Fostering Joy and Calm This Holiday Season: Suggestions for Caregivers

Holly Whiteside

A Recipe for Happiness
When a family member has cancer it affects the entire family. So, take a typical family at the holidays, add a heavy dose of the varied expectations (theirs and yours), toss in a collection of new time constraints, season liberally with a range of strong emotions and... can you smell the outcome of this recipe?

How do you maximize the odds of having an intimate and joyful holiday given all of the above ingredients? Perhaps not by simply asking for help, but by looking for something better; an inclusive conversation that builds family intimacy while relieving you of stress. Clear communication will lessen your feeling responsible for the happiness of the whole clan. But to communicate simply you need a simpler way to think about those involved.

If you haven’t yet gotten out a piece of paper, now would be a good time. Imagine that your holiday looks like the cross-section of an onion, and the people who would participate in it are arranged in the layers. You and your loved one are at the center, and the others are at varying distances from the center. The one’s closest to the center are the ones you most trust, with whom you have the best communication. Now draw your onion.

Lightening Up Through Simplification
Look at the center circles on your relationship onion - your “inner circles.” These are the people with whom you feel at ease, who you trust, and with whom you feel connected. Build your holiday thoughts and plans on this feel-good community. Whether they are family or friends, share with them your hopes for a happy holiday. As you share with them, also include them in the brainstorming about what could work. By focusing first and most on these people, you are already simplifying — your emotions around them are simpler and more restful. Build your happy holiday on these good folks and good feelings.

Worry less about the people further out on your relationship onion. They may not think like you. That’s okay. Let them be who they are while keeping your boundaries and safeguarding the things that are most important to you and your loved one. As much as possible, drop any expectations about what they might think, or how they should participate. It’s okay for them to say No if you do ask them to participate. You may not know all that they are going through or their difficulties dealing with your loved one’s cancer. Hold fast to the thought that if you want to feel good this holiday, think about the people with whom you feel good and the holiday elements that you love. Simplify your feelings, thoughts, and expectations and you have laid the groundwork for a holiday of greater joy and peace.

The Holiday Essentials
Each of us has aspects of the holidays that are dear to our hearts. When you think of them, you smile. Just the thought gives you energy. What are yours? Baking cookies and decorating your home? Spending quiet time with those you love dearly? Listening to holiday music?

Consider each of the following questions, looking for the answers that are absolutely true for you. Open your mind. Step back from your assumptions, looking for choices that you may not have considered. Writing down your thoughts will let you be more objective. Look for the wiggle room.

Once in a while you have to take a break and visit yourself.”
~ Audrey Giorgi

What would be possible if you simplified the festivities this year? When you can identify what is most important to you, you can let go of the aspects that are draining. In the reclaimed space you might even connect more with yourself, generating peace in your heart that can source the whole holiday.

Preparations: What holiday preparations are truly necessary to you and which are essential to your loved one? Which ones give you or your loved one energy? What other aspects seem in
CAREGIVERS continued from page 1

some way important but actually drain you? Which ones might you dispense with or delegate to others?

Guests: Who clearly needs to be present to bring the holiday alive? Who is most important to you, and who is important to your loved one? Could you manage to tell “certain others” that you’re scaling down, doing a simpler holiday this year? Of those that must come, who could stay nearby at a motel instead of with you?

Food: Which aspects of food preparation are a true joy to you or your loved one? Would it be okay with you if family brought some or all of the meal – making sure that meal is being prepared specifically for those with swallowing challenges (a soft or pureed recipe). Or could the meal even be ordered from a nearby restaurant? “Sacrilege!” I hear you say, but think about it! A chef could surely accommodate a family’s concerns with its loved ones food preparation.

Gifts: Would the family consider giving only one small gift per person or doing a yankee swap? Could you give simpler gifts – the singing of a song, reading a poem, or giving a special photograph, beautifully framed? Could you focus more on the gift of being together and less on the giving of things?

What would be possible if you asked others to partner with you in new ways this year? Including more family in preparations can increase holiday warmth. If you have friends who feel like family, talk to them too. They might be touched to be honorary family in the simplification of your holidays - even those who may not be joining you.

Family: Individually or at a family meeting, could you invite others to be on a holiday team, each picking one thing from your to-do list that would ease your load? Could a nearby family member offer respite care to give you time off from caregiving?

Professionals: Could you hire someone to do the housecleaning or take care of yard work or outdoor decorating? Might you find some time for respite from the everyday tasks that drain you during the year by finding a professional to do it for you?

What might be possible if, just for this pre-holiday, you pare down your commitments? People will understand if you have limited energy and resources this year. Give yourself a “time-out.”

