



TO CELEBRATE LIFE
BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION

in the LOOP

News from To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation

FALL/WINTER 2016

No one should face breast cancer alone.

From The Board President



As 2016 comes to a close along with my role as President of this Board, this is my last note to you through *in the LOOP*. I thank you for your support and thank all of our very hard working volunteers. The success of To Celebrate Life is because of YOU!

It has been a very productive 20th year. In the Spring, we were able to grant \$300,000 to our grantees bringing the total granted since inception to over \$4.55 million dollars. This is truly amazing for this volunteer-based organization.

We had a very successful Stepping Out gala in September. And, this year, an anonymous donor challenged us to a matching donation up to \$50,000 for all new and increased donations. This will be available through the end of the year.

As I begin my new role as Immediate Past President, I do so knowing we have several new and dynamic Board members, a robust Fund Development program in place, and a well organized Volunteer Committee with many new volunteers — which represent our future. And, I am proud to leave you all in the very capable hands of my successor, Kristen Bennett.

I know you join me in supporting and wishing her well as we continue to pursue our vision — **No one should face breast cancer alone.**

All my best for a very special holiday and a happy and healthy New Year.

Warmly,

Jane G. Pallas, President
Board of Directors

We raise money and give it away...

to Bay Area nonprofits that provide services for underserved people in the Bay Area dealing with breast cancer.

No one should face breast cancer alone.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Tee It Up To Celebrate Life
Golf Tournament**

Monday, May 8, 2017
Marin Country Club – Novato

IN THIS ISSUE

- **From The Board President** 1
- **21st Annual Stepping Out Gala**
Stepping Into The Future **2-3**
- **Face of the Foundation** - Claudia Gardner **4**
- **How Your Dollars Help**
Marin General Hospital Foundation **5**
- **Community Events** - Supporting To Celebrate Life
See Margie.Run, Our 2016 Community Partners **6**
- **Tidbits** - CNN Hero - Ceres Project's Cathryn Couch
Charlene Mikeska - Celebration Foundation **7**
- **Just Say Yes!**
Become a To Celebrate Live Volunteer **8**

21st Annual Stepping Out Gala – Stepping Into The Future

Guests attending To Celebrate Life's Annual Stepping Out Gala September 24th enjoyed avant-garde decor and modern entertainment while raising over \$300,000 for underserved breast cancer patients throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Close to 500 people joined together to celebrate this year's class of survivor models. Prominent local physicians escorted the models down the runway in our annual fashion show — the inspirational highlight of the evening.



The event began with cocktails and a Silent Auction which featured upscale items and luxurious getaways. While guests enjoyed a gourmet dinner by Elaine Bell Catering, the show opened with a performance featuring dancers from the California Institute of the Arts choreographed by Paige O'Mara. Paddles were raised during a high energy Fund A Need and Live Auction with getaways including a Las Vegas/Sir Elton John concert (with backstage Green Room passes), Cannes, Rancho La Puerta and Hawaii. We are grateful for two

generous friends of the Foundation who matched the Fund A Need donations. The celebration continued with dancing to the music of Entourage, underwritten by the Blanche Thebom Trust Fund.



The 2016 Stepping Out models, with donations from friends and family, raised over \$24,000 in our Sponsor A Model program. These funds will enhance grants awarded in the Spring of 2017— our 21st year of helping fund nonprofits that provide emergency and direct services. Special thanks to Stepping Out Gala Co-Chairs Julie Ballard and Judie Belmont, who together with committee leads and many volunteers, created a memorable event.

"From start to finish, the model experience was uplifting and deeply meaningful. It presented me with an opportunity for growth, and gifted me with new friends and a renewed appreciation for each day. There were a plethora of events meant to adore and prepare the models, each meticulously orchestrated. Patient, warm-hearted volunteers were always at the ready to support the models. The expert and practiced leadership coalesced our diverse group of participants to raise awareness and support a cause we all care about."

Lynn Fletcher, 2016 Model — Stepping Out To Celebrate Life





Face of the Foundation – Claudia Gardner



Like so many of our volunteers, Claudia's first experience with To Celebrate Life was as a model. She walked the runway in 2011 and had such a fantastic time and made so many good friends, she wanted to stay connected.

Claudia found being in the fashion show a little overwhelming (in a good way). She loved the fittings at the stores and clearly remembers the skin

tight jeans, gorgeous mustard boots, plaid wool jacket and driving cap she wore from Sundance.

From model to model tea organizer

Claudia wanted other breast cancer survivors to have the uplifting experience she had so, at the Volunteer Kickoff in January 2012, she signed up to co-chair the model tea with Juliana Blackwell. After a couple of years on that committee, she became a Model Mom responsible for recruiting, along with Dianne Sheridan. This year, Patty Johnstone joined their team.

