

VOICES OF THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Great Lakes Division, Inc.



Sharing Stories of Hope, Progress, and Answers Across Michigan and Indiana

v.12, September 2007

LOCAL AREA SPOTLIGHT

A Northeast Indiana hospital has accepted the Active For Life Challenge. Read their story in the local area spotlight.

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OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Prevention and early detection are two of the most powerful tools for reducing your risk for cancer. But sometimes, people forget to get a screening or make an appointment for a check-up.

Celebrate Take a Loved One for a Check-up Day on September 18 and talk to your doctor about which cancer screening tests are right for you and your loved one. For more information, call us toll-free at 1-800-ACS-2345.

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

The American Cancer Society offers several children's books that deal with cancer. Check out this month's resource highlight to see how a six-year-old girl from Michigan coped with her mom's cancer by writing her own book.

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Meet your researcher: Dr. Derek Griffith

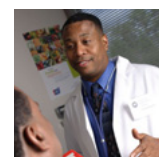
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Volunteer celebrates 10 year anniversary with Strides

This year marks the tenth anniversary for several Making Strides Against Breast Cancer sites in the Great Lakes Division. ACS volunteer Sharon Simmons has been with the Fort Wayne, Indiana event since its inception.

Sharon saw a newspaper article announcing the start of a Strides event in Fort Wayne and called to volunteer. The first year of Making Strides in Fort Wayne saw 200-300 walkers. This year, Sharon says they're expecting over 4,000 people to attend, and the event has changed locations because it has outgrown its original site.

"Strides is my favorite event," said Sharon, whose favorite part is the celebration of survivorship. "I love the hope and the support and the general community involvement."

When asked what her favorite memory over the past 10 years of Strides is, Sharon recalls the first year her husband, children, and grandchildren all joined her for the walk. Sharon has participated in Strides as a team captain, a walker with her friends and fellow Reach to Recovery volunteers, and as a volunteer in the survivorship area.

As a 15-year breast cancer survivor, Sharon has a lot of hope to offer other women who are diagnosed with breast cancer. During her own radiation treatment, she was visited by a Reach to Recovery volunteer.

"It made a big impression on me," said Sharon. As soon as she was able, she volunteered for the program, which pairs newly diagnosed breast cancer patients with breast cancer survivors who can offer support and hope. Now Sharon is the volunteer coordinator in Indiana and travels around the state training volunteers for Reach to Recovery and supporting local programs.

Volunteering with the American Cancer Society isn't the only way Sharon has reached out in the fight against breast cancer. When friend and fellow ACS volunteer Francine Schubert lost her battle to breast cancer, Sharon and other friends wanted to find a way to honor her memory. What started as an idea to raise money to pay for some mammograms grew into Francine's Friends, a mobile mammography unit that makes early detection of breast cancer available to every woman in the Fort Wayne area. The program has a partnership with the Parkview Regional Cancer Center and the Breast Diagnostic Center, which provide staff and support for the screenings.

"The program speaks to [Francine's] spirit and helps all the women in our



community," said Sharon. "We are friends helping friends." Since December 2005, Francine's Friends has found 17 breast cancers, all in stage I.

Sharon is excited about spreading the message of early detection and hope at this year's Making Strides event. If you are a breast cancer survivor who would like to become a Reach to Recovery volunteer and make a difference in the lives of others affected by breast cancer, call us toll-free at 1-800-ACS-2345. To find out more about the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer event nearest you, visit www.cancer.org/makingstrides.

Pictured: Sharon Simmons

• local area spotlight

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Northeast Indiana hospital challenges Ohio hospital to be Active for Life

When Debby Pontecorvo heard that a hospital in Ohio was looking for another hospital that was up for the Active for Life Challenge, the ACS Community Program Representative for the Northeast Indiana Area Service Center knew Cameron Memorial Community Hospital would be perfect. As a Five Star Community Investor in the Society's Workplace Solutions program, Cameron has been active in fighting cancer through the programs and services of the Society.

"This will be our second year of Active for Life," said John White, RN, who is in charge of community health relations at Cameron. "I don't think a hospital has ever challenged another hospital so it's really unique."

The Active for Life Challenge between Cameron and Clinton Memorial Hospital in Ohio starts September 11. Cameron president and CEO Dennis Knapp and Clinton COO Andy Riddell will trade DVD challenges, which will be played during the respective kickoff events. Active for Life is a 10-week program that encourages employees to be more active on a regular basis by setting individual goals and forming teams for motivation and support. Regular physical activity has been shown to improve job performance and morale; lower absenteeism and turnover; reduce disability days; and lower medical costs. But more

importantly, Active for Life nurtures teamwork and lifts morale while helping employees improve their health.

