



## Laura's Letter

As I contemplated what I wanted to say in this edition of the Foundation's Newsletter, I couldn't help but draw upon what I was personally experiencing. After a freak accident in August, I found myself in a cast with a broken foot.



And to make matters worse, it was a non-weight bearing cast on my driver's foot! Needless to say, my normal, daily activities have had to be significantly curtailed, if not suspended all together. I have been forced to rely on the goodness of family and friends for transportation, groceries and otherwise commonplace tasks I have never thought twice about doing myself. I couldn't even get myself a cup of coffee!

The reality of being incapacitated made me think about how our cancer patients must feel. They too did not choose to be sick and incapacitated. There may be heartache and guilt that may accompany having to rely on others for things they have always done for themselves. The reality of giving up all or some independence is a tough pill to swallow for many. And it certainly can prove to be difficult on family and caretakers too.

The article to the right of this piece introduces 10 ways to help prevent Caregiver Burnout. I hope that you and your family will be able to find one or two take-away points that might be helpful for your own personal situation.

So, as you or your family member travels this journey called Cancer, please remember that the Foundation is available to help patients and their caregivers with rides, resources, supportive services and guidance. Our wonderful Beacon of Hope Volunteers are here daily in the hallway and Infusion Room to help provide comfort, coffee and companionship.

Please stop by or call the Foundation Office for more information or for assistance.

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## CAREGIVER BURNOUT: 10 ways to recharge & refocus

Take care of yourself and become a better caregiver in the process

Caring for others can take so much time, work and effort that stress and anxiety often get the best of you. Studies show that female caregivers, in particular, have more emotional and physical health problems. The key to avoiding burnout is using regular tools to keep yourself in check.

- 1** Ask for and accept help. If you have other family members, talk about a game plan for dividing up responsibilities. How much time can each person realistically give? How can long-distance loved ones contribute? Who will pay for what? If you have no immediate family, seek out and use community resources, both for yourself and the person you're caring for.
- 2** Consider respite care. Respite care offers a temporary break to caregivers. It can range from a few hours of in-home care to a short stay in a nursing home or assisted living facility.
- 3** Know your limits. Guilt can play on your ability to say no. Be realistic with yourself about what you can and cannot handle, based on your other responsibilities to your spouse, children, work, school, etc.
- 4** Talk about your caregiving experience. Research has shown that counseling and support groups, in combination with respite care (see above) and other services, can help caregivers maintain their role longer, with less stress and greater satisfaction. Join a support group for caregivers in your area, see a therapist or even talk to a trusted friend.
- 5** Take it one day at a time. Recognize that you will have good days and bad days, and try to embrace it all. Even when you're feeling resentful or angry, know that this is normal and doesn't define you for eternity. It doesn't make you a bad person or a bad caregiver.
- 6** Stay in touch with friends and family. Social activities can help you feel connected and can provide emotional outlets for stress.
- 7** Get enough sleep. It sounds so simple, but a good night's sleep can make facing any challenge seem all the more manageable. Make getting at least seven hours a priority.
- 8** Eat well & exercise. Scarfing down a sugary snack because you have no time to eat will only make you crash later, making you more vulnerable to irritability, stress and fatigue. Opt for snacks like nuts or fruit to keep you on an even keel longer.
- 9** Make time for yourself. This is not a luxury, but essential for caregivers. If nothing else, set aside five minutes each day to meditate or simply be still. This is time just for you.
- 10** Educate yourself. The more you know about both your loved one's condition and the resources available to you, the more effective you will be in taking care of the both of you. Look online or check out books at your local library.

Sources: <http://womenshealth.gov/faq/caregiver.pdf>

Gallant, M. P., & Connell, C. M. (1998). The stress process among dementia spouse caregivers: Are caregivers at risk for negative health behavior change? *Research on Aging*, 20(3), 267-297.

## Our Mission

The ECHO Cancer Foundation is a unique, non-profit organization dedicated to providing hope, education and supportive care to those whose lives have been touched by cancer.

Our programs and services are available to cancer patients, their families and caregivers, regardless of where they receive treatment.



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### Thank you... Abby... Amy... Justin... Shannon.

What a fun summer we had with the  
Beacon of Hope Junior Volunteers!

