

## HOW TO REACH US

If you have any suggestions for topics, articles or just need to talk to us, please feel free to contact us. You can reach **LET'S TALK..... NEWSLETTER** at Forum Health's Cancer CareCenters by calling (330) 884-4152 or (800) 222-4603.

## FINDING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED

*Written by Mary C. Morris, MEd., LSW  
Adult Oncology Social Worker*

Many times we find ourselves alone when we hear a diagnosis. It is difficult to deal with our own feelings let alone those of a friend or family member. Support groups are there to help you with these unmet needs to share, gain information, find strength and peace, and learn how to work through the tough times.

Groups come in all shapes and sizes. They are in a variety of settings and times. The CancerCare Center now assists in providing a support group by telephone to give you an opportunity to share from the comfort of your own home. Check with your Social Worker today for more information on the who, what, when, where offerings are available. We will be glad to help and give the support you need.



## IS LAUGHTER GOOD MEDICINE?

*Written by Pam Stephenson, RN, MSN, CS, OCN, CHPN*

People have always said that "Laughter is the best medicine," but how much truth is there to that statement? As it turns out, there are many positive physical and emotional benefits to laugh. People have always said that "Laughter is the best medicine," but how much truth is there to that statement? As it turns out, there are many positive physical and emotional benefits to laughter.

- Laughter has been found to lower blood pressure and increase the efficiency of blood flow. This allows more oxygen to be carried throughout the body, which promotes healing.
- Laughter reduces the number of stress hormones in the bloodstream. Stress hormones become active during times of stress or anger and can suppress the benefits of the immune system.
- Laughter boosts the immune system by activating more T-cells and proteins that fight infections and other foreign invaders of the body.
- Laughter increases both the number and the activity of natural killer (NK) cells. These are cells that are naturally part of the immune system and fight some cancer and virus cells.
- Laughter can provide distraction against pain as well as tell the body to make more endorphins, the body's natural pain killers.

So, next time you're feeling under the weather. Try renting a funny movie. Laugh. Not only may it be good for you, but it just feels good!!

## JUST STAND

*Written by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, OCN, CHES, CPDS*

I was riding in the car, flipping through the radio channels, the other day and heard a song I haven't heard for a long time. It was called "Stand". The words were "What do you do when you've done all you can, and it seems like it's never enough? What do you give when given you're all and it seems like you can't make it through?" And then the chorus goes like this, "You just stand."

That's where strength comes from...our ability to standup, face resistance and walk through it. It's not that people with the courage to persevere don't feel doubt, fear, and exhaustion. They do. But in the toughest moments, we must have faith that if we take just one step more then we feel we can, if we draw from "that something" that every human has deep inside, we'll learn some of the best lessons that life has to offer.

What I have learned through life is that there is no strength without challenge, adversity, resistance and pain. The problems that make you want to throw the towel in and holler "I can't!" will build your tenacity,

courage, discipline and determination. I have learned to rely on strength from those who came before me and were tested with unimaginable hardships and survived. I learn from their lessons. I draw from their strength.

I try to view the challenges in my life not as annoyances but as confirmations of courage. And as Eleanor Roosevelt wisely wrote: *"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.....you must do the thing you think you cannot do."*

As you walk into what you fear, know that you already have the power you need. Remember, your deepest struggle will produce your greatest strength. And what do you do in that moment when you feel like you can't make it through? YOU JUST STAND!!!

## **GETTING YOUR CHILD TO TRY NEW FOODS**

*Written by Shelly Watson, RD, LD, CDE*

Research indicates that many of the food habits that often last into adulthood start to develop as early as infancy and early childhood.

Encouraging your child to have a willingness to taste new foods during these early years can help them become more well balanced eaters now and in the future.

Below are some helpful tips that will help even picky eaters "become better at trying new foods".