Non-family: What are your on-going commitments to friends or organizations? Which commitments to friends may not be necessary between now and the holidays? Could you let organizations know that you won’t be available for the next few weeks? From which obligations might you like to permanently DE-commit? Does your workplace give special support to family caregivers during the holidays? It doesn’t hurt to ask.

CAREGIVERS continued on page 3.
CAREGIVERS continued from page 2

Family: What services or favors do you regularly do for other family members (including children) that they could do for themselves? Could others take on the tasks that keep the household running?

If possible, include your loved one in these explorations. Let him/her be a part of the thinking, planning, and doing—participation is empowering for everyone.

You are the Caregiver. Your physical and emotional health aren’t just important, they’re a necessity. Your health is inextricably entwined with your peace, so you owe it to yourself and your loved one to put in place the necessary ingredients for joy and peace this holiday. This may not end up being perfect but you don’t have to do it all. You can pave the way for a simpler, more joyful and participative holiday this year.

Holidays celebrated when your loved one has cancer are different. People are different too. Balancing the holiday house of cards on your own shoulders is a vulnerable position. Do what you can. Let that be enough. Make a little more time to decompress. Focus on relationships more than the trappings of the holidays. Ask others for partnership to help everyone enjoy the holidays a little happier, a little more peaceful, and a little more grateful for all that you do have. And remember...

“The past is history, the future is a mystery.
But today is a gift...that’s why they call it the present.
So cherish every minute of it.”
~ Elvis Stojko

Editors Note: In 1996, after 15 years of life coaching and ten years of caregiving for her mother, Ms. Whiteside began coaching caregivers. During caregiving she had applied to herself the life coaching principles she had been teaching others. She published the self-help MindfulCaregiving tools that helped her to survive in “The Caregiver’s Compass”, a handbook for emotional balance, and “Exploring Hell and Other Warm Places”, her mother/daughter memoir, both available on Amazon.com.

RECIPES NEEDED!

for

Eat Well – Stay Nourished
Volume Two

Send in your recipes TODAY!
Deadline is Mar. 1, 2013

Go to our website at www.spohnc.org for Recipe Form or call 1-800-377-0928

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From the Executive Director...A Salute to Our Caregivers!

Did I ever tell you you’re my hero? You’re everything, everything I wish I could be. Oh, and I, I could fly higher than an eagle, ‘cause you are the wind beneath my wings, ‘cause you are the wind beneath my wings.

All of us at one time or another will become a caregiver to someone we love at some point in our lives. This month’s newsletter is dedicated to all the amazing caregivers who give so unselfishly of their love, time, and devotion to a loved one diagnosed with head and neck cancer. Anyone who knows this cancer understands the side effects that come with treating this disease. Caregivers play an important role in the life of a head and neck cancer patient. The caregiver is a source of light that will constantly shine whenever he or she needs them.

SPOHNC would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the caregivers who are able to get through the many obstacles, both emotional and physical, to make sure their wife, husband, partner, friend, mother or father, son or daughter, keeps up the struggles to overcome the challenges associated with this disease. They are a patient’s angel here on earth.

Cancer caregivers are special, unique individuals. They do the impossible. They never, never give up. There is no fight that they can’t handle. Their mission is to rise to every occasion, even when those obstacles become overwhelming. This holiday season, let’s applaud all the efforts of every caregiver you know that has helped pave the way to a better future for a loved one.

In this month’s News From SPOHNC, you’ll read about two extraordinary caregivers, one a wife and the other a mother. Both tell their stories of bravery, strength and faith. Each one of these women gives you an insight into their world of uncertainties, while still keeping the courage to go forward and devote their lives to each of their loved ones. Two truly inspirational stories we can learn from and be thankful for this season.

SPOHNC made its own commitment to support caregivers as they go through their own journey with this disease. Our National Survivor Volunteer Network consists of a caregiver network whereby caregivers can speak with other caregivers to support them as they hurdle the many challenges set upon them. Many have found this network to be very supportive, which helps them to continue to do what they do best. Our program is a heartwarming and close network of individuals who offer words of inspiration and hope. Many have also found strength by attending one of our support groups throughout the United States. At our 20th Anniversary Conference & Celebration of Life we acknowledged everyone’s caregiver with a standing ovation – a wonderful recognition, very heartfelt and deserving.

This season, let’s remember to honor our caregivers who provide hope, healing and comfort. Thank them for being there at a moments notice.

We, here at SPOHNC, are delighted to share our gratitude with everyone who has supported someone struggling with head and neck cancer.

Let’s celebrate each caregiver’s uniqueness, compassion and love that keeps on giving. Let’s nourish their spirit and thank them for their willingness to give all year long.

They are the wind beneath our wings...they are our hero’s!
Caregivers - we salute you!
Our best wishes for a healthy, joyous and peaceful holiday!

Many blessings to all,

SPOHNC Testimonial….

