

Kat's Father's Day Tribute – Thom Mrozek

My dad has always been a role model to me. He's funny, passionate, and never fails to cheer me up. He taught me how to golf and how to stand up for myself. He's the most wonderful father a girl could ask for and I wouldn't trade him for the world.

Throughout his journey we have all tried to be there for him as much as we can. We let him rest when he needed to rest and we sat with him while he underwent chemo treatments. Recently he passed the five-year anniversary of his diagnosis so we threw him a party. It was absolutely amazing see how many people showed up to show their support.

One of the most special moments was surprising him with the five-year survival party. Seeing his face when he saw all of the people that had supported him all the way through made all the careful planning worth it. We were all so thankful that he was there to celebrate with us.

Because of his diagnosis I think I grew up a little faster than I should have. Because my dad was sick and my mom had to take care of him, I had to learn how to be independent. I think it also brought my family together because we all needed to be there to support each other.

My dad is special because he has a wonderful sense of humor and always manages to make everyone around him smile. He is fearless and battled the cancer with everything he had in him – he is one of the bravest people I know.

Thanks for always having the courage to fight and be there for

me – I love you. Happy Father's Day.

In March of 2023, Thom celebrated his 11-year pancreatic cancer survivorship! He continues to support patients facing this disease by attending Hirshberg Foundation events and raising awareness for patients and families. He has shared his story on the [Patient Panel at the 15th Annual Symposium](#) on Pancreatic Cancer, he was an Honorary Starter at the [25th Annual LA Cancer Challenge](#), and he has also generously shared his pancreatic cancer journey on the [Living Hope podcast](#). He is a proud father, loving husband, avid golfer, and an inspiration to all survivors.

A Strong and Beautiful Woman – My Mother's Day Tribute

My Mom was definitely not supposed to get cancer. The thought was impossible and unreal. This strong, beautiful woman who lived each day focused on taking care of her family, offering unwavering support and strength and functioning as the glue that held everything together. The possibility of her being seriously ill was unthinkable.

My Mom's Journey – A Mother's

Day Tribute

By Sari R.

My mom has always been a huge influence in my life- as a friend, a role model and someone I grew up wanting to emulate. She has always been the true matriarch of our family, keeping my siblings and our families close to each other and a huge part of all our lives.

Our friends and family have been there for every step of my mom's journey – cooking and bringing her meals, being at every doctor appointment and surgery, visiting constantly at every hospital stay and at home, keeping my dad company, taking walks together, running errands for her, sending gifts to keep her spirits up, constant phone calls and just being there for everything she wanted and needed.

After grueling chemotherapy and a couple of related hospital visits, my mom was really weak and sick. She was pretty adamant that she was not willing to go through a Whipple surgery and the horrible recovery everyone told her would follow. When my sister found a doctor at the Mayo clinic performing laparoscopic Whipple procedures, my mom's attitude shifted to being her former strong self, certain she could get through that (much easier) recovery and anything that followed. Watching her put aside her fears and find her strength again was truly awe-inspiring!

My mom's diagnosis, treatment and recovery have made my family closer. We came together to make sure my mom and dad had everything they needed – and we all know now that we are truly there for each other, no matter what. My 90 year old father's strength and love has been amazing as well. He has been a rock for all of us, and his optimism kept everyone's spirits

up throughout.

I hope I let my mom know every day (not just on Mother's Day) how important she is to me, how much I love her and how grateful I am for every additional day I get with her!

***Sari's mom, Ronnie, was diagnosed November 2015.**

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.

Event Spotlight – Drifting For A Cure

By Elissa Oblath

The beauty of our 3rd party event program is seeing all the wonderful, ingenious ways our supporters find ways to help us raise pancreatic cancer awareness. No one demonstrates that more than Mitchell Tan.

