

You Can H.E.L.P. Fund Spotlight – A Birthday Fund in Memory of Bernie Kaplan

By Ilene Kaplan

Bernie and I met in 1962 and began dating off and on throughout college. He proposed to me the same year we met, but I felt that at 17 we were too young to get married. We were married a little more than a decade later on March 17, 1973 (St. Patrick's Day). We began our lives together and started planning for the future, not knowing that he would be taken from me by pancreatic cancer only 36 years later.

On October 21, 1998 I lost my best friend and husband after a short four month battle with pancreatic cancer. At the time, it had only been a year since Agi Hirshberg lost her husband Ron, and the Hirshberg Foundation was the only resource for pancreatic cancer patients and families. Within hours of reaching out to her, Agi responded to my phone call and was there for my daughter and I when Bernie passed away. She became our new family. It is because of her dedication and passion that I want to be a part of helping find an early detection method, and ultimately, a cure. To this day I continue to urge people to help me spread awareness and raise the much needed funds so that other families will not know the pain of the words 'pancreatic cancer.' Without the Hirshberg Foundation's support and friendship over the past 13 years I am not sure how I would have made it through.

This year, in memory of my husband and in honor of our daughter turning 35, I created a You Can Help Fund. The Fund is an amazing tool on the www.pancreatic.org website where I can

utilize my personalized webpage as a means of sharing my message of awareness while also encouraging others to support through action. I asked my family and friends to make a donation to my fund so that we can support the Hirshberg Foundation's mission to find a cure for this horrific disease! I even posted my URL on Facebook and received support from friends and acquaintances that I haven't even talked to in years, but who wanted to support my cause nonetheless. I am happy to report that we have raised over \$5000!!! This amount is even more important because \$0.83 of every dollar raised through the Foundation goes directly to research! But the best part of creating a Fund is the fact that it is permanent and will never expire, meaning I can continue to use it as a tool for fundraising and awareness for years to come, or at least until we find the cure!

Thank you to everyone who supported my You Can Help Fund and a big THANK YOU to the Hirshberg Foundation for their relentless passion and commitment to help families and patients that have been touched by pancreatic cancer.

Event Spotlight – The Pursuit of Wellness 5k Walk/Run

By Mullainy Fine

The Pursuit of Wellness 5K Walk/Run was created in memory of my grandmother, Carol Vail. My grandmother Carol was one of the most caring and loving individuals that I have ever known. She was, and still is, an inspiration to me with her constant positive attitude and unwavering strength. She touched the

hearts of every single person she ever came in contact with. Her love is irreplaceable.

The overall experience of putting this event on was amazing! There is no greater reward than knowing that you have not only put together an event in memory of a deserving woman and in honor of such a worthy cause, but that you have also raised a significant amount of money for that cause. Last year, the Pursuit of Wellness raised \$3,300 through race entry fees, a raffle and sponsorships from local businesses within our community. We chose to have the proceeds go to the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research because of its dedication to the cure. The Foundation is very personable, welcoming, and understanding. We felt that we could truly make a connection with everyone working at the Foundation. The Foundation is determined to find a cure for pancreatic cancer and to save lives that need not be lost. Its dedication is an inspiration.

The Pursuit of Wellness not only raised funds for pancreatic cancer research, but was also most definitely successful in raising awareness about pancreatic cancer. Many citizens of the surrounding community had little to no knowledge about this form of cancer before the Pursuit of Wellness took place. We have had countless people in the community approach us volunteering their time and efforts to help organize this event. Through this event, we have met other individuals that have been personally affected by pancreatic cancer and have developed great friendships with them as a result.

We cannot wait to organize the Second Annual Pursuit of Wellness which will take place on June 2, 2012 at Riley Rink at Hunter Park in Manchester Center, VT!

Event Spotlight – Salon 828 Event in Memory of Rosanne Wayman

By Holly Girst

My husband, Don and I had just had the best moment of our lives...the birth of our son. Everything was going wonderfully, and my mom was elated that she finally had a grandchild. The look on her face when she held him and sense of pride when she spoke about him made me so happy and grateful that I had such great parents.

