

# You Can H.E.L.P. Fund Spotlight – David Barach Fund

*“In Loving Memory of Uncle Dave”*

By Sarah Banks

An avid runner for most of her life, Lexy Green wanted to do something special to honor the memory of her Uncle Dave so she signed up for her first half-marathon. Diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2012 at 55 years old, her Uncle Dave fought the disease for two months. His efforts to remain physically and emotionally strong inspired his nieces Lexy, Christy, and Livy. The three sisters were very close with him; growing up he took them to play dates, sports events, and was incredibly supportive. To his nieces he would always be a spirited, lovable, and memorable man in their lives. It felt only natural to honor his life through an experience that would inspire hope. An unforgettable experience as a tribute for an unforgettable man, they thought.

Lexy and her sisters decided to coordinate efforts to fundraise for pancreatic cancer research while Lexy prepared to run the 2013 Austin Half-Marathon. Christy and Livy helped spearhead fundraising while Lexy trained. The sisters started a H.E.L.P. Fund with the Hirshberg Foundation and began asking friends, family, and their sorority sisters to donate. Their mom stepped in to help fundraise by reaching out to colleagues and loved ones. Lexy says, “The money my mom, sisters and I raised in his memory, in such a short period of time, is a testament to his character and how many people absolutely adored him.”

David Barach meant the world to these girls and they worked together to honor his memory. Livy reflects, “Our Uncle Dave was

adored by family, friends, co-workers, and all who came to know him. He really was such an amazing person and his good nature and positive spirit will forever be an inspiration to everyone who knew him.” Lexy added, “This experience was truly a journey beyond anything we’ve ever done. It was so meaningful and overwhelmingly inspiring, and something that we plan to keep doing!”

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## **You Can H.E.L.P. Fund Spotlight- Tyrone Buchheim Fund**

*“A Surprise Birthday with an Unexpected Gift”*

By Tatjana Luethi

This January, a year after my father-in-law Tyrone passed away from pancreatic cancer, my husband Mark’s 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday was quickly approaching. Mark’s mother Meta, sister Debbie, and I wanted to do something to celebrate my husband’s life and honor his father memory. So we set out to plan a surprise birthday party and raise funds to donate to The Hirshberg Foundation. This would be our gift to him. I wanted to support a foundation near us that was making a difference for patients and families affected by pancreatic cancer.

Our conspiracy was to keep Mark “busy” by our friends before his party. As it turned out Mark was and wasn’t surprised! Invitation websites simply don’t always work perfectly – oh

well, lesson learned. However, by the end of the evening 65 of his close friends and family joined us and had a blast! He was genuinely touched by the fund we'd created and appreciative of all the contributions.

We're so grateful to all who generously participated in our fundraiser. They stood by us in support of research that will help families in the future in hopes of finding a way for early detection and new treatment options of this deadly disease! We did this as a tribute to Mark's dad. It hadn't been long since Tyrone passed away and I remember my husband's powerful reflection on his father's life, the time they spent together, and some of their final memories. Mark wrote, "The last few months and days were both difficult and beautiful. My sister and I are his legacy. His beautiful grandchildren are his legacy. We are the gentle, giving, intelligent, and humorous children and adults we are today not in spite of our experiences but because of them."

Planning this unique gift turned into a wonderful experience and great collaboration with The Hirshberg Foundation. Mark's surprise birthday party is a memory that will always stay with us.

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## **Event Spotlight – Fishing for a Cure: The Larry Meister**

# Memorial Trout & Bass Tournament

As winter approaches many outdoorsmen and women eagerly anticipate the next Fishing for a Cure Trout and Bass Tournament. Doug Carlson, a pancreatic cancer survivor for over 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  years, hosted the first Fishing for a Cure event last year. Doug, a licensed fishing guide and angler, decided to organize a new unique event to raise awareness. Doug took Lake Casitas by storm with his signature "Fishing for a Cure" boat while participants at varying skill levels came out to support the cause while trying to catch the largest bass or trout.

Ready to compete in the Trout Derby, several families brought their children and boats out to support the fundraiser and enjoy a little friendly competition. "Bass appeared to be on the chew, as they were the predominant species brought to the scales throughout the event," said Doug. The gazebo at Lake Casitas Recreation Area was filled with goodie bags for participants, scales to weigh the fish, awards for the winners, and folks who came out to show support. The assortment of bags contained t-shirts, a variety of fishing gear, and raffle prizes ranging from gift certificates to iRods to professional guided fishing trips.

