



IDA & JOSEPH FRIEND CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

A NEWSLETTER TO FIND SUPPORT & INFORMATION ~ FALL 2004, ISSUE #43

Healing through Dance by Anne Krantz, PhD, ADTR

Every Tuesday morning something remarkable happens across the street from the UCSF Cancer Center. In a comfortable room at the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, cancer patients and survivors at all stages of treatment and recovery come together to heal their bodies, minds and spirits by practicing one of the oldest forms of medicine there is - dance. Since 1995 the Cancer Resource Center has offered "Healing through Dance" a dance therapy support group. The extraordinary women and men who have participated in this group share their work, wisdom, hearts and lives in movement, dance and words. No dance background is necessary.

Safe, healthful movement brings life into their bodies and gives them confidence to move in their own ways. "I love this class!" says Karen, a breast cancer survivor and participant of 4 years, "There is always something new to explore, because it's all coming from me, inside."

As participants learn about their bodies, they discover what they need and how to address important issues such as pain, physical limits, interpreting symptoms, and dealing with emo-



tional issues. Opening up possibilities of movement and expression releases tension and unlocks energy which can then be used for other purposes.

The needs and interests of our participants always guides the work, so no two classes are ever the same. Goals within a class might include: enlivening, freeing up and mobilizing the body; expressing the will to live or blocks to their life force; working creatively on what makes life meaningful; enjoying life and movement by increasing range, strength, resilience; and effective rest and relaxation. While the emphasis is on the individual, a sense of connection and support among the participants naturally arises. "Dancing through emotions and physical challenges leaves me freer in my body and joyous in spirit", says Karen, "People who see me after say I'm glowing!"

A release form is required for attendance. For more information, or to register, call the CRC at 415.885.3693.

Anne Krantz, Ph.D., ADTR, is a dance therapist and clinical psychologist. She has facilitated the Healing Through Dance class at UCSF since 1996. She also works with adults and children in private practice in San Francisco.

Talking with Your Children About Cancer

by Naomi Hoffer, MA



If you are faced with a diagnosis of cancer in your family, you may feel a strong desire to protect your child(ren) from the burden of the illness. You may not want to worry them unnecessarily or scare them about uncertain possibilities. You may not know how to talk about

cancer in a way that they can understand, or you may feel so caught up in the emotion of it yourself that you cannot imagine talking about it without breaking down in tears.

All of these reactions are common and valid. At the same time, it is important to realize that no matter how well you think you are hiding your illness, children have an incredible ability to detect very subtle changes in the family norm. Even if they do not understand the source of the prob-

lem, children can sense that something is wrong: Mommy may be away from home or sleeping more than usual; Daddy may seem more irritable; big brother may be exchanging different 'looks' with the parents. However subtle the cues, children left to themselves will often conclude that things are much worse than they really are. Furthermore, they will likely feel that *they* are the cause for the family's upset. They may become more insecure knowing that something is different; sensing a subtle growing distance between themselves and the other family members. And, worst of all, they may learn not to trust those who they love the most.

More than ever, children in a family with cancer need to feel secure in knowing that those closest to them can be relied upon to help them make sense of the world through honesty and communication. The following article is designed to offer tips in helping you discuss cancer with your children, whether the diagnosis be yours or another family members. Please note that this is a brief overview, and more detailed information can be obtained by visiting the library at the Cancer Resource Center. *Continued on page 2*

In this issue.....

- One Family Gives Back.....3
- Reflections by Joseph Friend.....3
- Black Bean Pumpkin Soup.....4
- CRC News.....4
- Volunteer Opportunities.....4

HOW TO TELL YOUR CHILD THAT YOU OR SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY HAS CANCER

The primary goals in talking with your children are threefold: to do so in language they can understand, to anticipate the information that will be most relevant to them, and to be honest. While you know best what the needs of your children are, here are some general guidelines you may want to follow:

Practice beforehand.

First take some time to absorb the information yourself before you talk to your children. Then practice what you want to say and how you want to say it. Practicing will

Some have found a garden analogy to be helpful, with cancer acting as a weed.

help you be as calm and objective as possible during the conversation so that you can focus on your child's fears and put aside your own for the time being. But also know that *it is okay to cry*. Crying is a healthy response to fear and sadness, and seeing you cry might even give your child permission to do the same.

Find a good time and setting.

Choose a time and place that is free from distractions. Try not to have the talk just before any social event that your child will be attending, such as school or baseball practice.

Keep it simple and relevant.

Too much information can be overwhelming but not enough may bring about more questions than answers. Mention the name of the disease, the location in the body, how it is treated, and how it will impact them. Use language that is appropriate for their age. For younger children, you might say something like, "Daddy is sick and needs to go to the hospital to get better. Sleeping more will help him get better, so you might not see him before you leave for school in the morning" Older children may need a more detailed explanation of what cancer is. Some have found a garden analogy to be helpful, with cancer acting as a weed.

