

# Fighting the Good Fight for Glenn

*Dedication stories from families or friends who have been touched by pancreatic cancer show the resilience and courage of the human spirit. Loved ones dedicate their time and effort every day to fighting for a cancer-free future in honor of someone touched by this disease. Every journey helps pave the way to a cure.*

By Lucas Buck

I tell anyone that wants to listen that I am heavily involved in raising awareness for pancreatic cancer research, not for me, but for them. The reason being, it's not *if* the disease will affect them in some way but *when*. I've teamed up with The Hirshberg Foundation for when that time that comes and it effects your life. I believe the hard work of researchers and others gave me an extra year with my brother because of the Whipple procedure. That surgery gave me an extra year with my brother and I'm forever grateful for that. I will continue to fight the good fight with others, knowing it's not *if* but *when*, and because of our work there will be more answers.

On February 11, 2014, my brother Glenn and his wife Carrie gave birth to their first child, William Oliver "Ollie" Buck. While enjoying the life of being a new daddy, 3 weeks later my brother turned bright yellow and developed what is known as "painless [jaundice](#)." Glenn was rushed to the James Cancer Institute at the Ohio State University. After spending the first 32 years of his life being known as the most athletic kid in any group of people, my brother was undergoing test after test to see what in the world was going on with him. Certainly it couldn't be pancreatic cancer, he was far too young.

My brother had never undergone any surgical procedures in his life, nor had he ever had any major illness. Glenn was the most athletic person I had ever met and I can barely remember him being sick growing up. On St. Patrick's Day of 2014, he was officially diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I can remember doing what everyone does, Googling "pancreatic cancer." I spent all but 30 seconds reading the survival rates and quickly clicked out of it. I had all the information I needed after one paragraph – the survival rates were terrible.

The next 6 months were spent in and out of "The James" at OSU, undergoing chemotherapy and radiation through a port that was installed on his left shoulder. Following this treatment, he underwent the Whipple procedure on August 19, 2014. After 9 hours of extremely invasive surgery, my brother came out and the surgery was deemed a "curative procedure." Unfortunately, as we know with pancreatic cancer, not all of the tumor cells were removed. Glenn spent the next 6 months going through chemo and radiation again at The James.

The hardest part was when he began to show signs of depression. Glenn rarely looked anyone in the eye and spent a lot of time in solitude. Finally, right around April, he turned a corner and we seemed to have our happy-go-lucky smiley guy back. Unfortunately, we went in for a check-up in late July, and what should have been a "good-to-go, take him off chemo" trip, turned into us learning the cancer had metastasized throughout his body and he now had possibly 2 weeks to live. Three weeks shy of his 34th birthday, my brother passed away, leaving behind a 1 year-old baby and his loving wife. He was 33.

Watching this disease take my brother away from his wife and son will stick with me forever. He had a laugh that would infectiously make anyone around him laugh. He's gone way too soon. The age 33 used to seem so old when we were kids. Now,

looking at that age of death is about as sobering as any moment gets. Passing away before one's 34th birthday just seems impossible and I don't want any other family to have to experience that kind of loss.

The Whipple helped give us an extra year with Glenn, and I'm forever grateful, but we needed more. I will continue to fight the good fight knowing that because of our work there will be more answers. I am involved in raising awareness and money for research for all the families that will hear, "pancreatic cancer," so that they will have more time.

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## **Alicia Honors Her Mother Through All Facets of Her Life and Inspires Us All to Never Give Up**

Alicia "ACE" Easter is a longtime friend and supporter of the Hirshberg Foundation. A [Hirshberg Training Team alumni](#), an LA Cancer Challenge team captain, a Yoga & Meditation teacher, and a Master Reiki Healer, Alicia not only embodies but inspires others to "Never Give Up."

When Alicia lost her mom to pancreatic cancer on April 20, 2002, she became a very reluctant member of the "Motherless Daughters Club." Facing undeniable grief after her mom died, and with a job that moved her to different cities across the country, Alicia realized she was searching for something. When she began

exploring yoga classes, she knew it was the lifesaver she was looking for.

