



News from Mount Sinai's Breast Health Resource Program

among

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Breast Health Resource Program

The Breast Health Resource Program mission is to help women and their families cope with the diagnosis of breast cancer. A team of dedicated professionals and volunteers is available to assist you in a very private, cozy and quiet setting. Help is available to better understand the illness, treatment options and the challenge of breast cancer diagnosis. The program offers one-on-one counseling, seminars, support groups as well as an extensive library with access to information about the latest treatments.

If you, or someone you care about is coping with a new diagnosis, undergoing treatment or dealing with post treatment, please contact us.

A Tribute to the Men in Our Lives: Editors Note

I am always so impressed by the support and concern of the men in our lives that I would like to dedicate the next issue to them. I will need your help I would like to hear about the sons, fathers, husbands, brothers and special men who supported and helped you through your breast cancer. Please share your experiences with us.

Our phone number is 212-987-3063.

Our fax number is 212-987-6322.

Our Web site is www.mountsinai.org/breasthealth

A Celebration of Life 2004

The 12TH Annual Celebration of Life Gala was held on October 13, 2004 at the elegant Plaza Hotel. This benefit provides the primary source of financial support for the many services and programs offered by Mount Sinai Breast Health Resource Program.

It was a splendid evening attended by 500 guests. We began over cocktails with our friends and supporters and then were ushered into a warm and inviting dining room beautifully decorated by the talented members of the Benefit committee.

This year our chairmen, Janet Hanson, Managing Director of Lehman Brothers and Judy Bauer, who chaired the benefit for four consecutive years, joined us in honoring Dr Susan R Drossman, Assistant Professor of Radiology, Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

Dr Drossman is a nationally recognized breast radiologist in private practice who is committed to early diagnosis of breast cancer. She is an outspoken advocate of image -guided, minimally invasive procedures that reduce the need for extensive surgical intervention. She makes an important difference in the lives of so many women . We at the Breast Health Resource Program applaud her.

One Patient's Story—Amy's Journey

Recently, as I looked at the new brochure for Mount. Sinai Breast Health Resource Program, describing its services as “compassionate and intelligent support for people coping with breast cancer” I reflected again on what the program meant to me as I went through my own breast cancer journey. I thought I might offer my own story as an example of how important the work of the program is and how helpful it can be.

In January of 2001, I was 51 and diagnosed with stage IIB breast cancer. I had received two sets of clean mammograms and sonograms in the previous year, the last set six months before I found the lump. I had very dense breasts which were hard to read. My younger sister had been diagnosed with pre-menopausal breast cancer several years before so I was watched carefully. I was found to have two positive lymph nodes. I was scheduled for six months of chemotherapy (4 AC, 4 Taxotere) and strongly urged to undergo genetic testing. Halfway through my chemotherapy, I was told that I had an ambiguous BRCA2 mutation. No one quite knew what it meant.

I ultimately decided to undergo bilateral mastectomy. I also started to look for women who had the same problems that I had. I was referred to one of the program's social worker Fran Epstein, She told me that a new support group, composed of women who had completed their treatment and were now dealing with survivors issues, was starting and might be just right for me.

I had sailed through the mastectomies initially with no regret and very little pain. I kept thinking, “I am going to get depressed from all this?” But I did not at the time. However, early in 2002, I hit the wall.

The second stage reconstruction was a great deal more difficult than I had expected. I had also started taking tamoxifen, which sent me into menopause.

I was truly taken aback. I had so looked forward to completing treatment yet I found myself falling into a real depression.

Fran and my friends in the support group were so warm and supportive. I also started taking anti-depressants that were designed not only to lift my mood but to give me some relief from the hot flashes. At one point, after a meltdown in the group, I took advantage of the individual therapy offered at the Breast Health Resource Program. In addition, Fran recommended that I participate in the Healthy Life Style Program and I thoroughly enjoyed that. It was very reinforcing to meet other survivors and learn their tips for coping.

I finally feel that my treatment is over with and I am so grateful that I continue to remain cancer free.

When I said good bye to everyone in the group, I told them that the Breast Health Resource Program had been like a lighthouse for me, a beacon for me to follow when out on dangerous and troubled seas. When I finally got to port, I was treated with loving concern, was provided with extremely useful information, and given thoughtful suggestions and insight. I could not have found a better place on my journey to recover from cancer. I vowed to myself that each Christmas, I would give a gift to the Program in gratitude for all that their staff had done for me and for other women coping with breast cancer. I look forward to making another gift this year and for years to come.

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A Volunteer's Day-Lorie's Story

It was a beautiful Thursday afternoon and Lorie was on her way to the breast clinic where she would try to give comfort to women waiting to be examined by the breast surgeon.

Walking into the Breast Health Resource Program to get organized for her day, she noticed a patient who seemed to be very sad. The patient had stepped out of a support group, hairless, tired and upset about the issues she had to deal with that day. Lorie devoted all her attention to the woman. She was touched by the patient's intense sadness and wanted to ease her sorrow. After a long talk, Lorie stepped out of the room. When she returned, she came to get the woman, and both of them disappeared for a while. When they returned, one was smiling – the other one was glowing.

Something good had happened. It was a little miracle.

Lorie offered to help the patient feel better and went to the drugstore to buy some cosmetics. Even though she had vetoed the eye shadow color, the woman was smiling! A stranger had cared enough to reach out.

Race for the Cure 2004

Thank you Mount Sinai

We were all very excited about the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure on September 12, to support breast cancer research and local screening programs. To share our enthusiasm, we made four visits to the Guggenheim lobby to remind our staff and visitors of the upcoming race.

