



Ovarian Cancer Support Group



By Marcia Gurche

I recently watched an inspiring Netflix movie called “Soul on Fire” which was based on a true story. It was so uplifting because it made me feel that no matter how dire the situation, with the right attitude, support, and faith, a person has the chance of overcoming anything.

Nine-year-old **John O’Leary** was severely burned over his entire body. Given less than a 1% chance of survival, the film depicts John’s grueling road to recovery, supported by his family, Catholic faith, dedicated medical personnel, and a pivotal friendship with legendary St. Louis Cardinals announcer Jack Buck. The movie follows John’s journey from being a victim following the house fire, which he unintentionally started, to becoming a world-renowned motivational speaker. It is a story highlighting his continual fight to find his self-worth and purpose.

We can’t all become motivational speakers, but often after finishing our cancer treatment, we feel the call to do something intentional that will have an impact on the world. There is something we all can do that may help

impact cancer research. It can be as easy as to sign up for Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance’s *Action Alert* (<https://ocrahope.org/advocacy/become-an-advocate/take-action-now/>) so that when there is an important issue affecting cancer research funding, you will be informed and can send a letter or make a phone call to your area congressional representative. This very simple act allows your voice to be heard.

A more active way to become involved in helping secure funding for ovarian cancer research is to participate in one of the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance’s *Advocacy Days*. According to the OCRA, their Advocacy Days “bring patients, survivors, loved ones, and supporters together from all corners of the country to advocate for better health policies for ovarian cancer and gynecological cancers. Advocacy Days are not just about raising awareness and funds for ovarian cancer research, however. They are about sharing stories with legislators who can help make a difference. Statistics tell only one part of the story. Having patients, survivors, and loved ones meet elected officials face-to-face is one of the best ways to create meaningful change.”

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.

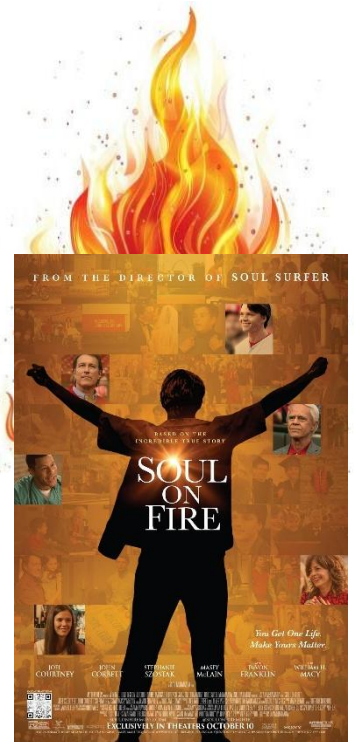
Donations are gratefully accepted and can be made by check payable to **One to One Ovarian Cancer Support Group** c/o Marilyn Brozovic 4793 Alton Dr. Troy, MI 48085

A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.

Having participated in a few Advocacy Days myself, I can honestly say that they are the most empowering and satisfying things I have ever done since my own ovarian cancer diagnosis twenty-five years ago. It felt amazing to sit in the offices of various senators and congressional legislators from Michigan and get the chance to tell them not just my story, but the stories of many of my fellow support group members and other ladies who I have met along the way.

Taking it a step further, if the spirit moves you and you would like to become even more involved in the advocacy movement, you might want to consider becoming an **Advocate Leader** for OCRA. “As an Advocate Leader, you will contribute to, and see the results of, legislative victories that tangibly improve the lives of patients. You will also continue to fight for expanded federal resources for gynecologic cancer and work with patient advocacy groups to provide coverage pathways for new and promising therapies.”

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An Advocate Leader will:

- Develop relationships with elected officials and their staff
- Issue calls to action in their community
- Follow up with legislators who have failed to fulfill Advocate Leaders' requests
- Work with OCRA to organize meetings
- Help train local advocates to increase the ovarian cancer community's presence in a particular state or district (<https://ocrahope.org/advocacy/become-an-advocate/advocate-leaders/>)

Lastly, consider helping to educate the healthcare professionals of tomorrow, or people in the general public, by joining **Survivors Teaching Students®** (STS) or **Survivors Promoting Early Awareness and Knowledge** (SPEAK.) By telling our unique stories of our cancer diagnoses to students and allowing them to ask questions through the STS program, we are making an invaluable contribution to their education. Since its inception, STS has educated over 150,000 students about ovarian cancer and over 1000 ladies have participated in the STS program. Both programs, STS and SPEAK, work hand in hand and are equally gratifying. By educating the general public through the SPEAK program, we hope to motivate someone to become her own advocate and get to a doctor early if symptoms appear, as this may allow for an earlier diagnosis. If you would like more information about the STS or SPEAK programs, please contact **Marilyn Brozovic** (brozovicm87@gmail.com) or **Marcia Gurche** (mgurche@gmail.com.)

The moral of this story is that we can turn lemons into lemonade if we choose to. Just as John O'Leary took a 1% chance of survival and years of excruciating pain and hard work and turned them into a wonderful, fulfilled life, anyone faced with a dire diagnosis can choose how he/she wants to deal with it and with life, post diagnosis. Yes, he had much support along the way, but he also had the faith, hope, and inner strength to search for the answer to that first question he asked his parents after he regained consciousness: "Why Me?"



Fly Fishing Wellness Retreats for Women Who Are Battling or Surviving Cancer

Renew Spirit. Renew Hope. Fish On!

