



Nov. – Dec. 2023

Learning From Each Other



By the time you read this, our annual PT event, which the **Oakland University Physical Therapy** students put on for our *One to One* Support Group and the *Sharing and Caring* Breast Cancer Support Group, will be over. The event is always a huge success and those who attend are amazed by the amount of work that the students put into preparing for and carrying it out.

Each year, the **Survivors Teaching Students®** program, also referred to as **STS**, does a presentation to these students in the Fall. We are always gratified by the rapt attention which the students give our presenters, and by their participation in the Q & A which follows. This is a direct reflection on the caliber and quality of the Oakland University PT program and its instructors, as well as the students themselves. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the wonderful job that they do for us with the PT event each year, and to plug our **STS** program, which is always in need of new presenters. To be an **STS** presenter, you just need to be willing to share your cancer story with future health care providers. If interested, please contact me* and we will help you get started. It is not a huge commitment, but I guarantee, you will be rewarded many times over.



Here are a few responses that we received from the evaluation forms that the Oakland University students completed after our last **STS** presentation:

How has the presentation changed the way you think about ovarian cancer?

- Extremely informational & moving presentation—Loved hearing stories of the survivors' path to diagnosis & treatment.
- It has allowed me to realize that ovarian cancer can affect all ages, it does not just affect older genetic females. It is important to have these discussions with our patients and keep ovarian cancer on our differential diagnosis list.

Would you consider this form of experiential learning an effective method of learning more about ovarian cancer or another condition?

- Yes, 100%. I think having the survivors come in and teach us increased my interest and attention pertaining to the topic. I feel like I will better remember the signs and symptoms related to ovarian cancer.
- Yes, I would. The first-hand stories from the survivors were gripping and allowed me to see all the things a lecturer would discuss right in front of me and it felt as though I was learning "from the source."

How can the presentation be more effective in conveying survivors' experiences, the importance of the symptoms or difficulties in diagnosis?

- I would suggest inviting more survivors. Their experiences truly cemented the information for me and made the learning process more personal. I would suggest possibly having caregivers come as well to get their perspective.
- I think this was a very effective presentation, and one I am very thankful for!

* **STS Contact: Marcia Gurche at mgurche@gmail.com** *

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.

PROFILE IN *Courage*

By Marcia Gurche

The saying “out of adversity comes opportunity” can certainly be applied to **Karen O’Brien**. Karen, who was diagnosed with stage 2 ovarian cancer in January of 2015, has had five recurrences of the disease. Over the eight-year time span since her diagnosis, Karen has endured six different regimens of IV chemotherapy; two regimens of oral chemotherapy; 30 rounds of radiation; a battle with blood clots; a double mastectomy due to being BRCA positive; surgery to remove a suspicious nodule; surgery to have an ileostomy and then an ileostomy reversal. Currently, Karen is happy to report that she has no evidence of disease.

Last week, Karen and her husband, **Dan**, traveled to Gaithersburg, Maryland, where Karen was awarded the *C2 Cancer Community Award for Unconventional Hero* through the pharmaceutical company **AstraZeneca**. Following her diagnosis, Karen, a competitive volleyball player and coach throughout her teenage and adult life, had formed a program called **Teal Attack**. Teal Attack is an event which gets high school and collegiate sporting teams to come together to raise awareness and funds for ovarian cancer. The participating teams are each given teal tee shirts for the event. Bracelets and symptom cards are provided for spectators and the money raised during the event goes to the Michigan Ovarian Cancer Alliance. To date, with the \$50,000 which was presented to Karen for being the recipient of the award, Teal Attack has raised over \$450,000.

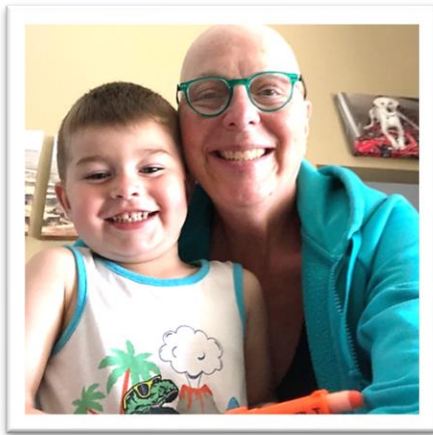
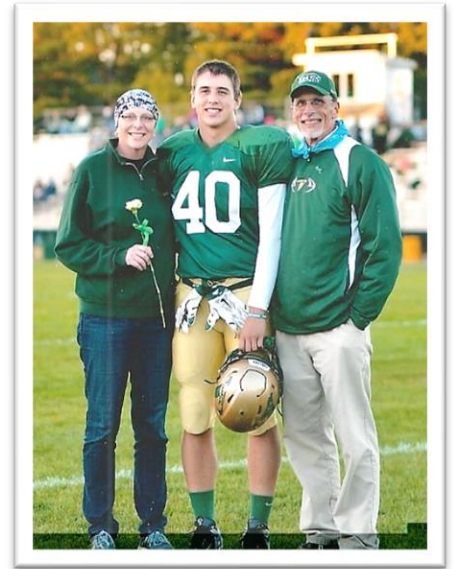
Karen was named a *Michigan High School Coaches Association* **Coach of the Year** in 2020. She has coached volleyball on the high school and college level since 1985 but decided to retire this year from her last position as coach at St. Mary’s of Monroe and she is content to keep her hand in the game by helping a friend coach a couple of days a week.



