



Ovarian Cancer Support Group

ACS Resources

By Marcia Gurche



At a recent *One to One* meeting, we were joined by **Jennifer Nagy**, who is the Cancer Control Strategic Partnership Manager with the **American Cancer Society**. Jenn has been a great friend of our support group over the years and understands what our members are going through as she is a cancer survivor herself. She is passionate in the work she does for ACS because she realizes the importance of the help that the organization gives to those diagnosed with cancer.

Jenn provided us with information about various services which are available to cancer patients and explained that more information is available on the ACS website. A short synopsis of pertinent resources is as follows:



AREA SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

ACS maintains a database of programs and services to help people with cancer and their loved ones get the emotional support they need as they manage their lives through treatment and recovery.

HEALTH INSURANCE ASSISTANCE

ACS provides guidance on health insurance options to people affected by cancer through their Health Insurance Assistance Service Program (HIAS).

EASY READING FOR PATIENTS: DEALING WITH SIDE EFFECTS OF CANCER TREATMENTS

ACS offers health-related stories in a PDF format to help readers make good decisions about their own health.

ONLINE PERSONAL HEALTH MANAGER

ACS provides a Personal Health Manager which helps keep track of all the information about your diagnosis and treatment. Keeping everything organized can help you feel less stressed and more prepared to talk with your doctor.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT VIDEO SERIES

ACS offers a video series which provides educational support to caregivers as they assist with the everyday needs of cancer patients and provides self-care techniques to improve their quality of life.

CAREGIVER RESOURCE GUIDE

This is a tool for people who are caring for someone with cancer. It can help you learn how to care for yourself as a caregiver, better understand what your loved one is going through, develop skills for coping and caring, and take steps to help protect your health and well-being.



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.

Since sleep is often a problem for people going through cancer treatments, Jenn sent us a link to the ACS website page where you can find strategies for dealing with sleep issues:
<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/sleep-problems.html>

In June of 2019, the **American Cancer Society** and **Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance** joined forces to fund multidisciplinary research projects to help detect and treat ovarian cancer, as well as prevent recurrences and improve quality of life among those diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The organizations together have committed to a total investment of \$8 million to sustain four research teams over four years.

According to the information provided by Jenn Nagy, “This joint initiative seeks to raise funds to support four multidisciplinary research teams to investigate biological, clinical, and psychosocial factors associated with ovarian cancer outcomes. A better understanding of these factors will lead to new avenues for detecting, treating, and preventing ovarian cancer relapse and for improving quality of life.”

The American Cancer Society is a wonderful organization, which we are so happy to have on our team. We are equally grateful to Jenn Nagy for her friendship and her caring over the years.



PROFILE IN *Courage*

By Marcia Gurche

Being diagnosed with ovarian cancer is difficult enough; getting diagnosed with ovarian cancer during COVID-19 is adding insult to injury. **Karen Simister** first went to the emergency room in early February of 2020 after taking a fall in her home, and one thing quickly led to another. She was eventually sent to Dr. Field who confirmed that she had a mass. Surgery was done on March 16th, just as the hospitals were all being shut down, along with the rest of the country.

Karen joined our *One to One* group just as we were transitioning to our Zoom format and she has been a steadfast member ever since. She has been married to **Jenny Hastings** for five years, however, they have been together for 39 years. They live in Royal Oak with their beautiful collie, Laci.

Karen retired 10 years ago from the Detroit School System where she taught math to fifth and sixth graders for 33 years. Jenny is still working as a Workman's Comp agent. She has worked from home for quite a while, which was a blessing since they brought her mother into their home to live with them in the final years of her life and it was helpful for Jenny to be there for her mom.

Karen was born and raised in East New Brunswick, New Jersey where she still has one sister, Kathy. Karen and Kathy are very close, and Karen still goes home to visit whenever she can. Karen is fortunate to have many supportive in-laws who are nearby and are very special to her.

After a couple of years of community college and anxious to venture out on her own, Karen moved to Michigan to attend Eastern Michigan University. She chose Michigan as her home because she enjoys the different seasons and wanted to be in a state that has access to beautiful water.



Both Karen and Jenny have been involved in a youth organization called *Michigan League of Academic Games* for a number of years and they hold positions on the organization's steering committee. This statewide organization has been around for 47 years and it is comprised of educators, coaches and volunteers who are "dedicated to providing a positive learning environment that empowers students of diverse backgrounds to progress academically and socially through a structured competitive tournament setting." The games are for students in third grade through high school and there are no electronics involved. The subjects covered are Math, Social Studies and Language Arts. After progressing through the district and regional tournaments, the winners of the state tournament go on to the national tournament.

Karen started out as a coach 39 years ago and has moved through the non-profit organization to different positions. She is currently Assistant Executive Director of the League, which entails, among many other duties, handling logistics for the tournaments, i.e., hotels, food, transportation, etc. for 500-1000 students. Unfortunately, the 2020 and 2021 tournaments have had to be canceled due to COVID-19, but Karen has already secured the hotel for the State tournament in Ypsilanti in 2022.

In doing some research on the Michigan League of Academic Games, I came across a couple of articles about the national competition which were interesting. In one I found out that Karen had been awarded a very prestigious award in 1991. At the national tournament she was awarded Outstanding Educator, which is a recognition given to exceptional teachers and coaches by their peers at the American Games League Tournament. "These individuals have contributed over an extended period of time in a quality manner to their own programs and have also made significant contributions at the national tournament. They are revered by their students and colleagues."

(Cont. 'd on next page)

Another accomplishment which I uncovered was that one of the students that Karen helped coach has won multiple honors two years in a row at the national level. The 12-year-old boy won the Elementary Sweepstakes and other medals in 2009 and 2010 and in fact had the highest overall score in the league for Math, Language Arts and Social Studies at the tournament. That had to be a very exciting time for Karen and her fellow coaches.

Even with the above-mentioned accomplishments, Karen stated that her most gratifying experience to date has been to have six of her former students come back and join her as coaches. That speaks volumes about the teacher and the program!



Karen is a self-proclaimed fanatic of two things: #1 is collies. Karen has had three rescue collies, and her Laci is now ten years old. Laci loves living close to the park so she can run and bark at the kids who come to play disc golf.

Karen is also obsessed with all things *Harry Potter*, and she and Jenny have made multiple trips to Universal in Orlando, Florida to visit the *Harry Potter Studio*. They also really enjoy the Bahamas and, before travel restrictions, would visit Atlantis a couple of times a year. Trips up north to enjoy the Great Lakes are always on their agenda too, as they love being around the water.

Karen is an exceptionally busy lady. Adding in all her extra-curricular activities, plus her love of reading, watching movies and travel, she is thoroughly enjoying her retirement. We are so happy that Karen reached out to our *One to One* group and we look forward to meeting her in person soon. Karen is equally happy that she found our group, since we embraced her and encouraged her to take off her scarf, which was something she wanted to do but just needed a little push to go through with. The *One to One* support group is all about encouragement!



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

- * March 11 and 25 *
- * April 8 and 22 *
- * May 13 and 27 *

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.



HAPPY SURVIVORSary!

Nata Ballard	27 years!
Cheryl Meehan	23
Lori Coluzzi	11
Lynne Karty	5
Christine Babish	4
Jill Covert	1

If your SURVIVORSary is missing, we did not receive an updated form from you.

Please contact Marilyn Brozovic via email: brozovicm87@gmail.com

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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.*