Claudia explains that the role of recruiter is challenging because they start six months in advance and it's difficult for people to plan that far ahead. The road from sign-up to the final event can be rocky with models dropping out along the way, and having to find replacements, often at the last minute can be difficult. But with her easy-going, nurturing personality, Claudia takes it all in stride.

"Seeing the models change and grow over time is so gratifying. Some don't think they can do it, others may have privacy issues, but I love talking them through it and watching them change their mindset and attitude."

What this Model Mom likes best

Seeing the models change and grow over time is so gratifying to Claudia. "Some don't think they can do it, others may have privacy issues, but I love talking them through it and watching them change their mindset and attitude," she says. "And some of them come back and make the best volunteers." She also enjoys the camaraderie among "the amazing group of women who make it happen."

While Claudia isn't new to volunteering, this is her first experience as a long-term volunteer. A dental hygienist with a long career in San Rafael, she has offered her services in dental clinics for children and adults, and has "manned" the dental table at the local senior health fair.

Now, in addition to her role as Model Mom, Claudia helps organize the Volunteer Thank You dinner held at Ristorante Servino.

To Celebrate Life sends a big "thank you" to Claudia for her dedication and her many heartfelt contributions.



Stepping Out To Celebrate Life – 2011



How Your DOLLARS HELP

MARIN GENERAL HOSPITAL FOUNDATION — a 2016 Grantee

Strength ABC Training Program for Lymphedema Patients and Diagnostic Fund



Alison Gause
Patient Navigator

Lymphedema is a condition that occurs in some breast cancer patients after surgical removal of lymph nodes, with other risk factors contributing as well. It causes build-up of fluid in the arms, forearms, shoulder, torso and breast resulting in swelling, discomfort and a limited range of motion. According to the National Cancer Institute, 5% to 17% of women who have had a sentinel lymph node biopsy may develop the condition.

Marin General Hospital Foundation's Strength ABC (ABC=After Breast Cancer) training program helps those living with or at risk for lymphedema. The program is based on a research study by Dr. Kathryn Schmitz (U of Pennsylvania Medical School) which showed that structured, progressive weight training helps reduce symptoms.

"What I find most rewarding about my job is being able to offer personalized assistance and eliminate any potential barriers to care. I like taking the logistical burden off people's shoulders during an already stressful time so they can focus on healing."

Alison Gause, Patient Navigator
MGH Center for Integrative Health and Wellness

"We partner with Sunflower Wellness exercise counselors who were trained in the Strength ABC curriculum," says Alison Gause, Patient Navigator at the MGH Center for Integrative Health & Wellness.

Alison works with physicians to help identify candidates for the program. Many of them are underserved and can't afford a gym membership or a personal trainer to help control or prevent lymphedema.

"What I find most rewarding about my job," says Alison, "is being able to offer personalized assistance and eliminate any potential barriers to care. I like taking the logistical burden off people's shoulders during an already stressful time so they can focus on healing."

Funding for screening and diagnostic procedures

The To Celebrate Life grant also covers MRI screenings, diagnostic mammograms and ultrasound exams for the underinsured. For many of these patients, English is not their first language, so hospital interpreters step in to assist with the application process, and breast health nurses and staff help schedule appointments.

So far this year, 25 diagnostic procedures have been funded from the grant and 20% of those women have been diagnosed with breast cancer, which might have gone undetected without early screening.

"We're incredibly grateful for the grant," says Alison. "Because of your generosity we are able to offer these programs and improve care to our patients."

Help To Celebrate Life
continue to
MAKE A DIFFERENCE
in someone's life.

DONATE TODAY!

COMMUNITY EVENTS — Supporting To Celebrate Life

See.Margie.Run — Racing to Give Back

Margie Torres always had a goal to complete a half marathon. After her breast cancer diagnosis, her priorities quickly changed. Realizing life was too short to put her goals on hold, she was determined to reach them. She became inspired to give back to the people and organizations that assisted her and to help others during their race against the disease.

Inspired by her experience as a 2015 Stepping Out model and impressed with the Foundation's mission to provide funding to local nonprofits, Margie returned the next year to volunteer. Additionally, she organized a personal fundraiser to help those impacted by breast cancer. She decided to participate in four East Bay Half Marathons during 2016 with all cumulative race sponsorships benefiting To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation. You can read about Margie's race triumphs and challenges, and make a sponsorship donation at [See.Margie.Run](#). The fundraising campaign will be open through December 31, 2016.



