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news

It takes a long time for that first peg...

If the "spirit" moves you, please give.



UPCOMING PROGRAM

Nia: Moving to Heal

Saturday, October 7, 1:30 – 3:00 PM

Instructor: Alba Azola, MD



This workshop introduces the basic principle of the Nia technique: "Through movement we find health." Learn to compassionately condition your body, mind, emotion

and spirit while exploring with movement and sensation. We will first present the fundamentals and then get moving in a beginner level Nia class. Please wear comfortable layers and be ready to take off your shoes and have fun. All fitness levels are welcome and no experience is required!

[rsvp@hopewellcancersupport.org](mailto:rsvp@hopewellcancersupport.org)



"HopeWellians" in the path of the eclipse!

our mission

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.



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# HOPE

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

## MindBodySpirit

Comprehensive offerings proven beneficial for people with cancer

Dedicated participants who bring the classes to life

Talented instructors and the place where it all happens...our beautiful barn



**Pamela Tanton**  
Certified Qigong Instructor

When I start my classes, I always tell the students, "Remember, qigong class is your vacation time. You're here to enjoy the movements, enjoy the practice and enjoy your life." When I asked them recently how class helps them, one answered with a smile, "It's my vacation!" I love their humor and willingness to be open and playful. They say that an hour of qigong helps them to feel calm and centered and even happy. They tell me about physical benefits too – my body doesn't feel so tight, they say, especially where they have had surgery. Or that the deep, slow breathing that goes along with qigong makes them feel more relaxed. Our participants are the best thing about teaching at HopeWell.



**Andy Giordano**  
Strength and Tone, Certificate on Aging, Certified Personal Trainer, Certificate in Older Adult Fitness

I love teaching my HopeWell classes. It's very rewarding. I'm a firm believer that exercise and physical conditioning are an important part of cancer recovery. I get to know the people in my class every week, and I love to help them get strong and stay strong. I teach at different gyms and centers all over town – and nobody works harder and with more heart than the people at HopeWell. These classes have become an important part of my life.



**Barbara Cochnar**  
Yoga, RYT-200

I started taking yoga at HopeWell when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2002. After getting my strength back, I felt a wholeness of body, mind and spirit, which inspired me to get certified to teach this wonderful life-changing practice. Students tell me they feel peaceful and calm after class. What a great way to start a Saturday morning – yoga in the barn!



**Sharon Calvano**  
Stretch and Tone, Walk with Hope, LCSW-C, RYT

Teaching at HopeWell is extremely gratifying, and it is different than teaching people in a gym. People who come here want to do what they can to heal their bodies, so they are here for profound reasons. I especially enjoy seeing them progress and become stronger. They support each other and the class becomes a community that, for some, has lasted for years.



**Lee Halfpenny**  
Yoga, Meditation, Yoga Nidra, Mindfulness Meditation, RYT-200

I find that participants at HopeWell are more in touch with their feelings than in other places I teach, and they often are more tuned in to the spiritual aspects of the practices of yoga and meditation. At the end of our meditation classes, we share a loving-friendliness practice to cultivate and affirm kindness. Dealing with cancer seems to enable participants to be more aware of the value of their existence.



**Jana Long**  
Yoga; Concentration, Relaxation, Meditation, C-IAYT, YTT-300

I enjoy being able to help people who are experiencing physical challenges and to lead them in an integrative experience of mind, body and spirit. I believe that yoga helps each person tap into their own personal power – "the power of one" that resides in each of us.



**Jeanne Deignan-Kosmides**

Yoga; Concentration, Relaxation, Meditation, NCC, MS, E-RYT, C-IAYT

Leading yoga and meditation at HopeWell has been a gift to me, especially now that I am a cancer survivor. Every person who attends my classes touches my heart. We explore the teachings of inspirational spiritual leaders, and the participants tell me that many of these conversations have deeply affected their lives. We learn together. They are my teachers!



**Marley Keller**  
Yoga, E-RYT500

Teaching at HopeWell is a wonderful experience. I love helping participants emphasize alignment and body awareness to help foster a better connection between their mind, body, and spirit. Teaching in the barn has always felt special. It is a beautiful space in which to practice.