“Spouses and caregivers love the support group. It helps to know you are NOT alone. You will bond with others who have survived and what joy that is!

Caregivers need this fellowship and rejuvenation.”

Janis S
Arkansas NW Chapter
It is generally not considered funny to play pranks on the “disabled” and when that person is the man you promised to love, honor and cherish through sickness and in health, I suppose the sin is even greater. But when the impulse hit me one morning not long ago, I couldn’t help myself. For six years my husband has claimed to have “no taste, except in women.” I occasionally question the accuracy of that statement and the time had come to put it to the test.

Just before Bill sat down to breakfast, I poured plain, boiling water into his black, ceramic mug, the one that says “Still perfect after all these years.”

I watched carefully as he drank from the cup to wash down each bite of French toast. Although I can’t understand how a man whose sensitive mucosa was so badly burned can drink scalding beverages, Bill has always liked his black coffee hotter than hot and radiation didn’t change that preference. Halfway through the meal I dutifully reheated his “coffee” in the microwave, biting my tongue to keep from laughing out loud.

Status confirmed. Bill’s taste buds MIA – March 2006 to present.

In January 2006 I was thrust into a role for which I had no training or experience — and one for which I had absolutely no ambition. A sausage-like growth that suddenly appeared on Bill’s neck turned him — just as suddenly — into a “cancer patient.” And I, by default, became a “caregiver.” I would have preferred not to tell.

Learning that neck dissection would leave a forked streak of stapled “lightning” running from ear to clavicle, Bill fashioned a coat hanger and two corks into “Frankenstein neck bolts” to complete the look. He wanted me to slip it on him as he was wheeled out of surgery. We laughed, anticipating the surgeon’s face when he saw the monster he had created.

But treatment for head and neck cancer has a way of taking the fun out of life, even for a funny guy, and any expectations I had for sailing through the experience on the wings of Bill’s humor were short-lived. Bill reacted poorly to anesthesia after surgery and there were no hi-jinks to be had in the recovery room. Reality set in when I saw his ghostly white face retching into a basin. If this would be his “life” I knew I would have to let Bill go.

In the brief interlude between surgery and the next stage of treatment, I got “Bill” back. He chided me for not following through with our Frankensteins’ scheme but we giggled as we imagined the “creature” he might become after the “mad doctors” sent him on 33 trips though the IMRT machine and injected all those metallic potions into his veins.

In fact, I barely recognized the weak, skeletal, hairless, zombie-like creature that emerged. And I, too, experienced a transformation of sorts. I hunkered down for the duration, determined to maintain control. I got up every morning and put one foot in front of the other, even on days that held no prospect of laughter.

The brutal effects of head and neck cancer treatment are well-documented. We knew what to expect... but not really. If ever there were an infomercial made about chemo-radiation, it would be Bill’s voice intoning the disclaimer at the end, the one that says, “Your actual results may vary.”

- Did you ever read the small print on drug information sheets? I read every word, including the fascinating statement that a side effect of anti-nausea medications can be...nausea! We’ll never know exactly what caused Bill’s stomach distress for the entire course of treatment, but nothing seemed to relieve it.

- The brochure we received about radiation indicated it can make patients feel “tired.” It mentioned they might need to ask their boss for a reduced work schedule. It recommended a nap in the afternoon. Since Bill is self-employed his “boss” hardly noticed when he stopped working altogether; he was too busy napping. In fact, for six months Bill’s boss pretty much slept all day long, in between trips to the bathroom to deal with phlegm and vomit.

- It was suggested mild exercise like walking can help cancer patients maintain physical and mental fitness. When a grown man literally cries at the thought of walking to the end of the driveway and back, exercise clearly is not the way to “mental fitness.”

- Smoothies are packed with nutrition for patients who can swallow but even hearing the word made my patient gag. Recipes for blended beverages poured into my email in-box from well-meaning friends continued on page 6.
ing friends. They never made it out of my computer.

• PEG tubes are said to be good things for many patients. Unfortunately, much of the formula that went into Bill’s stomach tube flowed out of his mouth if he leaned forward. Not a good thing.

• Eating large quantities of Ben & Jerry’s “Chubby Hubby” ice cream actually has an inverse effect on the weight of the husband when the product is consumed instead by the wife.

As time went on I learned a lot about head and neck cancer treatment. Most important, perhaps, was to expect the unexpected. Most difficult, perhaps, was to accept a certain loss of control. A patient’s reaction to treatment doesn’t always proceed as expected. Neither does the caregiver’s.

I knew from the start I would find strength I didn’t know I possessed. I also knew I was far weaker than it would appear to anyone from the outside. I anticipated sadness and fear. But the emotion that brought me to my knees – the one I never expected – was anger.

