

Cancer Survivorship

by Robin O'Connor

NOT LONG AGO SURVIVING CANCER WAS AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE.

When someone was told they had cancer, everyone prepared for the worst. Today with more than 10 million cancer survivors in the United States a community of survivors has emerged.

A person is considered a survivor the moment he or she is diagnosed with cancer. And even though the prognosis is usually much more positive, cancer can still take a heavy emotional toll on patients and families. To help support patients who may feel overwhelmed, afraid, and alone, many health care facilities have developed survivorship programs. These programs are designed to support patients emotionally, physically and psychologically.

Persons initially diagnosed with cancer face many challenges. When Thomas Goode found out he had lung cancer in March 2004, he was worried. He had come to the emergency room thinking he was having a heart attack only to learn his heart was in perfect working order. A chest X-ray revealed a spot on his lung and when he woke up from the diagnostic bronchoscopy an entire team of caregivers was there to support him. "When someone tells you that you have cancer all kinds of thoughts go through your head," says Goode. Through social services, support groups and education, survivors are able to deal with the

uncertainties a cancer diagnosis can bring.

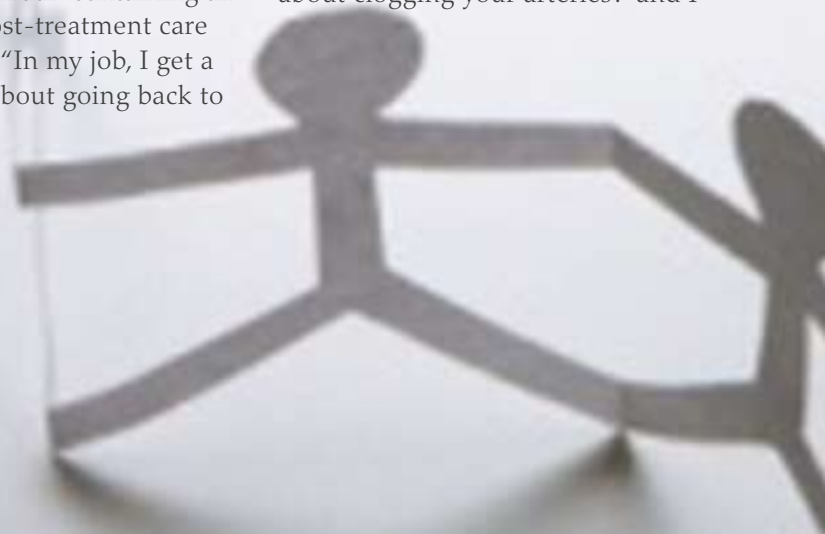
Survivorship has emerged as a new and significant phase in cancer care. Under the tutelage of Ernest Rosenbaum, M.D., an oncologist and the co-author of "Everyone's Guide to Cancer Supportive Care," California Pacific is launching a Cancer Survivorship Program in conjunction with a Survivorship Conference in September 2009. Dr. Rosenbaum worked with Stanford Hospital and the UCSF Medical Center developing cancer survivorship programs and continues to sit on California Pacific's Cancer Supportive Services Committee. The California Pacific Cancer Survivorship Program is cultivating a community that provides ongoing support to cancer survivors and their families. In addition to the September conference, the multidisciplinary survivorship committee has developed a "Survivorship manual" containing an individualized post-treatment care plan for patients. "In my job, I get a lot of questions about going back to

work, disability and relationship concerns," says Ilana Brosh, oncology social worker. The survivorship manual was adapted from Dr. Rosenbaum's work and tailored to California Pacific's patient needs and programs. Ilana says, "The manual has practical advice for cancer survivors."

Ilana and Alison Gause, patient navigator, have been dedicated to developing California Pacific's Cancer Survivorship Program. "As part of each individual's long-term follow-up needs, we help them stay connected to their health care team, educational resources

and a collaborative, supportive network," says Alison.

Goode reminisces when he was a new cancer survivor. Having dinner with a friend, he ordered pasta with cream sauce, "My friend said 'aren't you worried about clogging your arteries?' and I



responded 'why should I worry about my arteries, I'm dying of cancer.' He spent the first eight months preparing to die before having his "aha" moment. "One day I woke up and thought I need to start planning to live the rest of my life." He began reading cancer survivor stories and books which gave him strength and perspective. Each survivor has a different experience.

Goode did not feel like a survivor until about one year after he was diagnosed. Now five years out from his diagnosis in 2004, he looks at life as if everyday is a blessing.



Thomas Goode with Alison Gause and Ilana Brosh

California Pacific Oncology Services

California Pacific Medical Center's oncology programs and services combine the expertise of medical and surgical sub-specialists, integrative medicine, and genetic counselors with advanced technology and supportive patient care to create a comprehensive cancer center to treat and care for the whole person and their family, not just the illness.

Cancer Survivorship Conference

Saturday September 12, 2009
8 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

*The Art of Survivorship:
Facing Change, Finding Hope*

California Pacific Medical Center
Pacific Campus, Enright Room
2333 Buchanan St., Lobby Level
San Francisco, CA 94115

Call 415-600-3977 for more information or to reserve your seat.

There are more than 10 million cancer survivors in the U.S.