# FALL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### Mindfulness Meditation 8-Week Course

Starts Friday, October 20  
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Instructor: Lee Halfpenny, RYT

This class presents meditation, breath work and yoga as critical skills for managing life's challenges. These practices enable participants to:

- See the value and preciousness of the present moment.
- Be open to the possibility of transforming crisis into opportunity.
- Minimize the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual tolls of ordinary and extraordinary stresses.

Attendance beginning at the first session is highly recommended.

[rspv@hopewellcancersupport.org](mailto:rspv@hopewellcancersupport.org)  
once for the entire 8-week session.

### Colorectal Cancer: Options, Issues, Progress

Tuesday, October 17, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

House Calls Speaker: Nilofar Saba Azad, MD



Please join us for a discussion about current trends, treatment options, side effect management and research in the field of colorectal cancer. Dr. Nilofar Azad is an Associate Professor of

Oncology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Her expertise is in cancer of the gastrointestinal tract, with a particular interest in colorectal and pancreaticobiliary cancer. She also has led multiple clinical trials of new drugs including molecularly targeted agents, epigenetic agents, and immunotherapy for advanced GI cancer patients.

[rspv@hopewellcancersupport.org](mailto:rspv@hopewellcancersupport.org)

### Welcome Meetings Twice a Week...

Want to know more about HopeWell? We have Welcome Meetings on **Tuesdays at 7 PM** and **Thursdays at noon**. There's no need to call ahead; just drop in to see what HopeWell is all about.

- Take a tour of our house and barn.
- Learn about our wide range of programs.
- Hear about our philosophy and history.
- Meet other newcomers and current participants.
- Ask lots of questions.
- Bring a friend or family member with you if you choose.

Please spread the word about Welcome Meetings to anyone who may be interested!

## KEY STAFF

**Executive Director**  
Suzanne Brace

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

Patti Campbell	Tom Large
Joyleen Hamilton	Gwen Myers
Wanda Harrison	Pamela Tanton
Thalia Large	Lauren Van Slyke

**HopeWell Cancer Support**  
10628 Falls Road • Lutherville, MD 21093

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,

When I was diagnosed with cancer in 1980, I was living in California. I was young and had my whole life ahead of me. Like everyone, I was shocked by the initial news. My future suddenly seemed so uncertain as I plunged into a state of confusion, anxiety and fear. There was no "HopeWell" – no place to go to meet others who were going through what I was experiencing – no support groups – no one my age with my diagnosis – no one to "talk me through."

I was lucky enough to be living in Berkeley, a center for the emerging focus on the mind-body connection. Pioneers at the time included Herbert Benson ("The Relaxation Response" 1975), Ken Pelletier ("Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer" 1977), and O. Carl and Stephanie Simonton ("Getting Well Again" 1978).

I was introduced to the "relaxation response" by Pelletier's colleagues and learned visualization and meditation techniques from students of the Simontons. Biofeedback offered an additional way to "see" the slowing of my breath, lowering of my heart rate and relaxation of muscles. We were exploring a world of healing beyond Western medicine. I was in the right place at the right time and benefitted greatly.

By the time I moved East in 1984, there was a broader inquiry into the potential links between mind and body, but it was a challenge to find experienced practitioners or oncology professionals with a "holistic" approach. The National Cancer Institute, where I worked, was focused on cutting-edge treatments and was not yet talking about mind and body in the same sentence.



HopeWell opened (as The Wellness Community) in 1993, just as the renowned Bill Moyers' series "Healing and the Mind" debuted on public television. In part, because of my own personal experience and beliefs, we were "early adopters," offering relaxation-visualization, yoga, Mindfulness Meditation and t'ai chi from the very start.

Today, 37 years after my cancer diagnosis, many of the modalities of the 70's and 80's have been thoroughly researched and substantiate our early intuition about their value. The increase in "quality of life" and other health benefits are undeniable.

These days, I watch participants walking from the parking lot, through the greenery and into the beautiful calm of the barn. We can all recount stories of people who enter for the first time needing the lift or walking with a cane...and the large number who, gradually and despite their prognosis, emerge with a spring in their step, with a smile on their face, with a new optimism...who count others as their friends and HopeWell as their community.

With warmest regards,

These classes have become  
a mainstay  
for me.

"I was determined to lose my cane and walk without it, and I did! I was able to do more and more."

