

Event Spotlight – Foster the Cure's 1st Golf Tournament

How to Tee-Off Your First Event

By Foster the CURE

Our dad, Jim Foster was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer on September 16, 2011 and lost his battle 4 months later at 56 years old. He was a husband, dad, grandpa, friend, and respected colleague. He was a truly genuine person and always put his family first. He deserved a lot more time than he was ultimately given. We knew the prognosis was grim but fought with him for those four months and when he lost his battle, we knew we couldn't stop fighting. "Foster the CURE" was formed to help raise funds for pancreatic cancer research to hopefully allow someone else to thrive with their life in a way that our dad couldn't.

After the success of our local rummage sale in 2012, we began setting our sights even higher so this year held our first golf tournament! We pulled together as a team and were able to make our first tournament, which included a luncheon and raffle, a success. Everyone associated with Foster the CURE believes that one day all of the good that the Hirshberg Foundation is doing will be able to provide a cure for pancreatic cancer. Our dad wasn't given that chance and when you lose hope, you lose your life. We will continue to fight for our dad and raise money for the Hirshberg Foundation so that others won't lose hope.

Here are some tips we learned when planning our event:

Why a Golf Event? We wanted to do something that honored our dad. He loved to golf so the golf tournament idea began.

Accept a Helping Hand... Dad golfed at the Sun Valley Golf Course and they were very helpful in planning the tournament with us. We all divided up the duties of the golf tournament so one person wouldn't get overwhelmed.

Set Goals... On top of creating awareness we wanted to get out there and raise as much money as we could. We were able to obtain sponsors including a local hospital, hotel, businesses, and a local family (the Koch's).

Get the Word Out... We did interviews with all the local news stations and a local radio station that interviewed us ran our PSA up to the day of the event.

Try Something New... We started a facebook page for Foster the CURE and regularly posted updates!

Challenge Yourself... We accomplished things we'd never done before by working with the golf course, planning logistics & rules, registering golfers, requesting raffle prizes, approaching sponsors, and more.

Overcome Obstacles... Before the tournament it began to rain and didn't stop. It wasn't enough to postpone the event and the golfers stuck it out and went through the course like it was sunny and 85 degrees!

Thank Supporters... We thanked sponsors by placing signs at each hole, using social media, and in writing. We offered golfers additional items including a team memorabilia photo at the first hole, lunch, and the winning team received a trophy. We appreciated the golfers sticking it out with us and next year can only be better!

Foster the CURE consists of Jim Foster's family – his wife: Karen Foster, his children: Brandi Duerksen, Monica Colella,

Kristin Casotti, and Jamie Foster, and his children's spouses and his grandchildren.

Event Spotlight – 1st Annual Gourmet Cupcakes & Champagne fundraiser

On April 28th close friends Debbie Ragonig and Kim Colton hosted the 1st Annual Gourmet Cupcakes & Champagne fundraiser at the Federal Bar in North Hollywood. Only two weeks before Mother's Day, the timing seemed to align perfectly as Debbie planned an event to honor the memory of her mom. After enduring cancer treatment on and off during her adult life Debbie's mom ultimately faced a pancreatic cancer diagnosis which she fought for 6 months.

Ten years later, Debbie began a journey of becoming increasingly pro-active for her own health as well as for her kids. After much research on pancreatic cancer and ways to help join the fight, Debbie recalls reading articles from medical journals and statistics about the disease. She thought to herself, Cupcakes and Champagne should definitely be a recipe to help fight against pancreatic cancer...and so this event was born.

With over 75 people in attendance the fundraiser raised \$7,000 in three hours. Guests attending received unlimited free cupcake samples, a swag bag, a raffle ticket and a glass of champagne. Debbie and Kim searched, what seemed like, all of Southern California for the right bakeries and prizes their guests would

spend big bucks on. The response to donation requests was amazing! They collected 14 silent auction packages including a Napa Valley trip, VIP seats to "The Ellen Show," deep sea fishing for two, VIP tickets to the Tonite Show with Jay Leno, and much more. And it didn't stop there. Over 30 raffle packages decorated the Federal Bar including gift cards to movies, restaurants, activities, getaways and even a Lucky Strike Bowling party. A full room was dedicated to eight leading Los Angeles bakeries including two winners from Season 2 of Food Network's "Cupcake Wars" , Bake You Happy and Double "D" Cupcakes, who made and donated cupcakes. Joining the line-up of bakeries adding more decadent cupcakes was Create Your Own Cake Bakery, Cup My Cakez, Heavenly Frostings Shoppe, The Blooming Bakery, ButterSweet Minis, and Nothing Bundt Cakes. This class act was topped off with champagne to sip and cheese platters. To say the least, the number of sponsors and donations for this event was off the chart!

