

The Palchak Connection

Hope for a Cure... Begins with Research

Spring 2018

THE JACQUALYN PALCHAK
CANCER FUND

Volume 7 Issue 1

JPCF - Serving our Community since 2003

JPCF has been supporting local cancer research and providing patient services in our community for 15 years. Your donations help to assure the preservation of local cancer research, while giving patients treatment options. Spread the word that local cancer research is making a difference in the lives of people right here in southern San Luis Obispo County.

We appreciate your generous support!

Thank you to our supporters:

- Penny's All American Café, \$7,100.00
- Rosie Saenz' Fundraiser, \$605.00
- 5-Cities Girls Softball League, \$290.00

In the fall, the community showed their support of local cancer research through our mail campaign. Those donations totaled \$14,840! Thank you!



Ms. C has stage III colon cancer. Her cancer has a mutation predicted to make it sensitive to one of the new immunotherapies. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has recently opened a clinical trial comparing standard chemotherapy with or without a new immunotherapy for this type of colon cancer. I recently met with Ms. C to review her history and treatment options. She made an informed decision to participate in the clinical trial involving A021502. This anti-cancer strategy combines chemotherapy with cancer medications to help stop the growth of tumor cells, either by killing the cells, by stopping them from dividing

or by stopping them from spreading.

Sarah Estrada, our Research Coordinator, contacted the regional NCORP (NCI Community Oncology Research Program) office in Las Vegas informing them of our interested patient. Ms. C was screened for eligibility and the NCORP opened A021502 at our office.

We're now in the process of obtaining "pre-study tests," blood work, imaging that will be reviewed and screening for eligibility again. Then we will "register and randomize" Ms. C to A021502. The NCI will randomly assign her to standard chemotherapy or the same treatment plus immunother-

apy. She'll start treatment no more than 2-weeks after being registered.

Most of this work will happen behind the scenes when Ms. C isn't present. Compared with standard chemotherapy, she will have one extra office visit to review the informed consent document. In return for the one extra office visit, she'll receive a state of the art clinical trial close to home, in Arroyo Grande, that is the same clinical trial she would have received at the NCI in Bethesda, Maryland.



"Sarah, I think Ms. C may be eligible for A021502!"



PCR's New Office

PCR Oncology has a new address at: 584 Camino Mercado, Arroyo Grande

Our new office is located on a hillside with the second floor at the parking-lot level. We lease space on the first and second floors of the building, using the second floor for (Continued on reverse)



An Interview with Mary Bustamante *By Donna Glass*

"When you're close to losing your life, every day is special!"

During the summer of 2016, Mary Bustamante, 62, noticed pain on her side, a feeling of fullness, constipation, being tired and having some blood in her stool. She thought it was due to her many hours of working as a Construction Superintendent & Project Manager. She believed the blood was from hemorrhoids. Then, on December 22nd, she began vomiting and Mary's husband, Paul, rushed her to the emergency room. A CT scan and a colonoscopy indicated an obstruction in her colon.

Mary had surgery the following day and the surgeon removed 6" of her colon & 22 lymph nodes. The lymph nodes were all clear but the

pathology report indicated colorectal cancer, Stage II. Eight days later she was released from the hospital. This became a pivotal moment for Mary. She decided to educate herself about colon cancer, reading books and researching all the major cancer sites. "I've learned that you need to be your own health advocate, be informed and well versed."

Mary decided to make a lifestyle change. She no longer drinks alcohol and avoids sugar, processed foods, meats, pork, etc. Her diet consists mainly of fresh organic fruits & vegetables, chicken, fish, whole wheat products and green tea. "I realize now that no one is safe from cancer. It's not necessarily genetics but environmental and everyone can

take control and work on preventative measures to maintain a healthy lifestyle."

Then in June 2017, a CT scan indicated Mary's cancer had metastasized to Stage IV.

Mary decided to seek the Cancer Treatment Center of America (CTCA) in Phoenix. She received a comprehensive evaluation and was provided with a treatment plan.

Mary had her first round of chemotherapy treatment at CTCA and returned to Arroyo Grande to continue chemo treatments close to home. Mary contacted PCR Oncology, upon receiving a recommendation from a friend. She met with Dr. Erick Hjortsvang and was confident in the straight-forward doctor and in receiving chemo treatment from the PCR office.

(Continued on reverse)

Interview: Continued from front page

Mary had four more rounds of chemotherapy treatments. It hasn't been easy with all the side effects but Mary is optimistic and pragmatic. She has set goals for herself along the way, "If I get to the 2-year mark, then to the 5-year mark, then I know I'm well on my way to a full recovery."

Last December, Mary had an MRI, Pet scan and another CT scan that showed "No Evidenced Disease (NED)." However, she still had surgery to remove lesions from her liver. The surgery was a success and Mary now has clean margins. She's healing well and looks forward to her chemotherapy ending in April.

Looking back, Mary feels that if she had had a colonoscopy at age 50, her cancer would have been detected earlier. She can't stress enough the importance of having a colonoscopy for anyone 50+ years of age or younger, if there is a family history of colon cancer and to be aware of colon cancer symptoms.

Mary is a strong, independent, self-disciplined, determined and knowledgeable individual. She believes that when given a cancer diagnosis, you need to be proactive in maintaining your health. She stresses, "Take care of yourself and if you have Stage IV cancer it doesn't necessarily mean terminal. Life will be put on hold but don't let it take over your life." She adds, "Keep busy, find a hobby, work in the garden and focus on other things besides your cancer. Get over it and power through your cancer because you can beat it. If you begin to feel down, go for a walk, go shopping, buy a hat, do anything besides moping." A quote that resonates with Mary: "When you're close to losing your life, every day is special!"

Celebrate Birthdays!

Now you can let your **Facebook** "Friends" celebrate your birthday by making donations to the Jacquelyn Palchak Cancer Fund (JPCF). If you have a birthday coming up, go to the "Personal Profile" section on Facebook. You will find it has an area where you can pick a favorite charity.

Enter JPCF, instead of one of the nationally known organizations. Your "Friends" can then honor you and help JPCF at the same time. Donations are forwarded to JPCF on an anonymous invoice basis. "I did this for my recent birthday and felt honored that my "Friends" donated over \$900 to help our local cancer research efforts."

Bill Cockshott
 JPCF Board Member



10th Annual Cancer Survivor Celebration!

Saturday, September 29, 2018
10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Saint John's Lutheran Church
 Featuring guest speakers, prizes, and a BBQ Chicken lunch provided by the Arroyo Grande Lions Club.

Board of Directors

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- Marie Palchak, President
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To Contact JPCF

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 Marie Palchak (805) 710-3113

New Office: Continued from front page

patient care and the first floor for business, research and a break room. Entering the patient care office at the parking lot level means no stairs. The exam rooms and the two semi-private treatment rooms have large windows that look out on the beautiful canopies of oak trees, where we can see nature on display.

The new office is brighter than the old one with less congestion, more parking and beautiful views. The exam rooms are 25% larger and everyone has a bit more space than in the old office. We now have six treatment chairs instead of four. Two chairs are in private rooms and the other four are divided between two semi-private rooms.

We are very grateful to the following donors who made directed donations to JPCF totaling \$10,000, which paid for the new treatment chairs and some of the furnishings.

DONORS

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