– Karen King, MD,  
HopeWell participant



For years, Karen King, a physician at Hopkins, drove her kids to Meadowood Park for athletic events. "We would drive past HopeWell and I'd think, 'Oh, it looks nice there, wonder what they do.' Then I got colorectal cancer and had metastases to the bone. I couldn't really move much, and I was weak. An acupuncturist recommended HopeWell."

The idea of going to exercise classes at HopeWell, rather than a gym, appealed to Karen. "I knew I wanted to feel stronger and be capable of doing something besides sitting in a chair and getting waited on. But I was scared to go to regular classes. I didn't want the stress of being called out for not being able to do something."

The first class Karen went to was Strength and Tone. "I went with my husband Porter. The instructor was so helpful. I could barely move at all, but he kept at it until he found something I could do. 'As long as you're moving this muscle,' he said, 'you're working it out just like everyone else.'"

Feeling herself get stronger motivated Karen. "I was determined to lose my cane and walk without it, and I did. I was able to do more and more."

Karen also goes to yoga on Tuesday nights, and Nia has been a favorite. "These classes have become a mainstay for me. I slowly but surely got to know people, and we all support each other through difficult situations. We offer each other solutions. If I haven't been in class for some reason, I'll often get an email from another class member making sure everything's okay. The people who get out of bed and come to HopeWell – we're the people who will do anything to fight this."

"I bring my family and my friends to classes with me, which is wonderful. My daughter Lilly is in a running group, and so many of her friends ran in REACHOUT & RUN in support of me, which was terrific, but it was also a support for Lilly, and it made me feel so good to see that."

"The whole environment at HopeWell is just great. It's good for my kids and my husband to see the progress I've made. The diversity of programming covers all the bases. And the barn! I walk in, I smell the wood, and the world stops. Pressure doesn't exist there. If I didn't work, I would just move in!"

# MindBodySpirit

## Programming at HopeWell

### *Intuitively We Knew What Research Has Proven*

In the early 90's, there wasn't much in the way of research supporting the types of programs falling under the rubric, Mind Body Spirit. Even so, at HopeWell, we had an intuitive sense of the broad benefits for people living with cancer. Over the last 24 years, more and more studies have established the relationship between increased "quality of life" and modalities such as exercise, yoga, meditation, qigong and mindfulness. We were pioneers.

Here at HopeWell – unlike a gym or studio – Mind Body Spirit programs are unique because of the peaceful, safe and supportive environment we provide. Every one of our wonderful instructors is attuned to the specific needs of people living with cancer. Our beautiful barn and natural surroundings, combined with the warm, welcoming and understanding atmosphere, enable participants to focus on their health and well-being.

#### Sources

1. Shauna Burke, et al. "Physical Activity and Quality of Life in Cancer Survivors: A Meta-Synthesis of Qualitative Research." *Cancers*, January 2017: (9), 53. Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute.
2. Michael J. Mackenzie, "A qualitative study of self-perceived effects of Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) in a psychosocial oncology setting." *Stress and Health*. November 2006: (23)59-69.
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4. Julie Midtgaard, et al. "Cancer survivors' experience of exercise-based cancer rehabilitation – a meta-synthesis of qualitative research." *Acta Oncologica* (Stockholm, Sweden). March 2015: 54:609-617.
5. James Carmody, et al. "Mindfulness, spirituality and health-related symptoms." *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*. June 2007: (64)393-403.

### **Recent studies reflect what we see every day at HopeWell – renewed psychological, physical, spiritual and social well-being.**

*The psychological benefits of physical activity for cancer survivors was the most diverse theme identified. It was comprised of five specific aspects that contributed to overall psychological/emotional Quality of Life. These included focusing on health rather than illness, (re) discovering strength and physical capabilities, exercising control and taking action, evoking positive self-perceptions and minimizing negativity, and gaining a sense of normalcy [1].*

*Participants developed a sense of knowing where there was potential for influencing outcomes, and when to simply let go and relinquish efforts at controlling the uncontrollable...Patients learned to use these tools to exercise emotional control, reduce stress and live better with cancer [2].*

*Although cancer and its treatments exert a tremendous toll on cancer survivors and support persons, in the program, yoga was described as both a respite and means of taking control back...Support persons agreed with this sentiment and also found yoga to be a reprieve in the ongoing support they provide [3].*

*This...reflects the physical benefits of exercise-based rehabilitation related to physical challenges enabling the individual to re-establish confidentiality and trust in their own body and physical potential [4].*