As a long-time athlete, Alicia thought she had an awareness of her body from years of playing sports. In one of her early classes, the teacher led them in camel pose, a backbend from kneeling where you reach to grab your heels while lifting the chin and chest to the sky. Known as a heart-opener pose, Alicia struggled and her body resisted. After class, the yoga teacher asked Alicia if she had a broken heart. It was then that Alicia realized she was still weighed down with the grief of her mom's death.

Alicia's mother, Cynthia Geneva Lawson, had died four years earlier but Alicia still carried the pain of a loss she never fully processed. Despite being physically fit, there was still so much taking up space in her body that she wasn't aware of. Yoga inspired and empowered Alicia to find the healing she sought. After years of muffling her voice and her light, she realized the most powerful way to honor her mother was to share her light with the world.

Inspired, Alicia studied yoga, reiki, and meditation to help others and share her gifts of empowerment and mindfulness. Alicia now teaches yoga and meditation classes, locally and online, and recognizes it's an honor to guide students on their journey through yoga, meditation, and grief with love. She created *I AM FREE: Yoga, Meditation, and Intention Setting* workshops which she has hosted throughout California.

## **I AM Candle**

In June 2020, Alicia launched the I AM Candle Collection with the hope to inspire generations to come. Each time Alicia lit a candle, she was reminded she "is a brave being of light who is

protected and safe no matter what society says.” Her hope is that, as you light the candle, you are able to feel the waves of peace wash over you and your home.

The I AM Candle Collection proclaims I AM BEAUTIFUL, I AM BRAVE, I AM LOVE, and I AM FREE. Each one declares one of Alicia’s mantras, reminders to be the best of what we already are. Alicia believes we come into this world with love and have a duty to let love lead while we are here. She trusts it can all start with a spark of your own light and be reminded with a candle!

“It is never too late to affirm who you are and who you want to become.” – Alicia C. Easter

[Buy an I AM candle today →](#)

Throughout the month of November, Alicia will be donating 18% of the proceeds from the sale of her I AM BEAUTIFUL candle to the Hirshberg Foundation in honor of her mother, Cynthia, and in honor of all those pancreatic cancer has taken too soon.

Catch Alicia in-person at the [Flower Truck LA](#) pop-up on November 19th!

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## **We Will Never Give Up for Joe!**

My husband Joe Chedrick was a very quiet person at least until you got to know him. He was described as the type of person that did not say much but when he did it had meaning. He researched everything, could tell you all about cars, to finances, to home repairs. He was always very healthy. He would tell me he hopes that our children have his immune system. He went for check-ups twice a year and even his doctor was jealous of his results. So at the age of 48, when he started to feel full easy and was losing a few pounds, no one thought anything.

I remember saying "I wish I had that problem". The problem continued and became worse. After several tests and scopes it was determined he had cancer in his bile duct and his pancreas had pre-cancerous masses. We believed this to be curable; we had a doctor that had done hundreds of the Whipple procedures at UAB. January 10th 2014 he had his Whipple surgery and the doctor had to make a huge decision to also remove his pancreas. His exact words were that it was "too diseased". Welcome to our new normal: Not only did he have the extreme pain from the Whipple but now he was a type one diabetic. For the following almost ten months food became our enemy. Every conversation included "What did you eat". What to eat to try to get the energy and weight back on but how to keep his sugar levels under control. There were many battles we experienced, as with most cancer patients he acquired a very painful blood clot in his leg that landed him in the hospital for almost two weeks. A couple months later in the middle of the night he had a low blood sugar comma, which if you have never experienced it "and I had not" is very scary. My only description would be as if he was brain dead and could not respond. That again took him to the hospital for a week. All this time he was also taking chemo, according to his doctor, the most aggressive. He had four different types of chemo and he wore a chemo box home for two days after the chemo. He just kept on fighting even though he became weaker and weaker. His tumor markers were going down and we felt like we were moving in the right direction. By September he started retaining fluid around his stomach. The fluid was drained and it was cancerous. The doctor explained that the cancer cells had reformed and was not showing up in the tumor marker test. Last effort would be to drain the fluid again and do a different type of chemo. This is the path we took. Joe never quit trying. This was not successful and by this point he was at the end. I wanted to tell you Joe's story because I wanted to share with you how this taught me about true love. A love that I