Mitchell contacted us this summer with the idea to wrap his drift car to raise pancreatic cancer awareness. There was a resounding, “Of course! But what is drifting?” Mitchell, a young

driver with dedication, patiently explained practicing turns and perfecting donuts. (It is a lot like the driving featured in The Fast & The Furious movies.) Many people in the sport use parts from providers like [Low Offset](#) to help ensure peak performance, as modification is nearly mandatory to have a competitive edge.

Mitchell isn't just passionate about drifting; he's motivated to make a difference. Mitchell and MTRacing are dedicated to honoring the memory of Mitchell's uncle Rudyard. "If there was one thing I've learned when [Rudyard] was around it was to never give up, and to keep on keepin' on," something Mitchell remembers when he's drifting. If you're wanting to start drifting you might be interested in this [ae86 for sale Houston](#), the ae86 is apparently one of the most iconic drift cars available!

Once Mitchell had his car wrapped with our logo and a giant purple ribbon along its length, he set up a fund to share his story. Mitchell's desire to raise awareness shines through his emails and his enthusiasm is contagious. Luckily the LA Cancer Challenge was around the corner and we realized Mitchell and his car would be the perfect addition.

Mitchell's car was part of our 2014 LACC Fit Family Expo, where he was "able to share [his] story, and give exposure to the team in... a broader perspective." Mitchell reminds us "that no matter what, even in the absence of a loved one... we can keep striving." Mitchell is excited to raise pancreatic cancer awareness in the drift community, "we are reaching out to a whole new society... and showing our family that even after death, there is still a fight to be won."

When asked about the future, Mitchell is quick to state, "I feel this is a start of not only a new campaign, but a life-long mission of raising awareness that I hope to carry with me while

I compete in Formula Drift Pro/Am and on out road to the Formula Drift Pro series. We hope to impact people's lives, and to have a positive impact on others the way the community has [had] on our team, and to give back. The 2015 season has a lot in store for us, and we are more than happy to have this great cause with us every step of the way."

Event Spotlight – Cooking for a Cure

By Elissa Oblath

Among the many amazing events hosted by our passionate supporters to benefit our foundation during 2014, the June 8th Cooking for a Cure stands out as the tastiest. Plan Check Bar + Kitchen graciously offered a wonderful setting and Executive Chef Ernesto Uchimira welcomed a dazzling array of fellow chefs to serve up delicious bites. Joining chef Ernesto were "Top Chef" champ Michael Voltaggio, chef Josef Centeno of Băco Mercat & Bar Ama fame, award-winning BierBeisl Chef/Owner Bernhard Mairinger, Waterloo & City chef and a food TV rising star Brendan Collins and James Beard-nominated culinary masters Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo.

Held to benefit pancreatic cancer research, with an emphasis on the emotional support provided by the Hirshberg Foundation's relationship to the Simms-Mann Center at UCLA, the event raised over \$17,000. The event board, a passionate group of friends including Jeff Price, Terry Heller, Joey Leff, Jessica Sorgini and Gay Harwin, came together to support a friend currently in

treatment.

From Voltaggio's delicate asparagus with horseradish powder and caviar to Shook & Dotolo's crispy-skinned and juicy smoked chicken leg to Uchimura's creamy cheesy grits topped with the perfect egg and fresh green peas, there was something for everyone. Centeno brought a burrito twist on his signature bāco with pork asada and beef albondigas with a creamy tomato sauce and just the right heat. Collins' veal tongue with uni on a dark toast topped with apricots and a porcini was a crowd favorite for its play on textures and strong flavors. Mairinger's sous chef came prepared with his purple apron to serve up seared duck breast appropriately paired with a purple cabbage salad. With the windows open and a summer breeze, the intimate afternoon allowed participants to mingle with chefs and friends while supporting pancreatic cancer. A Tito's Vodka, watermelon and mint passed punch was available as well as specialty jalapeno-infused cocktail by Livigni + Moix and Matthew Biancaniello's famous Breeder's Cup. To say the afternoon was a culinary adventure is to say the least! But to think that it all benefited pancreatic cancer patients was the most delicious part of it all.