*Physical activity was seen as facilitating a spiritual awakening among participants. Specific spiritual benefits included (re)defining life purpose and living meaningfully and becoming mindful, which contributed to overall spiritual Quality of Life [1].*

*The results of this study suggest that spiritual well-being, particularly the cultivation of a sense of inner meaning and peace, may occur as a function of mindfulness meditation...and that this aspect of functioning may be an important element in health and well-being, as suggested by an increasing body of research on spirituality and health [5].*

*Participants experienced social benefits by participating in physical activity. Improvements in social interactions and networks, feeling understood by others, having stronger social connections with others, and being able to give and receive support were mainly reported. These specific benefits contributed to cancer survivors' overall social Quality of Life [1].*

*By listening to and observing one another, patients shared in the discovery of solutions to common dilemmas and thus increased their repertoire of effective coping skills [2].*

Stanley Latimer is a veteran – he was a helicopter technician in Viet Nam – and an engineer who is now retired from the MTA after years spent as a subway technician. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2005, and in 2015 he learned the cancer had spread to the bone.

Currently, Stanley is on chemotherapy. While getting treatment, Stanley saw our brochure. "At first, I had no idea what HopeWell would be like. I thought it was all about sitting and talking with others who have cancer. I didn't know there were exercise classes. I didn't even know there was a barn!

"I had a lot of negativity in my mind after I learned the cancer spread, and I just wanted to get that negativity out. And I got tired of sitting around, being home-bound. I live alone, and I'm retired, and the only thing I really ever did was walk my dog."

Stanley, who recently came to HopeWell, appreciates that family members are welcome, because he has strong family support nearby and hopes they'll be able to join him in some of his classes and other programs. "Both my niece and nephew lost their mothers – my sisters – to cancer. They understand what I'm going through. My niece is my rock. And my nephew is my translator. He goes with me to doctors appointments and helps me sift through the information they give me, and he'll ask questions too."

So far, Stanley has been enjoying yoga classes and Andy Giordano's Strength and Tone classes. "Andy is the funnest, sweetest, hardest-working-us teacher. He's great. He moves us in the correct way. He doesn't overdo it, but it's not too easy, and that's why I enjoy it. His class loosens me up and gives me a little more mobility.

"I like coming here and getting out of the house. You must get out and exercise to recover. And I enjoy doing this with others who are going through something similar. All of this helps with the depression I've experienced, especially since I learned my cancer spread. Coming here is like therapy.

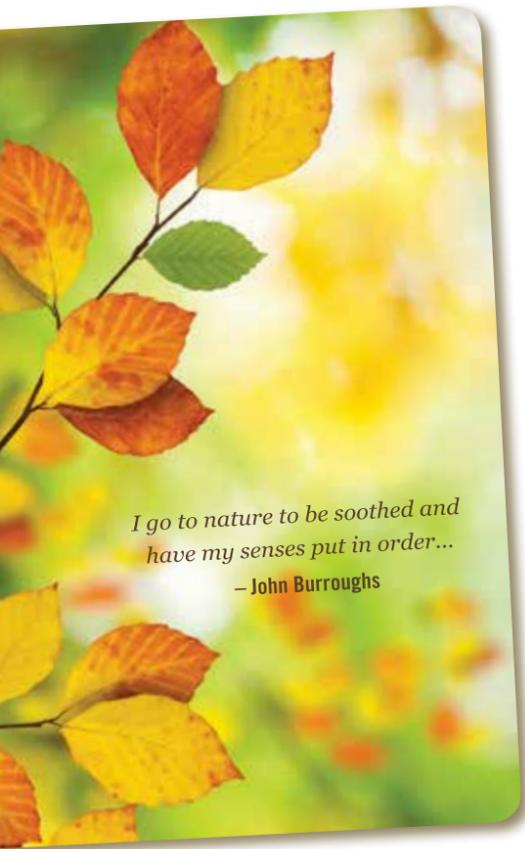
"And the barn – it's great! There's plenty of room, and it's all natural wood so you tend to think naturally, like you're part of the wood in the forest. It's peaceful. Wood softens everything, unlike brick or stone.

Coming here is like therapy.



"All of this helps with the depression I've experienced, especially since I learned my cancer spread. Coming here is like therapy."

