



Ovarian Cancer
Support Group

Laughter is the BEST medicine.



By Marcia Gurche

We talk about it often, but I don't think it hurts to remind ourselves that one of the best things for whatever ails us is laughter. Carl Reiner made it his first priority. The renowned actor, director, comedian, author and screenwriter, who passed away in June of 2020 at age 98, said that he watched something every night that made him laugh and he went on to say, "I wake up and tickle myself while I'm still in bed." I wouldn't go so far as to tickle myself but finding something to laugh at on television is relatively easy these days. I have learned over the years that the medical community has discovered both long and short-term benefits to laughter. Research has found that laughter can increase oxygen to the heart, lungs, and muscles, increase the endorphins that are released by the brain, improve mood and reduce physical pain.

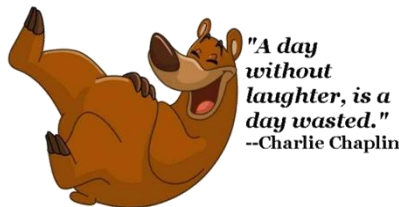
Human beings are the only species capable of laughter, and the average adult does so approximately 17 times per day. Not only does laughter promote healing by lowering the blood pressure, and by increasing blood flow and the oxygenation of the blood, but it has a more obvious physical result as well. Scientists estimate that laughing 100 times is equivalent to a 10-minute workout on a rowing machine, or 15-minutes on a stationary exercise bike. The mere act of laughing exercises the diaphragm, as well as the abdominal, respiratory, facial, leg, and back muscles.

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.



"A day without laughter, is a day wasted."
--Charlie Chaplin

Laughter can also improve our overall mental health because it provides an outlet for dealing with difficult situations. Over the years our *One to One* support group has had guests come to speak on just this topic. We have done Laughter Yoga, an exercise program using clapping, breathing, and childlike playful exercises which resulted in much fun and giggling. At one of our get-away weekends with a popular ER doctor who spoke to us about "Laughter in Medicine," we all sat with red clown noses and listened as he shared how important it is to laugh daily.

Whether it is through watching a good comedy on TV or being with friends, there is no greater pleasure than smiling and laughing out loud. Carl Reiner had the right idea when he created "The Dick Van Dyke" show so many years ago. It was one of the great sitcoms which have brought laughter into our homes through the years. Some of these can still be found on the Comedy Channel today if you are looking for some good wholesome entertainment. Thanks to **Lisa Helmle**, I am also thrilled to have discovered the **Dry Bar Comedy** channel on YouTube. It is a channel of clean, standup comedy, which seldom fails to entertain. Given the choice, I'd rather laugh than ride an exercise bike!



PROFILE IN *Courage*

By Marcia Gurche

March of 2020 was a very scary time for all of us with the coronavirus running rampant. The fear of the unknown was magnified for **Jill Covert** when she ended up in the emergency room with what she originally thought were kidney stones. While she did indeed have kidney stones, after many tests and a biopsy, she was given the dire news that she had ovarian cancer. She was referred to a gynecologic oncologist who recommended she do three rounds of chemotherapy first and then surgery. Undergoing chemotherapy during Covid was lonely and very scary since no visitors were allowed to accompany the patients. Another glitch was encountered when Jill's hand swelled, and after some further scans it was determined that she had a pulmonary embolism which required her to go on a blood thinner. Jill was anxious to get on with the next step and get the tumor removed, so she didn't appreciate the delay which this necessitated. Eventually, she completed six rounds of chemotherapy and had her surgery, and she began taking Lynparza, a PARP inhibitor, as a maintenance drug. The Lynparza causes her a lot of nausea and fatigue and Jill is trying hard to get used to her "new normal."



Prior to her diagnosis, Jill was living her dream life of being a working wife and mother. Like the rest of the world, Jill and her family were trying to get used to all the changes that Covid was bringing, but at least they were all together. Jill's husband of 26 years, **Dan**, was newly retired from his job at UPS, where he worked for 39 years. As a young retiree with college age children, he was still planning on working part-time, but the stress of daily full-time work was behind him. Jill was working as a surgical dental assistant for Great Expressions Dental and loved what she did. She had started working as a regular dental assistant many years

ago and then went to Oakland Community College where she got a special surgical certification through the Dental Hygiene Program.

Jill claims that she practically married "the boy next door." Dan grew up just across the street from her and they went to the same school and knew each other from the neighborhood. It wasn't until they stood up in a mutual friend's wedding, however, that the sparks began to fly and their relationship began.



(Cont. 'd on next page)

All Jill ever wanted was to become a mom, and her dream for that was fulfilled four times over. She has a beautiful family that she is, quite rightly, enormously proud of. Her daughter, **Hannah** (26), moved back home during the pandemic. She is a hair stylist by trade, but she is temporarily working as a manager at Jets Pizza. Jill has 24-year-old twin sons: **Kris**, who will be graduating in January with a degree in Computer Science and **Kyle**, who is an electrician apprentice. Her youngest, **Lily** (20), is on a scholarship at Schoolcraft College and will be transferring to Michigan State University to complete her degree in Animal Science. Jill says that her children have been an amazing source of support to her during her journey so far. The family also includes two beloved cats: **Pumpkin** and **Harley** and a dog named **Sammy**. I'd say that Jill has a lot of bases covered with a hair stylist, a computer expert, an electrician, and a vet in her family!