Put blame to rest.

The younger the child, the more they engage in "magical thinking," a belief that their thoughts, words, or actions have far-reaching consequences. They are therefore likely to feel responsible for the illness in some way. Assure them by saying that nothing they or anyone else did caused - or could have prevented - the cancer.

Tell them cancer is not contagious.

Children's familiarity with illness is usually in the context of colds or flu's - conditions which are contagious. Thus, they may be afraid that they or someone else in the family can 'catch' cancer. Assure them that this is not true.

Prepare your children for the effects of treatment.

The physical changes that often accompany cancer treatment such as hair loss or extreme fatigue, can sometimes frighten children or make them think a person has changed or is different. It is best to explain this beforehand and reassure them that the person is still the same on the inside.

End on a positive note.

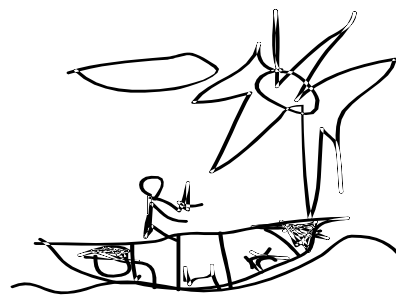
While you do not want to be dishonest in any way, it is still important to leave your child with feelings of hope. However poor the prognosis, there is always hope. It is important that your children believe this and that you believe this too.

Invite questions and answer honestly.

Remember that children will often infer the worst if they try to fill in the gaps themselves, so invite lots of questions and let them know you will update them regularly. Ask them to tell you what they hear from other sources so you can correct any misinformation. There may be many questions your children have that you, and even your doctor, cannot answer. Do not be afraid to say, "I don't know" if you don't. A real and honest connection with you is more important to them than the specifics.

Encourage them to share their feelings.

Children may experience feelings such as anger, sadness, guilt, fear, confusion or embarrassment when they hear that a family member has cancer. These reactions are not only normal responses, but helpful to the coping process if expressed. Let them know that it is okay for them to have lots of different feelings and that you have many of them too. You might



Drawing can help children express their feelings.

want to encourage younger children to express themselves through activities such as playing with dolls or drawing. Older children might prefer poetry, writing, or just plain talking. Be open to all of their feelings and reassure them of your love.

Let children help but also let them play.

You can help children feel involved in the healing process by letting them do helpful, age-appropriate tasks, such as fetching a glass of water or helping prepare breakfast. But realize that the stress of having someone ill in the family can be great. They will need lots of time to just play, relax, and be children.

Arrange for additional check-ins by another adult.

Children may be uncomfortable expressing all of their feel-

Continued on next page

ings to the parent who has cancer. It is helpful if another adult is available for the child to talk with privately. If there is no other parent in the child's life, ask a relative, physician or another person close to your family to occasionally 'check-in' with your child.

Be prepared to discuss death.

This is the topic that most parents dread. Yet, the courage and openness you show in acknowledging death will probably free your energies up to focus more on life. If you or your family member is very ill with cancer, you should be prepared to discuss the possibility of death with your children even if they do not bring it up themselves. You may want to consult a trained counselor or spiritual director first, or have this person be present during the meeting. There are also great books and other resources available to you to help facilitate the discussion of death with children.

Kathleen McCue writes, "All life is terminal. Even if one's own timetable is drastically shortened by a medical diagnosis, the end is not yet. There is still time; time for children and parents who love each other to make the most of it. Don't try to shield your children from making the most of that time."

Remember that it won't be perfect. There will be days when you will feel fatigued, angry, scattered, or anxious, and your communication with your children will not go according to plan. Forgive yourself, apologize to your children if necessary, and move on. Continue in your effort to be as honest, approachable, communicative and loving a parent you can be. And please don't be afraid to ask for help through the process. ♦

References:

Cancer in the Family, Sue P. Heiney et al., American Cancer Society.
How to Help Children Through a Parent's Serious Illness, Kathleen McCue, Martin's Press.
Helping Children Understand Cancer, Cancer Care Briefs, New York.

There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than 10,000 tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.
--Washington Irving

Some Reflections by Joseph H. Friend...

1. Store all misfortune down with hopeful thoughts and prayers
2. Have kind words, they do as much good as selfish words do harm.
3. Become a peacemaker of kindness and good deeds.
4. Never underestimate the power of forgiveness.
5. Make your good life a life filled with inner serenity.
6. Always keep your capacity for faith and believe in prayers.
7. Be in a position of a giver rather than a receiver.
8. Extend compassion and tolerance with loving care to all others.
9. Be cautious of making irrevocable decisions in hurried haste.
10. Resolve to live each day by the "Golden Rule" – do unto others as you would want them to do unto you.
11. Try never to think negative thoughts about yourself.
12. Transform your negative feelings into a position of optimism with a vocabulary of blessings.

