

*Providing Cancer Support in  
Western Connecticut and Eastern New York*

# ANN'S PLACE THE HOME OF I CAN Cancer Support Services



From left: Winner Candy Acquanita of Danbury and granddaughter, Mia Acquanita, winner Dr. David Chabot of Danbury, winner Madeline Baldwick, Diamond Chairperson and Realtor Marie Borner of Danbury and Robert Underhill, owner of Jewelry Designs.

## Thanks to You, The Best Ever!

From November 17 to 19, 2006, the Starr Ridge Banquet & Conference Center in Brewster, New York was transformed into a winter wonderland of original trees, quilts, gifts, wreaths, fresh centerpieces and magical teddy bears who drank tea. And thanks to you, the generous patrons of Ann's Place, the 4th Annual Festival of Trees and Traditions was the most successful ever. We raised over \$90,000 to continue our life-affirming work.

There are many special memories from this year's Festival. The Danbury Fair Tree brought back fond recollections of an event we all miss. Toyota's magnificent tree "Candlewood Christmas," captured our wondrous lake. Children and adults got to play prospector as they went "Digging for Diamonds," a new addition to this year's Festival. Kids dressed in their holiday finest as they enjoyed live entertainers at the Teddy Bear Teas. Everyone wondered who would win the stunning Cartier Watch. The bidding soared for the most popular trees at the Preview Party, as guests enjoyed the lively sounds of Steve Blake and the Swing Commandos.

## In the Holiday Spirit

From December 21 – 23, two dozen dedicated volunteers from Ann's Place wrapped holiday presents for last-minute shoppers at the Barnes & Noble on Backus Avenue in Danbury. Not only did they help to spread holiday cheer and provide shoppers with beautifully wrapped packages, they raised over \$800 in donations. Most importantly, however, by passing out bookmarks and newsletters, they made more people aware of the valuable services we provide here. When the need for cancer support services arises, they know who to call.

Thanks to John Cloutier and the great staff at Barnes & Noble, and to all of our gift-wrapping volunteers and generous holiday shoppers.

Great thanks to the many people and organizations who made this Festival such a huge success. They include: everyone who attended and shared the holiday spirit with us; scores of volunteers who worked so hard to make the Festival possible; and the dedicated Festival committee: co-chairs Sue Chabot, Shirley LaPine and Jennifer Roy, and members Iris Batson, Marie Borner, Susan Buzaid, Jean Conover, Claudia Coopersmith, Amy Dent, Ellen Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Hayes, Wilda Hayes, Geri Hutchings, Eveline Jones, Marcia Izzo, Jan Maria Jagush, Bernadette Kallas, Selma Kenter, Judy Killian, Sheila Lougheed, Wendee Nussle, Kathy Pape, Regina Platano and Christine Saffi, Katherine Mygan and Clara St. Jean. Thanks as well to all the patient spouses who pitched in throughout the year!

Special recognition goes to all of our sponsors, especially Toyota and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, Local Union #38, Premier Event Sponsors; Jewelry Designs, Digging for Diamonds Sponsor; the Praxair Cancer Center at Danbury Hospital, Preview Party sponsor; and the Boehringer Ingelheim Cares Foundation and Paul Dinto Electrical Contracting, Inc., our Leadership sponsors. Thanks as well to the local businesses, organizations and individuals who generously donated raffle prizes, bought program ads and sponsored trees. Without your help, we would not be able to help the over 600 clients who come through our door every month.

Finally, congratulations to the raffle and auction winners. Our first Digging for Diamonds winner was 8-year-old Madeline Baldwick of New Milford. Her delighted mother Erin says it was just the holiday boost her family needed: "What a happy moment; we still tell the story to everyone. The children and I have needed some happy moments since my husband died sixteen months ago." Madeline's diamond will be crafted into a heart-shaped necklace. The second winner of a \$2,000 diamond was Fordham Professor, Dave Chabot. Dave tossed the jewels he selected into his coat pocket, and didn't bring them into the store until his daughter Jennifer reminded him.

When the third winner did not appear, the staff at Jewelry Designs sorted through the jewels that had been left in the tank and found the remaining diamond. The lucky winner, drawn at random from

(continued on page 3)

Ann's Place, The Home of I CAN  
39 Old Ridgebury Road, Suite 17, Danbury, CT 06810  
Phone: 203-790-6568 Fax: 203-797-1726  
Email: [ican@annsplace.org](mailto:ican@annsplace.org)  
[www.annsplace.org](http://www.annsplace.org)

# ANN'S PLACE

## THE HOME OF I CAN

*Ann's Place, The Home of I CAN, provides comfort and support to people living with cancer and their loved ones. We inspire people to create solutions which will strengthen and sustain them.*

### Swimming Against the Tide

By Beth Cox

My confused feelings after my brother had completed chemo treatments made me realize I needed counseling. I remembered how Ann's Place had been so supportive for a friend and his family during his cancer treatments. The atmosphere is friendly and the counselor has been receptive to listen and offer a different perspective to me. It has been reassuring to know that there is support available outside of my family and friends.