Both Jill and Dan came from families of five siblings, and each had one brother and three sisters. Jill is the oldest in her family and Dan is the youngest in his. Jill's dad and sister live next door to each other in West Palm Beach and the Covert family tries to get down there yearly to visit. They are anticipating a trip this October if things go well. They also enjoy the usual family type vacations, such as visits to Cedar Point, Mackinac Island, and the Great Smokey Mountains.

Gardening and cooking are high on Jill's list of things she loves to do. She has an artistic side and enjoys painting with watercolors and doing other crafts. Jill and Dan are looking forward to doing "retirement-type things" once she begins to feel better from the effects of her medication.

Jill has a wonderfully positive attitude despite the difficult time she has experienced over these last few months. Even though she had to navigate her treatment during the Covid lockdown, she says that "at least everyone was germ-free" when they were around her. She has also learned how to advocate for herself, which can be a good thing in life. When she experienced unexplained extreme facial tics, she researched and discovered it was caused by the medication she was on for the nausea. She is getting good at navigating the health care system and is learning what will work best to help her overcome different chemo side effects. She no longer just takes a prescription without reading all the contraindications – she is very aware of how every thing might affect her body. Jill wasn't ready to retire from her job when she did, but she is looking back fondly at the time she did spend in her chosen career. Instead of dwelling on the negative she is happy to remember that she took x-rays of the amazing Aretha Franklin, and assisted on surgeries for Geoffrey Fieger and Jeffrey Bernstein, although at the end of the day they are everyday people just like the rest of us. As the weeks and months go by and life begins to return to normal, Jill can see past the negative and once again look ahead to spending quality time with Dan and their beautiful family.

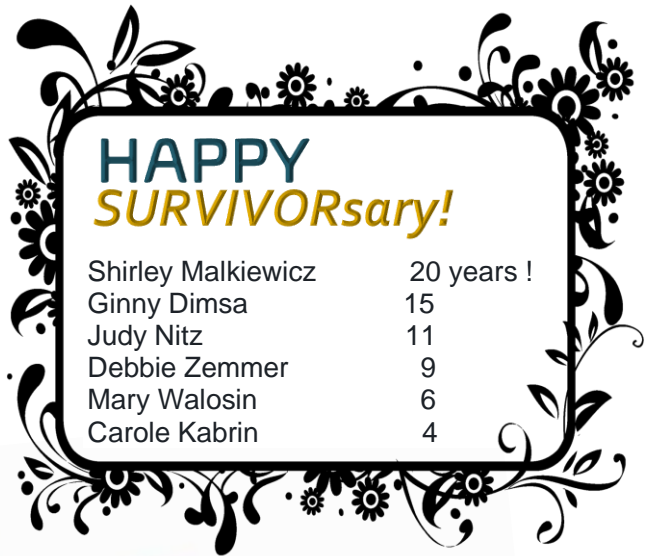


“LAUGHTER IS POISON TO FEAR.”

– George R.R. Martin, ***A Game of Thrones***



Cleaning the house with everyone home is like brushing your teeth while eating oreos

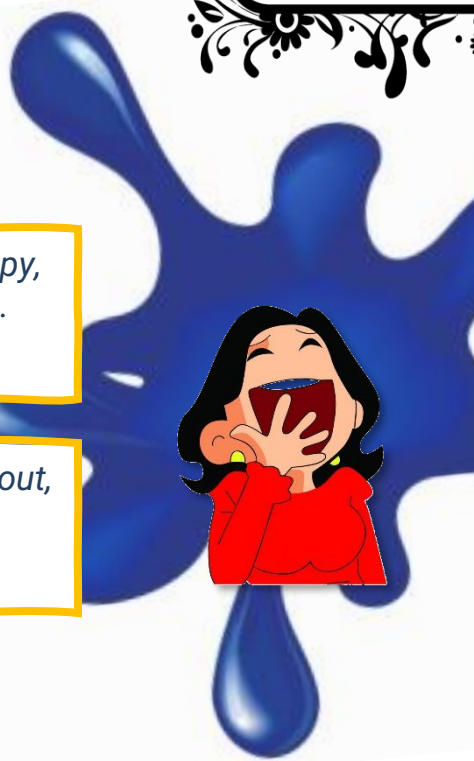


HAPPY SURVIVORsary!

Shirley Malkiewicz	20 years !
Ginny Dimsa	15
Judy Nitz	11
Debbie Zemmer	9
Mary Walosin	6
Carole Kabrin	4

We don't laugh because we're happy, we are happy because we laugh.
~ WILLIAM JAMES

Even if there is nothing to laugh about, laugh on credit.
~ Author Unknown



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Please join us for our ZOOM meetings at 4:30 pm on the second and fourth Thursdays each month.

- * August 12 and 26 *
- * September 9 and 23 *
- * October 14 and 28 *

An email will be sent to everyone four days prior to each video support group meeting asking if you would like to participate. A separate email with a link will be sent to those who reply one day prior to the meeting.

If your SURVIVORsary is missing, we did not receive an updated form from you. Please contact Marilyn Brozovic via email: brozovicm87@gmail.com

Newsletter information is presented in summary form, is general in nature and provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended in any way to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

- 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.