



Ovarian Cancer
Support Group

Our Mental Health

New Study Highlights Importance of Mental Health Support
for Ovarian Cancer Patients

Researchers at the University of Utah and Huntsman Cancer Institute found that an ovarian cancer diagnosis took a much higher mental toll on patients and survivors than initially expected at the start of the study, thus underscoring the critical need for programs that provide psychological and emotional support for people living with this disease.

“Mental health issues are important for cancer patients as they face major disruptions to their lives and deal with the toxic side effects of cancer treatment,” said the study’s lead author, Siqi Hu, a PhD candidate in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of Utah and Huntsman Cancer Institute. “However, the risks [for ovarian cancer patients] were far higher and persisted over a longer time period than we expected,” she said.



Risk for mental health disorders is higher after an ovarian cancer diagnosis.

Hu and her team discovered that ovarian cancer patients were more than three times more likely than the general public to be diagnosed with mental health disorders in the first two years after their diagnosis. During those first couple of years, depression, anxiety disorder and adjustment disorder all posed a risk that was three times higher than for people who did not have ovarian cancer.

To conduct the study, researchers used the Utah Cancer Registry to find 1,689 ovarian cancer patients diagnosed between 1996 and 2012 and match them with 7,038 women without cancer. Electronic health records enabled them to identify mental health diagnoses and exclude those that were given before the patients were found to have ovarian cancer.

These findings, which were presented at the virtual AACR Annual Meeting 2021, highlight the need for support services that address not just the physical toll of ovarian cancer, but also the psychological and emotional impact of the disease on patients and survivors.

“It is important to be aware that mental health may change over the course of diagnosis and treatment,” said Hu. “Increased support may contribute to prolonging the lives of ovarian cancer survivors.”

Supporting survivors and patients is a cornerstone of OCRA’s mission. Whether 1:1 counseling, joining a support group or connecting with a peer mentor, these types of services can improve one’s emotional *and* physical wellbeing.

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.

*As diehard members of the One to One support group, we have seen how important it is to provide support to women with an ovarian cancer diagnosis, no matter what stage they are at in their journey, and we are determined to continue to do so. Thank you to the **Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance** for allowing us to publish the above article and for all the information they provide on their website: ocrahope.org.*



PROFILE in

Courage



By Marcia Gurche and Kathy Mills

It is hard to believe that I have been friends with **Kathy Mills** for sixty years, ever since we played on the same JV basketball team at St. Benedict High School in Highland Park in 1964. It was such a long time ago that, back then, in girls' basketball, we were only allowed to take three dribbles and could not cross the half court line. By the time we were sophomores, Kathy and I moved up to varsity and the rules changed to allow two players from each team to "rove" and cross over the half court and both Kathy and I were designated "rovers." Fast forward to Fall of 1967. We both started college at Nazareth College in Kalamazoo and found ourselves living across the hall from each other. We each transferred to different schools after the first year, but over time we have stayed in contact as we share a close group of friends from Nazareth who get together monthly, known affectionally as our "Naz Group."



Through the years Kathy and I have led somewhat parallel lives. We both come from large Catholic families, we have both adopted children, and we have both lost a close loved one. However, I would never have expected that the two of us would experience the diagnosis of ovarian cancer. When Kathy was diagnosed with cancer in the emergency room on Christmas Day 2020, I was devastated. After all, I knew she was having symptoms commonly associated with ovarian cancer, but like the medical professionals, I assumed they were a result of her autoimmune hepatitis. Since her cancer diagnosis Kathy has become a very active member of our *One to One* support group, as well as a very strong advocate for herself.

Kathy grew up in Detroit as a middle child with six siblings: **Karyn, Rick, Mark, Nancy, Bill, and Joelle**. Her parents, **Nellie and Tony Calice**, moved to Troy in 1973, the same year that Kathy got married. She attended St. Benedict Grade School but went to Mercy High School where she was a member of the choral group, the Mercyaires, and was president of her senior class. Since her school did not have a basketball program, she was able to play on her parish team, thus our St. Benedict team benefited by having her for four years.

Kathy graduated from Western Michigan University with a teaching degree after majoring in English and minoring in Speech. Her first teaching job found her at a middle school in rural Temperance, Michigan for one and a half years before she was able to secure a job with Warren Consolidated Schools. An unexpected layoff in the middle of her employment there resulted in Kathy entering the business field for over ten years. She worked for a couple of different companies, then spent five years in the field of telecommunication and data communications for EDS before getting called back to Warren Consolidated. After returning to teaching and pursuing a graduate certificate program in school counseling, Kathy spent her last fifteen years in education as a guidance counselor.