Kim and Debbie were very happy with how our event came together and turned out. Kim commented, "We wanted to host our own event to raise money for pancreatic cancer. The event turned out better than we could have hoped. It was a lot of work but well worth it." I don't think there was a dry eye in the house when Debbie gave her speech and told her story. You might be able to find this on Facebook or Instagram, the story was very safeguarded by those at the event. Debbie does have an Instagram account where she's sharing her day-to-day life experiences, let's give her some [free instagram followers](#) to get her account going! ☐

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 ½ 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!

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."

Event Spotlight – Car Wash for Papa Bruce

By Kaitlin Faircloth

I can still remember the cold February morning over three years ago when my parents woke me to let me know that my grandfather had passed away. I had never known a hurt like that in my life. My grandfather – we called him Papa Bruce – was such a special person. He was always busy, whether he was working at his job, watching all of his grandchildren or working in his yard. He loved every minute of it. He was always happiest when he was busy. When we found out he had pancreatic cancer we were all floored. This disease robbed us of such a wonderful part of our family. He was diagnosed in November of 2009 and just 4 very short months later he was gone forever. I was in the eighth grade, just 13 years old.

As I started my junior year in high school, I knew that I was expected to write a research paper on a topic that meant something to me. It was explained to us that our Junior Paper should be the “jumping off point” for our Senior Project. It only made sense to me that I write about the greatest loss that I have known. It amazed me how little advancement that has been made in a cure for this disease. I wrote my paper thinking of my Papa Bruce and how I could make my Senior Project be a tribute to him.

My Papa Bruce had a side business at his home where he washed cars every Saturday for people in our community. He had washed cars for over 33 years. It only made sense to me to have a car wash event and create a pamphlet to bring more awareness to pancreatic cancer. I decided to invite all of his old clients and bring back all of the people who during their teenage years

had helped my Papa Bruce wash cars. I was amazed at the outpouring of love that was shown. During the two day event we welcomed so many of his past clients and the amount of people that showed up to volunteer their time just warmed my heart. We washed over 40 cars and only accepted donations. We did not put a price on what we were doing. I handed out close to 40 pamphlets and was able to share a lot of information with many in our community about pancreatic cancer. I had set a goal of raising \$2,000. The event not only met that goal, it ended up passing it by leaps and bounds. To date the total raised is \$3,010. I know that my project was a huge success, but it has meant so much more than that to me. I want to thank all that the Hirshberg Foundation does to promote and support research for Pancreatic Cancer.

Event Spotlight – Rummaging to Fight Pancreatic Cancer: Foster the CURE

By Monica Colella

Jim Foster, my dad, was the glue of our family.

When he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in September of 2011, it was devastating to all of our family, friends, and colleagues. He was a genuinely good person and his diagnosis raised the constant unanswered question of “why him?” Even as a well-educated woman, I didn’t know anything about pancreatic

cancer and wondered, why is this disease one of the most fatal cancers and the least funded?

After his diagnosis and throughout treatment, Dad didn't talk much. We all kept wondering what he was thinking about. He put up a good fight and when he was too weak we fought this disease together. When the oncologist and surgeon had done everything they could, my Dad smiled. He shook the surgeon's hand and thanked him. I remember thinking how could he thank him? It wasn't until he was gone that I then realized that during all those quiet times we had, he hadn't been angry. He'd made peace with it long before the rest of us had. He'd slowly taught my mom how to handle everyday tasks, from balancing the checkbook to grilling a hamburger. He even showed my brother how to cook the Thanksgiving turkey. Our fight was cut short after only four months. I think that he was able to thank the surgeon that day because he realized during those short four months that his work here was done. He was confident that he'd done his job as a husband, dad, friend, and colleague and he was proud of the results.

After our loss, our research on pancreatic cancer didn't stop. I found the Hirshberg Foundation's website and was excited to find something strictly for pancreatic cancer. My family and friends decided to hold a rummage sale and give 100% of the proceeds to the Hirshberg Foundation. It was well known that all the proceeds from our event would benefit pancreatic cancer research. We held a blind auction and received an abundance of donated gift cards and food from our community, friends, and family. We even had someone donate show rabbits that we were certain wouldn't sell, but to our surprise they were gone before we knew it!

"Rummaging for a Cure" started out as a simple rummage sale in our community in Sioux City, Iowa. We had a \$1,000 goal but when

everything was said and done we'd raised thousands of dollars! With all the support, our fundraiser grew and grew and Foster the CURE grew with it! We had numerous people throughout the event tell us their stories about how pancreatic cancer had affected them. I was completely in awe of how supportive everyone was and our event raised a tremendous amount of awareness and funds.

I was happy to have my garage and house back after months of rummage items taking over! I decided it would be months before discussing or planning another event, but it was about six hours before I was planning for next year! Foster the CURE will be doing an annual event each year. Hopefully something bigger and better, to raise money for pancreatic cancer research and we are looking forward to continuing a long lasting relationship with the Hirshberg Foundation.