It happened in the wee hours of the morning. We were staying in a friend’s second home conveniently located in the city where Bill was treated. I kept the alarm on my side of the bed and woke Bill at appropriate intervals for his medications. On that particular night he had been resistant and resentful. After finally submitting to my pleading he fell right back to sleep – but I couldn’t.

Tears welled up in my eyes. Not wanting to create a further disturbance I slipped from the room, hoping to collect myself with a cup of tea. Alone in a dark, unfamiliar kitchen illuminated only by glowing digits from the microwave clock I experienced a rush of dark, unfamiliar emotions. Waves of self-pity swept over me. Why Bill? Why me?

Suddenly, anger erupted in a fierce explosion of unprecedented magnitude. I hated the cancer center. I hated Bill’s smiling oncologists, the smiling receptionists, the jigsaw puzzles in the waiting room meant to distract us from thinking – really thinking – about what we were there for, what the future might bring. I hated God.

And most disturbing of all, I hated Bill for daring to give me hope and leading me to believe this would be easy.

I shrieked and I sobbed. I hurled pill bottles at the wall and tore reams of Internet medical research to shreds. I pounded my fists on the counter and kicked at debris as it fell to the floor.

I was ANGRY – and that anger was compounded because I had no idea where to “put” such a negative emotion, especially directed toward the person I loved more than anything. How could I be angry with the man who was fighting to stay alive for me? How could I curse the same God I begged to answer my prayers?

My tantrum probably lasted all of ten minutes, but it was loud, intense, and certainly not in keeping with the controlled, stoic persona I presented in public and to Bill. Guilt, shame and confusion overwhelmed me; the storm subsided almost as suddenly as it had struck. I cleaned up the kitchen in silence and went back to bed.

Bill slept in blessed ignorance through the whole episode and God apparently forgave me for being human. He also, for reasons I will never know, answered my prayers….

The road to recovery was long and arduous, but it’s much easier to reflect on the cancer experience with a light(er) heart after six years of “survivorship.” Entire days pass without either of us mentioning cancer and my indomitable husband has all but eliminated the word from his vocabulary. Bill rarely talks about the physical “leftovers” from treatment; he cheerfully accepts life with reduced saliva, swallowing issues, hypothyroidism, Lhermitte’s syndrome, and, of course, taste buds gone AWOL.

But for me, the emotional “souvenirs” remain closer to the surface than they appear. Six years can seem like a long time or a very short time, and no amount of time can make me forget that life is tenuous and we have been so very, very lucky.

While I am grateful our “new normal” includes a healthy dose of humor, I know many other families have not fared so well or been so fortunate. My heart goes out to these patients and particularly to their caregivers, as I now believe Bill may be right when he says this experience was harder on me than on him.

Why me? Why you? Why those we love?

“Caregiving” is a job we are given because – more than anything – we care. It brings out our softer side and our hard edges as well. We may embrace it as a gift or curse the burdens it places upon us – but it is a challenge we have no choice but to accept and to deal with as best we can.

After breakfast, I confessed to Bill he had been the victim of a hoax. The joke may have been on him but I have a feeling I’ll be reminded of my treachery for many years to come. The “man with a story for any occasion” has a new tale to tell and I will hear this one over…and over…and over! I’ll roll my eyes in exasperation of course, but it’s a small price to pay for the gift of having my husband back.

To the caregivers who read this and the patients you love, I wish for you hope, fortitude, resilience and – eventually – a return to laughter. God bless us all.

Linda Clyne
lclyne@mcn.org

Visit the SPOHNC website at www.spohnc.org
I can still hear his voice, low and hesitant, in the telephone… “Mom (a pause and a painful silence) it's cancer.” The world stood still, the sentence that I just heard was beyond comprehension… but the truth of the matter hung between us as if written in steel.

My youngest son who is so healthy, fit, full of joy, curiosity and sense of adventure, who is a light drinker and doesn’t smoke… HAS CANCER!

I had been worried for a couple of months back because of his throat ailment that had been diagnosed as Gerd (heartburn) and did not seem to go away in spite of the Nexium treatment. I had a gut feeling that there was more to it and advised him to go to a specialist to look deeper into this. At Christmas I noticed that he seemed to have lost weight and my worry deepened. But I kept my concern to myself. And then, why wasn’t I more insistent and didn’t urge him more forcefully to see the doctor. My God it has been four months now!!

But the mother in me took over and immediately mumbled all that was expected of me in that moment. “…we need a second opinion… I’ll take the next flight out… everything will be fine… trust God... I love you…!”