Abby, Amy, Justin, and Shannon brought their own sparkling personalities and individual areas of expertise to their summer internships with the ECHO Cancer Foundation. Their responsibilities ranged from keeping the ever-busy coffeepots full to visiting with patients. They also worked in the Foundation Office, helping to reorganize patient information and educational items to make it easier to access, doing mailings and even computer work. We even have an active Mission Fish account, the non-profit portion of eBay, loaded with several donated items that will benefit the Foundation when sold!

For those of you who had the good fortune to meet these young people, I know you will agree, we had a great group this summer and we hope to see their special smiles again during school breaks.

## The ECHO Cancer Foundation Volunteer Celebration

The Annual ECHO Cancer Foundation Volunteer Celebration was held on Friday, June 4th, at the Cottage at the Spa at Norwich Inn. This year, 36 ECHO Beacon of Hope and One to One Cancer Mentors joined Terri Slater, President of the Board; Laura Stevenson-Flom, Foundation Executive Director; members of the Foundation's Board of Directors and Anne Slam, The ECHO Oncology Practice Administrator to honor and celebrate the **2000+ volunteer hours** this group has donated to the Foundation programs this year.

The Beacon of Hope Program offers patients and family members comfort care during the sometimes long and tedious office visits for chemotherapy and blood products. A cup of coffee, tea, hot chocolate, goodies, a warm blanket and pillow are just a few ways this dedicated group of women and men help make a patients day a bit better.



The One to One Cancer Mentor Program closely matches new cancer patients with survivors of similar age, family dynamics and diagnosis. A One to One Mentor can offer an active cancer patient non-medical advice, insight and hope that there is life after a cancer diagnosis. Both the Beacon of Hope and One to One Cancer Mentor Programs are available to patients free of charge.

If you would like a Mentor, please contact Laura in the Foundation Office at 860-884-0102 or email [laurasf@echocancerfoundation.com](mailto:laurasf@echocancerfoundation.com).

*We are extremely grateful to all of our ECHO Cancer Foundation Volunteers. Please join us in thanking them when you see them around the Practice.*

## GENTLE YOGA – Rose City Senior Center

### Being a senior has its benefits!

Membership at Rose City Senior Center for people 55 and over is \$25 for a year.

These classes for seniors are \$18 for six weeks, or \$4 for drop ins.

There are three yoga classes each week at Rose City Senior Center:



We work plenty hard, we laugh a lot, and we do not get down on the floor.

**1. Wednesday, 11:00 – 12 Noon,**  
taught by **Sandy Hartnett**

**2. Friday 10:45 – 11:45am,**  
taught by **Carol Klammer and Sandy Hartnett (alternately)**

These are floor classes: bring your mat and a small cushion or a towel for a little extra cushioning.

**3. Thursday 2:45 – 3:45pm, taught by Carol Klammer**

This is a chair yoga class where poses are done seated or standing.

Contact Carol Klammer for more information on classes at Rose City Senior Center. You can call the Center at 860-889-5960 for more information about all their programs.

## More Thank You's!

A group of students from The Integrated Day Charter School, in Norwich recently presented The Foundation with a wonderful surprise, a check for \$172.71!

Ben, Joel, Megan, Owen, Danny, Kara, Gauresh, Tyler, Vicky, Tegan, assisted by their Advisors, did a service learning project. They decided on a bake sale and raised money by selling cookies, brownies, muddy buddies and cup cones. They reported that, "It was a success! Everyone liked them."

Their donation will be used to provide supportive services, guidance and education to cancer patients and their caregivers and to make sure no one lacks care or comfort while living with cancer.

We commend these very special students and we appreciate the time, effort and thought they put into such a meaningful community service project.

## Lymphedema Support Group for Breast Cancer Patients

**Next Meeting: December 7th**  
(Meets quarterly— 1st Tuesday of that month)

**4:00 - 5:30 pm**

**Backus Outpatient Care Center  
Conference Room 1**

Please come for an informational session and to share stories and experiences with others in similar situations.

**This program is FREE**, but registration is requested by calling (860) 823-6317. Refreshments will be provided.

The 2011 meetings currently scheduled for:  
March 1, June 7, September 6 & December 6

Sponsored by The ECHO Cancer Foundation  
and Backus Rehabilitation Services

For more information about any ECHO Foundation events or programs, please contact Laura Stevenson-Flom at 860-886-8362 ext. 289