Several times, an entire department would register; one representative would hand in all the completed forms and would explain that it was a group decision to join. Doctors on their way for a quick lunch would stop to register. Visitors would share their own breast cancer stories. It was such a wonderful feeling to see how much interest people showed.

One afternoon a doctor approached. His form was all ready and he had the twenty-five dollars in his hand. Somehow he seemed hesitant. "Do you need anything?" I discreetly asked, "Is the birth date mandatory on the form?" "As you wish", I replied. He immediately turned around and scratched a little spot on the form and returned it to me with a large and happy smile. This was a first, a doctor too embarrassed to admit how young he was! Thank you Mount Sinai for demonstrating that despite your hectic schedules, you care.

Team 2004, A Success Story



It was a very "Pink Sunday".

The dress code was casual, with a touch of pink.

New York, here we are! Mothers, daughters, friends, and spouses. It was our day.

It was comforting to see how many of us were gathered, all wearing the same tee shirts generously provided by University Chemists. Whether we were running or walking for our friends and family, it was clear how strong, powerful and determined we were. Our Mount Sinai team was the second largest in the hospital category this year.

The Tale of the Eighty Tee Shirts

You probably noticed if you were in Central Park the Sunday morning of "The Race for the Cure" a few large groups within the huge Mount Sinai Team. Every year, Helen invites all of her friends to participate. Thursday, before the race, she arranged to pick up all of their tee shirts, eighty, for all of her partners. Imagine how many shopping bags she had to carry! Two of our volunteers came to the rescue and helped Helen to a cab. The driver was intrigued by the load and asked her what was in those bags. Helen explained the concept and the importance of the race.

The driver was so touched by Helen's enthusiasm that he wanted to wear a tee shirt. She hesitated. She did not want to give up one of her friends tee shirts. What about her own? She gave him her tee shirt and when they arrived at Helen's apartment, he would not take any money. He wanted Helen to donate the money to "The Race". It is a big city with a big heart!

Program Beginnings: The Start of Something Good.

Louise Stern was admitted to Mount Sinai, in 1990 for breast cancer surgery. While she was recovering, she was visited by the hospital social worker, Andrea Geduld. This meeting was about to change their lives. During Louise's stay, she met with Andrea a number of times for counseling and support. When they said good bye, Louise asked Andrea to remember her, "I may call you in a year or so".

After Louise's own experience she believed that women like herself could use a unique support system. The opportunity for patients to meet and speak freely to patient volunteers with similar diagnosis would be the concept. The goal was to help patients cope with the diagnosis, and to alleviate the fear of the unknown. That is how the Patient-to-Patient volunteer program began.

Andrea and Louise, a terrific duo, co-founders of a special program which started at Mount Sinai Medical Center and was initially sponsored by the Auxiliary Board. Andrea developed and organized the Breast Health Resource Program and is now the program coordinator. Along with our social work professional staff, we are now 25 Patient-to-Patient volunteers who provide additional support to breast cancer patients in all aspects of diagnosis treatments and recovery.

If you are interested in speaking with a Patient – to – Patient volunteer or to become a volunteer, please call 212-987-3063

Save the Date
Join the Mount Sinai
Race for the Cure Team
Sunday, September 18, 2005

Support Groups

Bilingual Latina Group: A support group for women who speak Spanish to receive support and learn about breast cancer.

Every other Wednesday 10:30 – 12:00

Building Knowledge: A drop-in support group with special emphasis on treatment options and the skills needed for coping with the physical and emotional stress of breast cancer.

Every Thursday 10:30 – 12:00

Beyond Decision Making: Support for women coping with a breast cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Every other Wednesday 5:00 – 6:30

Building Lives: The focus is on women "moving on" after treatment.

Every other Monday 4:30 – 6:00

Breast Friends: Support for women dealing with the issues of survivorship.

Every other Tuesday 6:30 – 8:00

Blue Ribbon Club: For men coping with their own breast cancer diagnosis.

Date and time T B A.

Please Call to Participate in All Groups: **212-987-3063**

Special Events

Celebration of Life Benefit 2005: Proceeds from this event will benefit The Mount Sinai Breast Health Resource Program. We provide psychosocial, educational, and supportive services to breast cancer patients throughout the continuum of diagnosis, treatment and recovery.

Tuesday, October 18, 2005, Starlight Room, Waldorf Astoria

To attend or for more information, please call

212-675-9474 or 212-659-9702

Programs

The Mount Sinai Healthy Lifestyle Program: This innovative educational series promotes well-being and recovery through the practice of healthy nutrition, regular exercise, stress management and psychosocial support will begin August 2005.

WISH (Women In Search of Health): An education and support group for women who have learned through genetic testing that they carry a BRCA mutation. Participation helps women develop an informed and personal response to the difficult decisions that they may face.

Once a month Monday Evenings 6:00 – 7:30

Mount Sinai's Community Breast Health Program

This model program combines the Breast Health experts of Mount Sinai's Medical Center and delivers a three part program of Breast Self Exam, Clinical Breast Exam and Mammography Screening.

Call for more information

Donor Information

The Mount Sinai Breast Health Resource Program is dedicated to meeting the emotional and practical needs of men and women with breast cancer. Our patient services and research projects are funded through the generous gifts from individuals, corporations, and foundations. If you would like to help support our program, please send donations to:

The Mount Sinai Breast Health Resource Program
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Sylvie Mousseron

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MOUNT SINAI BREAST RESOURCE PROGRAM

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