John Elder Photography

Four-foot high waves and cold, shark-infested water. These were the conditions that my brother, Erick, and 600 other swimmers faced on a recent cold morning in July. Most of the swimmers donned wetsuits as they boarded a boat out to Alcatraz Island off San Francisco. They were all here to swim the Alcatraz Challenge. Known affectionately as "Swim or Die", the race is a total distance of 1 ½ miles in dangerously strong currents between the "rock" at Alcatraz Island and the shores of San Francisco. It was a crazy deal for some, and exhilarating for others, just to be able to attempt this Challenge. For Erick, this race marked a critical turning point for this cancer survivor and father of two young children.

Two years ago, at the age of 40, Erick was training to swim the Challenge when he was diagnosed with stage IV metastatic malignant melanoma. This diagnosis was a crushing blow to someone who considered himself invincible and in top physical form. As a triathlete and surfer, he faced this "race of his life" with his usual determination as he endured testing and two years of extensive and brutal biochemotherapy treatments in a San Francisco hospital. Often feeling much worse than he looked, he kept a goal list in his pocket so that he would never lose track of what was important in his life. He slowly regained his strength by remaining faithful and optimistic.

After the chemo treatments ended, he began to slowly swim again at lunchtime and after work in a local pool to set personal strengthening goals for himself. On his 42nd birthday, he was able to swim 42 laps. At the same time, he became a peer mentor for other cancer patients and an article was written about him in the California Pacific Medical Center newsletter. When fellow patients and survivors heard that Erick was seriously training for the next Challenge, the pressure was on for him to tackle his long-anticipated personal challenge. He aggressively set higher training goals for himself, claiming that it was im-

portant to not let down those around him who sought and needed the inspiration. He even trained while on vacation in Connecticut for one week.

Erick not only finished the race, but he completed the swim in 46 minutes and placed in the top third in his division. His cancer is currently in remission and he continues to focus on new goals. The next chapter of his life will include a private pilot's license!

### Funding Updates

Ann's Place recently received several grants from generous local funders.

The Albert Wadsworth and Helen Clark Meserve Memorial Fund awarded us a \$6,000 grant to help support the expansion of the successful Bridges program and the growth of outreach to teens and children whose lives have been impacted by cancer.

The Savings Bank of Danbury Foundation awarded us a \$5,000 grant to support the rapid growth in our client base and the increased need for individual and family counseling and support groups.

The Wolinsky Family Foundation gave us money for a new color printer which enhances our ability to produce documents and signage in-house.

We are grateful for the support of these compassionate program partners. With their help, we can continue to provide our life-affirming services to an expanding client base



Gary Hawley, who serves on the Distribution Committee for the Meserve Fund, presents the grant check to staff Social Worker Cheryl Koeber, whose work with Bridges and children is partially underwritten by the grant.



Savings Bank of Danbury President and CEO Hal Wibling (left) presenting the check to Wilda Hayes as Paul P. Dinto, President of the Board of Ann's Place, looks on.

## Clicking for a Good Cause



Imagine generating a donation for Ann's Place every time you surf the web. Thanks to our friends at GoodSearch, you can do just that.

GoodSearch is an Internet Search engine powered by Yahoo. By selling ad space, they make around two cents per Internet search. They have decided to donate half of this revenue to non-profit organizations such as Ann's Place. A penny per search may not sound like a lot, but it's a quick and easy way to raise funds and awareness for Ann's Place. With hundreds of people clicking just once or twice a day, we can make hundreds of dollars almost effortlessly.

Here's what you do. Go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com). Type Ann's Place in the box labeled "Who do you GoodSearch for?" and then click on Verify. Our name and location will appear in the box. Now, just use GoodSearch to surf the web and you will help Ann's Place.

Some things to keep in mind:

Only legitimate web searches count, so read the section on what constitutes a fraudulent search.

Make GoodSearch your home page or bookmark it – that way using it as your search engine will become automatic.

When you delete your browsing history (as you should do on a regular basis), make sure to re-submit Ann's Place as the beneficiary of your GoodSearch clicks.

Look at the GoodSearch site for suggestions on how to spread the word. Examples include mentioning GoodSearch in your email signature line, linking to GoodSearch on your blog or website and sending emails to your friends and family.

Thanks for using this quick and easy way to supplement your generous contributions to Ann's Place.

## A New Way to Support Ann's Place: Your IRA

Congress recently enacted legislation which provides you with a limited opportunity to help yourself, your family and Ann's Place. Individuals age 70 ½ and over can make a charitable donation of up to \$100,000 from an IRA without having to count the withdrawal as taxable income.

