



Ovarian Cancer Support Group

A Random Act of kindness

By Marcia Gurche

We hear of so much negativity and sadness in the news these days, that when we learn of a random act of kindness, such as one experienced by Lori Pittenger, it can uplift and inspire us in a profound way.

Lori enjoys following a number of creative people on Facebook in her spare time. A few months ago, she happened upon an exceptionally talented artist by the name of **Angela D’Souza**. Angela describes herself this way: “I am an artist who loves experimenting with fresh subject matter and new mediums. I enjoy pushing limits to expand on my art style. I’m exploring avenues of individual commissions and illustration. I love what I do and follow inspirations as they come.”

One of the things that captured Lori’s attention was the fact that Angela often uses tools in her paintings – tools which she inherited from her grandfather. According to Angela, her grandfather was a contractor who made a huge impression on her with his “beautifully positive attitude, generosity, and deep kindness.” She incorporates the tools into various paintings of elegant ladies in a series entitled “Gift of Grace.” Imagine a pair of pliers in the skirt of a dress, or a rake used as a train of a lady’s gown.



One to One is devoted to the on-going support of those newly diagnosed, those in remission and those in recurrence.

100% of contributions directly benefit our group by providing activities and paying for expenses.

*Donations are gratefully accepted and can be made by check payable to **One to One Ovarian Cancer Support Group** c/o Marilyn Brozovic 4793 Alton Dr. Troy, MI 48085*

A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.

Angela started painting in 2018 after her own dad passed from pancreatic cancer. Her “Gift of Grace” series of beautiful ladies was inspired when she noticed one of her inherited tools opened and realized that it looked like a ball gown. She believes that the series comes in part from her own struggle with a mental illness. She has a desire to “remind all women of their Grace – something that cannot be taken away.”

Lori began commenting on Angela’s postings on Facebook from time to time, and she asked Angela if she had ever done anything related to ovarian cancer. Before she knew it, Lori received a surprise package in the mail, a beautiful picture painted by Angela especially for her. Lori’s painting was entitled “Propelled by Light.” Just as special was a poem which accompanied the painting, written by Angela just for Lori. The fact that this talented, busy artist would take the time to paint and gift Lori with something so beautiful and special, out of the goodness of her heart, is just the type of magic that we need to hear about during these stressful times. Angela is a perfect example of Grace itself, as she reaches out to others in such a kind and generous way. Check out Angela’s Facebook page *colorinthewater* or go to her website: <http://colorinthewater.com>



Propelled by Light

Hope has pushed her through the night.
Her fragile shell is laced with light.
Fight she will, both tooth and nail,
She’ll cut through fear and toss the veil.
Her grace is worn on strongest frame,
Her hope will always be untamed.

~ Angela D’Souza

Scent-sational Science



(This information was taken from a February 2020 article by **Lucinda Hahn**:
"This Dog Could Save Your Life," as published on the web page of **Southwest the Magazine**)

They don't let dogs into medical school, but if they did, there are a few canines that probably should be enrolled. One for sure is Sierra, a Siberian husky who Stephanie Herfel inherited from her son when he went into the military. Stephanie, a 53-year-old single woman, began gaining an unusual amount of weight around 2010. After gaining 65 pounds and having numerous urinary infections which were casually dismissed by her primary care doctor, Stephanie experienced extreme pain in her pelvic area. A subsequent CT scan showed an ovarian cyst. She was given pain killers, which helped the pain, and she went on her way. A few weeks later, Sierra began to persistently sniff at Stephanie's abdomen – to the point where it became annoying. Finally, Stephanie pushed the dog away, only to later find Sierra curled up in a ball in the back of a closet, looking sad and tearful. It was a "lightbulb moment" for Stephanie when she realized Sierra had been trying to tell her something. Armed with the results of the CT scan, as well as the unexplained weight gain and urinary infections, she diligently pursued an answer. Two months later she was operated on and diagnosed with Stage 3 ovarian cancer.



A bit of science can help explain Sierra's behavior. People and dogs both have receptor cells inside their nostrils that detect smells. People have about 6 million cells as opposed to 300 million in a dog. A dog also has a much larger olfactory bulb, the part of the brain which is dedicated to processing all the information the nose supplies. That enables him to distinguish and remember a staggering variety of scents. Dogs also have a vomeronasal organ above the roof of their mouths which senses the chemicals from hormones that all animals, including humans, give off. Because of this, dogs are able to identify aggressors and potential mates, as well as tell if someone is pregnant or sick.

In 1989, two London-based dermatologists recorded in a respected British medical journal the first instance of a cancer-sniffing dog. Baby Boo, a Doberman pincher-border collie mix, had become fixated on the back of her owner's thigh – sniffing and snorting at it constantly. One day while the owner was wearing shorts, Baby Boo jumped up and began nipping at the back of her leg, causing the woman to turn around and discover a dark bump on her skin, which turned out to be a malignant melanoma. The tumor was small enough to be easily treated and the dermatologists credited the dog with saving the woman's life.