A few months later our lives were changed completely. My mom had a rash on her arms and legs that just wouldn't go away. We thought that it was an allergic reaction to laundry detergent or lotion. The doctor recommended cortisone cream. A few weeks later, my mom was having heartburn and lack of appetite. She knew someone in their early 40's that had the same mild symptoms and was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, so she made another appointment. When she mentioned her symptoms to the doctor his reaction was "That is the worst case scenario but I will send you home with some Nexium and we can follow up with an ultrasound to ease your concern."

A few days later, we got the diagnosis...stage 4 pancreatic cancer. As I struggled with her diagnosis, I was saddened by the thought of my son not knowing his Mommom. I was devastated at the idea of my dad losing his wife of 38 years. My mom was my best friend; I could not imagine not being able to talk to her

every day. I spent so many hours on the internet trying to absorb every piece of information on every procedure and every treatment option. I went to every doctor appointment and was disappointed by the lack of decisive action. I was so saddened by her oncologist's passive attitude and lack of urgency. The memo line of every follow up email was MY MOM, ROSANNE WAYMAN, in hopes that every doctor and nurse who treated her felt like she was their mother. Six short weeks later, she passed away. My mom was only 56.

I felt helpless in those six short weeks. After her passing, I knew that I immediately wanted to help raise awareness for early diagnosis and help fund the research for this awful disease. I wanted to honor my mom's courageous battle by trying to help others.

I own a salon and spa, so my first thought was to just write a check to the Hirshberg Foundation. As I was mentioning this to my staff, they suggested that they donate their time and plan an event in an effort to make a bigger impact and raise more money as well as awareness. We began to plan the event and it seemed that this became more therapeutic for me each day with every detail we planned out. The event was haircuts and blow outs for clients as well as a raffle, food and entertainment. My staff was booked through the day. Businesses offered to donate large gift baskets and gift certificates for a raffle. Clients who could not make it in for our event asked if they could make a donation anyway. I was blown away by all this generosity. I felt such an outpouring of love and support from my staff, family, clients and friends while planning this event. We managed to raise over \$4,000 during our four-hour event, and hopefully next year's will be bigger and better! I miss my mom, but this event has helped me feel like I am going to be able to help others going through the same situation and hopefully bring us closer to finding the cure.

You Can H.E.L.P. Fund Spotlight – Tessa's Fund: Shaving My Head for Pancreatic Cancer

By Tessa Todd

In December 2009 my mom was initially diagnosed with bile duct cancer. On January 14, 2010, her diagnosis changed to pancreatic cancer after a new biopsy was performed. She was given six months to live without chemotherapy and nine months with chemotherapy and surgery. After further investigation, it was found that mom was not a surgical candidate because they found one metastasis in her liver. She began a chemotherapy regimen while seeking out other surgical options. She had a liver ablation to remove the one spot in her liver in April and in August found a surgeon that would attempt a Whipple procedure. The doctor opened mom up and found that the cancer had spread so they closed her up and surgery was no longer an option. Mom stayed on chemotherapy until she passed away on January 12, 2011. She endured a few set backs; infections that ended her up in the hospital, an allergic reaction to chemotherapy, but through it all g-d was beside her.

I wanted to do something to honor my mom and raise awareness and money for pancreatic cancer research. I decided to create a Hirshberg Fund and raise money to shave my head. I raised \$830 for research! My mom was there with me through the whole process. I miss my mom and wish there was a cure for this

horrible disease!

Patient Programs Spotlight – Two Sisters Create Patient Symptom Management Workbook

Editor's Note: Bellah Care Chronicles Patient Symptom Management Workbook was created by two sisters who were caretakers for their mom after her diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. Their books are a tool aimed to help patients and family members gain control over symptoms, side effects, nutrition, medication, appointments and blood and scan results. In collaboration with the Bellah Care Chronicles, we have created a customized, comprehensive and complete Patient Symptom Management Workbook for pancreatic cancer patients. Thanks to a generous educational grant, The Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research is gifting the notebook to newly-diagnosed patients. It is our hope that patients and families will be able to take control of their treatment and their well being and be able to focus on what really matters most to them. Below is their story.

By Sarah and Carmella Banks

Our names are Sarah and Carmelle Banks. We are sisters, 2nd-generation caregivers, and cancer activists. In 2006, our lives took a dramatic turn when we became primary caregivers to our mom, Jane, who was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at the young age of 57.