By the end of the afternoon 35 anglers in three age divisions competed for the coveted "Cup" and first place divisional plaques. Ryan Caulfield of Ventura was the last angler to make his way to the stage. Weighmaster Paul Baradat called out "5.24 pounds" and the enthusiastic crowd that had assembled cheered the eventual Cup winner. Mrs. Barbara Meister was on hand to present Caulfield with the "Cup" named after her late husband, Larry Meister, a local outdoorsman who lost his battle with

pancreatic cancer almost seven years ago. Barbara, son Michael, daughter-in-law Faryl, and daughter Sherry were all in attendance to support Doug and honor the memory of their loved one.

The Carlson family remains dedicated to the fight against pancreatic cancer. This event, however, was a personal endeavor by Doug. He's now raising awareness while sharing something he enjoys. "The common theme this year was having fun, and, of course, fishing for a cure! The event was a resounding success... plans are already in the works for the second annual Larry Meister Memorial Cup" Doug said proudly. We look forward to it!

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## **Kids Can Cure in Action – 11 Year Old Heats Things Up with a Chili Cook-Off**

By Sarah Banks

This past November, 11 year old Jaden Del Guercio held a chili cook-off in the cul-de-sac of his neighborhood in Tarzana, CA to honor his Grandpa James. In 2001, Jaden lost his Grandpa to pancreatic cancer; it was the very same year he was born so they never had the chance to meet. Jaden's family had actually participated in the LA Cancer Challenge for several years so his father and aunt told him all about the Hirshberg Foundation. So Jaden set out to raise money to benefit pancreatic cancer research and bring awareness to his school through community

service. He began planning a chili cook-off!

Neighbors, the moms of several friends, and his parents all helped make chili for the tastings and competition. Once they were ready, there were nine types of chili to taste! He emailed an invitation and asked people to spread the word. Over seventy people attended- both adults and kids ages 3 to 70 years old. His friends, family, and neighbors came out to support. His mom and dad helped set up the tables and electrical to keep the chili hot. They also helped him organize all the tastings, as he charged a small flat fee to sample each chili. Jaden had his very own table where he collected all of the donations, counted all the competition votes, at the end of the event he announced the lucky winner.

The prize was a giant engraved silver spoon and a chili pepper necklace! Jaden's goal was to raise \$200 but by the end of the fundraiser, he'd raised over \$730. The chili cook-off was a great success and everyone was very generous. Jaden and his parents plan to do another fundraiser benefiting The Hirshberg Foundation because people loved it so much! After the event, Jaden said, "It was my first time doing something like this. It makes me feel good to raise money for a good cause and it means a lot to me and my family." His mom, Nicole, added "Jaden was named after his Grandpa. He was a loving and kind man and would've been so proud."

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## **You Can H.E.L.P Fund Spotlight**

# — Awesome Aud

By Ashley Kahrs

In October 2011, my mother, Audrey, was placed in the hospital for having a severe gallbladder attack. It was so infected the doctors made the decision to remove it. My mom had lost 15 pounds, was jaundiced and anemic and was getting worse every day. After spending over a month in the hospital post-surgery, her symptoms were finally getting better. My siblings and niece celebrated her birthday in the small hospital room. Finally she was well enough to have the all the pre-op tests and what they found was shocking.

Thanksgiving morning 2011 my phone woke me up a bit after 6:30 a.m. My father, Anthony, was calling me, "Hi sweetheart. I need to tell you something. Mom has cancer. It's pancreatic..." My heart dropped and the world around me was gone. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I screamed and burst into tears. I hung up the phone and balled my eyes out in my husband Andrew's arms before I told him the news. We got out of bed and threw on whatever clothes we could find. Driving to the hospital, which was 5 minutes away, was a blur of emotions.

When we walked into my mom's room and she saw us we all started to cry. I crawled into my mom's hospital bed and just hugged her. I couldn't let her go. The room was filled with sadness and some other undeterminable emotion. I now know that the emotion was the will to fight, to survive and beat this horrible cancer. Shortly after my brother, Scott, sister-in-law, Kerstin, and niece Jeanina filled the room with love and support. As a family we discussed the next steps to take. Doctor after doctor came in to talk to us about what they recommended. Everyone agreed she would need a surgery called "The Whipple," which would remove the cancer, part of her pancreas, and the surrounding lymph

nodes.

Kerstin had just had a very dear friend go through this exact same type of cancer and recommended my mother be transferred to UCLA Medical Center where she could receive proper treatment. My mom was accepted into their pancreatic cancer program and would be under the experienced care of Dr. Timothy Donahue. As you could expect my mom and dad were so thankful. My mother now had a fighting chance. That night my brother picked up Thanksgiving dinner and as a family we celebrated what we were thankful for: finding the cancer, getting into UCLA and our family being such a strong support system for one another. During a time of tragic news here we sat laughing and smiling like it was just another day, just in a hospital setting.

