters to our local community members seeking donations. The response to our mailing was overwhelming. We received over \$12,000! We are all very fortunate indeed to live in such a beautiful and compassionate community.

Fall 2015 Event

7th Annual Cancer Survivors

Celebration!

This September JPCF will once again be hosting this meaningful event of presentations, demonstrations, testimonials and a delicious BBQ Chicken lunch provided by the Arroyo Grande Lions Club. We'll keep you posted for the date!



A Cancer Story

By Marie Palchak

None of us knows what the future holds or what unforeseen challenges lie just around the corner. Cindy Hanes had suspected that something could be wrong, but several

mammograms were negative and nothing was visible on x-rays. She persisted with her medical team and eventually saw a surgeon. A biopsy revealed Stage III Infiltrating Lobular cancer of the breast. She was diagnosed

March 17, 2014 on her 59th birthday.

Cindy's experience as a hospice nurse, along with her intelligent and thoughtful nature, served her well as she considered her options. With her choices laid out before her, and trusting her doctors, she decided to make short-term sacrifices for a long-term gain. She completed surgery, chemotherapy and radiation by mid-November.

Throughout her cancer therapy, Cindy received great love and support from her husband, Sam.

Cindy was used to taking care of him and others, but now she needed to be taken care of. Sam offered to take her to all her appointments and treatments, but after the first one she decided to do as much as she could for herself. Cindy was glad to retain some control over her life, some independence.

(Continued on reverse)



The PCR Research Team

The PCR Oncology Research Team consists of Dr. David Palchak, Principal Investigator; Lori Robertson, IRB Regulatory Specialist; and Cheryl Meruelo, Clinical Research Coordinator/Data Manager.

Lori Robertson has been on staff for seven years, overseeing all issues pertaining to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). An IRB is comprised of people (physicians, laypersons and administrators) who review research to assure that patients in a study are aware and consent to any physical or psychological risks related to participation in a clinical trial.

In recent years additional work has been added to her position including the opening of studies; monitoring reports pertaining to each study; as well as maintaining IRB files and assuring they are audit ready.

During her time off, Lori enjoys playing tennis and traveling.

Cheryl Meruelo joined the research team last August, replacing our long-time Research Coordinator, Diane DeVos Schmidt, who left in December to pursue a career as a nurse practitioner.

Cheryl's responsibilities include recruiting and screening patients; monitoring patients for protocol adherence; processing and shipping specimens required by some studies; and submitting data collected from study patients to study sponsors.

Cheryl's hobbies include motorcycle touring and spending time with her pet pug, Winston.

The success of this program is measured by the quality of its staff. Thank you to Lori and Cheryl for their dedication and commitment to cancer research in our community.



Cheryl Meruelo (left)
and Lori Robertson (right)



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A Cancer Story (Continued from reverse)

Cindy remembers having to take steroids and being unable to sleep for days at a time. Together, she and Sam would "binge watch" their favorite shows and movies. Sam also took it upon himself to keep family and friends updated as to Cindy's progress via email. Sam was there for her in so many important ways.

While undergoing her cancer treatment, Cindy felt comforted and cared for by her oncology team. Dr. Palchak, his nurses and the office staff played a vital role in her therapy and recovery. She used her new-found gift of time to be 'more present', experiencing life in the moment. She used her time during treatment for prayer and reflection. Her job was to "focus on getting well".

Cindy returned to work full-time in December 2014 as an intake nurse for Central Coast Hospice. Their gifts of support were a real blessing. This March, Cindy celebrated her 60th birthday walking across the Golden Gate Bridge with Sam by her side. She is grateful for the many moments, big and small, that presented themselves because of her cancer diagnosis. Today Cindy is confident and 'free', ready to live life well.

**Jacquelyn Palchak Cancer Fund
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A federally recognized 501(c)3 non-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors.

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Contact us if you prefer receiving our newsletter electronically.

**THE RECIPE CORNER
Spinach Strawberry Salad**

The abundance of fresh, sweet strawberries available at local stands and Farmers



Markets makes this salad a natural choice. On top of that, spinach, strawberries and almonds are three cancer-fighting foods!

Ingredients

Salad:

- 1½ cups strawberries, hulled & quartered
- ¼ cup Herb Vinaigrette (recipe below)
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh mint
- 1 (6-ounce) package fresh baby spinach
- 2 tablespoons sliced almonds, toasted
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Combine strawberries, ¼ cup vinaigrette, mint, and spinach in a large bowl; toss gently to coat. Sprinkle with almonds and pepper; serve immediately.

Herb Vinaigrette:

- 9 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons honey
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup canola oil
- 3 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh chives, minced

Combine the first three ingredients in a medium bowl; slowly whisk in oil until combined. Stir in basil and chives. Cover and store remaining vinaigrette in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Fundraising Efforts are GREATLY Appreciated!!



Bingo for Breast Cancer

Last October, the Central Coast Women's League held their annual "Bingo for Breast Cancer" fundraiser. This year the Jacquelyn Palchak Cancer Fund was one of two local nonprofits selected to receive their proceeds.

In December, Donna Phillips, President and Sandy Woolley, fundraising chair, presented Marie Palchak with a check for \$6,400. Their donation is being used to open a breast cancer trial to refine hormonal treatment of breast cancer in women at an early

stage. The Board of Directors is grateful to the Women's League for their generosity and support.

KZOZ & Mullahey Ford Radio Promotion

Special thanks to the folks of Mullahey Ford and KZOZ 93.3 radio who parked their mobile studio at the Arroyo Grande car dealership for their annual on the air "song request for donations" promotion in December. JPCF received \$350 from proceeds raised. Thank you!!