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# HOPE

Where there is community... there is strength. Where there is strength... there is hope.

## Living with cancer as a chronic condition

BY THOMAS LARGE, M.M.H., LCSW-C

**A recurrence of cancer is devastating news.**  
But there's good reason for hope.

In all of our groups and activities at HopeWell, acceptance has always been an essential value. We welcome people with cancer at any stage and encourage them to find their "voice." Survivors living with cancer teach us what helps the most:

- to connect with other survivors,
- to live for this particular day,
- to make those long-overdue life corrections, and, above all,
- keep nurturing hopeful moments.

At HopeWell we do not prescribe. We offer. People come to us at every stage of the cancer experience, as do their loved ones. And within the calendar of programs, we trust that everyone can find something that is helpful.

We believe in the spirit of community as part of the healing process. And so, each moment at HopeWell we strive to maximize the potential for people to interact with others who understand what they are going through.



With more and more families living with cancer, HopeWell's community and family-oriented approaches to support and patient education are in increasing demand.

This year, HopeWell's National Cancer Survivors' Day—which drew more than 250 attendees—was a great opportunity to connect with other survivors and to "live for the day." The speakers at this celebration represented the breadth of experience of our community and each told their own unique story (see page 3). They so eloquently captured the hopeful spirit of our entire community.

## news

### HopeWell Bags It !!

Our kitchen is often the central meeting place for our community. For most of us, gathering in the kitchen is one of those traditions that feels familiar and comfortable.

At this time, however, HopeWell faces financial challenges and, as a result, will no longer be able to provide snacks or kitchen staffing.

Although we feel badly that we need to make this change, we truly believe that the friendships and spirit of community nurtured at HopeWell are the things that really count.

**So, as of July 1, 2009** we invite you to bring a bag lunch. If what you bring needs to be refrigerated, please feel free to do so, but take it with you when you leave...and don't forget to put your name on your bag!

**The mission of HopeWell Cancer Support** is to create a community for all people with cancer, their families and friends, that encourages an exchange of information, the development of a support system and the presence of hope.

# Programs

## Exercise and Cancer: Can It Make A Difference?

Dr. Stanley Walker, Director of The Oncology Center of Central Baltimore, will share his research on exercise and cancer. He'll talk about why exercise matters—both during and after treatment, and how it can benefit your recovery.

Monday, August 17 | 7:00-8:30 pm  
Please RSVP for this session

## Journaling: A Powerful Strategy for Coping

Keeping a personal journal can be an effective tool for managing stress, increasing self awareness and solving problems. This class will show you the health benefits of journaling and how to integrate it into your daily routines. No writing experience needed.

Monday, August 24 | 9:30-11:30 am  
Please RSVP for this class

## Kids Circle/Teen Circle

This program can help children and teens (5-18) learn valuable skills to cope with a loved one's cancer diagnosis. A fall session is now forming. Interested in finding out more? Please attend the upcoming orientation session.

Thursday, Sept 10 | 6:00-7:00 pm  
Please RSVP for this orientation session

View our full calendar of programs  
at [hopewellcancersupport.org](http://hopewellcancersupport.org)

# KEY STAFF

**Executive Director**  
Suzanne Brace

**Program Director**  
Carole Sharp, LCSW-C

**Development Director**  
Lily Burke

**Assistant Executive Director**  
Carleen Kramer

**Clinical Director**  
Thomas R. Large, LCSW-C

HopeWell Cancer Support is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. For a copy of our current financial statement, please contact HopeWell Cancer Support or the office of the Secretary of State, Annapolis, MD 21401.



## A Letter from HopeWell

FROM SUZANNE BRACE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

HopeWell has a barn! So many people poured their hearts and minds into this labor of love. We are thrilled! And yet, I have been feeling uncharacteristically “out of sorts.” Why so unfocused, so grumpy and sad?

Last week it came to me. For over two years, my life was filled with barn-related meetings and decision points, small crises and big deadlines. From a dream shared with one potential donor we grew to a cast of hundreds. Fundraising, friend-raising... budget task forces and design teams... excavation, foundation, timbers and flooring, plumbing, electric, air and heat, elevators, lighting, bluestone and trees.

But all of that work was for the culmination of the dream—**filling the barn with people and programs!**

That day will surely come, but a pause is necessary. We had contingencies in place, we stuck to our budgets, but no one imagined the vast change in the economic climate. Now we must make up for unexpected losses and deal with an uncertain future. We are being strategic and resourceful, and, as we always have, HopeWell turns to our community for answers.

Recently a few participants joined representatives of staff and board to talk about if and how to make those who come to HopeWell aware of our financial needs, being ever-mindful that we **never** want cost to be a barrier to people facing the enormity of a cancer diagnosis.

This committed and creative team reminds us that the answers lie in the strength of community. Each person felt that by being better informed about the financial needs of HopeWell, they could be part of the solution. While some may not be able to give financially, everyone can help in some way. What a treasure!

