



Cedar Valley Cancer Committee

# Touch of Courage Connection

Newsletter

## January 2021

*Celebrating over 30 years in the Cedar Valley*

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## Seasonal Affective Disorder is REAL

**Amanda Schara, LMHC, CADC,** UnityPoint Health - Allen Hospital

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that results from seasonal changes. It is common, with more than 3 million cases per year in the US. It can last several months or years. SAD is said to occur due to changes in the body's internal clock, and changes in brain and body's chemicals. Feeling depressed on most days, feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness, reduced energy, concentration, and interest in activities are the commonly noted symptoms. Light therapy, medications, and psychotherapy are the treatments available for SAD.

### Symptoms

Most cases of SAD begin during late fall or early winter and go away during spring or summer. Some cases may be reported during spring and summer. Winter SAD and summer SAD show similar and different symptoms including:

- ◀ Feeling depressed on most of the days
- ◀ Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness

- ◀ Sadness
  - ◀ Reduced energy
  - ◀ Loss of concentration and interest in activities
  - ◀ Trouble sleeping/oversleeping
  - ◀ Nausea, loss of appetite/craving for fatty or carbohydrate- rich foods
  - ◀ Suicidal thoughts
- Weight loss/weight gain



### Treatments

Light therapy, medications, and psychotherapy are the treatments available for SAD. It is important to let the doctor know of your other medical conditions, including bipolar disorder, to avoid any side

*Continued on next page, SAD*

*SAD, continued from page 1*

effects from any of the medications or therapies.

### Medication

Antidepressants: Drugs used to reduce the symptoms of depression.

### Bupropion • Paroxetine

### Self-care

- ◀ Keep your house well lit.
- ◀ Sit closer to bright windows both at home and in office.
- ◀ Take a walk outside each day
- ◀ Exercise regularly
- ◀ Eat a well-balanced diet
- ◀ Stick to your treatment plan
- ◀ Practice relaxation techniques such as yoga, tai chi and meditation
- ◀ Practice music or art therapy.

**Therapies:** Light therapy • Psychotherapy

### Causes

The exact cause for SAD is not known but some of the factors that are said to influence the condition include:

- ◀ Changes in the body's internal clock due to seasonal changes
- ◀ Reduced levels of the brain chemical serotonin
- ◀ An imbalance in the chemical melatonin that influences sleep and mood patterns
- ◀ Vitamin D insufficiency
- ◀ Gender: Women are more prone to SAD
- ◀ An imbalance in the chemical melatonin that influences sleep and mood patterns
- ◀ Family history of SAD
- ◀ Personal history of clinical depression or bipolar disorder

◀ The distance of living from the equator

As winter continues and the possibility of being homebound due to the pandemic SAD may become more prevalent. Keep your home well lit – open those curtains and shades. Be active, look for exercise videos to do daily and make it a routine. Work on puzzles or a craft, read or watch movies, and phone your family and friends. If at all possible, take time to enjoy the outside, but be safe.

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# Cancer Support Groups

Living with cancer is a challenge and living through a pandemic has added even more to that challenge. Although our local cancer support groups have not been able to meet in person since March that doesn't mean we aren't still here for you. The Beyond Pink TEAM (BPT) is working on ways we can support each other safely.

The BPT **All Cancer Support Group (ACSG)** is meeting virtually through Zoom to socialize, keep in touch and learn with guest speakers. The Zoom link is sent through the private Facebook group. Contact Gabbi

DeWitt at 319-292-2225 if you need the link emailed to you. For those living or working outside of the Cedar Valley this has allowed them to join our group. We have also been working on a buddy system so you can visit one on one with someone who has had a similar experience as you. For more information on being a buddy or being matched with one, contact Angela Hamilton at 319-231-3143.

The BPT **Touch of Courage** breast cancer support group has not been meeting personally and tries to keep in touch through email. Pat has been looking for a new meeting location that will have easy access and plenty of space to social distance. The Hearts of Hope pillows continue to be made and delivered to Cedar Valley hospitals and clinics as needed. Until it is safe to gather in person, contact Pat at 319-232-8691 with questions about support or the pillows.

Mercy One's Waterloo Cancer Center is working on a virtual option for the **Care and Share Support Group**. Please contact Jessica Nauholz at 319-272-2816 for participation details.