Next step, I called my close friend, a source of comfort and strength and a light in this dark night, who, as a cancer survivor herself, could understand my pain more than anyone else in this moment. Her support and love that long night in the name of adventure, who is a light drinker and doesn’t smoke…

So it was to the emergency room. When I saw him, my heart sank: swollen, bruised and bleeding. I couldn’t believe it, so surreal, so needless. I didn’t know if I should cry or hit him… So it was to the emergency room for required tests, etc. Again his excellent doctors at Baylor was always on hand to assist. Friends from childhood, near and far, reached out and people came out to assist. Friends from the SPOHN group, joining their closely-knit group gatherings both at Baylor-Dallas and Baylor-Irving. This team provided insight, pointers, tips, and above all, strength and inspiration to put up the “good fight.”

But the hero of this story is my son. Gabriel evolved beyond being courageous and stoic by assuming this experience as a new life, a compassionate life, a life transformed by God and the team of excellent doctors and nurses, we got clear CT and PET scans, and Gabriel is cured. My heart overflows with gratitude and happiness. My son has a long life ahead of him…but a new life, a compassionate life, a life transformed by pain, and faith.

Edna Angeli
ednaj0731@gmail.com
To all of our Chapter Facilitators and Co-Facilitators, our National Survivor Volunteer Network volunteers and to all of you who have helped to bring awareness of oral, head and neck cancer to your communities, family and friends, we extend our sincerest thanks.

You have helped so many people through such difficult times, brought hope and brightness to the lives of so many and continue in your commitment to those who need you. Here at SPOHNC, we are privileged to do what we do each and every day, and honored to be in the company of such an amazing network of compassionate individuals. To those of you who have been through so much and have experienced the trials and tribulations of oral, head and neck cancer and for those of you who have seen so many suffering and helped to bring them through the toughest of times, we thank you for continuing to be there.


CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

On October 5th, 2012, Jack Igleburger, Facilitator of the Arkansas Northwest SPOHNC Chapter Support Group, was honored with the Gentleman of Distinction Award during the 9th Annual Bill Fleeman Gentlemen of Distinction Fashion Show at the John Q. Hammons Convention Center in Rogers, Arkansas. The event benefitted Hope Cancer Resources. As a SPOHNC Chapter Facilitator, Jack is well versed in all the resources available for people in Northwest Arkansas who are affected by oral, head and neck cancer.

Jack said he was astounded by the award, and that half of it belongs to his wife, Temple, herself a breast cancer survivor and an advocate for those who faced the same types of cancer that threatened Jack’s life. “They usually are picking doctors and well-known dignitaries and philanthropists [for the award], people that are a little more well known than Jack Igleburger,” said Jack.

“It was rather humbling that they thought I deserved it - that we deserved it.” Jack accepted the award on behalf of himself and his lovely wife, Temple. In his acceptance speech, Jack spoke of their SPOHNC group, and said “The core members of our Chapter have experienced the devastating side effects of treatment. This allows them to provide new patients with solutions during recovery. Thanks to all of them, we continue to be very progressive.” What a wonderful way to pay tribute to his group, and the people he has surely come to know and care about in a way that no one else can understand.

In 2004, the Bill Fleeman Gentlemen of Distinction Award was established to recognize an outstanding individual who has gone above and beyond to make a difference in the field of cancer care in the Northwest Arkansas region. Jack & Temple are highly dedicated advocates for raising awareness of oral, head and neck cancer among patients, medical and dental professionals. Their Chapter Support group has hosted many guest speakers – experts in the field – to speak with the group about treatment options, nutrition and many other topics of interest to oral, head and neck cancer patients. Since 2006 when Jack and Temple founded the Northwest Arkansas SPOHNC Chapter Support group, the group has grown and continues to offer oral, head and neck cancer patients and their families in the area, an atmosphere of support and caring, and a sharing of experiences to help each other along their cancer journeys and beyond. We would say that is definitely above and beyond…

Congratulations Jack, on this well deserved honor!
CHAPTERS OF SPOHNC

ALABAMA- BIRMINGHAM
St. Vincent’s Hospital, Bruno Cancer Center
3rd Tuesday: 12 Noon
Karen Clemen 205-870-4102/ kclenec@cox.net

ARIZONA-CHANDLER
Cancer Center at Chandler Reg, Med. Ctr.
1st Wednesday: 5:30-7:30 PM
Monica Krise, MSW 480-729-3613 monica.krise@chw.edu
Dick Snider, MD (ret.) 480-895-6019 rsnider326@aol.com

ARIZONA-PHOENIX/MESA
Banner Desert Medical Center
3rd Wednesday: 4:30 -6:30 PM
Keri Winchester, MS, CCC-SLP
480-412-3627/Keri.Winchester@bannerhealth.com
Dick Snider, MD (ret.) 480-895-6019 rsnider326@aol.com

ARIZONA-PHOENIX
Rad/Onc Waiting Room
St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Ctr.
1st Tuesday: 5:30-7:30 PM
Mary Schneider, Dir. 602-406-3882
Barbara Chapman, RN, OCN
602-401-8111/barbara.chapman@chw.edu
Dick Snider, MD (ret.) 480-895-6019 rsnider326@aol.com