Yes, I am having a momentary “reality check”—but HopeWell *will* move forward. We are retooling our plans and reaching out. The barn is built, is beautiful, will wait. The future is rich with possibility.

Thank you for being a valued part of our community.

***P. S. The website is coming! Our beloved paper calendar will soon be available online and in a more user-friendly version. This newsletter will begin to be our major form of print communication.***

## Top Ten Reasons I Love HopeWell

BY MIRIAM JACOBSON, HOPEWELL PARTICIPANT

10. **HopeWell is welcoming.** No one asks for your insurance card or co-pay; No HIPPA forms.
9. **HopeWell is holistic.** You are a human being here; not a type or stage of cancer. Yes, you can be healthy and have cancer at the same time.
8. **HopeWell helps you connect with others.** For a long time, the only person I knew of with my rare cancer was Farrah Fawcett. At HopeWell, I rolled over one day in my yoga class and there, on the next mat, was another woman living and doing well with the same cancer.
7. **Nature and beauty can help heal.** The power of nature and art is very real. It is beautiful here. The grounds, the house and the barn are gorgeous.
6. **We're real here.** It's safe. You can be genuine. You can be having a bad hair day or a NO hair day... it doesn't matter. It's a "come as you are" party.
5. **You don't have to talk about cancer unless you want to.**
4. **Free and convenient parking.** If you've ever been to a big, medical institution, you'll appreciate this.
3. **Healing is a process that cannot be rushed.** There is no timetable. Setbacks and obstacles are natural and frequently can be overcome.
2. **HopeWell offers credible, easily accessible information.**
1. **HopeWell helps me stay in the now,** which if you take a deep cleansing breath and look around, "the now" is a wonderful place to be.

### Cancer affects the whole family and there is something at HopeWell for all of us.

I started with the Brain Tumor group, mainly to get information about my husband's type of cancer.

My husband came to the Brain Tumor group to know there were others in the same situation.

Our children used the Kids Circle to start expressing themselves.

I participate in the Caregivers group to get support on how to LIVE with this every day.

No matter who you are, or where you are on this journey, you are a SURVIVOR and there is a place for you at Hope Well!

Elise Ziv

# Voices of Hope...

## HOPEWELL PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR STORIES on National Cancer Survivors' Day

In early June, HopeWell celebrated two wonderful events: the public dedication of our new barn along with National Cancer Survivors' Day. Over 500 people attended the weekend-long celebrations and were able to witness the healing power of the HopeWell community first-hand.



HopeWell participant Edna O'Connor spoke from the heart on National Cancer Survivors' Day

**My name is Edna O'Connor.** I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in July of 2008. Certainly the intellectual part of me had heard about, read something about, and even knew several people with cancer. I had walked in the Komen Cancer Walk the year before my diagnosis.

However, when the doctor informed me that I had cancer, I walked out of his office on what I knew was a bright, sunny day. But, all around me was darkness. It felt like midnight. I was disorientated. I felt confused, lost and very much alone. That day, I felt as if I was the only person in the world who had cancer.

**When I started to look around for support, I found HopeWell.** I was looking for a place where I could access accurate information and support for my cancer. I was looking for a place where I could develop a camaraderie with others who looked like me (bald head and all) and who had experienced what was for me one of the most life altering challenges of my life... cancer.

**Why did I come to HopeWell?** At HopeWell, I felt a genuine sense of warmth, friendliness, and caring by the staff. The activities were relevant and spoke to my needs. The environment was calm, serene and inviting. And equally important, I met and bonded with people with whom my heart spoke... people who were on a journey, who wanted to seek answers and share solutions, who were willing to live a healthy and happy life... day by day, minute by minute and second by second.



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### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**Taking Stock** is HopeWell's ongoing series on financial issues.

The next program is Social Security Disability and Workplace Issues. Thursday, October 29. Look for other topics in future communications!

## HopeWell Tribute Gifts

Remembering or honoring someone who has touched your life.

When someone you know is diagnosed with cancer, it is often difficult to know how to help. A donation to HopeWell is a meaningful way to begin.

**A Gift in Honor** is an easy way to acknowledge the courage and strength of someone living with cancer, celebrate an important health or survivorship milestone. These gifts can also commemorate personal milestones—a birthday, wedding, anniversary, graduation, or retirement—and support HopeWell at the same time. **A Gift in Memory** can help to express the sense of loss you feel when you lose someone to cancer. It is also a meaningful way to celebrate the memory of a loved one who supported HopeWell's mission.



For more information about Tribute Gifts, please contact our Development Office at 410.832.2719 or cancerhelp@hopewellcancersupport.org

### Help HopeWell Go Green!

**Yes!** Please send me news and information via email.  
(We will always provide easy ways to opt out of mailings and we will never share your address.)

I prefer to receive news and information in the mail.

Print Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred e-mail address

Please fill out this form and send it to us at HopeWell Cancer Support, Attn: E-Communications Update, P.O. Box 755, Brooklandville, MD 21022.  
**OR...** Send us an e-mail at cancerhelp@hopewellcancersupport.org. **Thank you!**