



Ovarian Cancer
Support Group

Mosaic Madness!

Song and Spirit Institute for Peace brings people of different faith traditions together to engage in creative service through music, art, education and outreach to the poor. **Mary Gilhuly**, one of the founders, thought of our *One to One* support group recently when the institute was given a grant. She reached out to us, offering a free workshop to make a tile mosaic, and 14 of our ladies showed up at Starr Presbyterian Church to participate. We spent a wonderful morning creating beautiful dahlia tiles with backgrounds in various shades of teal. When our individual tiles were finished we also 'helped' Mary by adding glass tiles to a large project piece that will be installed in the Sterling Heights Community Center. Soon our *One to One* contribution will be on display!

We feel so fortunate to be the recipients of the grant and are thankful to Mary and her assistants, Lori, Nancy, and Laura for donating their time to make our experience so much fun.



Song
and Spirit

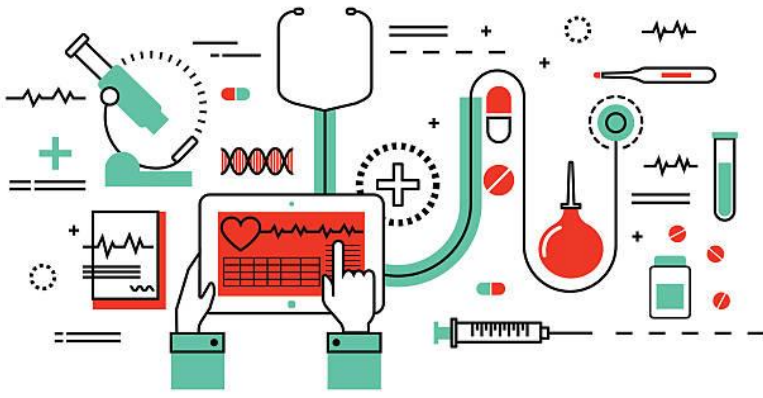
One to One is devoted to the on-going support of those newly diagnosed, those in remission and those in recurrence.

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.





Research NEWS

New Research Shows Cervical Cells May Hold Key to Predicting Ovarian Cancer Risk

Cervical cell samples that are routinely collected as part of Pap smears may hold promise for predicting the risk of ovarian and other cancers, according to recent findings published as two separate papers in *Nature* — one focused on ovarian cancer and the other on breast cancer.

The researchers studied cervical samples collected at 15 different health centers in Europe from approximately 3,000 women — some with ovarian cancer, some with breast cancer, and some without either disease. The cervical cells were analyzed for specific “epigenetic footprints” that are associated with higher risk of ovarian or breast cancer, according to the scientists.

“Our studies have taken a completely novel approach and evaluate an individual’s risk for more than one cancer by assessing several different epigenetic footprints in a single cervical screening sample,” said lead researcher **Dr. Martin Widschwendter** of University College London, University of Innsbruck, and the European Translational Oncology Prevention and Screening Institute.

These “epigenetic footprints” are identified by looking at chemical modifications or marks to the cell’s DNA that occur via a process known as DNA methylation. These marks tell the cell how to read the DNA and act on it. But both environmental factors and lifestyle habits can alter these marks in a way that is damaging to how the cell behaves, which the researchers believe may lead to increased cancer risk in some cases. The tests that they have developed, which are named **WID** for Women’s risk IDentification, involve the use of an algorithm that has been trained to spot specific patterns in DNA methylation marks that correlate to an increased risk of ovarian or breast cancer.

“Importantly, the tests do not detect actual cancer but rather indicate genetic, lifestyle and environment risk factors associated with them and may be able to predict future risk,” according to a statement from The Eve Appeal, which co-funded the study.

The findings may pave the way for future screening tools, but more research is needed. The scientists plan to use large population trials to see whether the newly developed tests accurately predict cancer before it occurs.

“As with any new test, they will need trialing on a large number of the population over the next years before being available widely,” said **Dr. Chiara Herzog** of University of Innsbruck and the European Translational Oncology Prevention and Screening Institute, who is a part of the research team. “Our next research will also discover whether the tests are best suited for screening all women and people with a cervix, or only in those with a known increased risk of these cancers (e.g., people with a BRCA alteration or family history).”

Posted on February 9, 2022 in Research

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PROFILE IN *Courage*

By Marcia Gurche

Five years ago, when **Jan Potts** of Saline asked if she would take over as head of the Survivor Support Tote Program* through the Michigan Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MIOCA), Jan was hesitant at first to do so. She was not tentative because of the amount of work that being chair of the project was going to entail. She was uncertain that she was the right person for the job, since it required her to call newly diagnosed ovarian cancer ladies and ask them if they would like to receive a free support tote and ask if they had any questions or concerns that she could help them with. Since Jan was, at that time, a three-year survivor of Stage 1c clear cell ovarian cancer, she was sensitive to the fact that newly diagnosed survivors might not be receptive to hearing from someone diagnosed at such a low stage. However, as Jan has discovered, this has not been an issue. The ladies she has contacted have been more than happy to hear from her. They are grateful to receive the tote and get the chance to speak with someone who has gone through what they are going through.



