

My Greatest Inspiration

By Sebastian B.

My Dad has been one of my greatest inspirations from a very young age. My Dad has been my rock, fueling and motivating me to pursue my dreams, my goals, and my ambitions. He encouraged me to pursue my passion for the sciences – driving me to my first science fair, helping me balance equations, concocting zany science experiments. When my Dad was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in May 2013, I truly felt as if the world had been pulled away from under my feet.

After joining a clinical trial, my Dad underwent the Whipple Procedure, proton radiation and lengthy chemotherapy. His relentless energy, fueled by the support system built by our family and friends, proved to be the best healing therapy he could possibly receive. I feel unspeakably fortunate that over three years later, he is in remission with only a 15% chance of recurrence.

I recently relocated to the Los Angeles area from the East Coast where I grew up. I was searching for a home away from home, a community who could relate to my family's experience with pancreatic cancer. The Hirshberg Foundation proved to be exactly the community I was searching for; they are a driven group of passionate team members who are committed to fighting a devastating disease. My experience this Pancreatic Cancer Awareness month means joining the efforts of the Hirshberg Foundation. The Hirshberg Foundation welcomed me with open arms as a volunteer for their fall 2016 LA Cancer Challenge. Their motto – "Pancreatic cancer is relentless. Fortunately so are we." – speaks volumes about the ceaseless energy they put towards their fundraising, event coordination, and community action.

This very combination of science and community, of intricate treatment and collective support, forms the foundation of not only my Dad's ongoing treatment and recovery, but countless others. I am inspired to enter the field of cancer research and treatment myself, and carry the encouragement and energy of my Dad.

November 13th is World Pancreatic Cancer Day



What is World Pancreatic Cancer Day?

- World Pancreatic Cancer Day was established to mobilize a global effort and raise the profile of pancreatic cancer focusing on the need for urgent change!
- The goal is to raise awareness and further educate all pancreatic organizations and their supporters on an international scale.
- The first ever World Pancreatic Cancer has been driven by leaders of pancreatic cancer organizations across the globe.

- Learn more about pancreatic cancer and how the Hirshberg Foundation is battling back.
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This November join us as we Pledge. Share. Wear.

Welcome to November! To kick off

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, we are launching our newest purple campaign, Pledge Share Wear. Here are three simple and easy ways for you to join our fight this month and raise awareness about this disease. In honor of the nearly 49,000 people that will be diagnosed this year, help us build an army of pancreatic cancer survivors able to speak out and advocate for more research. It couldn't be any easier! Join us all month long as we Pledge. Share. Wear.

Pledge Purple

We know you are committed to the fight against pancreatic cancer, now voice that dedication/perseverance by pledging purple! Your pledge is a personal commitment to stand against this disease and be a voice for all those who have lost the battle to pancreatic cancer. It can be a small step or a giant leap, whatever you commit to will have the power to change lives.

Share Purple

You are committed to changing the face of pancreatic cancer; now share your passion with others. Once you've taken the pledge, be sure to share it with your friends, family, community and the world! When we join together to raise awareness, our voices can

be heard. Share your story, share why you support, share how this disease has touched you – the more we speak up, the louder we will be heard.

Wear Purple

This one's the easiest and we know you have purple in your closet! This month ask others to join you and wear purple together. Snap a photo of your purple party, whether it's at school, in the office, at your community center, the gym or just your household. Show off your purple duds and share your dedication to fight pancreatic cancer wherever you go.

This month is all about making our voices heard. Be sure to tag all your posts with **#pledgepurple2015** or [email](#) your photo or story to us so we can share them too! Here's to a very purple November!

Patient Spotlight – My New Normal

By Jeff Ross

I was diagnosed April 11, 2014; Adenosarcoma was the diagnosis with mets to the liver. My wife, Shareen, found out about Agi's great work so we attended a 'Game Day' event in Brentwood where I first met both Agi and Allison. I can't speak highly enough about them both. They've been extremely helpful in getting me into UCLA.

Dr. Schwartz at Kaiser Woodland Hills has been my oncologist. He believes in me being active and doing things that I enjoy in

life – things to keep me looking forward! I also see Dr. Lucy Postolov, an acupuncturist, and have had second opinions with great doctors like Dr. Lee Rosen at UCLA. Combined they have all given me hope, inspiration, and great treatments.

My “new normal” is to do something good for myself as often as I can. This includes using a trainer to get stronger, or taking yoga classes with my wife to help improve balance and get more meditative. My wife Shareen inspires me with her positive attitude. The ups are the weeks off from chemo and going out to see concerts and friends. The downs are the side effects of chemo, having neuropathy in my fingers and toes are bothersome and the G.I. side effects as well.