Since everyone is different, participants set their own goals based on how active they are, and how active they want to be. Personal goals can be moderate, such as walking or taking the stairs, or more intense like running or tennis. Each participant also belongs to a team so teammates can encourage and motivate each other. Participants are rewarded as they make progress towards their personal or team goals.

To educate and motivate staff, Cameron will send out weekly Active for Life newsletters, share recipes, and hold lunchtime learning sessions. Incentives will include ACS cookbooks and Active for Life gear. The challenge will conclude on November 20, just before Thanksgiving.

"We thought that if we can get people exercising before the holidays, then they would be able to continue throughout the holidays and avoid that weight gain from all the sweets," explained John.

At the end of the challenge, the winning hospital will be presented with a plastic representation of five pounds of muscle. The losing hospital will receive the plastic equivalent of five pounds of fat, which is larger to repre-

sent the actual difference in size between muscle and fat. The two hospitals hope to meet halfway to present the prizes to each other.



"There's been a lot of friendly banter between the hospitals and I think it's only going to continue," said John. "It's been a pleasure to work with Debby and the American Cancer Society and I think the challenge will be a lot of fun."

For information about starting an Active for Life program at your workplace, or other ACS health and wellness programs, please visit www.ACSWorkplaceSolutions.com or call 1-800-ACS-2345.

Pictured: ACS representative Debby Pontecorvo and Cameron president and CEO Dennis Knapp display the hospital's "Five Star" award plaques

• survivorship and patient services

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Overcoming the many burdens of cancer

When the battle with cancer is over, the battle to overcome cancer's burden is just beginning for many families. With survival rates growing, families begin facing the new challenge of providing children with the financial means to attend colleges and universities. To help restore this opportunity to young survivors, the Great Lakes Division established the Young Survivor Scholarship Program.

Children battling cancer and their families dream of overcoming the disease to live meaningful and rewarding lives. For many, that future is unattainable without a college education, and the financial impact from cancer can put that opportunity out of reach.

The recipients of the Great Lakes Division Young Survivor Scholarship Program for the 2007/08 school year were recently announced. This year,



137 young cancer survivors in Indiana and Michigan were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to help fund their collegiate dreams.

Michigan resident Bradley Bechard is a three time recipient of the scholarship and will be a junior at Hope College this year. "This support means a great deal to me," said Bradley. "Not only does it help with the cost of attending college, it's also nice to know that some good things can come out of bad things that happen. Cancer treatment was a tough experience for me and my family and it's nice to have this contribution as I face another challenging experience of meeting my educational goals."

Since 1997, the Great Lakes Division Young Survivor Scholarship Program has helped 427 young cancer survivors rebuild their lives and pursue their goal of higher education. Scholarships are available annually, based on academic performance, community service, and leadership, among other criteria.

"This scholarship will contribute to my education at Delta College and will ease the burden of my educational expenses for my family who have been so supportive," said Ashley LaForest, a first time recipient of the scholarship and Michigan resident. "I am prepared to accept the community role that comes with being this scholarship winner. I am



sincerely appreciative of the opportunity to become a role model for kids with cancer. Being a recipient of this scholarship will make a positive difference in my life."

Scholarship recipients are often involved with the local American Cancer Society in their college community. Their cancer experiences uniquely qualify them for future leadership roles, and we hope they will begin a life-long practice of service through volunteering.

For information on the Great Lakes Division Young Survivor Scholarship Program, or to make a gift in support of the program, contact your local American Cancer Society office or call 1-800-ACS-2345.

Pictured: Bradley Bechard (bottom left); Ashley LaForest (top right)

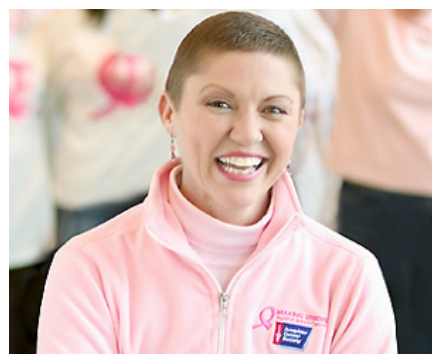
The faces of Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer is a noncompetitive walk to help fight breast cancer and provide hope to people facing the disease. The event supports the American Cancer Society's lifesaving research, prevention, early detection, and support programs for thousands of patients and their families. But for Judy Gloden and Mary Montoya, two Michigan residents who are the faces of this year's national campaign, Making Strides is much more than just a walk to raise money for breast cancer.

Judy Gloden, Lansing, MI

Judy Gloden made sure she had yearly mammograms after watching her mother, now a 23-year survivor, battle breast cancer. It was after her routine screening in 2006 that Judy learned she had breast cancer. She called the American Cancer Society for answers. "I just picked up the phone and called. Whenever I had a question, I'd call back."

It was through these calls that Judy found out about Making Strides and accepted an invitation to attend the



kick-off breakfast. The event sparked her motivation and Judy called on family and friends to start her own team of nearly 30 people, including her mom.