Jan's own diagnosis was somewhat unusual in that she recognized that the symptoms she was experiencing (bloating, eating difficulties, urinary issues and abdominal issues), were out of the realm of ordinary, so she sought medical advice quickly and her primary care doctor, after doing a CA 125 test and ultrasound, sent her to a gynecologist who performed a hysterectomy. Because her gynecologist was not sure what she was going to find, since the CA count was rather low, she did have a gynecologic oncologist on hand, who she immediately called in to perform the debulking once ovarian cancer was confirmed. Following surgery, Jan did the regular regimen of Carboplatin and Taxol and she has been in remission since then.

Jan made the decision to see her primary care doctor on April 4th, the 40th anniversary of her marriage to her husband, **Rob**. She and Rob are about to celebrate their 48th anniversary. They met while both were students at Michigan State University and living in the same dorm. Following graduation, they got married and moved to Ann Arbor where Rob began working with an automotive supplier outside of Jackson, and Jan worked at Washtenaw

Intermediate Schools. She taught mentally impaired and autistic kids for 35 years and thoroughly enjoyed her job. It filled her with joy even though it was undeniably challenging.

Jan and Rob have two children. Their daughter, **Katherine**, works as a social worker and lives in Detroit. She has a home in beautiful Indian Village. Katherine works for Trinity Health and she also has her own private practice.

Their son, **Daniel**, and his wife,

Erin, have a beautiful baby girl, **Hazel** (2 years old), and they live in Rhode Island, where Daniel works for Labor Union SEIU. Jan and Rob try to visit the family every couple of months and they take advantage of opportunities to help with Hazel whenever possible, like occasionally when mom, Erin, is out of town for work. To paraphrase an old saying, "When mom's away, the grandparents will play!"




(Cont.'d on next page)

Jan was born outside St. Louis and moved to Michigan when she was six years old. Sadly, she has lost both of her parents, **Eleanor** and **Weldon**, as well as her sister, **Marge**. She is close with Rob's family, however, and enjoys spending time with them. Rob's family has been working as a team helping out with his brother, **David**, who, unfortunately suffers from early-stage Alzheimer's. David lives in a facility in Lansing and while he can't do a lot of activities, he does enjoy company and so they all do their best to make his life a little more pleasant by reminiscing, playing music and doing whatever it takes. The family effort even includes David's ex-wife, a testament to the strength of this family's bond.

Jan and Rob thoroughly enjoy traveling and their trips are too numerous to mention. Jan benefited from the chance to travel to some countries, such as Japan, when Rob was there on business. They have taken many cruises and they are looking forward to going to Sicily in May. Jan enjoys walking and, while she likes to golf, she calls herself a "fair weather golfer - no humidity and no wind." She finds that the best thing about golfing is being with her family and friends on the course.

Reading is a passion for Jan and she is not partial to any genre, enjoying all types of books. Additionally, she is very giving of her time. She has been involved in the Ann Arbor Ovarian Cancer Support Group since her diagnosis, and she has also participated in numerous fundraising activities to combat ovarian cancer.

If only she lived closer to Royal Oak! 

* If you are newly diagnosed or know of a newly diagnosed ovarian cancer patient and would like to receive a survivor support tote, go to:

<https://www.mioca.org/events-programs/programs/Survivor-Support-Tote-For-Those-In-Treatment>

meeting

Group meetings are held on the **2nd Thursday** of the month at **4 pm**. Meetings are in-person at the **Berkley Public Library** and are also held via Zoom.

You are welcome to join us for dinner following the meeting at *The Avenue Restaurant*, located on Woodward just north of 13 Mile.

April 13
May 11
June 8



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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.

10 Things to Remember

1. Love is the answer. Always.
2. Vulnerability is not a weakness. It's a strength.
3. Your body is sacred. Cherish it.
4. Gratitude shifts everything. Be thankful.
5. Forgiveness sets you free. It really does.
6. You cannot change others. Only yourself.
7. Little acts of kindness are never little. Ever.
8. Fun is underrated. Enjoy yourself.
9. Age is just a number. It's never too late.
10. Life is precious. Live it now.

- Anna Grace Taylor

HAPPY SURVIVORSary!

Suzanne Kauffman	25 yrs!
Candy Brandon-Watters	20
Michelle Shepherd	19
Barb Livingston	18
Patti Pfaendtner	11
Arlene Beyma	7
Kathy Dominczak	7
Pam Peplinski	3

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.*