*Please check page 6 of this newsletter for dates, times, and additional information.*



# Survivor Stories



## Where They Are Now!

*by Lori Seawel, a 9-year survivor*

I was informed that I had breast cancer on April 1, 2011. Yep, what an April Fool's joke right?! Only it wasn't a joke. I recall that first week being pretty chaotic. So many appointments. So hard to tell people. And so many decisions.

One of the hardest decisions for me was deciding whether to do a lumpectomy or a bilateral mastectomy. I learned I had lobular breast cancer which meant it could more easily come back in my other breast. I decided on a lumpectomy as I could never go back if I went the other route, but the surgeon was unable to get clear margins. So I ended up having a bilateral mastectomy anyway. My breast cancer ended up being Stage 1. I did not have chemotherapy or radiation. It was estrogen/progesterone positive. So following surgery, I started on Tamoxifen for five years. Two and a half years into that, a research study revealed it was better to be on hormone therapy for ten years. At the five-year mark, I switched to an aromatase inhibitor. Now in my tenth year, I look forward to finally getting off this medication in about seven months. I am hopeful the side effects that came along with it will also go away.

I have always had a pretty strong faith and great family support as well as good friends. So I've stayed pretty strong throughout my cancer journey. That's not to say there were never any tears. There were. And I have been afraid at times. But my faith, family and friends have helped me keep a pretty positive outlook and have helped me keep from quitting the medicine early even though the side effects have persisted.

I was very much into fitness when breast cancer struck. Honestly, that's been a battle for me since then, partly because my life has become really busy, but also because I experience periods of significant fatigue as a side effect. I try to eat well, but I also break the rules with favorite treats now and then as I believe these are things that contribute to MY quality of life. There was no way I was giving up bacon and chocolate. I have learned that everyone has to determine for themselves what contributes to THEIR quality of life.



*Lori and Christine Carpenter with Senator Grassely during an advocacy trip to Washington, DC.*

## Winning the Race from Supporting to Surviving

*By Debbie Brecher, a Breast Cancer Survivor*

My family has participated in the Pink Ribbon Run since 2014 when my mom, Jody, was diagnosed with breast cancer. We walked in her name until this year. I would never have dreamed that this year would present one of the toughest things I've ever endured in the same way. There are three things that I know for certain about breast cancer. Early detection is absolutely critical, a great medical team behind you is key, and a team of warriors who stand beside you is essential.

One of those warrior teams that stepped up the day of my diagnosis to help was the Beyond Pink TEAM (BPT). There were so many different ways the BPT offers assistance to breast cancer patients and their families. Emotionally, physically, and financially. Until you're one of them you don't realize how much this cancer consumes you. This team was reaching out to me on day one to provide help navigating cancer. I didn't realize how impactful this group was until I became the patient.

*Continued on page 7, Lori*

*Continued on next page, Debbie*





### *Pink Ribbon Run Was A Success!*

The 2020 Virtual Pink Ribbon Run was held from October 3-10 allowing the 604 registered participants the opportunity to choose their day to run or walk. And guess what? No rain!

Here are a few stats from this year's unique event:

- ⌘ 609 registered individuals, representing 12 states and a Canadian province
- ⌘ 122 registered survivors with 968 years of survivorship, and 10 being 20+ year survivors
- ⌘ 32 teams, with largest team of 54
- ⌘ Raised \$38,185.42 for the BPT



### Photos from Virtual Run

*Debbie, continued from previous page*

It is simply astounding to learn that one of every eight individuals will experience breast cancer in his or her lifetime. Two of those eight will find that they have the most aggressive form of breast cancer. I am one of those two and I can tell you it is not a position I would wish for anyone. By the grace of God early detection and a great doctor gave me a fighting chance to win the race. I really do think of it like a race. You know there's a finish line. You're following the map your medical team gave you but you have no idea if your body is taking you in the right direction. At the time there were nights I just didn't think I was going to be able to take much more. The finish line looked a long ways away back in March. I'm thrilled to report my finish line is in

sight on October 1 which is so fitting as October starts breast cancer awareness month.

I reached the finish line as my warriors are making sure of it with them by my side. You are my warriors!

Initially, I really didn't want to share the fact that I had breast cancer. It's an overwhelming diagnosis. The last thing you want to do is put your burden on others. But they gave me strength and confidence that I could do this. They made me realize how important it is to share and support one another. I think we are all compassionate in our own ways. However, compassion in cancer gives me an entirely new perspective.



