



Living through cancer with exercise

Sunflower Wellness provides therapeutic movement and exercise for people living with cancer.

Board of Directors

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December 2011

Exciting New Growth for Sunflower Wellness

Sunflower Wellness continues to grow. We're hearing from more hospitals looking to add exercise programs for their cancer patients, we're adding more fitness clubs and programs, and we're reaching more and more clients.

A new program is in the works, set to launch in 2012 at Marin General Hospital's Center for Integrative



Health & Wellness, under the direction of Julie Wheelan. While we are admittedly biased, we believe that Julie made a brilliant decision by hiring Sunflower Wellness co-founder, board member and cancer-exercise instructor **Regan Fedric**

(pictured) to lead an initiative placing exercise as a core component of services provided to the Center's cancer patients. Regan is busy developing an Exercise Counseling program for that purpose, similar to the Sunflower Wellness program she helped create (and runs) at UCSF with Jane Clark.

Marin General is the latest in a growing group of hospitals that have contacted Sunflower Wellness for help establishing Exercise Counseling and other exercise-related services for their cancer patients. Recently we have spoken with hospitals on both coasts about our work and about starting similar programs – including Cooley-Dickenson Hospital in central Massachusetts, which is creating a new cancer care facility, and Stanford in California,

(Article continues: "Exciting New Growth" on Page 2)

The Challenges of Motivation: Getting Patients Started with Exercise

Sunflower Wellness is committed to working with medical practitioners to increase the number of cancer patients involved in an exercise program. However, one of the major problems we face is *motivating* people to start exercising. Many people with cancer are older and the debilitating effects of typical treatments, such as chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery, don't exactly make a person feel like standing up and doing cartwheels, especially when many people didn't exercise regularly prior to their diagnosis.

Fortunately, we have help. Research studies tell us that oncologists, surgeons, nurses and other medical staff members are great motivators, able to stimulate patients into bringing movement into their lives. Studies also show that personal trainers are the best motivators of all – and if you've met Sunflower Wellness practitioners Regan Fedric, Jane Clark, or any of our other instructors, you'd understand exactly why. So here comes "RxExercise."

Jane and Regan pioneered our Exercise Counseling program at UCSF's Helen Diller Comprehensive Cancer Center in April 2010. Since then they have consulted with over 340 patients – and still counting! – to create customized exercise programs.

(Article continues: see "The Challenge..." on Page 2)

Also in this issue:

- Nantucket update
- New research: Group exercise—a key to greater benefit?
- Nutrition: The straight skinny
- By the numbers

Exciting New Growth... (from page 1)

where Regan and Jane will begin a new cancer-exercise lecture series next year. And, we continue to build connections with industry colleagues. In June, Sunflower Wellness Board President Bill Bain traveled to New York and got a personal tour of Memorial-Sloan Kettering's exercise facilities from cancer-exercise coordinator Donna Wilson.

Fitness club expansions

We are in the process of working with Western Athletic Clubs (WAC) to expand Sunflower Wellness cancer-exercise offerings to the Ross Valley Swim & Tennis Club in Kentfield, CA in Marin County. This club joined the WAC family recently as a Pacific Sports Resort site, offering outstanding facilities for tennis and swimming enthusiasts. We started selling specially discounted Sunflower Wellness memberships to the club in early November and we have plans to expand to additional WAC clubs in 2012.

And if that weren't enough, we've also been in the planning stages for a five-club pilot program in the San Francisco Bay Area to begin in 2012 with one of the country's largest fitness club companies. Our goal is to build up client flow into these test sites so that we can expand nationwide. We'll keep you posted as this incredible growth opportunity comes to fruition.

By the numbers

We've experienced a tremendous growth spurt in the number of people we've touched with our programs. Sunflower Wellness has connected with over a hundred new patients at UCSF since our last newsletter. This is good news, but what's more, the patients we consult with are continuing to benefit from their Exercise Counseling sessions with 78% reporting that they exercise regularly after their session! And those who exercise report that their levels of stress and fatigue have each dropped an average of 23%.

