



Sunflower
Wellness

Planting seeds for health and hope

November/December 2009 **The Word from Sunflower**

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

Board of Directors:

Bill Bain, President
Regan Fedric, Secretary
Michael Kolanski, Treasurer
Rick Davis
Bunny Rust

Upfront: Exercise Counseling

Sunflower Wellness is working to establish a one day per week pilot for the first onsite Exercise Counseling service at UCSF's Mount Zion Comprehensive Cancer Center. We've spent several months with Mimi Roth and Meridithe Mendelsohn developing a grant proposal for this innovative program. Mimi manages the Joseph and Ida Friend Cancer Resource Center, housed within UCSF. Meridithe manages the Breast Cancer Survivorship program at the Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center at UCSF. Mimi and Meridithe have spent many hours helping us navigate the UCSF system to find strong support and sponsorship. Rick Davis, Sunflower Wellness board member, worked tirelessly throughout to develop key relationships with UCSF oncology researchers and department heads.

Jane Clark and board member Regan Fedric are already working weekly at the Cancer Resource Center to prepare for the program's launch. Our goal: hit the ground running with patient referrals at the start of 2010 to reach over 300 people in the first year. Our next goal is to turn the pilot into a full time program.

*Got feedback? Please let us know on our website,
www.sunflowerwellness.org.*

Great Support

We've been blessed with some real generosity lately, and for that we can only say Thank You!

- Donations since our last newsletter came to almost \$3,500. Thank you all!
- A big Thank You to Erin Fleming, yoga director at Bay Club Marin. Erin's 50th birthday party at supperclub san francisco (Friday, November 13th 9:30pm -2:00am) will benefit Sunflower. Nice!
- Bay Club Marin's annual gala will be held Friday, March 5, 2010, with proceeds and a silent auction both benefiting Sunflower Wellness. Thank You to Bay Club Marin! (Have an item to donate? Please send a note to Regan@sunflowerwellness.org.)
- On November 18, we will auction a September 2010 cruise vacation for two, generously donated by AAA Sojourn Cruises. Keiretsu Forum, a locally-based investor group, has graciously given us the opportunity to auction this cruise package to their members. Big thanks also to Chef Gary Danko, who is featured on the cruise, to Kelly Bell at AAA, and to Bunny Rust from our board for making it happen.

As the end of the year approaches, we would truly appreciate your keeping Sunflower Wellness on your holiday gift list. Thank you again for all your support!

Great Research

We continually update our website to describe emerging research about cancer and exercise. (See www.sunflowerwellness.org.) Some recent examples:

- An October 2009 research article described a three-year study involving over 1,800 Chinese women with breast cancer, suggesting that “regular exercise after breast cancer improves quality of life.”
- A groundbreaking study in the New England Journal of Medicine in August 2009 found that contrary to medical advice given for decades, “weight-lifting did not significantly affect the severity of breast cancer-associated lymphedema.” Lymphedema is a condition that can occur when the lymph system is disrupted, resulting in severe swelling. The researchers found that “weight-lifting reduced the number and severity of arm and hand symptoms, increased muscular strength, and reduced the incidence of lymphedema exacerbations as assessed by a lymphedema specialist.”

Additional studies continue to be reported, indicating improvements with the use of exercise for prostate cancer survivors, as well as for other cancer survivors. Studies generally support the findings that exercise improves body fat, lean mass, and bone mass.

Great People

Regan Fedric and Jane Clark, two of our leading fitness professionals, have recently attended a new certification program. The American College of Sports Medicine certifies personal trainers in one of the most rigorous programs available. This summer they added a new certification: Cancer Exercise Trainer. Regan and Jane were in the first class of ACSM students to receive the CET education and expect to be fully certified shortly.

Great Opportunity

We have a growing need for volunteers with specific skills, such as legal and finance advice. Please visit our website to see our volunteer needs and to contact us with your availability.

Why we do this work

Owing to the generous donations and grants we have received, including from To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation earlier this year, Sunflower Wellness is able to offer exercise classes to cancer survivors. Since we last wrote, we received these notes from people who participate in our programs. No one can describe the benefits of the programs we offer better than the people who participate in them.

■ *"I was diagnosed with breast cancer 2-1/2 years ago and have gone through 3 surgeries, chemo, radiation and a few other treatments. I have tried to exercise through all of it and have found that no matter how much I could or couldn't do, I always felt better. I try to take my walks on the beach or go to an exercise class every day. I know that exercise is key to my recovery, to regaining my strength, to my emotional well-being and to doing all that I can to stay cancer-free and avoid a recurrence. I want to live a long and healthy life for both myself and for my kids. I really believe that exercise is what will help me achieve all of this." — Janet, San Francisco*

■ *"Exercise has helped me enormously since cancer treatment; in particular, it has all but eliminated the 'chemo-brain' that was so distressing to me. The classes I attend have me feeling healthier than I have in decades. Because I have a kind of cancer the oncologists tell me will return, it is important to me to stay as fit as I can. Even if I can't prevent a recurrence, I will need to be strong to go through future treatments." — Chava*

■ *"Keeping in good physical condition has been very helpful in the six years since I was diagnosed. When I participate with others (group sessions, etc), I do much better than trying to keep up an exercise program solo. I was in a pilot exercise class in April 2004 and was very encouraged by my ability to stay as fit as possible in between my two rounds of chemo. Although I am still receiving chemo every three weeks, I feel that it is very beneficial that I stay physically active and as in-shape as possible." — Kendelyn, Berkeley*