This tax-free IRA distribution offers you the chance to make a significant gift to Ann's Place while avoiding the usual paperwork associated with an IRA withdrawal. The withdrawal must go directly to Ann's Place. If you are interested in using your IRA to help us continue our vital work, please consult your financial planner or tax advisor. Act soon, because this provision is currently only effective through 2007. Our Federal EIN is 22-3181832.

# ANN'S PLACE THE HOME OF I CAN

(continued from page 1)

everyone who played, was Candy Acquanita. Candy is a Peer Mentor for our Bridges Program. Her diamond is being fashioned into an original necklace for her granddaughter Mia Acquanita.

Bob Underhill, owner of Jewelry Designs in Danbury was thrilled with the success of the event. "The whole setting was so fabulous, so well-done! I can't wait to see it at the next Festival," Bob said as he was photographed with the winners. "It goes to a cause I can really appreciate."

The lovely ladies Cartier watch was won by Maureen McCarthy of Somers, New York. She recently visited the Cartier store in Manhattan to have the watch set and sized. She reports that she very much enjoyed the experience of being a Cartier client!

Thanks again to everyone who helped make the Festival of Trees and Traditions such a great success. Look for additional Festival photos at [www.annsplace.org](http://www.annsplace.org). Mark your calendars now for this year's Festival – November 16 to 18.



Isabelle Farrington, Regina Platano and Shirley LaPine check out the Great Danbury Fair tree, which was later donated to the Danbury Museum by Joe Saffi and Pat Paquette. Levi Newsome, Director of Museum Operations, joins the ladies in this photo. Regina used original fair memorabilia, as well as re-creating ornaments based on originals in the museum, in creating this one-of-a-kind tree.



Frankie the Framer 2006



If you are interested in serving on an event committee, please give us a call at (203) 790-6568.

## Spotlight on Jim Coffey



Sometimes the most unexpected things can lead people to Ann's Place. For Jim Coffey, facilitator of our Men's Group, it was his obsession with golf. While hitting balls at a driving range in Brookfield one spring afternoon in 2004, he ran into his old friend Ken Ordway, a long-time Board member and dedi-

cated supporter of Ann's Place. When Jim mentioned he had undergone prostate cancer surgery the previous fall, Ken told him about the counseling services offered by Ann's Place. Jim said he was doing alright now, so Ken mentioned that he might want to help other survivors and facilitate the Men's Group. Jim demurred, but the next day he got a phone call from Su Murdock, Clinical Director at Ann's Place, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Men's Group, a gathering for men living with prostate cancer, meets on the first Wednesday of every month from 6:30 – 8:00pm. While participation in the group varies, there are currently thirty men who meet to discuss their diagnosis, treatment and prognosis in an open and supportive atmosphere. While Jim makes it clear that no one in the group dispenses medical advice, he says it is a great forum for gathering information and sharing experiences. "There are no conditions," Coffey says, "just understanding. We are there to be as supportive as possible. A bond develops between members of the group, and a high comfort level quickly grows. In fact, we often discuss topics the members might not want to talk about with their doctors or partners. And while quality time at a doctor's office might be limited, there are no time limits at our meetings."

While Jim does prepare an agenda for each meeting, he notes that the topics often emerge organically from the evening's conversation. At the last meeting, for example, there "were three guys with new diagnoses, so we talked about terminology and prognosis and the other group members shared their experiences. It was a great help to the new guys." Jim says that the sessions are an "opportunity to refuel the soul" and encourages men who are living with prostate cancer to join the Men's Group.

Before Jim became a facilitator at Ann's Place, he worked in education. He retired as a high school principal, but he spent most of his life in counseling. He has a Masters in Counseling and Guidance. Born in Danbury, he has spent his life in western Connecticut and now lives in Redding with Eleanor, his wife of 43 years. They have two sons: Jim, who lives with his family in Massachusetts, and Chris, who lives in Danbury.

Besides his obsession with golf, Jim enjoys working outdoors in the warm weather and is an enthusiastic landscaper. He is also an avid reader, especially of non-fiction and does some writing himself. Jim reads local news for the blind through a volunteer program with the Lion's Club.

While Jim is quick to point out that he gets as much back from the group members as he gives, Executive Director Wilda Hayes is also quick to point out how fortunate Ann's Place is to have dedicated facilitators like Jim. "In the past two years, the Men's Group has experienced tremendous growth. Jim and the group

# ANN'S PLACE THE HOME OF I CAN

members create such a trusting and supportive atmosphere that new members quickly feel comfortable and thrive on helping each other.

Wilda adds, "We are incredibly grateful to Jim for his commitment to Ann's Place. He has left his mark on the lives of so many people in our community." Thanks, Jim, for everything you do!

