

The Palchak Connection

Hope for a Cure... Begins with Research

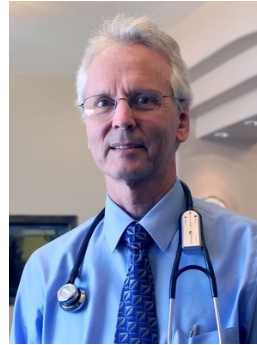
*** Spring 2023 ***

THE JACQUALYN PALCHAK
CANCER FUND

Volume 12 Issue 1

Colon Cancer at 33

By Donna Glass



Quality of Care

What if the National Cancer Institute audited your oncologist's practice and found no problems?

As PCR's research program has evolved, we have grown to function as a satellite

of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The NCI routinely audits quality of care and research at satellites like ours. PCR has passed 2 of these audits already in 2023, assuring our patients that we meet the highest standards for patient care and research.

PCR was the first practice in the region to establish a research program, thus first to submit to external audits of quality of care. We have been passing these audits since 1994, assuring our patients of high-quality care for decades.

Many Thanks!

The JPCF Board would like to thank Milan for sharing his story. We are grateful to all of you for your continued support of cancer research. Advances in cancer treatment have benefitted many local patients, such as Milan.

Thank you to our Donors!



In November, JPCF mailed out our annual appeal letter to more than 1,000 members of the community seeking donations to support the cancer research that is being done locally at PCR

Oncology. This year's campaign totaled close to \$25,000 in donations.

Funds raised make it possible for PCR Oncology to continue as a satellite site for the National Cancer Institute. Your financial support gives cancer patients life sustaining treatment options and assures the preservation of local cancer research through clinical trials.

We are so grateful for your support!

Research Leads to Progress in Medicine

By David Palchak, MD

Milan's Chemotherapy

(See column to the left)

When this regimen was first developed, 12-cycles of chemotherapy were administered over 24-weeks. PCR Oncology participated in an international research effort comparing 6 cycles over 12-weeks with 12-cycles over 24-weeks. Results were published in March of 2018 and revealed that only the highest-risk stage-3 colon cancer patients should consider 24-weeks of treatment. Milan benefited from this advancement, receiving only half the treatment that would have been administered prior to 2018.

Rising Cancer Incidence in Young

An annual review of cancer statistics in 2023 "CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians" reveals that the incidence of colon cancer in people younger than 50 (a group not subject to screening) has increased 2% per year over the last 11 years. The cause of this increase is uncertain, but the authors speculate it is due to environmental factors.

Rosie and Penny, Fundraising Warriors!

Two ladies in our local community go above and beyond at raising funds for JPCF in the name of breast cancer and for local cancer research. We applaud the faithfulness and commitment, year after year, by Rosie Saenz and Penny Rodriguez at fulfilling their mission to support cancer research. We are a greater community because of Rosie and Penny!

This year Rosie, pictured below to the right of JPCF President Marie Palchak, raised \$2,200 among family, friends and colleagues.

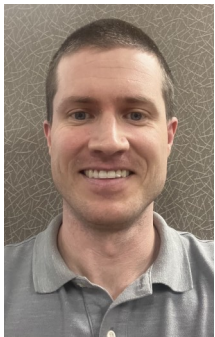
Each year Rosie comes up with a creative theme.

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Milan, pronounced with the long "i" sound is a healthy and fit 34-year-old. He is a smart, pragmatic and caring individual. Milan Limbo has lived on the Central Coast since 2000. He has an older brother who's married and lives in Oregon, and although his mother passed away 6 years ago, he's fortunate to still have his supportive dad. Milan works in the Elections division of the San Luis Obispo County Clerk-Recorder's Office.