It was a busy night at The Rathskeller's, a bar in Royal Oak, when Kathy met the love of her life, **John Mills**. She and her friends were waiting in line when suddenly John, always the charmer, appeared out of nowhere and offered to find them a table. Within minutes, a table opened, and John masterfully maneuvered a seat with Kathy's group. The rest is history, as they say, and Kathy and John were married in 1973. After learning that they could not have children, they set out on the path to adoption and were thrilled when their son, **Daniel John**, arrived in March of 1988. Kathy and John, a newly licensed attorney, with the help of his wonderful secretary, **Jane**, managed to share

(Cont'd. on next page)

responsibilities for Danny during the day until Kathy could be home full-time during the summer. Four years later, the Mills' family welcomed **Robert Anthony**. They kept very busy with their active boys, attending all of Dan and Rob's school and sports activities.

Sadly, after John and Kathy celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary, John died from esophageal cancer. While Kathy handled John's death with dignity and grace, losing him was extremely difficult and brought many changes. Last year Kathy moved from the home where she and John raised their boys to a beautiful condo, in order to eliminate some of the maintenance duties.



Kathy's diagnosis of Stage 3 C ovarian cancer was devastating, but nothing would prepare her for what would follow her surgery. At her post-surgery visit, the doctor told her she had too much ascites to remove her stitches. Subsequent bloodwork indicated she was in kidney failure. So, nine days after being released from the hospital, she returned and spent the next 42 days virtually alone, due to COVID restrictions. Within a week of her return, she also had emergency surgery to repair a perforated bladder. Fortunately, she survived, but her recovery was exceptionally difficult. Despite months of complications, Kathy's chemotherapy treatment eventually was completed

and she was able to get on with her life.

Kathy quickly returned to singing in the St. Thomas More Parish Choir and attending meetings with her very special Manresa Women of Faith. She became a presenter for the Survivors Teaching Students program and is always the first one to offer to share her story with future health care professionals. The December after her diagnosis she was thrilled to co-host a beautiful first year anniversary reception for her son, **Rob**, and his lovely wife, **Jackie**, who had married the year before during COVID.

Three years after her original diagnosis, Kathy received the unwelcome news that she had a recurrence. This shocked her in unexpected ways. Her confidence was shattered, and she became fearful about "what next?" Today, she takes nothing for granted and asks God daily to be with her. Six cycles of chemo behind her, she is once again advocating for herself, seeking second and third opinions. Her prayer is to find peace in whatever decision she makes next.

Kathy is faith filled. Her Manresa friends and other women of faith in her life give her strength. Just like before, she has the love and support of amazing friends. Her entire family, including **Dan** and his wife, **Katie**, **Rob** and **Jackie**, her devoted sisters and brothers, as well as John's siblings and their spouses, and her many nieces and nephews, are all concerned, offer help and pray for her. Now she has even more reason to continue to conquer this disease, as she is going to become a grandmother for the first time in November. Nothing says HOPE like the anticipation of a Baby Boy! ❤️



You are invited to attend the complimentary interactive, empowering, annual educational event hosted by students of **Oakland University's Doctor of Physical Therapy Program – Wednesday, November 13 from 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.** (registration begins at 3:30 pm). Door prizes and goodie bags too for every participant!

Location: Oakland University Campus, Human Health Building, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester, MI 48309.

Oakland University Physical Therapy students and faculty will be offering education on various topics of interest regarding the benefits of physical therapy and cancer survivorship. These eager students work hard every year in organizing this event and we are honored that they wish to do this for us again this year. This event is limited to approximately 30 in attendance.

We will be joined by Sharing & Caring Breast Cancer Education and Support Group. More information to follow!

Cake Mix Bar Cookies

Many thanks to Barb Blakemore for sharing the recipe for the delicious cookies which she so generously brought to our August meeting.

1 box yellow cake mix
 ½ cup melted butter
 ½ cup brown sugar
 2 eggs

Mix all together well



Stir in:
 1/3 cup English toffee bits
 ½ cup chocolate chips
 ½ cup butterscotch chips
 (optional) ½ cup peanuts

Spread into a greased 9 x 13 baking pan.
 Bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes, until toothpick comes out dry.

A. The one on the range.



Q. If there are 5 flies in the kitchen, which one is the cowboy?

PLEASE NOTE

Meeting Location Change!

Group meetings will now be held at
4 pm on the 2nd Thursday
 of the month at

Gilda's Club

3517 Rochester Rd.
 Royal Oak, MI 48073
 (located north of 13 Mile Rd.)

September 12
October 10

Note: There will be NO meeting on Nov. 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.

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HAPPY SURVIVORSary

September

Nannette Gearhart	25 years!
Terrie Karebian	21
Julie Fisk	19
Deanna Cosens	13
Jordan Tolmie	13
Sharon Witkowski	13
Cheryl DiChiera	12
Chrissy Zigulis	10
Laura Marmorstein	7
Diane Barretta	5

HAPPY SURVIVORSary

October

Linh Cundiff	40 years!
Shirley O'Brien	33
Jill Price-Winters	30
Norma Sullivan	28
Carol Holder	24
Carol Kay	24
Toni Tarczy	22
Carol Lingeman	20
Adele Megdall	9
Debra Savino	8

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.*