Volume: 18 Issue: 3 Summer 2002

Caring & Sharing

Cancer Patient Care

509-456-0446 1507 East Sprague Avenue, Spokane, WA 99202 www.cancerpatientcare.org



Patti poses in the Reimer Room

From Those We Serve
Patti's Story

For the second time in seven years, I found a lump in my breast. My doctor assured me it couldn't be cancer after performing the lumpectomy, but he would be calling after running the tests on some odd looking tissue. Three days later his report was positive for cancer, and the news was heartbreaking since I had survived breast cancer seven years before. How could this be happening? Didn't they always say if you survived five years without recurrence that you were "safe"? My husband and I just got custody of his two young sons, ages 4 and 8, the day after I found my lump. How do I explain this to these children? They barely knew me and now I was going in for surgery and then chemotherapy (again). My surgery was a month away and it was going to be a long month. They took the news better than I thought and we got to know each other during that waiting time.

Surgery was extensive, mastectomy and reconstruction at the same time. What should have been an eight-hour procedure turned into twelve because of complications with scar tissue from the previous cancer surgery. Now I had to heal to get ready for chemotherapy treatments.

"Patti's" cont'd on p. 5

Counting Our Blessings: *The numbers behind the services*

The highlight of each newsletter we publish is "From Those We Serve," our clients' stories. These are stories of human strength and physical boundaries, inspirational and frightening, but always stories of compassion and hope. Each of these stories is multiplied every month as we track the services given to our clients, our friends and neighbors struggling with cancer. How many times has Cancer Patient Care been there for others in a similar battle? Every month, Cancer Patient Care serves approximately 300 clients and touches many more lives linked through families and friends of each individual cancer patient. As much power as there is behind each one of those accounts, actual numbers magnify the impact through the reality that this is just one of the many lives touched by cancer; one of the many patients ministered to by Cancer Patient Care.

Cancer Patient Care was there to provide encouragement and understanding for many facing the battle of and for their lives. Our social workers made a total of 283 home visits and 265 office visits through June of this year, offering a helping hand, a shoulder to lean on, and a wealth of experience and knowledge to draw from. Jenni Bowman, Cancer Patient Care's newest social worker, discovered how valuable home visits are for cancer patients.

"Counting " cont'd on p. 4

Cancer Patient Care

Mission Statement:
To provide social service support for cancer patients and their families who have limited financial resources.

Cancer Patient Care
Volume 18, Issue no. 3
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Imagine if...



Heidi Vaughn, Executive Director

Can you imagine trying to fight the battle of cancer without the financial resources to do so? Can you imagine choosing between much needed medication and paying the utility bill? Can you imagine not having the financial resources to pay for a wig when you have lost your hair because of cancer treatment? Can you imagine needing to pay $1000 for anti-nausea medications, and this is for only 60 pills?

There are ways you can help with the unimaginable. Your financial support of Cancer Patient Care helps take the burden off our friends and neighbors fighting the battle of cancer. We believe that no one should have to make the choice between food and medication. Because of the generosity of our community, we are making a difference with real people who have real needs, right now. Please help us with our mission. We need your financial support to provide social service support for cancer patients and their families who have limited financial resources. Imagine if.....



Will Terpening, Board President

A Message From the President

The busy months are now behind us at Cancer Patient Care with our major events coming to a close. We thank all of you who participated in Mostly Merlot and the Loreen Miller Bike Ride and a special thanks to our sponsors who made these events possible. As we move into the summer months with plans for travel, vacations and visits to the lake dominating our thoughts, I hope that you will continue to remember our clients and their special needs.

Cancer Patient Care, like many other nonprofit organizations, continues to face financial challenges including Federal and State dollars getting much tighter, the local economy continuing in a weakened state, and health care costs continuing to increase while insurance continues to cover less. That means we will continue to count on you, our dedicated volunteers and donors, to support this vital work.

You are critical to our mission and we appreciate your continued support. We and our clients thank you.

Would you like to make a difference in the lives of cancer patients and their families today and after you have gone? A planned gift from your estate can benefit you through a tax dollar savings, while fulfilling your wishes of helping cancer patients and their families with limited financial resources. Contact your tax advisor or attorney and see how you can help Cancer Patient Care.