Milan's cancer story is incredible and hard to imagine at the same time. It all began in January 2022 when one day he began having stomach pains. He thought that he'd eaten something that didn't agree with him. The pain came in gentle waves at first and then began to get worse. He drove himself to the emergency room (ER) at Arroyo Grande Hospital that afternoon. It was recommended that he drink lots of fluids but if his symptoms became worse, he should return to the ER. He went home and the pain began to get progressively worse. He



then thought that he might have a hernia. He ended up driving himself back to the ER late that night. Milan remembers the pain being excruciating and unbelievable. He was given blood tests and a CT scan. The results of the tests showed a cancerous tumor in his colon. He

needed surgery immediately; it was a matter of life and death. With no time to process the diagnosis or think about options, he knew that it was what had to be done.

Milan had a great surgeon that removed his cancerous tumor (9.4 cm), 23 lymph nodes and part of his large intestine. He had to have a colostomy bag and spent the next few weeks in the hospital. He was released to go home but after 2 days being back, he had to be readmitted to the hospital for an extended time due to needing special care with his recovery.

Milan was diagnosed with Sigmoid Colon Cancer, Stage II. Although, a common cancer, it is rare for someone in their 30's to have that type of cancer.

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Daffodils as Gifts of Hope



Cheerful bright yellow daffodils are some of the first flowers to bloom in the spring and are

considered a representation of rebirth and new beginnings.

Above L-R: PCR Staff - Nixie Gaxiola, Emilie Cole and Ivory Gallegos. Below L-R: PCR's Dr. Erick Hjortsvang and Ivory Gallegos.

As a symbolic "Gift of Hope", each year during a week in March, JPCF President Marie Palchak assembles vases of fresh daffodils for PCR Oncology patients.



Marie has continued this tradition for many years as a gesture of hope for PCR's brave and resilient cancer patients.

Colon Cancer at 33

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Milan was referred to oncologist, Dr. Erick Hjortsvang. He was told that his cancer had a 7% reoccurrence but if he were to receive chemotherapy treatment, his cancer would have a 3% reoccurrence. Milan chose to go ahead with the treatment which consisted of 12 weeks with 6 two-week cycles. He would be prepped, receive a 1st bolus dose and then go home with an Infusion pump.

He would return after 46 hours to have the pump removed from his port. Milan would have the next week of rest and then start the treatment all over again. He remembers the side effects of nauseousness and fatigue being the hardest part of dealing with the treatment. He was thankful when his treatment ended last June.

Milan's last 2 CT scans of tumor markers and lab reports look good, his cancer is in remission.

Throughout Milan's cancer experiences, he has been able to see the silver linings. For one, he has met a lot of kind people and credits the doctors and healthcare workers for helping him get through his cancer this past year.

Since his treatments have ended, his

colostomy bag was reversed, and he no longer has the pain. He's at a good place in his life and feels grateful for making it through the past year with all the challenges and obstacles that came his way. Milan doesn't feel that he's any more special than the other person, but I am astounded by his story and how well he handled himself throughout the entire ordeal with his cancer journey.

Milan hopes that his story will help to give some insight about cancer, give hope to others and encourage them to understand that the process won't be the same for everyone but there can be a good outcome.

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PO Box 1614, Pismo Beach, CA 93448
805-710-3113

www.PalchakCancerFund.org

Rosie and Penny, Fundraising Warriors!

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This year Rosie incentivized her donors giving by announcing that anyone who made a donation over \$25.00 would receive decorative gloves and a teacup set.

From October through December, Penny from **Penny's All American Café** located at 1053 Price Street in Pismo Beach, sold T-shirts, sweatshirts, coffee mugs and more to the patrons of her café, with the proceeds going directly to the JPCF. During the three-month period Penny raised over \$7,000!

Our deepest appreciation and gratitude to these two Fundraising Warriors!

Pictured L-R: JPCF's Marie Palchak and Penny Rodriguez

Save The Date!

Be sure to mark your calendars for
Saturday, October 21, 2023 for our

Annual Cancer Survivor Celebration!

Since 2009, JPCF has hosted this luncheon with informational guest speakers and special gifts for cancer survivor attendees. The Lions Club of Arroyo Grande will once again be serving up a fabulous chicken barbecue!