ARKANSAS-NORTHWEST
NWA Cancer Support Home
3rd Saturday: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Jack & Temple Igleburger 805-739-3185/aundiew@mail.com

CALIFORNIA-LOS ANGELES-UCLA
UCLA Med. Pla., Rad/Onc Conf. Rm. B-265
1st Tuesday: 6:30-8:00 PM
Pam Hoff, LCSW 310-825-6134
phoff@mednet.ucla.edu

CALIFORNIA-SAN DIEGO
45 Ranch Library
1st Saturday: 12:00 noon
Valerie Targia 760-751-2109/vtargia@yahoo.com

CALIFORNIA-SANTA MARIA
Marion Rehab. Center
3rd Tues/Alternate Months
Audre Werner, MS, CCC-SLP
805-739-3185/audreew@comcast.net

CALIFORNIA-STANFORD
Stanford Cancer Center
1st Tuesday: 4:00 - 5:30 PM
Mike Bonar, LCSW 650-725-0929 mbonar@stanfordmed.org

CALIFORNIA-VENTURA
The Cancer Resource Center of Community Memorial Hospital
4th Tuesday: 6:00 - 7:30 PM
Kathleen Horton 805-652-5495
khorton@cmhhospital.org

COLORADO- DENVER
Porter’s Adventist Hospital
Twin Peaks Conf. Rm.
Last Tuesday: 6:30-8:00 PM
Jeanne Currey 303-778-5832
jeanne.currey@centura.org

CONNECTICUT-NEW HAVEN
Hospital of St. Raphael
2nd Tuesday: 5:00 PM-6:30 PM
Vanna Dest, APRN 203-789-3113/vdest@srhs.org
Lori Ratchelous, MSW/lratchelous@srhs.org

CONNECTICUT-NEW LONDON
Lawrence & Memorial Hospital
Community Cancer Center
Waiting Room - 1st Thursday: 6:00 PM-7:30 PM
Catherine McCarthy, LCSW 860-444-3744
cmccarthy@lmlhosp.org

CONNECTICUT- NORWICH
William W. Backus Hospital
Medical Office Building, MOB Conf. Rm.
3rd Tuesday: 5:00-6:00 PM
Darlene Young, RN, OCN 686-892-2777
dayoung@wwbh.org
Kathy Gernhard, RN, OCN 860-892-2777
kgernhard@wwbh.org

DC-GEORGETOWN
Lombardi Ca Ctr/Martin Marietta Conference Rm
3rd Wednesday: 1:30-3:00 PM
Joanne Assarson, MS, LICSW 202-444-3755
assarss@sunet.georgetown.edu

FLORIDA-Boca RATON
Boca Raton Community Hospital.
1st Tuesday: 4:00-5:00 PM
Lauren Moon Cox, MSW 561-655-5987
lmoon@brch.com

FLORIDA-FT MYERS
Gulf Coast Medical Center
Outpatient Rehabilitation Ctr.
4th Tuesday: 3:00-4:00 PM
Stacey Brill, MS, CCC-SLP 239-343-1645
stacey.brill@keenmemorial.org

FLORIDA-FTWALTONBEACH/NW FL
Call for Location
4th Thursday: 5:00 PM
Shannon Leach, MA, CCC-SLP 850-362-9200
sleachslp@yahoo.com

FLORIDA-GAINESVILLE
Gulf Coast Medical Center
Outpatient Rehabilitation Ctr.
1st Wednesday: 2:00-3:00PM
Stacey Brill, MS, CCC-SLP 239-343-1645
stacey.brill@keenmemorial.org

FLORIDA-JACKSONVILLE
Winship CA Institute (Bldg. C)
1st Monday: 6:00-7:30 PM
Sarah Reisling, MS, CCC-SLP 904-244-2948
sarah.reisling@jax.ufl.edu

FLORIDA-MIAMI
Cancer Support Community
3rd Wednesday: 6:00-8:00 PM
Isabel Trabanco 305-668-5900
imtrabanco@gmail.com
Russell Nansen 305-661-3915

FLORIDA-OCALA
Robert Boissoecanct Oncology Institute
1st Monday: 11:00 AM-12:00 Noon
Amy Roberts, LCSW 352-732-0277
aroberts@rboi.com

FLORIDA-PALM COAST/NORTHEAST
Grand Haven, Creekside Facility
1st Thursday, 4:00-5:30pm
Amy & Lewis Beilman 386-864-7895
atlwill001@msn.com

FLORIDA-SARASOTA
The Cancer Support Community
1st Wednesday: 2:00-300PM
Julie O’Brien, LMHC 941-921-5539
julieobee@verizon.net