*The Men's Group meets the first Wednesday of every month from 6:30 – 8:00 PM in the offices of Ann's Place. For more information, call (203) 790-6568. Ann's Place also offers the Partners Group for spouses and partners of men living with prostate cancer, as well as individual and family counseling for survivors and their families.*

## Program Needs

As a small non-profit with no fee for services rendered to over 600 clients each month, it is often tough for us to fund all our programmatic needs. Your donations can help fill the gaps as we provide emotional support for client families. Here are some current needs:



**\$10 covers a welcome packet & gift bag for one new client.**

**\$19 covers one annual subscription to Coping Magazine.**

**\$30 buys blank journals for one of our writing groups.**

**\$50 replaces art supplies for our art therapy program.**

**\$250 helps with materials for our "Childrens Lives Include Moments of Bravery" program**

**\$300 provides updated books for our children's library.**

**\$500 buys a video camera for our children's program & events.**

**\$2,500 sponsors our annual summer client retreat.**

Please note on your donation if you would like to sponsor one of these items. Also please check at [www.annsplace.org](http://www.annsplace.org) for ways to donate.

Your support is invaluable!

# ANN'S PLACE

## THE HOME OF I CAN

*Ann's Place, The Home of I CAN, provides comfort and support to people living with cancer and their loved ones. We inspire people to create solutions which will strengthen and sustain them.*

Newsletter

5

Spring 2007



### Please Welcome Jackie Morrison

Jackie Morrison recently joined the staff of Ann's Place as our Volunteer Coordinator. She will be responsible for recruiting volunteers for a variety of needs here, from receptionists to special events to mailing parties.

Bringing a wealth of volunteer experience to Ann's Place, Jackie most recently served as the Assistant Executive Director of the Jewish Federation, Inc. in Danbury. Before that she worked as the Temple Administrator at the United Jewish Center in Danbury, and earlier held positions with Davidson Insurance Services and with public schools in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Jackie has also held a variety of positions with the local section of the National Council of Jewish Women, including President.

Jackie grew up on Long Island, but has lived in Danbury for the past 37 years. Her husband Eliot is an independent insurance agent and they have three grown children – a son who is teaching in Seoul, Korea; a daughter who lives on Lasqueti Island in British Columbia; and a son who owns an art gallery in Kent, CT. She also has three grandchildren ages 7, 11 & 15.

Jackie adds that she “joined a volunteer organization within two weeks of moving to Danbury and I have never stopped enjoying the gratification of helping to fill a need in the lives of individuals – whether locally, nationally or internationally.”

## How You Can Get Involved

### Volunteer Opportunities

We are always looking for volunteers at Ann's Place. Here are our current needs:

#### Receptionists

Greet clients and visitors, direct calls on multi-line phone system and provide general support. Work one four-hour shift per week. Please call the office to find out which shifts are available. Evening greeter needed on 1st Wednesdays 6-8pm.

#### Substitute Receptionists

To fill in for regular receptionists as needed

#### Office Support

To help prepare mailings and help with other tasks as needed

#### Special Events

To help before, during and after our three major fundraisers and other events throughout the year

**Event Committee:** Ladies Golf Planning Committee meets February to June. We need people who can sell ads and tee signs.

**In Your Town:** Plan a benefit in your town for Ann's Place.

**Library Inventory:** Catalog and organize our library.

**Grant Research and Writing:** Help us uncover resources to support operations.

*For more information on volunteering at Ann's Place, or just to welcome Jackie, you can call (203) 790-6568 or email Jackie@annsplace.org.*

## CALENDAR

**April 19** - *Wine Tasting* at Ethan Allen Hotel, 5-7pm, Sponsored by Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce

**June 3** - *Survivor's Day* at Ethan Allen Hotel {Co-sponsored by the Community Cancer Collaborative: the Praxair Cancer Center at Danbury Hospital, the American Cancer Society and Ann's Place, the Home of I CAN}

**June 18** - *12th Annual Ladies Golf Tournament* at Richter Park Golf Course, Danbury, CT. Entry form on website.

**July 11** - *Danbury Westerners Baseball Game* to benefit Ann's Place, 7pm, Rogers Park, Danbury. Play ball!

**July 14** - *Client Retreat* - Mercy Center, Madison, CT, by reservation. Call 790-6568

**September 10** - *18th Annual Ann Olsen Greater Danbury Golf Classic* at Ridgewood Golf Course, Danbury, CT (See website for forms).

**September 19 - October 31** - *The Joy of Survival Art Exhibit* at Praxair Cancer Center, hosted by the Community Cancer Collaborative. See website, Support section, Programs tab.

**November 16-18** - *5th Annual Festival of Trees & Traditions* at Starr Ridge Banquet & Conference Center, Brewster, NY  
Friday – *Festival Preview Party*, Saturday & Sunday – *Festival Days*