The sport of fly fishing has endured for thousands of years. Its therapeutic powers are renowned and have been well documented. Cancer has yet to be eradicated. Its destruction to the human spirit is unique to each individual affected, yet understood by all who walk the path to overcome the disease. When the human spirit, combined with courage and faith to overcome cancer, connects with a river and the chance to fly fish, well, magic just seems to happen. How do we know that? Many years of experiencing the magic at **Reeling and Healing Midwest's** retreat programs shows this to be true. Each individual who participates in the Reeling & Healing Midwest Retreat Programs is touched in a way that renews their spirit, their joy, their hope and their view of life.

Visit the website fishon.org/dates to check for upcoming dates for 2026.

Connecting Spirit & River

★ PROFILE in *Courage* ★

Maureen Kozicki has a very different message which she likes to share: there is no one “right” way to get through a cancer diagnosis. Going through cancer, she believes, is not a performance - it’s a deeply personal and challenging road to find yourself on and she does whatever she can to encourage cancer patients to find their own way through. She believes that healing is not just physical and that there is always hope. Healing the heart and spirit can be just as powerful as tending to the physical body.

She does not believe in forced positivity and strongly advocates for patients to allow themselves to make room for all feelings including fear, sadness, grief, insecurity and anger. She emphasizes that forcing a positive demeanor shields others from discomfort while denying cancer patients the space to be honest about what they are going through.



Maureen has been cancer free since completing her last chemotherapy treatment following her initial Stage II Clear Cell Ovarian Cancer diagnosis in March of 2014. Her experience reinforced a truth she now speaks openly about: ***Every person’s cancer journey is unique.***

She cautions that there’s a lot of “you should do what I did or you should do what I tell you to do” propaganda which can easily drown out our own inner voice and lead us down an inauthentic path. She acknowledges that finding our own way through can be daunting but in the end being true to yourself is a healing of its own.

With that in mind, Maureen has dedicated the last two years to sharing this message through the Survivors Teaching Students® Program as both a presenter and a facilitator.

Like many people, Maureen was shocked by her cancer diagnosis. She had been very proactive regarding her own health, already eating an “anti-cancer diet” - a whole foods, plant-based diet prior to diagnosis. She was a successful yoga and meditation teacher and in optimal health. The consensus of the people in her life at the time was, “If you can get cancer, anyone can get cancer.”



Maureen supplemented conventional chemotherapy treatment with holistic care from a naturopath oncologist, acupuncturist and guided meditations. She journaled all her true emotions, met virtually with a therapist, and made sure to laugh with her son every day. She read many books that helped her determine her own path including “Radical Remission” by Kelly A. Turner and “Healing Into Life and Death” by Stephen Levine.

After recovering from chemotherapy, Maureen decided to do the traveling that she had always wanted to do before cancer. She enjoyed all the places she visited in Europe but eventually came back to the States. She currently resides in Rochester Hills, Michigan.

Maureen has an undergraduate degree in sociology from The University of Michigan and a master’s degree in business from Madonna College. She worked for Chrysler Corporation in sales and marketing before her son, **James**, was born. Wanting to be home with James, she left the demands of the corporate world and began teaching yoga when James started kindergarten. Maureen was an active volunteer in all of her son’s schools. Out of all of her accomplishments, being a mom to such a great son is the one she is most proud of.


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In addition to speaking and facilitating for the STS (Survivors Teaching Students) and SPEAK (Survivors Promoting Early Awareness and Knowledge) programs, Maureen's zeal for patient advocacy has extended to the world of artificial intelligence as an inaugural member of Radical Health's Patient Advisory Board. Radical Health is a start-up AI company that has created a one-of-a-kind cancer patient AI tool. What Maureen loves most about Radical Health is that they are truly rooted in the patient experience - bringing comprehensive, personalized treatment options right to a patient's fingertips.

Maureen continues to enjoy nature, traveling, and spending time with her son. She is also currently enjoying an online storytelling class and learning how to improve her writing. She is entertaining different ways to tell her story, including the cancer part of her life.

Her main message is simple: "There is no one-size-fits-all approach to healing and living well. Stay true to yourself #DoltYourWay." She is always willing to talk to anyone as they navigate their way through cancer.

You can find Maureen on Facebook and LinkedIn under Maureen Kozicki. For more information on Radical Health, you can go to their website: <https://platform.radicalhealth.ai/>

Maureen wishes the best possible outcomes for all the wonderful women challenged by ovarian cancer and extends immense gratitude for all the women that showed up for her, including Marilyn Brozovic and Marcia Gurche. 

March

Cheryl Meehan	28 yrs!
Bonnie Wolfe	20
Lori Coluzzi	16
Maureen Kozicki	12
Lynne Karty	10
Christine Babish	9
Jill Covert	6
Ashman, Lisa	1

HAPPY SURVIVORSary



April

Roena Sorrels	33 yrs
Suzanne Kauffman	28
Candy Brandon-Watters	23
Michelle Shepherd	22
Barb Livingston	21
Arlene Beyma	10
Kathy Dominczak	10
Pam Peplinski	6
Josalyn Billingsley	3
Jena Hermiz	3

Group Meeting

Group meetings will 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.)

March 12
April 9
May 14

Group Leadership

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JUNE 4

MOSAIC EVENT!

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.

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.

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).