*This was my picture from last year's walk I'm in the middle, #276. While I know they say you're a survivor in your first year I'm anxious to know that by next year when we can all walk together, I can look back at how far I've come.*

**Note:** This year's Pink Ribbon Run had a team, "Jody's Pack 4-Ever & Debbie's Warriors" – a family team of 41 supporters for 2 breast cancer survivors, mother and daughter. Debbie.



**Donations from September 1, 2020 through November 30, 2020.**

**Thank you for all your support!**

Janice Akin  
 Abby Athey  
 Bank Iowa  
 Buchanan County Health Center  
 Bunger Family Foundation  
 Sam & Dawn DeBord  
 Kelli Dix  
 Don Bosco School System  
 Dunkerton Community Schools  
 Farrells Extreme Bodyshaping  
 Flowerama  
 Gallagher Family Foundation  
 Dee & Marty Hughes  
 Jennifer Hughes  
 Marianne Hartz  
 Hurling Hatchet  
 Independence Community Schools  
 Isle Casino & Hotel  
 J&C Grocery  
 Adel Kessler  
 Neela Kottmeier  
 Mickey Mabry & Family  
 Joan Mattson  
 MercyOne  
 Nagle Signs Inc.  
 Donna O'Brien  
 Bob & Rhoda Olson  
 Kathy Patterson  
 PDCM  
 Merrie Schroeder  
 Gia Shannon  
 Marilyn Teig  
 Visions Hair Studio  
 Waterloo Black Hawk Hockey  
 Waterloo Fire Fighters  
 Waterloo Police  
 Waverly Health Center  
 Doris Webber  
 Wendy Welter

## A few of the October Fundraisers benefiting BPT



*Dunkerton Community Schools held a "Pink Out" at one of their football games by auctioning pink jerseys and other shirts. Pictured are the co-captains, 18-Gabe Heideman, 3-Jake Kennedy, 12-Riley Moulds, and 5-Ian Boner presenting a check just over \$1,300.00 to BPT members, Dee H and Marty M.*



*Visions Hair Studio sold various "Pink" items, along "In Honor - Memory" wall cards during the month of October. Pictured is Mo Hardy, owner of Visions with donations of just over \$800.*



*BPT member, Gabbi D, is presented with a \$1,200 from Angie Fuller, a Farrell's staff member, from their weekend kickboxing marathon and silent auction.*

*Waterloo Firefighters sold these shirts in September/October and were able to wear the shirts during the month of October. A check just over \$1,700 was given to BPT in honor of Cole Weliver, Tiffini Kieler, and Danielle Mason who have been affected by cancer and a part of the Waterloo Fire Family.*



**DUE TO THE COVID-19 VIRUS,  
PLEASE CALL BEFORE ATTENDING  
ANY SUPPORT GROUP**

## Support Group Dates

**January 4, 1:30 p.m.**

**Touch of Courage  
Breast Cancer Support Group**

Location to be Determined  
Pat – 319-232-8691 for information



**January 5, 1:30 p.m.**

**Care & Share Cancer Support  
Group**

MercyOne Waterloo Cancer Center  
200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo  
Jessica – 319-272-2816 for virtual meeting info



**January 19, 4:30 p.m.**

**BPT All Cancer Support Group -  
Meet, Mingle and Learn**

Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalist  
3912 Cedar Heights Dr., Cedar Falls  
Gabbi – 319-292-2225 for Zoom link



**February 1, 1:30 p.m.**

**Touch of Courage  
Breast Cancer Support Group**

Location to be Determined  
Pat – 319-232-8691 for information

**February 2, 1:30 p.m.**

**Care & Share Cancer Support  
Group**

MercyOne Waterloo Cancer Center  
200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo  
Jessica – 319-272-2816 for Virtual meeting info



**February 11- TBD**

**Splash of Color – Women of Color  
Breast Cancer Support Group**

Call Cathy Ketton - 319-504-2703 for details

**March 1, 1:30 p.m.**

**Touch of Courage  
Breast Cancer Support Group**

Location to be Determined  
Pat – 319-232-8691 for information

**March 2, 1:30 p.m.**

**Care & Share Cancer Support  
Group**

MercyOne Waterloo Cancer Center  
200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo  
Jessica – 319-272-2816 for virtual meeting info



