

WIN ABC

Women's Information Network
Against Breast Cancer

Spring 2002

Issue 1, Volume IV

Save the Date! Revlon Run/Walk for Women May 11, 2002 Los Angeles



Heartthrob *Andy Garcia* has just been named as the Guest Host for the Ninth Annual Revlon Run/Walk for Women in Los Angeles, California.

Once again 60,000 dedicated women, men and children will put on their running shoes, grease the wheels on the strollers, gather their water bottles and pound the pavement on the streets near the historic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The common thread will be the passion to raise funds to further the research to eradicate breast and ovarian cancer and to continue to support organizations like WIN Against Breast Cancer in assisting patients with breast cancer and their families.



Shelly Blechman, Lincy Machorro and Renée Gaines from WIN ABC with friends Justine Richard, Charlotte Kilgore and Wanda Owen and special visitors from Japanese Public Television ...all had a great time last year!

WIN Against Breast Cancer has been chosen again to be a beneficiary for this event. Please help us to make this the most successful year ever and sign up for the *WIN ABC TEAM 112* on our website www.winabc.org. We will be having two busses leaving from our office in Covina available to registered participants. Seats are limited to the first 100 people, so reserve early. If you would like to reserve your seat on the bus or to receive a registration brochure, to make a pledge or to volunteer for this event, please call us toll-free at 866-2 WIN ABC.

Nature and Nurture The Genetics of Breast Cancer



There is still much unknown about the causes of breast cancer. Scientists are looking at genetic causes as well as genetic treatments. Scientists believe that a person's DNA receives 'hits' that damage the DNA before cancer begins. Each person born with one or more of these hits built into their DNA is considered at risk to develop cancer. The process of damage to the DNA after birth continues throughout the human life cycle. Factor in environmental issues, infections, hormones, pesticides and radiation and DNA becomes damaged on a daily basis, leaving cells vulnerable to abnormal growth.

The two identified genes for predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer are the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women and a small percentage of these cases occurs in men. It is estimated that 203,500 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed this year.*

What does this all mean? How can we protect ourselves? What are the chances of having the breast cancer gene?

The research of breast cancer genetics has been keeping scientists working at a frenetic pace in hopes of finding ways to cure and prevent the diseases.

When determining familial links to breast and ovarian cancer and cancer genes, ask yourself these questions:

- ⌘ Do you have more than two first-degree relatives (e.g. mother or sister) who have had breast cancer and one or more who've had ovarian cancer, diagnosed at any age?
- ⌘ Do you have more than two first-degree relatives who were diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 50?
- ⌘ Do you have more than two sisters who developed breast or ovarian cancer before age 50?
- ⌘ Do you have a first-degree relative who has had two breast cancers, two ovarian cancers, or breast and ovarian cancer?

**Source American Cancer Society
(continued page 2, column 2)*

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*"We make a living
by what we get,
we make a life by
what we give."
—Winston Churchill*

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What is *Quality Health Care*?

How do you know if you are receiving quality health care? How is quality care measured? Is it by how long you have to wait in the doctor's office? How quickly you can get referrals for a specialty doctor?

WIN Against Breast Cancer has a long history of promoting quality health care and informing consumers about the standard of care that they should be demanding and receiving.

WIN ABC is very proud to be one of eight beneficiaries that are part of a very unique program funded through the California HealthCare Foundation's (CHCF) Quality Initiative.

CHCF's Quality Initiative seeks to foster development and dissemination of salient, scientifically vetted, and standardized quality of care information; stimulate consumer and purchaser use of comparison information; reduce barriers to quality measurement and assessment; and accelerate quality improvement, patient safety and public accountability through greater involvement by consumers, providers, purchasers and policymakers.

We know that when cancer patients are better educated about their disease, they can ask more informed questions. When patients know the right questions to ask and what constitutes state-of-the-art care, they will learn to ask for it and expect to receive care based upon evidence-based guidelines. Health care consumers can drive these issues with doctors, hospitals and insurance providers. This is not just for consumers who pay for their healthcare. We are finding that by educating patients at public health facilities via WIN ABC's Breast Buddy Breast Care Program, we are creating better-informed patients who are able to effectively communicate their needs and expectations, thus allowing them to play an active role in their health care and feel more positive about their treatment choices.

We call this a *health care quality movement* and hope that this spreads not only across the state of California but also across the nation. We can bring our health care to the level that it needs to be. We just need to know what the standard of care is and then demand it!

**Source: California Healthcare Foundation*

For more information about The Quality Initiative
log onto <http://quality.chcf.org> /

For more information on exemplary practices in breast cancer
screening and treatment, log onto www.winabc.org

Nature and Nurture The Genetics of Breast Cancer

(continued from page 1, column 2)

The BRCA 1 & 2 genes are not only a factor for increased risk for breast and ovarian cancer but also for a recurrence. Currently, doctors cannot predict with certainty who will have a cancer recurrence and who will not. Until now, all patients are treated with the thought that cancer can recur and chemotherapy is often the norm.

Progress is being made. An international team of researchers from the Netherlands have teamed up with scientists at Rosetta Inpharmatics in Kirkland, Washington. Scientists have developed a computerized chip that can examine a tumor growing in a breast to determine which type of chemotherapy, or if any chemotherapy, would actually prevent the breast cancer from coming back. While this testing is not ready to be used routinely in patients, the investigators hope to identify those patients who need additional anti-cancer treatment and spare those who do not.

