

Event Spotlight – John V. Taylor Poker Ride

By Linda Taylor

Born on March 31, 1959 in San Jose California, John Taylor was a lover of life. His charismatic soul made him a person to love. He wore cowboy boots, always, even in the hot Arizona summers. He was a Chef, loved to eat and would soak for hours in the pool. He created his own man cave – for himself, his Harley and his friends “to hang out in.” Alone or with friends, he said riding his Harley was the best – having the wind on his face, the time for his thoughts and the freedom it gave. I met John in 1994 and we married on July 4, 1997 in Tombstone AZ. It was, as I always told John, the happiest day of my life.

John was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer on April 17, 2008. There were no warning signs. You wake up one morning and you find a lump or your eyes are yellow and you don't know what is going on. When John first went to the doctor they thought he had hepatitis. They ran some more tests and did a CT scan, and found pancreatic cancer. I'll never forget that day. We were sitting on the couch and John took the call from our doctor. He knew when he took the call that it was not a good thing. That is strength.

That is how John continued to deal with the next 29 months—with strength, hope, perseverance and always a positive outlook. He ruled his disease up until the afternoon it won. He always kept his quality of life. John was an inspiration to anyone who was with him through his fight. Pancreatic cancer took John's life on September 19, 2010, but not before going out the night before and enjoying a wonderful Italian dinner with our dear friends.

In John's memory, I organized a Poker Ride to raise awareness and money for pancreatic cancer research. We had a beautiful day in Arizona! More than sixty people participated – all so patient and willing to help. It was so special to see people that loved John come together and smile again—not because of the loss, but because of who he was. He always made people laugh, and at our event, even though it was hard not to have John physically with us, everyone was smiling and having a great time.

We had several people participate who didn't even know John. One that touched my heart the most was an older couple. She was diagnosed 13 months previously with pancreatic cancer. The day before our event he told me she wasn't having a good day, but she knew there was an event to support research that she didn't want to miss. She told her husband they were going to participate and even though I could tell she wasn't well, she showed up wearing all purple and had a smile on her face. You could see it was something she needed to do. I gave her a hug and a "Pancreatic Cancer Sucks Button." After they left to get on their bike I had to take a break. That was strength!

We had a few other riders show up that we didn't know, but they just wanted to ride because pancreatic cancer had touched their lives one way or another. They thanked us and told me an event like this was a first. The John V. Taylor Ride raised \$3600.25 (I believe the \$0.25 was from my grandson) for the Hirshberg Foundation.

I wanted to end this story with a note we received after our event and the lesson I learned from putting this together:

"To All: Yesterday when I woke I did not know John, but after attending your benefit and talking with some of John's friends, I wish I had. Your benefit has opened my eyes to the cause and it will be in my heart from this day forward. I want to thank

you all for allowing me to be present and hope to be more involved with each passing year. Again, my thanks!!!!!"

What I learned overall was this: We started a message. Besides raising money, we opened people's eyes to pancreatic cancer and the need to put it in the spotlight. I have a small understanding of what the Hirshberg Foundation started and feel blessed that our event can be a part of the fight.

John, you are the love of my life, my forever soul mate. I miss you every second of every minute, of every hour of every day. Thank you for giving me the best time of my life.

Event Spotlight – The Richard Grana Gold Tournament

By Roseanne Grana

My husband Richard died of pancreatic cancer on September 22, 2009. We remember Richard best when he was playing golf...he LOVED golfing every chance he had. In his memory, we decided that a golf tournament was the best way we can remember him. Originally, the tournament was going to be an opportunity for friends and family to get together to remember Richard while contributing to a good cause. But it has become much more than that—it has become an annual fundraiser for pancreatic cancer research. It is also a setting where we are able to educate and spread awareness regarding the relentlessness of the disease and how ill prepared we are to treat it. Our event benefits the Hirshberg Foundation because they are focused on funding research specifically for pancreatic cancer. I want our

participants to know that their donations will make a significant difference in our society's battle against this disease.

The golf tournament is held at the Shadow Pines Golf Club in Rochester, NY since that was one of Richard's favorite courses. Last year we held a raffle and a silent auction as the guests enjoyed lunch and dinner. We were fortunate to also have children volunteer to sell raffle tickets and help out wherever possible. The event brought in very generous donations throughout the entire day.

My son David, my mom and I have planned the past two golf tournaments. I am the VP of marketing and finance, my mom helps secure donations and increase community support, and David organizes and directs the event. Putting this event together has been a meaningful experience for us and that is why it has become an annual event. It takes an ever-increasing amount of work to make the event grow year after year, but we continue to gain more and more volunteers and participants each year as well. The 3rd Annual Richard Grana Golf Tournament will be held on July 21, 2012. This year we have received our local senator's support, so we're hoping to draw in an even greater amount of participation.

**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!