The new normal is to accept the diagnosis, and to fight every day against the disease but to also appreciate that life is truly a gift and to have gratitude for things each day. My wife and I are foodies, so we have a few special places we like to go to celebrate the little victories. We plan on doing a lot of traveling which we enjoy. I bought a new camera, as photography is a hobby and it gives me a lot of pleasure to get out and take pictures. I still maintain my literary management business, and reading clients’ new material helps motivate me in addition to getting them where they want to go.

My wife Shareen, my family and friends are my biggest supporters. This October my wife organized 13 people to join Team Jeff for the 17th Annual LA Cancer Challenge. Our nephew Justin designed the t-shirts with the baseball motif “we’re going to knock cancer out of the ballpark!” We raised over \$2,300, my sister and her boyfriend came out from New Jersey, and we all finished the 3.1 miles!

Patient Spotlight – Cancer Changes Everything

By Rayva L.G. Harrell

In this month and season that the world sets aside for Thanksgiving, I am gently reminded each day of the many things God has given me to be thankful for. Of course this includes my family, friends, and dream team of angels. But most of the ordinary things we forget or assume to be a normal way of life – springing out of bed without nausea, a simple trip to the grocery store without a mask, energy that lasts throughout the day without a nap(s) or the simple refreshing taste of water that now assumes the metallic chemical taste of the poison that could provide life. Cancer changes everything!!!

I was given a book very shortly after my stage 4 pancreatic cancer diagnosis (with metastasis to my liver). It is called *What Cancer Cannot Do – Stories of Hope and Encouragement*. The book sat for days, weeks, even after I had begun my first chemo treatment. My admittance and acceptance had not sunk in yet. Was this book for ME? However one morning when I was in a very dark place I reached for the book of simple stories, scriptures of peace laced with information to encourage, many from survivors. It soothed my soul and has often been what I need in the wee hours between the moon of night and sunrise of another day.

Cancer has become my wake up call. I believe that God must have given me all of this because he knew I could handle it (Oh yes, in May I also suffered a stroke). In the 8 short weeks since I began [chemo treatment](#), amongst anger, sadness, disbelief, and

emotions that flip like a switch, I have discovered a new found relationship of thanksgiving for the awareness of life and living.

On October 25th when picking up my LA Cancer Challenge bib number for the walk the next day, I met Allison Miller, a warm and friendly woman who then introduced me to Ms. Agi Hirshberg who greeted me with a loving embrace that will never be forgotten. My acquaintance to this disease is new and unfamiliar still but my initiation to the Hirshberg Foundation feels like home. The work that the Foundation continues doing year after year, season after season is true through the efforts of research and endless hours of dedication, education, and determination of finding a cure for this beast. If it's truly the work that God has called us to do, then he will help us do it, and we will find goodness and fulfillment in it.

As the year closes out and a new one of hope begins, let us all remember to be thankful the entire year round. All are not called for the same purpose, and all will fight and not win the battle. However *"there is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great and no tonic so powerful, as expectation of something better tomorrow."*

LACC Volunteer Spotlight – A Thrilling Adventure for

Volunteers!

By Sarah Banks

In the months leading up to this year's LA Cancer Challenge a group of amazing volunteers began making plans behind the scenes! The committee included nearly a dozen volunteers who had been introduced to the Hirshberg Foundation while participating in one of our past events. What began as brainstorming sessions quickly became a concise plan of how each person wanted to contribute to entertainment, raffle, sponsorship and community outreach. Everyone had a part to play and the contribution was astounding.

Thinking outside the box was exciting and challenging as the group explored new ideas to help make this year's experience unique. Whether they attended every meeting or made calls and sent emails from home, everyone participated and brought their A-game! The end result was fun entertainment on the course, a raffle with higher ticket sales, new sponsorship, and outreach to more schools and community and business organizations.

For good friends Rosheen Erangey & Gina DeRosa the loss of Gina's mom, Gayle Reed motivated them to join the raffle committee. Rosheen said, "Because we worked on the raffle it was great to see it in action. We were thrilled to actually see the winners so excited when their numbers were called"!

Volunteer Carol Poletti had never even attended the LACC before getting involved with the entertainment committee. "After seeing the event this year, I now have a clearer understanding of how everyone's contributions came together. And based on the participants' enthusiastic reaction, I've started thinking about what we could do for next year's event!"

The Hirshberg Foundation wants to thank our LACC Volunteer Committee for joining us on this thrilling adventure!