UCSF exercise consultation stats

- Over 500 patient phone inquiries logged
- Over 340 patient consultations held to date
- Patients who report they now exercise: 78%
- Average STRESS reduction: 23%
- Average FATIGUE reduction: 23%

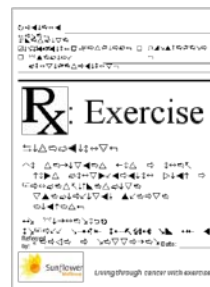
Sunflower Exercise program stats

- Weekly classes offered: 9
- Total clients served: 215
- Class sessions logged: 877
- Personal training sessions: 321
- Total client- hours of exercise: Over 5,000

The Challenge... (cont. from page 1)

One of the more common programs our Counselors prescribe is *walking* – just moving the muscles and increasing circulation does a lot of good. For others, stretching exercises, such as yoga, are essential after surgery for regaining range of motion, along with resistance training to build strength.

To get the ball rolling we found an easy way for physicians to direct patients toward an Exercise Counseling session. Enter the Sunflower Wellness RxExercise prescription pad.



For the past few months we've been slowly testing the effectiveness of the RxExercise prescription pads and find that they increase our patient flow. Medical teams understand this handy little pad and don't ignore it like a brochure. And patients know exactly what to do when given a small piece of paper that looks like a prescription: they follow instructions.

So, we've decided to up the ante and have started offering *phone-based* and *Skype-based* Exercise Counseling sessions so people can receive a consultation no matter where they live. What's more, we plan to offer these sessions *at no charge* to people who contact us.

Sunflower Wellness can offer these free sessions as long as our funding allows us to do so. For that, we definitely need to count on your generous support and have also applied for several grants to help. We are grateful for a recent grant from Genentech that's helping us bootstrap the service.

Do you know anyone who would like to receive a free one-hour Exercise Counseling consultation session? If so, please have them sign up online at www.rxexercise.org. They can also call and leave us a message at (415) 234-7010.

Nutrition: The Straight Skinny on Diet and Cancer

Last newsletter, Sunflower Wellness began a series on Nutrition and Cancer, graciously authored by Cecelia Ottentweller, a volunteer and survivor in Houston. The full installment of Cecelia's interview with Bay Area cancer nutritionist Natalie Ledesma can be found on our website at <http://www.sunflowerwellness.org/Nutrition>.

Alkalinity

Some nutritionists say one of the big culprits in the development of cancer is having too acidic an environment in the body. What role does alkalinity play in the development of breast cancer specifically?

Natalie: There is a grain of truth to the concept that cancer is related to acid-alkaline balance in the body. There is no evidence that links acidic diets as a causative factor in cancer.

That said, aiming to eat an alkaline diet certainly can do no harm and is generally a very healthy diet anyway. The biggest impact is to eat a more plant-based diet. In general, vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains make the body less acidic while meat and dairy products make the body more acidic.

Gluten

I know so many people who've gone "gluten-free." It's hard not to be disdainful of this as a "fad" and I'm pretty confused by it. Is there a value in not doing gluten? Does it contribute in the development of cancer?

Natalie: While it does seem to be becoming a 'fad', unfortunately, I do believe there is clout in a gluten free diet being quite beneficial for many. However, there isn't any evidence to my knowledge linking gluten and cancer per se. Gluten, the protein found in wheat, rye, and barley, does have an inflammatory effect for many, if not all, people. And clearly, there is a direct link of inflammation to various types of cancer and any chronic disease for that matter.

I typically suggest a gluten-free diet for certain patients not because of their cancer itself, but more so to help with other symptoms (i.e., joint pain, gastrointestinal distress, weight management) that they may be experiencing. A true test is to eat

absolutely NO gluten for at least 4 weeks, if not 6 weeks, to find out if gluten is an issue.

Research News:

Group Exercise: a key to greater benefit?