coach and eventually they bought their first Subway store. With Dan coaching and working as a teacher, Karen did most of the day-to-day running of the store, which they had until they sold in 2022.



Karen and Dan's son, **Wyatt**, was born in 2000 and he brought another aspect of athletics into the mix. Wyatt played multiple sports through high school, so he kept them busy attending his games. He eventually played baseball for the University of Toledo. He is currently pursuing a career as a Strength and Conditioning Coach at Michigan State University.



In addition to Wyatt, Karen and Dan are proud grandparents to four-year-old **Apollo**, who is the son of Dan's son, **Quinton**, and his wife, **Celeste**. The family lives in St. Louis so it requires a little effort to see them, but it is very much worth it. Fortunately, most of Karen's immediate family, her parents, **Bob and Marge Kelley**, and her siblings, **Greg, Kevin, Kris, and Mary** and their families all live in the metropolitan Detroit area, so they are in closer proximity to her and Dan, who live in Monroe.

With a little more time on their hands now, Karen and Dan hope to be able to travel a bit. Dan is originally from Florida, so they anticipate going down there for some sun this winter. They also enjoy golfing together and look forward to being able to spend more time on the golf course down south, as well as here in Michigan once the weather gets good again.

Karen is also a valued member of the **Survivors Teaching Students Program**. Her presentation to the health care students is very poignant, especially when they hear all that she has endured. They appreciate her willingness to come to speak to them about the disease and its warning signs and risk factors. Karen is passionate about raising awareness, as is Dan, through Teal Attack and various events that they have helped spearhead.

If you know of a high school or college student athlete who participates in a sport and might like their team to host a Teal Attack event to raise awareness for ovarian cancer, please contact Karen at tealattack@gmail.com. Karen's competitive spirit is working overtime to keep her cancer at bay while she helps raise awareness and funds to fight this disease. 💖

**Our 2023 Holiday Luncheon will be held on
Saturday, December 2nd at 11:30 am
at The Masters Restaurant
1775 E. Thirteen Mile Road, Madison Heights**

We hope you will consider joining us as we get together for a nice afternoon with new friends and old in a comfortable and relaxing setting!

The luncheon will cost each guest \$25.00 and will include a choice of three entrees:

- ❖ **Vegetarian Pasta:** Asparagus, portabella mushrooms, red bell peppers, sundried tomatoes sauteed w/basil, garlic & olive oil tossed with fettuccini
- ❖ **Atlantic Salmon** served with rice
- ❖ **Beef Tenderloin Tips:** Asian style beef tips served over rice and topped with scallions

* Ice cream and beverage will be included *

Please email Marcia at mgurche@gmail.com by Friday, November 24th to reserve your spot.



One to One now has a private **Facebook** page where you can ask questions and share information whether you are in treatment or in remission. Support is always needed for those in treatment.

Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/248878334746995/>
or search for *ovariancancersupportonetoone*.

This is a private page which is monitored closely and is for ovarian cancer survivors only. We are all survivors from our day of diagnosis.

HAPPY SURVIVORsary

November

Barbara Solms	32 years!
Georgia Roed	18
Anita Dukich	15
Krystal Donovan	8
Jen Murakami	6
Jo Kwasny	5
Tina Roberts	5
Desiree Swiney	5
Mimi Gass	4

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.

November 9
December 14

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.

If you could erase all the mistakes of your past, you would also erase the wisdom of your present. Remember the lesson, not the disappointment.



BEST WISHES FOR A LOVELY HOLIDAY SEASON!

HAPPY SURVIVORsary

December

Sharon Rocklin	55 years!
Marilyn Brozovic	27
Lorraine Marsin	24
Marcia Gurche	23
Rose Newman	11
Louise Brown	9
Michelle Urbanczyk	9
Deb Claybaugh	8
Genevieve Riess	8
Eileen Shaughnessy	7
Jeanne Schaberg	5
Kathy Mills	3
Barb Clerebout	1

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This educational newsletter is supported through philanthropic donations to the *One to One* ovarian cancer support group through Corewell Health Foundation Southeast Michigan (formerly the Beaumont Health Foundation).



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.*