FLORIDA-TAVARES
Florida Hosp, Cancer Inst.
Waterman Conf. Room
2nd Thursday: 4:00pm-5:30pm
Georgeann Bjornson 352-253-5830
georgeann.bjornson@ahhs.org

GEORGIA-COLUMBUS
St. Joseph Hospital of Atlanta
Evelyn Trammell Voice & Swallowing Center
2nd Tuesday: 1:00 PM
Tanya Duke 678-843-5586
tduke@sjha.org

GEORGIA-ATLANTA
MCG Health Children’s Medical Center
Family Resource Center
1st Tuesday: 6:00-7:30 PM
Lori M. Burkle Morgan, PhD, CCC-SLP
706-721-6100/lori_gator@bellsouth.net
Leann Drangano drangano@bellsouth.net

GEORGIA-COLUMBUS
Columbus Public Library
3000 Macon Rd.
1st Monday: 6:00-7:30 PM
Wanda Hodge 706-442-1768
whodge50@gmail.com

ILLINOIS-CHICAGO
Duchossois Ctr. for Advanced Medicine
4th Tuesday: 1:00 PM
Mary Herbert 773-834-7326
mherbert@medicine.bsd.uchicago.edu

http://www.spohnc.org
E-mail-- info@spohnc.org

S•P•O•H•N•C
CHAPTERS OF SPOHNC

NEW YORK-NEW HYDE PARK
North Shore-LIJ Health System
Hearing and Speech Conf Rm, LL
2nd Tuesday: 6:00-8:00 PM
Dennis Staropoli, 631-682-8115/dstaropoli@healthpartners.org

NEW YORK-ROCHESTER
Strong Memorial Hospital
1st Monday: 4:30-6:30 PM
Sandra Sabatka@URMC.Rochester.edu

NEW YORK-STONY BROOK
Ambulatory Care Pavilion
1st Wednesday: 6:45-8:15 PM
Dennis Staropoli, 631-682-7103/den.star@hotmail.com

NEW YORK-SYOSSET
NSLJ- Syosset Hospital
2nd Thursday: 7:30-9:00 PM
Alice Steiner, 516-764-1571/alicesteiner28@gmail.com

NORTH CAROLINA-ASHVILLE
Call for additional information
Kathleen Goodwin, 828-692-6174/kateeyes928@aol.com

NORTH CAROLINA-CHARLOTTE
Blumenthal Cancer Center
2nd & 4th Thursday: 1:30-3:00 PM
Dennis Staropoli, 631-682-8115/den.star@hotmail.com

NORTH CAROLINA-CHAPEL HILL/DURHAM
Corny Fuccia House
2nd Wednesday: 6:00 PM
Dave Gould, 919-493-8168/jmorton44@gmail.com

NORTH CAROLINA-SPOKANE
Call for additional information
Kathleen Goodwin, 828-692-6174/kateeyes928@aol.com

OHIO- CINCINNATI
Call for additional information
Deborah Heim, MSN, ANPBC, AOCNP
513-584-4794/deborah.heim@uchealth.com
Angie Keith, 513-475-7366
Angie.Keith@ucphysicians.com

OHIO-CLEVELAND
Cleveland Clinic at Fairview Hospital
2nd Thursday: 4:00 PM
Gwen Paul, LISW, 216-476-7241/gwpaul@ccf.org

OHIO-DAYTON
The Medical Center at Elizabeth Place
One Elizabeth Pl. - West Lobby - The Chapel Room
2nd Monday: 6:00-8:00 PM
Hank Deneski, 937-832-2677/wohnc@earthlink.net

OHIO-LIMA
St. Rita’s Regional Cancer Ctr.
Allison Rad Onc. Ctr. & Garden Conf Rm
3rd Tuesday of each month: 5:00 PM
Holly Metzger, LMSW, 419-996-5606/hjmetzger@health-partners.org
Linda Glorioso, 419-996-5616/ldglorioso@health-partners.org

OKLAHOMA-TULSA
Hardy Public Library
1st Tuesday: 6:30 PM
Christine B. Griffin, RN, 918-261-8858/Beritgriffin@att.net

OREGON-MEDFORD
Providence Medical Center
2nd Friday: 12:00-1:30 PM
Richard Boucher, 503-295-8323/richard.boucher@hp.com

PA NENSYLVANIA-DUNMORE
Northeast Radiation Oncology Center
Last Thursday of the month: 5:30-7:00 PM
Kathryn Cramer, LMSW, CCHT
570-961-7777/ssccsocwork@hotmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA-HARRISBURG
PinnacleHealth Fox Chase Regional Cancer Center
2nd Wednesday: 6:00 PM
Debra Winn, Nurse Navigator 717-724-6772/dwwiner@pinnaclehealth.org