probably took for granted for quite a bit of our 29 years of marriage. He refused to give up but not for him but for my kids and me. During the 29 years of marriage I never saw my husband cry for anything until this happened. He would cry and I would ask "are you okay, what's hurting?" his answer was always the same " I am not crying for me, I am crying for you". You see pancreatic cancer was breaking his heart knowing he would leave us and we would feel the pain of not having him here to experience life with us. I never knew how many ways pancreatic cancer would change my life, my children's life and how we value the time we have with our love ones.

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month means to me an opportunity to bring light to a deadly silent killer called pancreatic cancer. I like to post every day in November either a statistic about pancreatic cancer or at least a picture of support for pancreatic cancer awareness. I think this month is a time to encourage others to help fight for ways to stop pancreatic cancer before it attacks, develop tests for early detection and find a cure for those diagnosed. I proudly wear my purple and tell everyone why I am wearing purple and what that purple ribbon means to me. This disease does not discriminate against any one, if you think it can't get me you are wrong. My best friend and I sponsor a Pancreatic Cancer Awareness day every other year, it's a great time to share about pancreatic cancer and raise money for the Hirshberg Foundation. Within the last two years we have raised \$10,000. I hope you will look for ways to get the word out and to support Hirshberg so that one day we won't need to have Pancreatic Cancer Awareness months because pancreatic cancer will not exist.

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# Jill Hecsh Levine Story

By Shirley Gordon, Penny Lewis and the Cape Cod Mah Jongg Group

“Have fun every day”, were words that our dear friend, Jill Hecsh Levine, lived by.

Jill was a happy upbeat person with a personality that just drew people to her, and whatever she did, she did to the utmost, no skimping for her! Creative, outspoken, honest and a great “doer”, she organized and ran many successful parties, events, and fund raisers. If she was organizing it, you not only wanted to be there, you wanted to help. Jill had a deep passion for life, for people, and for having fun. As we remember, Jill frequently said, “I’m the luckiest girl in the world”.

An avid reader, with a commanding vocabulary, she loved to play games... Scrabble, Words with Friends, and Mah Jongg. She was competitive and loved to win! Her winning attitude served her well from the day she was diagnosed, as she immediately set out to “beat cancer”! Right until the very end, she never quit. Our dear friend Jill passed away on April 18, 2014, on her 61st birthday.

When a bright, beautiful, blonde dynamo, in the prime of her life, died too soon, our small Cape Cod community was moved to action. Jill was a founding member of our weekly Mah Jongg game. To honor her memory, in a way we know she would have liked, her friends began hosting *Mah Jongg Madness*, an annual all-day Mah Jongg event, luncheon, and fundraiser for Pancreatic Cancer Research. We invite the wider community of local Mah Jongg players, who are thrilled to participate in this worthy cause. As we play and laugh, we continue to hold Jill close in our hearts, see the bright twinkle in her eyes, and hear her remind us “not to gloat” when we win a hand. After all, it’s about



friendship, being together, having fun, and celebrating a life well lived.

In this second year, we were able to donate over \$1000 to the Hirshberg Pancreatic Research Foundation in loving memory of Jill. It has been a labor of love and a fun day for everyone involved.

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## **Owen Never Gives Up!**

To date, the Annual Dal Bon Memorial Golf Tournament has raised nearly \$50,000 dollars for pancreatic cancer research. The event is one of our highlights of the summer, bringing together the community in Grass Valley & Auburn, CA. The Dal Bon family's continued dedication to Never Give Up inspires us all to continue the fight!

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## **Dr. Go Never Gives Up!**

For 20 years, Dr. Vay Liang Go has played an instrumental role guiding the foundation's scientific efforts and developing the Foundation's international Seed Grant Program. As Chair of the Hirshberg Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board, Dr. Go has opened doors for medical professionals and investigators eager to launch a career in the field of pancreatic cancer research. His remarkable accomplishments continue to inspire up-and-coming investigators to set a higher standard in their pursuit for a

cure and Never Give Up!