**April 5, 1:30 p.m.**

**Touch of Courage  
Breast Cancer Support Group**

Location to be Determined  
Pat – 319-232-8691 for information

**April 6, 1:30 p.m.**

**Care & Share Cancer Support  
Group**

MercyOne Waterloo Cancer Center  
200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo  
Jessica – 319-272-2816 for virtual meeting info



**April 20, 4:30 p.m.**

**BPT All Cancer Support Group -  
Meet, Mingle and Learn**

Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalist  
3912 Cedar Heights Dr., Cedar Falls  
Gabbi – 319-292-2225 for Zoom link



**Ignite**  
THE CANCER CONVERSATION  
Mind, Body & Soul

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, 69 individuals virtually attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Ignite event. For those unable to attend, there will be a recording available for purchase. Check out Ignite information on the BPT website, [beyondpinkteam.org](http://beyondpinkteam.org) for more information.

Want to know what Ignite is all about? A video sharing what Ignite has done to bring the cancer conversation to the front is available on the BPT website or at the link below.

<https://youtu.be/gS4wXwHqt1g>

## Living Green

### Growing Your Own Garden

By Dawn Keller



Are you interested in growing some of your own food, but don't know where to start? Most people know that I have a large garden, but many don't know that I started gardening to deal with cancer treatment. I had no idea what I was doing but discovered that it wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be.

My advice? Set a goal and start small. Choose one or two things that you like to eat and plant them in a way that works for you. This can be in your yard, a large container, or a raised bed. It can even be a favorite herb or two grown right in your home.

When I decided to give gardening a try, my goal was to be able to walk to the garden and pick the ingredients to make one of my favorite things: salsa. I will never forget the first time I did this—it was simple with tomatoes, jalapenos, onions, and cilantro, but it was mine and it was delicious.

When do I start my garden? You can begin planting seeds as early as March. Planting seeds outside should be late April or when ground is warm. So, start your plan now as to what you will plant.





By Christine Carpenter

Advocates from the Beyond Pink TEAM, working with the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC), were instrumental in helping pass the CDC Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act because of our relationship with Senator Grassley. It was a hard-fought success that is making a real difference for income eligible women and men with breast and cervical cancer. Recently we asked Senator Grassley to request a Government Accounting Office (GAO) report updating the data for the program. Here is a short statement from the National Breast Cancer Coalition about the report.

NBCC again thanks Senator Grassley for requesting the GAO report issued on November 30, on the implementation of the CDC Treatment Act (CDCTA), legislation championed by NBCC twenty years ago. While the number of people who were screened overall decreased, the share of people screened who were racial and ethnic minorities increased from 53% in 2011 to 73% in 2018. The report also underscores the importance of the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion which have been key to providing screening and treatment for low-income individuals, in conjunction with the CDCTA. It is important to note that in most states where there was no expansion of Medicaid, treatment under the CDCTA increased. NBCC remains committed to its advocacy for access to high-quality health care for all and will protect the CDCTA and ACA, which provide vital health care

for individuals who would otherwise fall through the cracks.

*Lori, continued from page 3*

One day early in my journey, while sitting in a breast cancer center's waiting room, I discovered Beyond Pink TEAM's newsletter. "Ahhh..." I thought, "...they were the ones who gave me the stuffed bear with a meaningful note on the day of my lumpectomy." Recalling that special feeling that a group of strangers cared about me that much, made me realize I wanted to be part of this group. Nine years later, I am very involved with the Beyond Pink TEAM. I chair the Education Council and am very active with the Advocacy Council. Together, volunteers on these councils just completed our 5<sup>th</sup> annual Ignite the Cancer Conversation event, to offer opportunities for our community to engage in conversations that focus on how to end cancer as well as strategies for dealing with a cancer diagnosis. If you've never attended one of our events, I encourage you to watch this newsletter and our website, [BeyondPinkTEAM.org](http://BeyondPinkTEAM.org), for news about the 2021 event which will likely be in November.

The Beyond Pink TEAM (BPT) is a member organization of the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) and serves on their Board of Directors. As BPT's alternate representative to this board, I travel with our primary board member to meetings in Washington, D.C, typically three times a year. On each trip, we ALWAYS visit the offices of all six of Iowa's congressmen/women. It surprised me considerably to discover that I really enjoy doing this. It certainly is not because I like politics. Rather it is

because I know I'm fighting for a very worthy cause...to bring an end to breast cancer so, in the future, women do not have to hear the words, "You have breast cancer."