By Trisha Hue, PhD, MPH
Sunflower Wellness Board Secretary

Studies have shown that it is harder for people to make lifestyle changes on their own and that cancer patients/survivors who join an exercise program have a better chance of making healthy long-term changes. Researchers have found that participants who exercised in groups felt motivated by others and were both encouraged and challenged to attain their peak performance.¹

A recently-conducted evaluation of the current data on exercise in men with prostate cancer confirmed that incontinence, fitness, fatigue, body constitution, and quality of life can be improved by exercise in patients during and after prostate cancer.² Additionally, they found that "supervised exercise" was more effective than "non-supervised exercise." Another research group also conducted a data review and concluded that the beneficial effects of exercise were greater in group-based (versus home-based) programs, especially if the program included resistance training.³

References:

¹Midtgaard J, Rorth M, Stelter R, et al. The group matters: an explorative study of group cohesion and quality of life in cancer patients participating in physical exercise intervention during treatment. *Eur J Cancer Care*. 2006;15(1):25-33.;

²Baumann FT, Zopf EM, and Bloch W. Clinical exercise interventions in prostate cancer patients—a systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *Support Care Cancer*. 2011Oct12 [E-published ahead of print];

³Keogh JW, Macleod RD. Body Composition, Physical Fitness, Functional Performance, Quality of Life, and Fatigue Benefits of Exercise for Prostate Cancer Patients: A Systematic Review. *J Pain Symptom Manage*. 2011June1 [E-published ahead of print].



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Nantucket

By Bunny Rust

Sunflower Wellness Board Director

This past July, Sunflower Board President Bill Bain, board members Regan Fedric, Annie Stackhouse and Bunny Rust met on Nantucket as the guests of Dr. and Mrs. Craig Henderson. Bettina Broer very graciously opened her Siasconset home for a



Partners in crime: Sunflower board President Bill Bain and director Annie Stackhouse prepare to greet guests at the Sunflower Wellness gathering in Nantucket, July '11

Sunflower-specific event where the board members had the opportunity to once again greet a number of lovely Nantucket residents. Our audience was very enthusiastic about our progress in our second annual update. They were especially pleased to hear about the Mount Zion Health Fund grant we received to continue our work in the UCSF Helen Diller Comprehensive Cancer Center, as well as the new program we have begun to develop with a major national fitness chain. The guests endorsed our mission with promises of support.

This is the second year that the Hendersons have hosted us as houseguests. (Craig Henderson is a member of our Medical Advisory Board.) Margaret and Larry McQuade have graciously offered to host our fundraising presentation in 2012 at their home, where we will continue to spread the good news about how Sunflower Wellness is continuing to reach out and provide exercise to people living with cancer.

Quote

"Thank you -- Empower Aqua! You've changed my life for the better."

--Rosemary Gong, Sunflower Wellness Aquatics participant – from Tricia Probert's class, The San Francisco Bay Club

Thank you shout-outs

Thank you Chad, Jana, Tricia, grantors & WAC! Sunflower Wellness has been the grateful recipient of some fantastic efforts and contributions this year.

In June, yoga instructors **Chad Stose** and **Jana Kilgore** led a group of dedicated fundraising participants in a Sun Salutation marathon at YogaKula in San Francisco. The group of nine



Chad and Jana show how it's done (in cool T-shirts!)

people raised over \$1,700 in donations. Thank you, Chad, Jana, and your fantastic team of yogis! (Chad also teaches yoga for Sunflower Wellness at Club One Fillmore.)



Our popular Aquatics instructor at The San Francisco Bay Club, **Tricia Probert**, undertook her own fundraising effort for us in August. Tricia's friends and family donated over \$1,500 to Sunflower Wellness.

Way to go, Tricia! Thank you!

We would also like to thank the **Mount Zion Health Fund** and **Genentech** for their incredible support of our Exercise Counseling program at UCSF. Both organizations have recently awarded us with new grants to help us continue our work.

Finally, we are incredibly grateful for the support of **Heather** and **Matthew Stevens** at **Western Athletic Clubs**. Heather is the Sunflower Wellness Pilates instructor at both clubs, and also oversees our program at WAC, which has received the dedicated support of her husband Matthew, the President of WAC. You guys rock! Thank you!

Sunflower Wellness kindly requests your support. Please visit our website to donate.