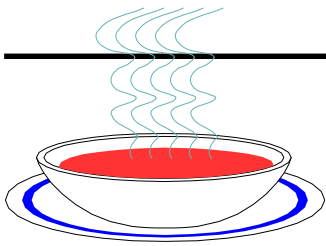
~Joseph H. Friend

One Family Gives Back...

Chris Funk was 28 - and his wife pregnant with their first child - when he first learned he had a level 2/3 glioma astrocytoma. Surgery could not remove all of the tumor, and after months of indecision and searching for the best form of treatment, they put their faith in Dr. Michael Prados at UCSF who enrolled Chris in a Phase II chemotherapy clinical trial.

Now at thirty-one, Chris and his wife Brandi feel especially blessed. Over 20 MRIs and 18 months of chemo treatment later, Chris now lives an extremely wonderful and fulfilling life with his family in their new Wisconsin home. "Everything happens for a reason" he says, "in our opinion, you just have to figure out what that reason is and make the best of it."

As a way to give back and show gratitude for their good fortune, they created **HEADRUSH** - an annual event where 100% of the proceeds will go towards brain tumor research and cancer support and resource centers, including the CRC. The event will be held on Saturday, October 2nd, 2004 in Wisconsin's Governor Dodge State Park. It is a day of celebration, of enjoying life with friends and loved ones. Brandi writes, "We believe that spending time with the people that you love, and doing the things that you enjoy, is how to live with the most grace and success. We also learned that brain tumor research and cancer support centers are a necessity these days. We are a community... now let's play!" For more information on this event, please check out their website at www.headrushevent.org.



Black Bean Pumpkin Soup *by Natalie Ledesma, MS, RD.*

This hearty Fall soup is fantastic! The pumpkin (or squash) and the tomatoes in the recipe provide cancer-fighting carotenoids that also strengthen the immune system. The beans add protein and dietary fiber. Fiber is important in the diet for a variety of reasons, including bowel regularity and cholesterol lowering effects. It also may function as an anti-carcinogen by binding to toxic compounds and carcinogens circulating in the body, which can then be eliminated. Additionally, a high fiber diet works to reduce hormone levels that may be involved in the progression of hormone-related cancers. The onion and garlic provide allium compounds, which are rich in flavonoids and organosulfur compounds that have anticancer properties. The allium compounds may facilitate the elimination of carcinogens, decrease reproduction of tumor cells, and block cancer-causing chemicals. A truly delicious soup with great health benefits too – enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 1 large red onion, chopped (2 1/2 cups raw)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4-5 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon + 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 15-ounce cans chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 cups cooked mashed pumpkin or other dark orange squash (kabocha squash works great!)
- 1 16-ounce can diced tomatoes (with juice)
- 3 15 1/2-ounce cans black beans
- 1/4 cup sherry
- 2 tablespoon seasoned rice vinegar (or apple cider vinegar)

Nutrient Information (per 1 cup serving):

Calories: 225	Fat: 3 g
Dietary fiber: 10 g	Protein: 12 g

Mmmmm!

In a large saucepan, sauté onion in olive oil until wilted. While onions are cooking, add the garlic, cumin, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper. When the onions are barely golden brown, add the broth, cooked squash, tomatoes, black beans, sherry, and vinegar. Bring to a boil, turn down heat, and simmer for about 15 minutes. Pureé in a blender or food processor.

Recipe adapted from the Women's Healthy & Eating Living (WHEL) Study at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). Developed by Vicky Newman, MS, RD, WHEL Study Nutrition Coordinator.

CRC News

There are two friendly new faces that you will see at the Cancer Resource Center! We are delighted to have **Paul Asfour** on board as our new Volunteer Manger. Paul comes to us with a deep commitment to volunteerism and a passion for helping people with cancer. He is happy to be returning to



Paul Asfour

UCSF where he had worked in the past in the School of Medicine's Residency programs. Stop in to meet Paul; and he'd love to hear your recommendations for local ethnic restaurants! You will also see a new social worker at the Cancer Center. **Michele Francis**, LCSW has joined the UCSF social work team and her office is

in the CRC. Michele has lots of experience working with people with serious illnesses and their families, and she is a great advocate and problem solver! She will be facilitating the Family and Friends group and hopes to get the Oral, Head and Neck Cancer group started again. Welcome Paul and Michele!

Volunteer Opportunities

Did you know that the Cancer Resource Center is funded mainly by donations and grants? And that the foundation of the information and support services we provide are from volunteers? As someone who is reading our newsletter, you may be an ideal candidate to volunteer at the CRC. Volunteers help to distribute information to the various clinics at the Cancer Center, assist the nutritionist, work with the library and informational materials, and assist patients over the phone and in-person with a wide variety of inquires.

If you are interested in joining our volunteer team please go to our website at <http://cc.ucsf.edu/crc>, download our Volunteer Intake Form and mail it to us. Or call our new Volunteer Manager, Paul Asfour at 885-3785 to discuss your interest.

