

A Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month Tradition

Reagan Ferris was just three years old when her father, Eric, passed away after a 2-year battle with pancreatic cancer at just 41 years old. Now a senior in high school, Reagan has grown up celebrating the holidays and milestones with her amazing mom, Jennifer and her two older brothers, Jackson and Carter, and inevitably, she thinks about her dad.

Service to others has always been a cornerstone for the Ferris family. A few years ago, Reagan decided that [Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month](#) was the perfect time to do something on her own to help others. She created a [fundraiser with See's Candy](#) in honor of her dad, benefiting the Hirshberg Foundation. Reagan writes, "the Hirshberg Foundation and staff at UCLA were instrumental in helping my dad get the best care possible. Our family is forever grateful to everyone who helped my dad (healthcare workers, family, friends, colleagues, and even kind strangers) and those who continue to support our family and his memory."

She added, "I am blessed to do something special to honor my dad and all those who fight for and support this important cause. I hope to continue this tradition and to inspire others to find ways to give help where needed." To date, she has raised over \$4,400 and Reagan hopes to keep the tradition going.

As you prepare for the holidays, make them even sweeter with a gift that gives back – consider supporting Reagan and her See's Candy fundraiser.

[Reagan's See's Candy Fundraiser →](#)

President of UCLA Health named Honorary Medical Co-Chair at the 25th LA Cancer Challenge

It is a privilege to welcome Johnese Spisso, MPA, President of UCLA Health and CEO of the UCLA Hospital System to serve as the Honorary Medical Co-Chair at the 25th LA Cancer Challenge. As the Hirshberg Foundation and the LA Cancer Challenge commemorate 25 years of research progress and patient support for the pancreatic cancer community, we are appreciative of our deep partnership with UCLA Health.

Johnese Spisso joins [Dr. John Mazziotta](#), Vice Chancellor of UCLA Health Sciences and CEO of UCLA Health, to serve as co-chair for the LA Cancer Challenge. **This joint honor captures the holistic approach to patient support and research that have been tenets of the Hirshberg Foundation's partnership with UCLA.** Since 1997, the Hirshberg Foundation has emphasized patient care alongside research, investing in treatment that span the bench to the bedside. Today, the [Hirshberg Laboratories at UCLA](#) closely collaborate with the [UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases](#), a center of excellence for patient treatment and care.

“It is an honor to have both Johnese and Dr. Mazziotta join us at the LA Cancer Challenge for our landmark year. Bringing together doctors and patients, families and healthcare leaders has been my dream. We are stronger when we work together and

learn from each other's experiences," wrote Agi Hirshberg, Founder and President of the Hirshberg Foundation.

As we commemorate 25 years, we celebrate our progress, our determination and our partnership with UCLA. We are proud to honor Johnese Spisso and Dr. John Mazziotta as they lead the [UCLA Health](#) team at the 25th LA Cancer Challenge.

"Agi and the Hirshberg Foundation have been invaluable partners over the past 25 years. Serving as co-chair with Dr. Mazziotta is an honor and symbolizes the partnership between research and patient care that is a cornerstone of UCLA Health, and we couldn't have done it without the support of the Hirshberg Foundation. I look forward to celebrating with the pancreatic cancer community on October 23, 2022," said Johnese Spisso.

"The LACC allows our doctors to meet the families who are fundraising for a cure, lets the fundraisers cheer for the 3-, 5-, and 10-year survivors. It is a day of joy and some tears but most of all, a day of hope," said Hirshberg. **Join Agi, Johnese, Dr. Mazziotta and the pancreatic cancer community at the [25th LA Cancer Challenge](#) on October 23rd at UCLA.**

[Johnese Spisso](#) assumed the position of President of UCLA Health, CEO of UCLA Hospital System and Associate Vice Chancellor of UCLA Health Sciences in 2016. She is a nationally recognized academic healthcare leader with more than 30 years of experience, and oversees all operations of UCLA's hospitals and clinics as well as the health system's regional outreach strategy.

Before coming to UCLA, Spisso spent 22 years at UW Medicine in Seattle, Washington, where she was promoted from Chief Nursing Officer to Chief Operating Officer to Chief Health System Officer and Vice President of Medical Affairs for the University of Washington. She served in the latter role from 2007-2016 and

was responsible for the two academic medical centers, two community hospitals, the network of community clinics, and the Airlift Northwest flight program. While there, Spisso played a major role in expanding collaborations with regional hospitals and in the operational integration of two major community hospitals into UW Medicine. She also was instrumental in leading the development of a statewide trauma system.

Prior to UW, as a registered nurse, Spisso rose through the ranks over 12 years at the University of California, Davis Medical Center and directed the critical care, trauma and burn center, emergency services and the Life Flight Air-Medical Program. Before that, she began her career as a critical-care nurse in the medical, surgical and transplant intensive care unit at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Presbyterian.