At the time, we lived on separate coasts, one of us living on

the east coast and one on the west. When our mom told us she had cancer, we immediately returned home to live with her and put our heart and soul into taking care of her. While most people in their twenties are transitioning into careers and family life, we were getting ready to embark on the biggest role of our lives, warriors against pancreatic cancer, with our mom leading the way. Our mom was a single parent, a registered nurse and health educator for 37 years. She taught us about being women of integrity by stressing the importance of service and helping others. She always made sure we were taken care of. Years later, as she was facing the biggest challenge of her life, it was our turn to make sure she was loved, supported, and was well taken care of.

Throughout treatment mom endured a variety of chemotherapy drugs, surgeries, integrative treatments and took many medications. In an effort to be better caregivers and understand how *her* body was handling treatments medications and new food regimens, I designed a book which would keep track of her daily needs and what we refer to as the "new normal". I created the book specifically so it was small enough to travel in a purse or bag back and forth to doctor appointments, but large enough to hold the pertinent information that your doctor may ask. The book also contains refillable pages with detailed charts for medication, daily food intake, symptoms, doctor's notes, phone numbers and other medical information.

Our mom fought courageously for 2 1/2 years overcoming the bleak statistics that gave her only six months to live. Today, though we can no longer fight this disease beside our mom, we continue to stand up for cancer by dedicating our lives to helping other families manage their cancer care. We've made it our mission to stand up for all patients, caregivers, and loved ones by spreading cancer awareness and helping to raise thousands of dollars for cancer research.

Our family was first introduced to the Hirshberg Foundation after going to one of their annual educational Symposiums at UCLA. We were eager to collaborate with them by creating a customized book for pancreatic cancer patients and their loved ones. The Hirshberg Foundation helped to pioneer the first customized Symptom Management Workbook for people facing pancreatic cancer. Agi has shown her unyielding support for the book's launch and the entire Hirshberg Foundation family has supported the two of us as both caregivers and as an organization. We have high hopes of contributing to the cancer community using the Foundation as a guiding source of inspiration. We are so happy and proud to be a part of the Hirshberg family and their ongoing efforts to find a cure for pancreatic cancer. We know our mom would be too.

With the help of an educational grant, the Hirshberg Foundation is generously gifting the customized workbooks along with a re-stickable mediation logs to individuals touched by pancreatic cancer. Helping other pancreatic cancer patients and caregivers manage their care better is a special way to honor our mom's memory, continue her legacy of love and generosity and help make a positive difference in the lives of other families, like o

You Can H.E.L.P. Fund Spotlight – In Memory of Pamela Martens Boughton

By Lisa Boughton

My mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in July of 2010. She had not been feeling well for a few weeks. Finally, my father noticed that she was jaundiced. He called his doctor, who then asked my mom a few questions. After that telephone conversation my dad rushed her to the ER, where we would get the diagnosis that changed our lives forever.

I had only known one other person who had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Quickly and painfully he also lost his battle with this horrible disease. I have to admit I never thought of or really heard about this disease before then. Little did I know it would creep into my life again, affecting me forever.

The irony in all of this is that my mother was a nurse. She spent ten years as an oncology nurse at the same hospital where her Whipple procedure was eventually performed. She survived the surgery, two weeks in the hospital, and one round of chemo. We only got five months. The cancer spread to her liver. My mom, my hero, died on November 27, 2010 at just 64 years old.

Anyone who reads this knows how devastating this disease is. I watched her suffer, yet she never let on how much pain she was in. Was that because she was a nurse, had seen people die of cancer and knew what was coming? Did she want to spare us more grief and pain than we already had? Knowing her, the answer is "yes" to all of the above. I would ask her every day, "How are you feeling today mom?" She always replied "so-so". I could tell she was putting on a brave face. She never complained; never let it get the best of her. She refused our help, whether it was bathing, getting up and down stairs, or urging her to take the pain meds she so desperately needed.

My friend Kelly found the Hirshberg Foundation online and directed me to the website. It has been a God send. In lieu of flowers, we directed that donations be sent to the Hirshberg

Foundation and to date we have raised \$870.00. In doing so, it was my hope that more people would become aware of pancreatic cancer. I hope and pray that someone else can be spared the pain and devastation this disease inflicts on families and patients alike.