Last year, researchers have finally finished sequencing the human genome and the payoffs in medicine have begun. The Human Genome Project has found a way to create a "fingerprint" of the tumor. With this breakthrough, doctors will also be able to test and determine which tumors will not recur, to better identify those patients who will and will not need adjuvant therapy.

*Source: Reuters, DNA Sciences, Inc., March 1, 2002
For educational materials on genetic testing for BRCA 1&2,*



Volunteers of the Quarter

*The lifeblood of our organization is our volunteers.
We'd like to thank the following individuals
who dedicated themselves unselfishly
so that we may achieve our goals.*

Nikki Applebaum

Elizabeth Anstey

Adam Blechman

Robbie Blechman

Nancy Corti

Diamond Bar Rainbow Girls

Jane Fisher

Brendon Hess-Fisher

Diana Hess-Fisher

Mark Fisher

Paige Hess-Fisher

Shelly Friedman

Linda Garrett

Desirée Gaines

Larry Gaines

Emily Hendryx

Jeanne Hendryx

Rachel Hendryx

Kelly Johnson

Lauren Johnson

Gwen Kenealy

Kelsey Kenealy

Annie Luttrell

Ken Mullen

Stephanie Rindfleisch

Julia Roberts

Mark Roberts

Savannah Sanderlin

Barbara Sause

Mary Jane Williams

Matthew Williams

Nichalis Williams

*"The best way to find yourself
is to lose yourself in the service of others."
-- Ghandi*

Survivor Stories

Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.
 -- Martin Luther King, Jr.



Denise Maciel
 Age 46

I am married and have two sons. I was diagnosed in 1998 at the age of 42.

When I was told that the tumor found in my right breast was cancerous, I was stunned. How could this happen twice in the same family? You see, my mother also had breast cancer in 1978. She passed away in 1995. As stunned as I was when I was diagnosed, I knew I was at high risk of developing this disease because of my mother.

At the time of my diagnosis, my thoughts went to my boys. The only thing they knew of cancer was that they had lost their grandmother and grandfather to a terrifying disease. I didn't want them to think that I was going to die. I sat them down and prepared them for what was ahead for me.

I am Catholic and religion has always been an important part of my life and I found myself praying for God's guidance and strength. After finishing my treatments and as I patiently waited for my hair to grow back, I decided that I wanted to help as many women as I could who were also diagnosed with this disease. I am now a Breast Buddy volunteer.

Now I live each day fully and pray that I do survive for many years to come and live to see my sons grow up to become adults.



Michael Lewis
 Age 46

The journey I speak of is one not many men fear because it is usually known as a woman's disease. My journey is coming back from breast cancer. Until two years ago cancer or the big "C" as some refer to it, had never entered my mind.

I was a healthy 43-year-old man. I run, I don't smoke, I don't drink and I have never been involved with drugs.

After one of my runs one day, I was getting into my car and bumped my breast. It was painful and after some weeks the area was still painful and I noticed a thumb sized lump with redness around the nipple. It was tender to the touch. I became alarmed and went to the doctor. He examined it and dismissed it as a fatty tissue.

After two years, I finally had the lump removed. By then, the mass was the size of a golf ball. I had a biopsy and my greatest fears had my realized. I had breast cancer; it was a world shattering time in my life.

A mastectomy was performed. I was filled with anger and embarrassment; people thought of breast cancer as a woman's disease and so did I.

I am now a big brother to men who find themselves in the same pair of shoes I was in several years ago. Only they have me as a guide and also living proof that men, too, are affected with breast cancer and can also survive.

In Honor Of

Juanita Cooper
 Elberta Cotton
 Marcia Savage
From Shirley Best

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From Michelle Boshans
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 Ariella Lewis
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 Elise Rose
From Selma Gaines

Kathi Koch
From Justine Richard

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Marge Plumlee
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Margaret Schulte
From Kris Schulte

Carol Scott
From Ruth & Dell Scott

Laura Ward
From Lynn Kinikin

In-Kind Donations

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From our President/CEO:

Betsy Mullen



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Dear Friends,

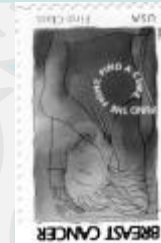
Spring is here and at this time of year our thoughts turn to hope and renewal. This is a time for joy and the celebration of life. We can take joy in the simple things that fill our days with so many precious moments. We can celebrate life not only for those still living but also for our dear loved ones who so greatly enriched our lives, even though our hearts may ache deeply from their absence.

I take great pride in and celebrate the work that WIN ABC accomplishes everyday in helping the *next* person with breast cancer. If we can be that calm in the storm, if we can continue to inform, educate and empower patients and support them throughout their "breast cancer journey", then we can truly rejoice in our collective efforts.

There are so many exciting things on the horizon for breast cancer research and we can all continue to be hopeful. We can renew our commitment to support efforts that will rally more dollars for research and education. We hope that you will support WIN Against Breast Cancer so that we can continue to be the "safe harbor" for so many who need our help.

Fondly,
Betsy

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"Fund the Fight. Find a Cure."

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