"It was very emotional being there with my mom," said Judy. "Seeing all those survivors together is really an emotional but amazing time."

Judy is spreading the message about early detection every chance she gets. "I wear my pink ribbon every day and people are always talking to me about breast cancer," said Judy. "Strides is an opportunity for survivors to get the word out about early detection and increase people's awareness about getting their yearly mammogram."

Mary Montoya, Portland, MI

When Mary Montoya noticed a rash on her breast in 1999, she turned to her doctor. After a mammogram and two biopsies, Mary was diagnosed

with inflammatory breast cancer, an uncommon type of invasive breast cancer. She started treatment immediately and that same day, she received a visit from an American Cancer Society volunteer and breast cancer survivor.

"She let me know that it was possible to live through it," said Mary. After recovering from treatment, Mary decided to take part and help out.



She turned to cancer.org and found out about Making Strides.

"I do just about anything that is breast cancer related," said Mary, who has been walking with her family as a Making Strides team leader for six years. "If we're going to beat this disease, we have to come together to make a difference for other women."

Mary is also active in advocacy efforts to increase access to care and improve treatment procedures. "Progress is being made every day," said Mary. She encourages women to get their yearly mammogram and not take anything for granted. "Together we will find a cure."

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer is the premiere breast cancer event of the American Cancer Society. To find a Strides event near you, visit online at www.cancer.org/makingstrides or call us toll-free at 1-800-ACS-2345.

Pictured: Judy Gloden (bottom left); Mary Montoya (top right)

Meet your researcher: Dr. Derek Griffith

Research into the causes, prevention, and treatment of prostate cancer is underway in many medical centers throughout the world. The American Cancer Society is currently funding 83 grants for prostate cancer research, totaling more than \$45 million. Dr. Derek Griffith is one of the researchers in the Great Lakes Division who recently received funding.

Dr. Griffith has a background in psychology and is an assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, as well as the assistant director for research and research training for the Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture, and Health and the associate director of evaluation for the Prevention Research Center of Michigan.

“Cancer research really gave me the opportunity to explore my larger interest in how social factors and our society differentially affect different groups,” said Dr. Griffith. “Prostate cancer is an important issue for African American men and this grant really provides an opportunity to explore how being African American and being male influences the opportunity men have to be healthy.”

With the grant, Dr. Griffith will study behavioral cancer risks in African American men and pilot test an intervention to help African

American men eat healthier foods and exercise more. Diet and exercise are both factors that may affect prostate cancer risk.

“The grant is proposing to adapt the Body & Soul program that was developed for African American churches and see if we can develop that type of program in fraternities, lodges and other men’s organizations that have a large African American male population in them,” explained Dr. Griffith. Body & Soul: A Celebration of Healthy Living is a collaborative program between the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute to promote nutrition in African American churches to help reduce cancer risk.

The project will be conducted in the Flint area and may expand to include Ypsilanti and Detroit. Dr. Griffith is also exploring the possibility of conducting a complimentary study that looks at regional differences in African American men’s diet and physical activity.

In addition to his research, Dr. Griffith also teaches courses on racial and ethnic health disparities at the University of Michigan and has been a featured speaker at area events to increase prostate cancer awareness in African American men. He encourages men to seek out the facts about the early detection and prevention of prostate cancer.



“I think it is important for men that they really get a good understanding of the issues themselves and try to find the medical information and sources of information like their physicians or other medical professionals that they can trust to really discuss and figure out what’s best for them in terms of screening.” For more information on the Society’s research program and funding, visit www.cancer.org/research.

Pictured: Dr. Derek Griffith

Prostate cancer: know your doctor and your screening options

An estimated 218,890 cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in men in the United States this year, and an estimated 27,050 men will die from the disease. Death rates from the disease have been declining for white and African American men since the early 1990s, yet African American men are still more than twice as likely to get the disease as white men, which cannot yet be fully explained.

As the most frequently diagnosed cancer in men and a leading cause of cancer death, knowing the facts about prostate cancer and early detection is important. September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, which is used to highlight the disease.

When it comes to prostate cancer, men should talk with their doctor about whether or not they should be tested. Risk factors include:

- **Age:** Your risk increases after age 50, and most cases occur in men over 65.
- **Race/ethnicity:** Prostate cancer occurs more often in African American men, who are also more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage.
- **Family history:** Having one or more close relatives who have had prostate cancer increases your risk, particularly if they were diagnosed before age 65.

methods. Neither test is 100% accurate, and uncertain or false test results could lead to excess worry, or even an unneeded biopsy or other tests. Until more information is available, it is crucial for men to develop a good relationship with their doctor so they feel comfortable taking an active part in the choice of whether or not they should have the tests.