PENNSYLVANIA-MONROEVILLE
Inter Community Cancer Center
Last Friday of the month: 3:00-4:00 PM
Beth Madrishin, 412-856-7740/bmadrishin@wpahs.org

PENNSYLVANIA-NEW CASTLE
UPMC Jamerson Cancer Center
Medical Arts Bldg, Suite 104
2nd Monday: 6:30-8:00 PM
Jeannie Williams, Patient Navigator
Becky Rainville, RN, 724-656-5870

PENNSYLVANIA-PHILADELPHIA
Penn Med Perelman Ctr Advanced Med
1 W. Pavillion Pt, Fam Conf Rm
1st Wednesday: 9:30-11:00 AM
Micki Naimoli, 856-722-5574
Tracy Lautenbach, MSW, LMSW, OSW-C
215-662-6193/lautenbach@uphs.upenn.edu

PENNSYLVANIA-YORK
Apple Hill Medical Center
2nd Wednesday: 5:00 PM
Dianne S. Hollinger, MA, CCC-SLP, 717-812-5850
Denise Luce, 717-741-8400/dmcwain@wellspan.org

SOUTH CAROLINA-OF THE UPSTATE
44 W. Avondale Dr.
1st Sunday: 2:00PM-3:30 PM
Martha Miller, MSW, CCC-SLP, 864-232-6334
1st Sunday: 2:00PM-3:30 PM

SOUTHDAKOTA-RAPID CITY
Rapid City Regional Hospital, Rushmore Room
3rd Monday: 6:30 - 7:00 PM
Angie Langstaff, 605-570-8387/bfurno@rch.org

TEXAS-DALLAS
Baylor Irving-Coppell Medical Center
2nd Thursday: 10:00 AM
Dan Stack, 972-373-9599/danstack@aol.com

TEXAS- FORT WORTH
Moncrief Cancer Institute
2nd Wednesday: 3:30-5:00 PM
Marla Hathcoat, LMSW, 817-288-9820

TEXAS-HOUSTON/TOMBALL
Tomball Regional Hospital
TBA

TEXAS-McALLEN
Rio Grande Regional Hospital
3rd Monday: 6:00 PM
Stephanie Leal, MA, LMSW, SLF
SAL1275@aol.com

TEXAS-PLANO
Regional Medical Center at Plano
2nd Tuesday: 6:30-8:00 PM
Polly Candela, RN, 214-820-3595/Polly.Candela@baylorhealth.edu

VIRGINIA-CHARLOTTESVILLE
Dept. of Forestry Building, Suite 800
Last Thursday of month: 11:30-1:00 PM
Vikki Bravo, 434-982-4091, vsb4n@virginia.edu

VIRGINIA-FAIRFAX
Inova Fairfax Hospital Radiation/Oncology
2nd Wednesday: 5:30-7:00 PM
Corinne Cook, LCSW, 703-776-2813
Corinne.cook@inova.com

VIRGINIA-NORFOLK
Sentara Norfolk General Hospital
3rd Monday: 7:00 PM
Cynthia Gilliam, 757-770-4190/beachdolphin@aol.com

VIRGINIA- RICHMOND
Massey Cancer Ctr, Thalhimter Room
2nd and 4th Monday: 2:00-3:30 PM
Karen Mullin, MSW, 804-828-1066/kmullin@mcvh-vcu.edu

WASHINGTON-SEATTLE
Evergreen Hospital Medical Center
Rad/One Conf Rm Green 1-245
2nd Wednesday: 6:30-8:00 PM
Kile Jackson, 425-788-6562/kilejackson@hotmail.com

WASHINGTON-SEATTLE
Swedish Med Ctr 1 E. Conf Rm
3rd Thursday: 6:00-7:30 PM
Susan Sam Veto, BSN, RN, BC
206-341-1720/search.veto@vmc.org

WISCONSIN-MADISON
Univ. of Wisconsin Hosp. - ENT Clinic Rm, G3/206
1st Wed every other month beg. Feb. 11:30-1:00 PM
Rachael Kammer, MS, CCC-SLP, 608-263-4896/kammer@wisc.edu

WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
Medical College of Wisconsin - Conf.Rm. N, 3rd Fl.
2nd Tuesday: 6:00-8:00 PM
Mary Brawley, MACCC-SLP, 414-805-8655/mary.brawley@froedterthhealth.org

WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
Medical College of Wisconsin - Conf.Rm. N, 3rd Fl.
2nd Tuesday: 6:00-8:00 PM
Mary Brawley, MACCC-SLP, 414-805-8655/mary.brawley@froedterthhealth.org
SPOHNC Extends Wishes to All for Happy Holidays, and a Joyful New Year!

Thank you for your calls & e-mails following Hurricane Sandy. Our prayers go out to those affected by this devastating storm.