- Let your child decide how much to try (e.g. even a small bite or taste is enough), and let them have the option of not swallowing it if they don't like it.
- Describe the food to your child before they taste it. Let them know if it is sweet, salty, sour etc.
- Offer just one new food at a time and serve it with a food your child likes (e.g. use yogurt or pudding as a dip for trying pineapple or kiwi slices).
- Make it fun by varying texture, shape and color. (e.g. prepare a bright colored vegetable tray with dip or cut food into fun, interesting shapes).
- Let them help prepare food. Children are more likely to try a food that they help make. Even small children can help stir or measure.

- Involve friends. Introducing a new food to your child with friends or peers that are good tasters may make them more willing to try it.
- Offer new foods from all food groups as all are needed for good health.
- Be a role model! Make sure that you eat a well balanced diet and let your child see you trying new foods.
- Don't force a child to try a food but do offer it again at another time.
- Don't give up! Many young children must be offered a food as many as ten or more times before they will be likely to try it. Eventually, they will probably give it a try.

## **RECIPE**

### ***Sundae Anyday!***

#### ***Ingredients:***

*Combination of favorite fruits*

*Plain yogurt*

*Vanilla and/or cinnamon*

*One or more of the following:*

*Crushed nuts, grapenuts, wheat germ, granola or other breakfast cereals, or raisons.*

#### **What To Do:**

1. *Cut up fruit into bite-size chunks and mix together in a fruit salad. For young children, have adult prepare fruit salad first.*
2. *Put into individual bowls.*
3. *Mix a dash of vanilla and/or cinnamon into the yogurt.*
4. *Top fruit salad with yogurt mixture.*
5. *Sprinkle with you favorite toppings.*

**©1992 Foodplay**

## **TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WHEN CHOOSING A HEALTH CARE TEAM**

*Written by Debbie Reed Anastasiadis, RN, MSN, OCN, CNS*

Good health care requires a good relationship between you and your doctor. As with all relationships, effective communication is essential to assure that your needs are met.

Cancer treatment usually requires the services of more than one doctor and sometimes involves a number of other health specialists. You may receive information from several sources. However, it's a good idea to choose one doctor to be your primary source of information – the person you can turn to with any concern. You may or may not choose the doctor you deal with the most to be that person. The following information will assist you in making that choice.

- Am I comfortable with my health care team?
- Do they make me feel like I am a central part of the decision-making process?
- Does the doctor communicate to me in terms that I can understand?
- Am I comfortable with the information that is provided to me?
- Do I feel comfortable asking questions?
- Does the doctor listen to my concerns?
- Are the office surroundings comfortable?
- Do I have to wait long after my appointment time to see the doctor?
- Besides the doctor, what other specialists are available to me?
- A dietitian, social worker, nurse, or pharmacist?
- When and how can I contact my health care team?

Seek information in quantities that you can manage. Ask yourself, "how much do I want to know?" You may want a clear and thorough explanation. Some people feel much better when they know all the facts about what is happening to them. Or, you may want only the overview. Some people find it disturbing to know all the details of what's happening to their bodies and what different treatments are designed to do. They just want to be told the overview—what pill to take or what their treatment will be and when it will be completed. They prefer to leave most decisions to the doctor.

We each have our own style of communication. That's why the perfect doctor for one person may not be a good match for another. After you have identified what you want as a patient, the next step is observing how you communicate with your doctor.



## **THE COLOR OF COURAGE**

*Written by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC,  
OCN, CHES, CPDS*

May 17th marked the 2002 Mahoning County National Cancer Survivor's Day and American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. It was an incredible success and well attended even though everyone wished that Noah and his Arch would have been there to help us! One would have thought the rain would have been a deterrent, but I must tell you that an overwhelming number of people graced the place. I would like to share an e-mail that I received from someone that so appropriately paints the picture, conveys the feelings and gives thanks to this powerful event.

"Good Morning,  
Purple shirts, purple ribbons and beautiful pink roses identified the cancer survivors at the Relay for Life last Friday and Saturday in Boardman. These colors were in sharp contrast to the weather, which was gray and dismal with a drizzle of rain which turned into a steady downpour by the time the opening ceremony began at 6:00 PM.

As I waded my way to the stage to say the invocation, I really didn't expect to see many people but as I turned to face the stands, I was surprised to see the stands were heavily populated as well as the track.