Spisso received a master's degree in health care administration and public administration from the University of San Francisco, and a bachelor's degree in health sciences from Chapman College. She earned her RN at the St. Francis School of Nursing. She has published numerous articles and book chapters on healthcare leadership, and she serves on several national boards, including the American Association of Medical Colleges' Council of Teaching Hospitals and Health Systems.

Spisso is active in community leadership and has served as the Los Angeles Community Chair for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Light the Night Walk as well as the Los Angeles Community Chair for the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women Luncheon. She has received numerous awards and recognition throughout her career, recently being named to Modern Healthcare's Top 25 Most Influential Women Leaders in 2019, LA Business Journal's 500 Most Influential Leaders in Los Angeles in 2020, Modern Healthcare's Top 50 Clinical Leaders of 2020 in

the U.S., and the Los Angeles Business Journal Women of Influence Award for Health Care in 2021 and 2022.

Vice Chancellor of UCLA Health Sciences to serve as Honorary Medical Chair at the 25th LA Cancer Challenge

As the Hirshberg Foundation and the LA Cancer Challenge commemorate 25 years of advancing research and providing patient services for the pancreatic cancer community, we are grateful to partner with UCLA Health and welcome Dr. John C. Mazziotta as our Honorary Medical Chair.

When the Hirshberg Foundation was [established in July of 1997](#), it was in partnership with doctors and researchers at UCLA. The Ronald S. [Hirshberg Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research Laboratory](#) was opened shortly thereafter in February 1998. The Hirshberg research centers at UCLA have grown to include three laboratories that collaborate amongst each other and with the [UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Cancer Diseases](#). **This deep partnership with UCLA is why it is such a distinct honor to recognize Dr. John Mazziotta and have him leading the [UCLA Health](#) team at the 25th LA Cancer Challenge.**

“I look forward to marking 25 years of fighting towards a cure with my friend Dr. Mazziotta by our side. It is an honor to have him participating in the LA Cancer Challenge,” said Agi

Hirshberg, Founder and President of the Hirshberg Foundation.

In reply to our invitation, Dr. Mazziotta wrote, “I have long admired and commend the work of the Hirshberg Foundation. Their partnership has helped establish UCLA as a premiere pancreatic cancer center and we are deeply grateful for their longstanding support. It is a true privilege to be the Honorary Medical Chair for this landmark year of the LA Cancer Challenge. I look forward to leading our UCLA Health team, see you there!”

“We have made such progress and I am confident that our momentum and hard work will carry us to the finish: a cure! I have happy tears just thinking about all the hugs and faces I will see at this year’s event,” said Agi Hirshberg. **Join Agi, Dr. Mazziotta and the pancreatic cancer community at the [25th LA Cancer Challenge](#) on October 23rd at UCLA.**

[Dr. John C. Mazziotta](#) has been Vice Chancellor of UCLA Health Sciences and CEO of UCLA Health since 2015. A member of the David Geffen School of Medicine faculty since 1983, Dr. Mazziotta also has served as Dean of the medical school, Associate Vice Chancellor of UCLA Health Sciences and Executive Vice Dean. In addition, he was chair of the Department of Neurology and founding director of the Ahmanson-Lovelace Brain Mapping Center.

Dr. Mazziotta earned his MD and PhD in neuroanatomy and computer science from Georgetown University. Following an internship at Georgetown, he completed neurology and nuclear medicine training at UCLA.

Dr. Mazziotta has published more than 260 research papers and eight texts. He has received numerous awards and honors, including the Oldendorf Award from the American Society of Neuroimaging, the S. Weir Mitchell Award and the Wartenberg Prize of the American Academy of Neurology, and the Von Hevesy

Prize from the International Society of Nuclear Medicine. Dr. Mazziotta has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine and the Royal College of Physicians.

Remembering a Beloved Father at the Sean R. Sanner 5K

Across the country, [Purple Ribbon Events](#) have helped raised thousands of dollars for pancreatic cancer research and patient programs each year. From game days to a walk/run, chili cook-off or golf tournament, [ideas and themes](#) are explored to best honor a loved one and to raise awareness in the community. In March of this year, the first-ever [Sean R. Sanner 5K](#) was hosted by a daughter paying tribute to her dad on what would have been his 50th birthday. These are the Purple Ribbon Events that make the biggest impact for a family, loved ones and the larger community. Let by her love for her father, Madison Sanner raised nearly \$15,000 for pancreatic cancer research and patient support services!

In March of 2020, Sean Sanner was diagnosed with a rare form of pancreatic cancer. After a devastating loss, his daughter set her heart on celebrating his life and legacy. “I wanted to do something that would bring honor to him because his 50th birthday was the first one without him, and the idea popped into my head and ran with it.” Shared Madison. She shared the message #SannerStrong on social media as she invited loved ones to participate. After 7 long and brutal months of watching her father fight pancreatic cancer, “I wanted to do something that would bring honor to him because his 50th birthday was the first

one without him.