9th Annual Loreen Miller Bike Ride

Thank you Spokane! Cancer Patient Care's 9th Annual Loreen Miller Bike Ride was a huge success. With beautiful weather and a slight breeze, almost 600 riders and 157 volunteers participated giving 1,923 hours of labor to honor their loved ones' memories, pay tribute to their battles and celebrate their survival.



Riders take off from Mt. Spokane High School

On Sunday, June 23rd, the pastoral Peone Prairie served as the backdrop for the cyclists riding as teams, families or individuals to support the mission of Cancer Patient Care. One rider commented, "The course was well marked, the food stops were great and I loved the people cheering us on. What a wonderful event and cause. The ride was very challenging, but what kept me going was thinking about what cancer patients go through and what a tough battle they fight."

Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of participants from a variety of organizations and interests, this event was a huge success raising nearly $40,000 for services available for cancer patients and their families here in our own community. Each volunteer and rider who assisted with this event has made a significant contribution to Cancer Patient Care. Our clients thank you for your efforts. Volunteers are an integral part of our program, helping raise awareness as well as funds, and assisting with the operation of the agency.

Thanks again to all who participated and to all who generously volunteer!

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"Even in her (the client) situation, with all of the treatment she is going through, she was so positive and appreciative," said Jenni. "It surprised me how important my visit really was to her." Visits like this bring emotional support as well as the delivery of home health care equipment, disposable medical supplies, or much-needed food supplements to nourish a chemo-altered body.

Home health care equipment from our Loan Closet can save a cancer patient hundreds of dollars every month. Hospital beds can rent for up to $400 per month, beyond the means of many people who need them. Everything from wheelchairs, shower benches and walkers can be borrowed from Cancer Patient Care. The home health care equipment can be borrowed regardless of whether a person needing the item has cancer or not. When a client needs a piece of home health care equipment, yet has no means to get it, our social workers will deliver the item to their home. For the first half of 2002, a total of 312 pieces of equipment have been loaned to clients, including 81 home deliveries.



Cancer Patient Care provides more nutritional food supplements for cancer patients, at no cost to them, than any other local agency. Food supplements are necessary to maintain nutrition levels for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy and for whom nausea is an unwelcome side effect. For those too ill to eat solid food, food supplements are crucial. From January to June, 439 cases of food supplements were distributed.

For Jeanne Ratliff, Cancer Patient Care provided a necessary commodity and a comfort knowing her mother was taken care of when she was unable to take her to her many appointments for cancer treatment.

"Cancer Patient Care was very helpful for me and my family when my mother was on chemotherapy," said Jeanne. "We truly couldn't have survived without them. They picked her up, stayed with her and brought her home. When you are a working family who is trying to keep their jobs and care for someone this kind of help is immeasurable."

So far this year, Cancer Patient Care has been able to provide over 131 round trips to and from their medical appointments, paying for the taxi service. In some cases, Cancer Patient Care has been able to provide a rental car for transportation to medical treatments not available in Spokane and requiring more travel.

These statistics of the services provided through Cancer Patient Care reflect just a portion of the stories of our friends and neighbors struggling daily with the turmoil of dealing with cancer. We are able to provide these services thanks to donations from the community. As you ponder the personal testimonies you have read, consider how many times that story is multiplied, maybe even with someone you know. Perhaps you can help.

For a complete list of donors visit our website at www.cancerpatientcare.org.
A special thanks again to all of those who continue to support Cancer Patient Care!

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Staff Involvement puts the "care" in Cancer Care Northwest.

The sterile tile and florescent glow of the hospital hallway can seem all but welcoming; it's easy to feel alone in a battle within your body. The staff at Cancer Care Northwest have been doing their best to treat their patients beyond just the physical realm and it's easy to see that "caring" for their patients is not just a job to them, but their corporate culture. In a united response, employees of Cancer Care Northwest, from the staff that greets you at the front door, the doctors and nurses who treat the disease, and many other dedicated employees raised $3,500 throughout the year for Cancer Patient Care.

For the past several years, the staff gave the proceeds from ongoing fundraising events to cancer research, but last year at a general staff meeting of all three CCNW locations they decided to give half of the proceeds to a local organization, Cancer Patient Care.