At the Penn Vet Working Dog Center in Philadelphia, which was opened in 2012 and has trained hundreds of canine snouts that help sniff out bombs, narcotics, and disaster victims, there are five dogs known as the "cancer dogs." Each of the dogs can successfully detect the scent of ovarian cancer in a sample of blood plasma so small that a human can barely see it, let alone smell it. Odors are created by volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, and that is what the dogs are so good at honing in on. Everything has its own pattern of VOCs; the one for peanut butter is very different from Chanel No. 5. Cancer cells evidently produce an array of VOCs that are different from those of healthy cells. According to Dr. Howard Bailey, the director of the Carbone Cancer Center and one of Stephanie Herfel's oncologists, "Cancer occurs and advances based on some of the abnormal proteins it produces, and differing smells are often a result of different proteins. So, it's not surprising that dogs, which are much more sensitive to smell than we are, could detect a change [in their owner's smell]." Since dogs basically see through their noses, if something changes with their owner, they "see" the changes and react to it.

"Dogs have given us their absolute all. We are the center of their universe. We are the focus of their love and faith and trust. They serve us in return for scraps. It is without a doubt the best deal man has ever made."

– Roger A. Caras

(Cont'd. on next page)

While it wouldn't be practical to put a dog in every doctor's office, scientists are working on producing a device called an electronic nose. The carbon nanotubes and single-strand DNA that make up the e-nose's sensors do essentially what the dogs do: read the VOCs emanating from cancer patients' plasma samples. While the e-noses are showing promise, none have reached the market yet, so in the meantime, the dogs at the Working Dog School continue to help with cutting edge cancer research.

Now, back to Sierra. Stephanie went on with her life and eventually fell in love with a wonderful man after she went into remission. While on a weekend get-away, Stephanie found Sierra hiding in an upstairs loft, looking terrified. After being coaxed downstairs, Sierra immediately went and hid again in a closet. Stephanie knew in her heart that her cancer had returned, and sure enough it had. Stephanie went on to marry her new love and over the next two years she had two more recurrences, both of them caught early, thanks in part to Sierra hiding each time and alerting Stephanie. Sierra has definite ways of letting Stephanie know that things aren't right.



There are numerous cases similar to Stephanie's which document a dog sniffing out cancer in its owner. Some of our own *One to One* members have reported that their dogs have alerted them to their cancer. Patty Kurpinski's 140-pound shepherd/rottweiler, Luna, not exactly a lap dog, started to lay on her lap any chance she could and bury her snout into Patty. She began doing this six months before Patty was diagnosed with ovarian and endometrial cancer, but had never done anything like it in the six years previous. Patti Phaendtner, in her *Survivors Teaching Students* presentation to the medical students relates how her dog, Mugsy, used to sniff the right side of her belly whenever she changed clothes. Her tumor was on the right ovary, so when she speaks to the students, she tells them that it turns out that her dog should have gone to medical school.

In conclusion, our dogs are good for much more than just companionship, cuddling, and listening to us talk to ourselves!



CANCER ACTION DAY

*** TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE ***

JOIN US!

Join volunteers, activists, survivors and caregivers from across Michigan as we meet to tell lawmakers to pass oral anti-cancer drug fairness laws.

WHEN: May 6th, 2020
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

WHERE: Radisson Hotel - Lansing Capitol
111 N Grand Ave | Lansing, MI 48933

For more information and to register go to:
www.fightcancer.org/events/2020-michigan-cancer-action-day



The world is currently experiencing what a cancer patient faces every day:

- ✓ Trying not to worry
- ✓ Trying to stay healthy
- ✓ Avoiding sick people, crowds and germs
- ✓ Hearing about crazy cures
- ✓ Fighting everyone's opinions on the matter

HAPPY SURVIVORsary!

Suzanne Kauffman	22 years!
Michelle Shepherd	16
Barb Livingston	15
Arlene Beyma	5
Carol Quintel	5
Kathy Dominczak	4

If your SURVIVORsary is missing, we did not receive an updated form from you. Please visit our One to One website for the form or contact Marilyn Brozovic via email: brozovicm87@gmail.com

What do YOU Believe?

"I believe in being strong when everything seems to be going wrong. I believe that happy girls are the prettiest girls. I believe that tomorrow is another day, and I believe in miracles."

- Audrey Hepburn

I believe that every human mind feels pleasure in doing good to another.

- Thomas Jefferson

I believe everything happens for a reason! People change so you can learn to let go, things go wrong so that you can appreciate them when they're right. You believe lies so that you will eventually learn to trust no one but yourself, and sometimes, good things fall apart so better things can fall together.

- Marilyn Monroe

PLEASE NOTE

Group Meetings Canceled

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all One to One support group meetings are canceled until further notice.

We pray for everyone's health and safety during these troubled times.

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Objectives of support group:

- ✦ Provide a forum for ovarian cancer patients to address concerns;
- ✦ Support each other through initial treatment phase, during potential recurrence, and with issues related to long term survival;
- ✦ Establish core group of survivors willing to visit newly diagnosed patients;
- ✦ Increase awareness of ovarian cancer, including its symptoms and risk factors, in the hope of achieving earlier detection and treatment.