On March 19th, Madison's family and friends gathered in Lafayette, California, wearing purple and ready to walk for her dad. Proving that we can all take the time to honor a loved one and celebrate them here and now, Madison shared, "The whole thing almost didn't happen. There was a lot going on in my family, and it became overwhelming, but I pushed through and am so happy I did. It ended up all working out and the day of was incredible!" As she saw everyone in their matching shirts, she was moved to know it was all for him. Some favorite event day moments included seeing people from different areas of her life. "My dad was all about giving back, and it doesn't always need to be in ways that people see, but to just know you can make an impact in someone's life." Joined by loved ones, Madison hosted an event her community will never forget.

[Make a Donation to the Sean R. Sanner 5K >](#)

HOST A PURPLE RIBBON EVENT IN 2022!

Before the seasons grow warm, begin planning an outdoor event to bring your family and friends together and make an impact in someone else's life. Try an activity you enjoy or honor a loved one with one of their favorite pass times. Options are limitless with opportunities to host an in-person event, online activity or a [Facebook fundraiser](#) benefiting pancreatic cancer research! We'll provide a [checklist](#), [tools and tips](#) to support you.

World Pancreatic Cancer Day

It's [World Pancreatic Cancer Day](#)! So, let's make a plan and take action to fight this disease today and in our everyday lives! This is a time to reflect on *all* of the lives impacted by this disease and answer a global call-to-action together. We all have a part to play, whether you join our annual [Celebrate](#), [Participate](#) & [Dedicate](#) campaign through [November](#), share our [awareness video](#) with friends and family on social media or [make a donation](#) in honor of a loved one. There are countless ways to color your world purple and shine a light on this disease!

Here are some easy ways to learn and share facts about this disease, raise awareness and make sure no patient or caregiver fights this disease alone.



Celebrate

[Pampered Chef fundraising event](#) →

Make [purple purchase](#) in our e-store →

[Start Planning your Event](#) →



Participate

Join the [2022 Hirshberg Training Team](#) →
Start a [Facebook Fundraiser](#) →
[Create a Fund](#) in Honor of a Loved One →



Dedicate

[Write a Message of Hope for Survivors](#) →
[Share Your Story](#) →
[Read Never Give Up Stories!](#) →

Answering a Call-to-Action has Real-

Life Results

What is the real-life impact of sharing the facts with friends and family, wearing purple to work or posting our [November Awareness video](#) on social media? Each action is more important than you may realize. Too few people know [what the pancreas is](#), let alone the [facts](#), [symptoms](#) [risk factors](#) of pancreatic cancer. Far too many are diagnosed at a late stage, in part because of a lack of awareness and because there is not yet a standard for early detection. When you raise awareness you are empower others, when you fundraise you are advancing critical research and when you introduce your community to the Hirshberg Foundation, that message will spread far and wide [reaching a patients](#). Our actions change lives!

World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition Advocacy

The Hirshberg Foundation has been a member of the World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition since its inception and today it has 90 member organizations from more than 30 countries on 6 continents! Our unified message is simple, "It's About Time". On World Pancreatic Cancer Day, our goal is to work together and make time to get to know your pancreas and learn the risks and symptoms. Every moment matters. Advocate for a patient, [help the Hirshberg Foundation fund research](#) and [join us in our efforts year-round](#). We encourage you and your loved ones There is no early detection test, so listen to your body and talk to your doctor about any concerns. It's about time that we talk about this disease out in the open, that all of us raise our voices and fight this disease like never before. Watch the Coalition's ['It's About Time to Raise Awareness' Video](#) today!

Esther Lee Shares Her Pancreatic Cancer Journey

We are delighted to have Esther Lee, DPT, as our Honorary Starter for the 2021 LA Cancer Challenge Walk/Run. The LACC Honorary Starter is a special honor we bestow each year on a pancreatic cancer survivor who has shown great courage, strength and positivity throughout their cancer journey.

Diagnosed in July 2020 with stage IV [pancreatic neuroendocrine](#) tumor with metastasis, Esther faced a long and bumpy treatment journey that she is still on. Through it all she exemplifies grace and expresses gratitude every step of the way. In Esther's own words, "I've truly learned to take it one day at a time, the greatest challenge being fully present in each day, moment by moment... this is the amazing place of peace and gratitude."

Learn more about Esther in this short video

Esther is a source of joy and inspiration to everyone she meets, including her long-time client Serena Williams. The tennis icon and Esther's dear friend shared a heartfelt video rallying support for Esther and her team.

Watch Serena's video

Esther has the amazing support of her family, friends and her medical team at UCLA. On October 31, 2021, we rally for Esther and all those facing pancreatic cancer to walk for research,

race towards a cure and never give up!