In the last several years, I had a niece diagnosed with breast cancer. I even found out about it while on one of those advocacy trips to Washington, D.C. Of course, I cried. And more recently, I learned a first cousin was diagnosed. She's just starting her journey. We've talked a number of times as she struggles with those next decisions that must be made. I want to be available for these women that are close to my heart and anyone else that just wants to hear from a survivor that's further along in this journey. I realize not everyone has good family support, good insurance, and a great supportive organization like the Beyond Pink TEAM to help them through. If you're reading this newsletter, you should know, YOU DO have the support of the amazing women that make up the Beyond Pink TEAM!

A handwritten note on a bright yellow background. The text reads "Donations are GREATLY appreciated!" in a casual, cursive script. The word "GREATLY" is written in all caps.

Did you know you can now donate by Venmo and AmazonSmile. Click the "DONATE" button on our website for more information on these and other options, as well.

[www.beyondpinkteam.org](http://www.beyondpinkteam.org)



**MISSION – Beyond Pink TEAM is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide breast cancer prevention, education, support, and advocacy for comprehensive, quality health care for ALL in the Cedar Valley and surrounding communities.**

**Resources – Information, support, counseling, and educational materials are available from the following:**

**Beyond Pink TEAM** is a local breast cancer organization providing a variety of services. Our website lists services we provide as well as other services available in the Cedar Valley. [www.beyondpinkTEAM.org](http://www.beyondpinkTEAM.org)

**Living Beyond Breast Cancer** includes a helpline, newsletter, and information. Survivors Helpline: 888-753-5222 [www.LBBC.org](http://www.LBBC.org)

**Young Survival Coalition** connects with other young women diagnosed with breast cancer. [www.youngsurvival.org](http://www.youngsurvival.org)

**Cancer Care** is a national nonprofit organization offering counseling, support, financial assistance, and education to individuals with cancer and their families. [www.cancercares.org](http://www.cancercares.org)

**Iowa Cancer Consortium** offers cancer information and links to resources in Iowa. [www.canceriowa.org](http://www.canceriowa.org)

**American Cancer Society** offers cancer information and services. [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

**National Breast Cancer Coalition** the NBCC's mission is to eradicate breast cancer by focusing the government, research institutions, and consumer advocates on breast cancer. It encourages advocacy for action and change. [www.stopbreastcancer.org](http://www.stopbreastcancer.org).

**National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN)** provides state-of-the-art treatment information in easy-to-understand language to people with cancer and their caregivers. [NCCN.org/patients](http://NCCN.org/patients)

**National LGBT Cancer Network** works to improve the lives of LGBT cancer survivors and those at risk. [www.cancer-network.org](http://www.cancer-network.org)

**National Cancer Institute** offers information about cancer, breast cancer, clinical trials, cancer statistics, research and funding, and the latest news. They will also answer your questions by calling 1-800-4CANCER. [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

**National Cancer Institute** for NCI dictionaries of cancer terms, genetics terms, and cancer drugs. [www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries](http://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries)

**Connect with us . . .** Your support financially or through volunteering is both needed and appreciated. Please feel free to complete the following and forward to Cedar Valley Cancer Committee at the address listed below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to participate with the Beyond Pink TEAM by:

- Writing a survivor story for the newsletter
- Become part of the Breast Cancer Advocacy Network
- Volunteering: *((check all that apply))*
- Assist with Support Groups
- Development (Publicity)
- Events (Fundraisers, Projects and More)
- Donate. Make checks payable to Beyond Pink TEAM. *(All donations are tax deductible)*
- BPT Fund
- Advocacy Fund
- Area of Need
- Making phone calls and sending emails to policy makers for breast cancer issues
- Become a member of the Beyond Pink TEAM -Complete this form, send with a check for \$5 to Jeanne Olson, BPT Treasurer, to address at bottom of this page. Meetings are 3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs days each month (except December) at 7:00 a.m.
- Education (Health Fairs/Presentations, Newsletters)
- Advocacy – Contact Congress/Ignite the Cancer Conversation

**Touch of Courage . . . Connection**

**NEW ADDRESS**

**Cedar Valley Cancer Committee**  
3453 Kingswood Place  
Waterloo, IA 50701  
[www.beyondpinkteam.org](http://www.beyondpinkteam.org)