



Cancer Support Services

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Fall 2006

Providing Cancer Support in Western Connecticut and Eastern New York

Beating the Odds at the Ann Olsen Classic

The day began with sunny skies and crisp fall breezes. By the time our golfers left the 2006 Ann Olsen Greater Danbury Golf Classic at Ridgewood Country Club on September 11th, everyone was smiling.



The foursome (Tony Mercaldo, John Kortze, Ron Struski and Jim Foley) representing the Danbury firm Mittler & Mercaldo carried home the prestigious perpetual Ervie S.Hawley, Jr. Cup with a winning low net of 126, beating defending champs Ridgefield Bank by 1 point.

But the excitement did not stop there. At 2:10 in the afternoon, David Hawley swung a perfect ace on Hole #10. Twenty minutes later, Brian Martin repeated the hole in one on the same hole! The volunteers and players could hardly contain their excitement! The news spread like wildfire through the course. This hole was sponsored by Mike Dimyan of Tower Realty and was insured for \$10,000 for each ace through the National Hole-in-One Association. It was incredible to have even one winner; having two was gleeful. Later that afternoon, attorney Jackie Chan became the first player to sink the final putt in the Newtown Savings Bank Putt-Off and won \$500. John O'Connor of the Danbury Hospital Laboratory team pitched out of the bunker to win the Branson Sandman competition.

Congratulations to our winners and to General Chairman Ed Carola, and Honorary Chairs John Martocci and Mayor Mark Boughton. Thanks to our Corporate level sponsors: Boehringer Ingelheim, Branson, PepsiCola, Buck Consultants, New York Board of Trade and Union Savings Bank.

Every sponsor, player and volunteer contributed to keeping our doors open to people living with cancer. As our client volume grows, fundraisers like the Classic are absolutely vital.



Hole in One Winners:
Brian Martin & David Hawley



Tony Mercaldo & Ron Struski accepting the Ervie S. Hawley Cup on behalf of the Mittler & Mercaldo team.

CALENDER

- September 21** 2006 Greater Danbury "Good Scout" Luncheon - 11:30am, Amber Room Colonnade, Danbury, CT Recognizing Paul Dinto, President, Ann's Place Board of Directors & Paul McNamara of Ridgefield Bank.
- September 28** Danbury Old Timers Association - 6:15pm, Amber Room Colonnade. Among the thirteen honorees is Wilda Hayes, Executive Director, Ann's Place.
- September 30** Annual Clinical Staff Retreat
- October 9** BRIDGES Annual Volunteer Appreciation Tea
- November 17-19** 4th Annual Festival of Trees - Starr Ridge Banquet and Conference Center, 38 Starr Ridge Road, Brewster, NY (Just 4 miles past Trader Joe's)
- Monthly** The Men's Prostate Group meets on the first Wednesday evening of each month and has an active program committee.



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

To mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Community Cancer Collaborative held a High Tea on October 9 to recognize the compassionate volunteers of the Bridges Program. Bridges connects newly-diagnosed breast cancer patients to breast cancer survivors. Bridges volunteers receive training and support from the members of the Community Cancer Collaborative – Ann's Place, the American Cancer Society, and the Praxair Cancer Center at Danbury Hospital. Thanks to the Bridges volunteers – they are providing understanding, support and hope to those most in need.

The Breast Cancer Awareness exhibit at the Danbury Fair Mall (October 13 & 14) was sponsored by the Community Cancer Collaborative.

Clinical Staff & Volunteer Appreciation

Recently we recognized the outstanding work done by our facilitators, as well as our peer mentors and the Bridges volunteers. These dedicated volunteers were presented with fuzzy velvet hearts in appreciation for the work they do, but also to remind them to take good care of themselves. In addition, chair massages were offered by the staff of Take Time, Relaxation Center in Bethel.

As Clinical Director Su Murdock said, "We so appreciate the compassion and commitment that you each bring to your work here. Compassion comes from two words meaning 'with' and 'suffering.' You cannot help but experience some suffering as you provide the compassion and support that you do to each person whose life you touch. Be gentle with yourself!"