In December 2011, my mother was transferred to UCLA where she would be treated with the highest care possible. In a few weeks' time, with her health improving, they would go ahead and remove the cancer tumor. Soon it was the big day, time to remove the cancer. The Whipple would take about 6 hours and was very high risk. Eight hours later Dr. Donahue came down stairs to find my family and let us know the news. The tumor was larger than they originally thought but they were able to remove the cancer. As of that moment mom had a great chance of surviving. Her life changed forever that day.

The past year my mother went through numerous rounds of chemo and radiation, suffered an umbilical hernia in two locations, has been on more medications that I can even remember. She has had test after test, CT scans, PET scans, weekly or daily doctor's visits and through it all has never given up. **I am pleased to say Audrey Ann Everts, wife, mother, friend is cancer free.** She fought a hard long battle, went through hell and back a couple of times. My mom is my hero. I don't know many people who could survive what she has.



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# LACC Team Spotlight – Dave's Wolfpack the Law Dogs

By Andrew Noriega

Usually, a story has a hero, a nemesis and a “happily ever after” ending. In order to tell my story I want you to know more about the main character, my personal hero and boyfriend, Dave. He has over 16 years in the U.S. Marine Corps; he is retired from a small police department in New Jersey; he was a volunteer fire chief and a paramedic. He was a part of the Ground Zero “rescue/recovery” team a couple of days after 9/11. He’s even a bagpiper and has performed for countless memorial services and never once has he asked to be compensated. In his words, “It’s the least I can do. It would be my honor.”

Dave and I met through mutual friends on Facebook and began communicating on line and on the phone for the next six months. Then he made me an offer to fly me from my home town of L.A. out to his in New Jersey to take me to National Police Week in May, 2011. I accepted! It was the most honorable and moving event I had ever attended, and to top it off, I fell in love! Since then Dave and I have spent our time flying back and forth from our homes. We made plans for him to move to LA with his 10 year old son by the end of 2012. And in spring we planned to celebrate our first anniversary at the annual National Police Week in Washington, D.C.

Unbeknownst to me, Dave was planning to propose marriage. This is where the nemesis came into play. A week prior to my visit, Dave was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. My world had fallen

apart right before my eyes. I felt hopeless. After the diagnosis we both didn't want to pretend everything was simply okay, so we postponed the engagement. Dave began treatment in Philadelphia. Back in Los Angeles, I fell into a deep depression and felt so useless to him. I started doing research online to see what the prognosis was and that was a HUGE mistake! Everything I read only pushed me further into my depression. I kept thinking, "Why would God allow me to fall in love with a man that's 2,740 miles away and then a year later he wants to take him away from me." I continued researching information, support groups or anything that would give me some sense of hope. That is when I discovered the LA Cancer Challenge and the Hirshberg Foundation!

Without hesitation I signed up to participate in this 5K/10K in Dave's honor. When my co-workers found out, they encouraged me to raise money and start a team. Initially I set my goal at \$250, but I found myself increasing it to \$1,500. As LACC fundraising began to wrap up, I'd raised over \$1,900! I was hoping to have at least 25-30 team members and then I surpassed that goal and found that Dave's Wolf Pack had grown 73 people strong!

Recently, Dave had been responding very well to treatments. The tumor shrunk a great deal and he'd made great progress. Then on October 24<sup>th</sup> we were told he's in remission. For Dave, a lot of it is mental though- he's a fighter, he's stubborn and he's determined. He's Dave! He has always kept his faith in God and this is what keeps him grounded and focused on winning this battle. Now we're working towards our "happily ever after." Dave is truly the love of my life and he is my personal hero and I want to thank him for fighting, never giving up and always staying positive. By joining the Hirshberg Foundation at the LACC, my goal was to prevent at least one person from enduring what Dave has, and to help prevent a family from watching a

loved one fight for their life. I'd like to thank the Foundation for being angels, helping me with my team and offering support in every possible way. I will always admire this man for opting to go through with his treatments and fighting to stay alive for his son and myself. **He constantly reminds me that he has cancer and that the cancer doesn't have him.**

***After the LACC, Dave wrote the following on his Facebook page:***

*"There have been days I just wanted to give up. It's the love of Drea and my son Nick that keep me going. When Drea organized "Team Dave" for the LA Cancer Challenge, I saw all the love and support surrounding us. As some could see I simply couldn't hold back the tears. I don't think Drea knows just how special she really is and I have to say she truly is the love of my life. She has been my backbone through this journey and I love her with all my heart." -Dave*