– Stanley Latimer, HopeWell participant



*I go to nature to be soothed and  
have my senses put in order...*  
— John Burroughs

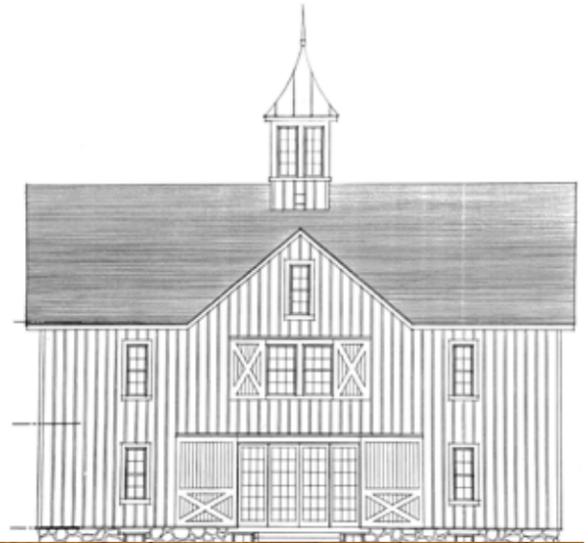
## Share your support with a Fall Tribute Card from HopeWell!

Tribute Cards are a beautiful way  
to make a gift in honor or in memory  
of someone special.

HopeWell sends out a personalized card to each  
person you designate, letting them know that  
you made a gift in their name. **The minimum  
gift per honoree is \$10.**

Ordering is easy. Simply provide us with a list  
of names and addresses of the people you  
would like to recognize — along with your  
contribution — and we'll do the rest.

**Please indicate that your contribution is a  
FALL Tribute gift.** To learn more about  
tribute gifts, contact the Development  
Office at 410.832.2719.



## Our Beautiful Barn — 10 Years!

It's hard to believe it's been 10 years since we  
broke ground for the barn, where Mind Body Spirit  
shares a home with our Kids Circle programs.

*With deep gratitude to the Kohn  
family for their vision and generosity.*



P.O. Box 755, Brooklandville, MD 21022-0755  
Tel 410.832.2719  
Email [cancerhelp@hopewellcancersupport.org](mailto:cancerhelp@hopewellcancersupport.org)

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# Mind Body Spirit

## MindBodySpirit *at HopeWell ... A History*

When HopeWell opened in 1993 in a 5th floor  
office building in Towson, we already understood  
the importance of the Mind Body Spirit  
connection. Executive Director Suzanne Brace  
trained as a therapist in Berkeley, CA, where she  
had explored many mind-body modalities that  
were just becoming recognized. Our first calendar  
after we cut the ribbon offered yoga, relaxation-  
visualization, t'ai chi and Mindfulness Meditation  
— 10 classes in all.

Bill Moyers's "Healing and the Mind" series was  
premiering on public television, lending validity  
to our program. It brought recognition to the role  
relaxation-visualization could play in helping  
relieve the debilitating nausea and pain — often  
chemo side effects — that are now, thankfully,  
better handled by medications.

"Anticipatory nausea" was so extreme that people  
literally grew sick approaching their treatment  
site. We tailored meditation exercises to fit the  
"script" each person needed to get through their

anxiety and stress. For many, it was an immediate  
transformation that deepened as they practiced  
— a "personal toolbox" that could be used in their  
daily lives.

Though our offices were not designed for  
movement classes, we put the furniture on rollers  
to free up space as needed. When an exercise  
class required a wall for balance, participants  
lined the long hallway of our suite and did their  
routines within earshot of us all.

By the time we left Towson in 2003, we had  
become an independent organization, changed  
our name to HopeWell, and bought our Falls Road  
property. With new space came new vision — a  
"Great Room" and the great outdoors. The Mind  
Body Spirit programming quickly grew to 30  
offerings a month.

And then came the barn, designed to house  
HopeWell's Kids Circle and Mind Body Spirit  
programs. The upper floor, with its cathedral



ceiling and exposed posts and beams, was more  
than we could have hoped for! Often referred to as  
a "sacred space," the barn easily accommodates  
the exuberance of our Strength and Tone classes  
as well as the silence of yoga nidra. Now, at 55  
classes per month and counting, we've come  
a long way. We were "ahead of our time"  
then, and we plan to continue that way!