"Every day our nursing staff and support personnel deal with patients who receive transportation assistance, prescriptions, medical equipment and other help from Cancer Patient Care," said Linda Smith, RN, Nurse Manager. This is a great organization that touches the lives of many local cancer patients, and we are pleased to support them."

Violet Watcher, RN, said, "Research is valuable but the hands-on services delivered by Cancer Patient Care in their friendly, comforting way is so important to our patients' treatment."

Each month the staff held a variety of different fundraisers with each department working together on a project. At Christmas time, the lab workers created and raffled a seasonal quilted wall hanging. In February the front desk put together a gift basket and raffled it off in time for Valentine day. Other departments held bake sales, raffles with merchandise ranging from a handmade doll donated by a patient to a DVD player, and a huge Cancer Care Northwest Yard Sale.

"It's a lot of fun for all of us," said Sherrie Kanan, Receptionist. "Everybody just pulls together. We have a great time doing it."

The staff and clients at Cancer Patient Care salute the efforts of Cancer Care Northwest. The donation will be used to provide vital emotional, physical and financial support services for cancer patients and their families, our friends and neighbors, in the Spokane area.

Patti's cont'd

Two months later I began the treatments, and I got sick right away. The anti-nausea pills were $100 a piece! My doctor told me I would lose all the hair on my body within two weeks. I didn't believe him, but he was right. This was such a stressful time, not only for me, but for my new family as well. The bills were piling up and I had been off work already for three months. Suddenly, we were a one income home, with two more mouths to feed.

A friend told me about Cancer Patient Care. My first visit I was exhausted from treatment and worry over finances, but I found Ray, my social worker. I knew that he would make sure we got the help we needed. Soon, we were getting financial help with all the prescriptions I had to take and there were a lot of them and they were all very expensive.

The boys like to eat a lot, constantly it seems, and our grocery bill was shocking. One day, Ray brought us a grocery voucher for $100 to the house. We also had two months of our utilities paid.

It wasn't just financial help either. Ray would call to see how I was doing, his support and encouragement meant a lot to me. It helped me make it through a lot of hard days.

A fun time at Cancer Patient Care, was when my four year old stepson came with me to choose some wigs to wear when I was bald. It was a chance for us to have a good time and I valued his honest opinion of what looked good on me. We took a red one, a blonde one and one that was really big and long (like Dolly Parton). The boys even tried the wigs on themselves so that they would know what it felt like.

It's been over a year now and two more surgeries later and thank God I'm OK. My family had been in such a dark and dreary place and there weren't very many rays of sunshine, but Cancer Patient Care always had some for us.

Did You Know?

A donation of just $50 provides a grocery voucher for a family like Patti's or three cases of food supplements for a patient who has been physically, financially, and emotionally depleted by cancer.

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How you can help Cancer Patient Care

Cancer Patient Care serves a large, otherwise unmet need in our comunity. We consistently have over 300 active clients needing our services. In the month of June we had a record number of new clients, people in need of our services. These services range from food supplements to emergency funds for food, heat and light to breast cancer screening and so much more. We often get asked how people can help. There are different ways you can help others right here, right now with real needs.

1. Financial support. Financial support is constantly needed to continue our improtant work. Your donations stay right here in the community to help your friends and neighbors.
2. Volunteer. Your time as a volunteer is extremely important. Whether you want to help with a special event, office work, or cleaning healthcare equipment, your donated time keeps Cancer Patient Care efficient.
3. Spread the word. Cancer Patient Care has brochures and posters avialable that explain our services. The more people who know about Cancer Patient Care and its services, the more people we can help.

Call us at 456-0446 to find out how you can help Cancer Patient Care or stop by our office at 1507 East Sprague and talk with us.

Wish List

8 1/2 x 11 copy paper, stamps, white-out, floppy disks, zip disks, wig heads, scarves, volunteers and financial support.

To schedule an informational speaker representing Cancer Patient Care and our services, call 456-0446

For information on **Community Care**, a program created to partner your business and employees with our mission, contact Julie Banks at 456-0446 for details.

Cancer Patient Care
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