Special thanks to Diane King, Karen Antici, Mariana Zerbi, Marilyn Robinson for making the hearts.



Salute to the PepsiCo Foundation

We salute PepsiCo Foundation for their wonderful generosity in double matching PepsiCo employee gifts for those who volunteer time at Ann's Place. You have been exemplary in your support and a role model for other companies.

Spotlight on Pat Goldman



Pat Goldman has been a facilitator at Ann's Place, the Home of I CAN for the past six years. Like many people associated with Ann's Place, Pat has known Mary Burke (our Co-Founder) for many years. "I had a number of opportunities to speak with Mary over the years as the concept for I CAN was being formulated and became very excited about her ideas. I have great respect for Mary and her philosophy – her deep concern for clients and her willingness to actively listen to people and respond to their needs. So, I promised Mary that after I retired I would help her in any way that she could use me."

Pat facilitates the Women Together Graduates group for breast cancer survivors who have recently completed their treatment. As a breast cancer survivor of more than 20 years, she felt that she wanted to "give back" to others.

Pat notes that women living with breast cancer still have important issues to deal with after their initial treatments have been completed. When they are in the early phases of diagnosis and treatment, they generally have consistent and ongoing support from medical personnel, as well as family and friends. However, they enter a challenging transition when the first phase of treatment is over. At this point, they often face the insecurity of not having the same level of personal and professional support systems. They also face the expectations from family and friends that "things will get back to normal now." However, as people living with cancer know, you can never go back to things as they were before diagnosis.

The Graduates support group at Ann's Place helps women through this difficult transition. Goldman is quick to point out that it is members of the group who bring the greatest input to the meetings; her role is to facilitate discussion and the exchange of information, ideas and feelings.

Goldman also says that the group helps women develop advocacy skills. "Women often have the expectation that they should be good complacent patients. In sharing personal experiences, they often learn that they don't need to be passive and that they can be more participatory in their on-going medical treatment. We spend a lot of time talking about ways to be most effectively and positively assertive."

In addition, sessions are a safe vehicle for helping people to recognize and process the feelings that sometimes accompany a cancer diagnosis. Participants in the group help one another to develop a good perspective on what is happening in their personal lives. While family and friends can be sympathetic to what women living with breast cancer are undergoing, their understanding is always incomplete, because they have never fully shared the experience. Many women are also very protective of their loved ones; they don't want families to know the extent of their physical and emotional pain.

In the Graduates support group, they can share their experiences with others in the same situation. Goldman points out that participants can share as much or as little as they want with fellow group members. Sometimes it takes several meetings for new members to open up to their feelings and concerns. She praises the women in the group for their great courage in moving beyond their initial distress into finding the resources they need to cope with such a wrenching life change.

While Goldman grew up in the small town in New Braunfels in the hill country of Texas, she did her undergraduate work at nearby Vassar College. She also earned a Masters in English Literature from Western Connecticut State University. She says this was "great preparation for her work in counseling. Great literature can give much richer insights than dry case studies." Right now she is reading *The Madonnas of Leningrad* by Debra Dean which she recommends highly. Besides its powerful themes, the book takes on a special resonance for Goldman, who is a docent at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield.

As an undergraduate, Pat was a child psychology major. When she started her student teaching assignment, she realized that she was more interested in working with individuals or small groups, and especially with parents and children. Her first job after graduation was for the Lighthouse for the Blind where she served as a preschool counselor.

During her long and successful career, she worked as a counselor with a focus on group work. She worked in early intervention in the Danbury Public Schools and with the Danbury Regional Child Advocacy Center as a facilitator of parent/infant/toddler groups and in mentor training. She also has a master's degree in counseling from Bank Street College in New York City.

Pat is married to Alvin Goldman, a retired pediatrician, and has two children, Hillel and Beth, and four grandchildren. She happily notes that "all of the trite truisms about grandparents are really true and not trite at all." Watching grandchildren grow and develop and playing some part in that process, she adds, is a great pleasure and privilege. Pat is also active in Congregation B'nai Israel Synagogue.

Thanks to Pat for her generous and compassionate service at Ann's Place and throughout the community. She has touched countless lives. We deeply appreciate all she has done to provide women living with cancer with support, hope and creative solutions to the challenges they face, and to inspire others with her love of beauty and the arts.