What color is courage and commitment? It is the color of a sea of umbrellas in all different shades....people whose shoes were already wet, whose hands were turning blue from the cold, who wouldn't have missed this event for the world....certainly not for a little inclement weather! It is the color of folks, clothed in raincoats and winter coats who walked the track in the wet and cold, looking beyond this ugly wet rain to a day when the word 'cure' will color all of our lives!

Thanks to those who worked diligently to make the Relay for Life events in both Mahoning and Trumbull Counties possible and to those of you who participated in the relays! Thanks to the survivors and their families and to those who care daily for cancer patients! Your courage, commitment and compassion have helped to define who we are. You have added color to our lives! Thank you.

Have a good day. Chaplain Janie Melick"

## **MAHONING COUNTY RELAYS**

### **MONEY RAISED:**

Austintown Relay	\$102,000.00
Boardman Relay	\$310,000.00
YSU Relay	\$ 23,000.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$435,000.00</b>

**Columbiana Relay           \$ 50,000.00**

## **TRUMBULL COUNTY RELAY FOR LIFE** **8 YEARS RUNNING”**

*Written by Debbie Reed Anastasiadis, RN, MSN,  
OCN, CNS*

The Warren Area Relay located at Mollenkopf Stadium, Warren G. Harding High School was held on the National Date Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m. until Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m. Out of 150 teams TMH Forum Health won the following 2002 Warren Area Awards:

- Best Campsite by Division: Tie third place in Healthcare
- Best Educational Message Overall: Tie second place
- Best Educational Message by Division: First place in Healthcare
- Best Banner Overall: First place
- Best Banner by Division: Second place in Healthcare
- People's Choice Award for Best Campsite: Third place

**\$463,000 – WOW!!!!!!!!!!**

**CONGRATULATIONS**, Warren on making goal,  
And obtaining a **12% INCREASE!!!!**

## **TRUMBULL COUNTY RELAYS**

### **MONEY RAISED:**

Cortland Relay	\$ 97,500.00
Warren/Niles	\$463,000.00
Liberty	\$ 88,100.00

## **BACKBONE**

*Written by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC,  
OCN, CHES, CPDS*

The dictionary defines *strength* as the ability to do; endure toughness; solidity; or the power to resist attack. Strength involves fitness of the body, mind and spirit. Outwardly, strength is power to influence others, change your life or the course of history. Then, there is inner strength. I call it resilience, will, moral fiber or the ability to carry on no matter what.

It makes us stand up for our beliefs and stand down when love not war is called for. True strength, it turns out, isn't about muscle. It is about "backbone".

How can we cultivate or grow this "backbone" to overcome setbacks, stay centered and maintain our strength? I guess we need to make a plan and remember that our bodies and minds are wonderful gifts. I am often surprised by the might of our bodies and the power of our minds.

Here are some suggestions for feeding our "backbone":

- Create your own inner-strength team. Choose people whose support you can enlist. Think of how they can help you with specific goals (more self esteem, getting you out and doing things) and what you need from each of them (a sounding board, telephone or e-mail exchanges, coaching).
- Think of how you can be forceful without using harsh words or violence.
- Faith can move mountains. Do you feel connected to a source of spiritual strength? In what ways can you boost them?
- In a changing world, an open mind is your strongest ally. Are you willing to look at things without judgment? Are you willing to modify your position on an issue after learning more about it?
- Cultivate inner strength. Everyday over the next two months, do something that is a stretch for you.
- A strong body builds confidence. Think about stretching exercises, yoga, and tai chi.
- Just for today, resist temptation. Say no to second helpings, buying clothes you don't need and losing your temper.
- Is someone trying to push you around? Stand firm ... literally. Plant your feet squarely; breathe into your abdomen. Stay grounded during difficult conversations.
- Being a hero doesn't require heroics ... just a willingness to confront our fears. This week pick a fear and get to know it.
- It takes strength of character to admit when you are wrong. Practice that often this month.
- Play to your strengths. Make a list of them. Tack it on your mirror and refer to it often.