When deciding whether or not prostate cancer tests are right for you, you should consider your age and your health. If you are young and you get prostate cancer, it will likely shorten your life if not caught early. But if you are older or in poor health, than prostate cancer may never become a major problem because it is generally a slow-growing cancer.

Your doctor should give you the chance to openly discuss the benefits and limitations of testing at yearly checkups. You can actively take part in the decision by learning about prostate cancer and talking with your doctor about benefits, risks, side effects, and questions about early prostate cancer tests, so you can make an informed decision that takes into account your own situation and risk.

For more information about prostate cancer, visit online at www.cancer.org/prostatecancer.



The American Cancer Society believes men should be offered a PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood test and a digital rectal examination starting at age 50 to help detect prostate cancer early. African American men or men with a strong family history of prostate cancer (a father or brother who was diagnosed before age 65) should begin testing at age 45.

However, there are limits to the current screening

Federal Lobby Day 2007 gives volunteers a chance to impact federal policy

As an experienced volunteer for the American Cancer Society, Ginger Darwin has visited Washington, D.C. on several different occasions during the last five years. But each trip always has the same goal—to make sure that cancer issues remain a priority with her federal lawmakers from Indiana. Next month, she'll make the trek again for the Society's annual Federal Lobby Day. "It's a wonderful, awesome, and humbling experience. I feel like we can get the ear of our legislators and make a difference," said Ginger.

With the new advocacy structure, this year's event will be a little different. Ginger will join 435 ACT! Leads

for a training and to participate in Federal Lobby Day. For the first time, the ACT! Leads are responsible for managing the relationship with their Member of Congress.

"Generally, we'll go into some trainings on the issues that we're going to talk to our elected officials about. For example, it could be increased funding for cancer screening, or research or something else," explained Ginger. "I'm always happy when we can get research on the agenda."

As a four-time cancer survivor, Ginger personally knows how important it is to maintain support and funding for cancer research.

"I had bone marrow transplants back when the procedure was experimental. In my case, lymphoma research helped."

As someone who has attended several Federal Lobby Days, Ginger believes it is a great opportunity to educate legislators.

"It's important to go and let them know that we're watching



how they vote. We have to keep cancer funding a priority," said Ginger. "It's great to feel like you're having an impact. We sit here (in Indiana) and they are out there. But it makes you feel like you can make a difference. Lobby Day really does de-mystify the whole legislative process."

To get involved in advocacy efforts, call 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit online at www.acscan.org/indiana and www.acscan.org/michigan.



• resource highlight

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Children's books offer hope in a unique way

When Nancy Perez-Atkari was diagnosed with breast cancer in June 2006, the Akron, Michigan resident started gathering information. She received a personal health kit and numerous brochures and books from the American Cancer Society, which helped her to know what to expect. Nancy's doctor also gave her a children's book to share with her six-year-old daughter, Mya. The resources helped Nancy talk to Mya about how cancer would affect her.

"I told her I might get sick, I might not feel good, I might cough, I might be tired," said Nancy, who had chemotherapy and radiation before starting Tamoxifen. "[The resources] helped make it easier."

Mya had a chance to write her own book when her school, Unionville-Sebewaing Area Elementary, held a Young Authors contest for first through fourth graders.

"It was the day before and I told Mya, 'Don't forget, you have to think of something to write for a book for tomorrow,'" recalled Nancy. "And she said ok and that's all we talked about it."

A couple months later during parent-teacher conferences, Nancy had a chance to read Mya's book, "Mom's Life with Cancer".

"I wanted other kids to know how it feels," said Mya. "My favorite part is where Mom got to come home with us

because she had to stay at Grandma's for a while. That was hard."

Nancy works near the Bay Area Service Center, and when she took her daughter with her to work one day, Mya asked to visit the local office.

"She had her book with her," explained Nancy. "She just wanted someone to read it." The staff at the area service center was honored to grant Mya's request and they were very moved by her book.

The American Cancer Society currently offers four books designed to help children and families cope with cancer as well as gain a better understanding of the treatment process and life post-diagnosis:

- *Mom and the Polka-Dot Boo-Boo* by Eileen and Maggie Sutherland
- *Our Mom is Getting Better* and *Our Dad is Getting Better* by Alex, Emily, and Anna Rose Silver
- *I Can Survive* by Jennifer May Allen

While young children may only recognize the side effects of cancer, they certainly understand that the vibrant adults they once knew are now chal-

lenged by fatigue and illness, often leaving them unable to interact in the same way as they did prior to treatment.

The books are written by children whose families are affected by cancer, and their perspectives offer hope in a unique way. Visit online at www.cancer.org/bookstore or call 1-800-ACS-2345 to learn more about these wonderful resources offered by your American Cancer Society.



Pictured: Mya Atkari and Nancy Perez-Atkari © 2007. The Bay City Times. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.