Women Together Graduates is a mutual help support group for post treatment breast cancer survivors. It meets on the second Monday evening of every month at the offices of Ann's Place, The Home of I CAN. Ann's Place also offers the Women Together support group for women newly diagnosed with breast cancer, as well as the Post Graduate group for long-term survivors. Check our website for other types of support groups.



This fall, Marianne Seeber will be doing her internship at Ann's Place. Marianne is completing her training for a Certificate in Energy Medicine at the Institute of Healing Arts and Sciences, LLC, in Bloomfield, Connecticut. She will be working closely with our clinical staff and doing energy work for our clients.

Jewelry Designs

Proud sponsors of the exciting new "Digging for Diamonds" at the 4th Annual Festival of Trees and Traditions.

Keeping Hope in Action

Watch our construction progress on Saw Mill Road over the coming months. It is *not too late* to memorialize a loved one by naming a room in our new building. You might consider dedicating the reception area or a counseling room for a gift of \$25,000, payable in annual or quarterly installments. Check with Brian Carney or Wilda Hayes at (203) 790-6568 for wall plaques ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 and for major naming opportunities from \$50,000. Join area families and companies in preserving a dear memory while reaching out to families in need.

ICANCERVIVE

Donna Betts of Newtown recently donated her lovely "icancervive" quilt to Ann's Place, where it is hanging in the reception area and bringing hope and inspiration to everyone who sees it. Donna is now creating some pieces for the "Quilter's Corner" at the 4th Annual Festival of Trees. If you would like to donate some pieces to be sold at the Festival, please contact Jean Conover at 203-426-6146 or jconover6146@sbcglobal.net or Selma Kenter at 203-426- 0559 or arktekstil@superonline.com.



"Many Happy Returns!"



The staff of Ann's Place recently celebrated the 75th birthday of co-founder Mary Burke. The happy guests ranged in age from one year old Morgan Coles, son of staff member Andrea Coles, to Mary's husband Harold, still going strong at ninety-one. The event was not only a chance to enjoy great company, but to reflect on the incredible contributions that Mary has made to our community. If you have not done so already, please take a moment to join us in sending birthday greetings to Mary, and to wish her many happy returns!

New Staff



Cheryl Koeber, MSW, LCSW has recently joined the staff at Ann's Place, The Home of I CAN. She is a licensed clinical social worker who comes to us with extensive experience in the field of oncology social work, including Regional Hospice, Cancer Care, and Danbury Hospital. She has her B.A. from NYU and received her Master's

Degree from Hunter College School of Social Work. Cheryl is a native Bostonian, who currently lives in Carmel, NY with her husband Douglas and son Zachary, their dog and two cats. Zach attends the Purchase Conservatory of Music as a freshman in Jazz Studies Performance, majoring in tenor saxophone. Cheryl is very excited to be here, and will be working noon to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Her goal is to focus on the Kids Kan program, including outreach and expansion of services to our school community.

Brian T. Carney, Development Director, comes to Ann's Place with a wide variety of experience. Brian has extensive experience as a non-profit administrator and fundraiser, including senior positions at the Advocacy Institute, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and Washington Project for the Arts. Most recently, he served as the Director of Chapter and Professional Relations for the Educational Theatre Association and as



Grants Specialist for the City of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Brian is currently a doctoral candidate in Theatre at the University of Pittsburgh. He is writing on recent dramatic historical fantasies called narrative landscapes. As an undergraduate, he attended the University of Pennsylvania where he earned a BSE in Management from the Wharton School and a BA in Urban Studies from the College of Arts and Sciences. A published author and produced playwright, he also holds an MFA from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.



Jean Knopf and Gerry Plantania of the Candlewood Lions Club present a check to Brian T. Carney, Development Director of Ann's Place. Many thanks to the Candlewood Lions, who generously made Ann's Place, The Home of I CAN, the beneficiary of their fundraiser. If you are planning an event and would like to include Ann's Place, please contact Brian T. Carney at brian@annsplace.org or (203) 790-6568.