Above: Margie Torres models in Stepping Out – 2015
Above right: Alameda Half Marathon June 5, 2016

"From my perspective, To Celebrate Life provides financial support to nonprofits to help for immediate needs, but more importantly, the organization provides things that are priceless — offering women and men, who have lived through the experience of breast cancer, a community and space where they feel understood, appreciated and welcomed. They offer love, hope, joy and friendship!"

— Margie Torres

Thanks to Our 2016 Community Partners

To Celebrate Life is grateful to our dedicated community partners for their support and fundraising efforts this year. Funds raised will benefit our 2017 Grants Program which helps underserved people in our community struggling with breast cancer. Thank you for supporting our mission!

- Harbor Point Charitable Foundation – *Bands to Battle Breast Cancer*
- Meadow Club Women's Golf Association
- Mill Valley Firefighters Association
- See.Margie.Run
- CrossFit North Marin
- North Bay FC Wave
- Jonathan Marks Realty
- Mollie Stone's Markets eScrip



To Celebrate Life Board member and Community Events Chair Jeanne Capurro accepts a generous check from Mill Valley Firefighters Association. Proceeds were donated from their Breast Cancer Awareness pink t-shirt fundraiser.

TIDBITS

CNN Hero — Ceres Community Project's Cathryn Couch Serving up healthy meals and hope

Congratulations to Cathryn Couch, Founder and Executive Director of The Ceres Community Project — a To Celebrate Life grantee. In September, Cathryn was nominated as a CNN Hero. [READ the story.](#)

Since 2007, The Ceres Community Project has trained more than 2,000 young volunteers and delivered more than 450,000 nutritious organic meals to people with cancer or other serious illnesses.

Local teens volunteer after school in four commercial kitchens in Sonoma, Marin and Alameda counties — preparing 100% organic meals for clients and their families. The organization also has a leadership training and gardening program, where teens raise about 5,000 pounds of food every year.

A 2007 grant from To Celebrate Life provided seed money to help Ceres get started. We are so honored to support this amazing organization!



Cathryn Couch with volunteer teen chefs — The Ceres Community Project

Charlene Mikeska — Celebration Founder Supports Chico Breast Cancer Community

Former Stepping Out model and longtime To Celebrate Life volunteer, Charlene Mikeska, is the passionate founder of Celebration Foundation, based in Chico. Charlene was diagnosed with breast cancer 24 years ago. She knows firsthand the challenges faced by women and men dealing with the disease.

As a new survivor living in the Bay Area, Charlene was invited to participate in the first Stepping Out To Celebrate Life gala. As part of this extraordinary breast cancer fundraiser and fashion show she experienced great healing. Charlene found the affirmation of the volunteers and attendees to be incredibly empowering and she continued as a gala volunteer until she retired and moved to Chico in 2006.

She decided to create a similar event in her new hometown, and Celebration was born. A runway fashion show with models who are all breast cancer survivors is held every other year. Every Celebration event demands meticulous planning, with coordination needed for each model's hair, makeup, and attire. The volunteers do it all!

With valuable mentoring from Stepping Out To Celebrate Life volunteers, Charlene's persistence and hard work paid off, and her foundation was awarded a generous grant. First presented in 2009, Celebration delighted an audience of 200. By 2010, with the help of a generous grant, Celebration Foundation was formed. Celebration 2012 was attended by 400 guests, and 2014's event hosted nearly 500. The fifth Celebration event was held on October 29, 2016.

To Celebrate Life congratulates Charlene for her efforts to support the Chico breast cancer community.



Just Say YES! — Become a To Celebrate Life Volunteer

Volunteers are the core of our organization and we're always looking for people to join our Foundation family. Whatever your talent, skills and interests, there are so many opportunities and ways you can contribute and help make a difference. Volunteering is fun and so rewarding!

Our WISH LIST

Do you have skills in these areas?

- Event planning
- Production
- Fundraising
- Auction/raffle soliciting
- Videography
- Video-editing
- Photography
- General administration
- Database
- Community relations
- Marketing
- Communications
- Graphic design
- Project management

READ more about how you can make a difference and **Just Say YES!**

Sign up by filling out our **Volunteer** form or **Contact us** for more information.



Julianna Blackwell and Lisa Bernardi
2016 Volunteer Kickoff

Make a Difference With a LASTING GIFT

Join our **Celebration Circle**. By including a planned gift to the Foundation as part of your estate plan, you'll help ensure the continuation of To Celebrate Life's work for years to come. You can also create a Legacy Fund honoring or in memory of a loved one. **Contact us** for further information.

You can help fulfill our vision — **No one should face breast cancer alone.**

Your donations enable our grantees to continue their work supporting underserved patients coping with overwhelming health and financial emergencies after a breast cancer diagnosis.



Help ensure that future breast cancer patients receive the help they need.



Join Our Facebook Community

If you have Foundation updates or meeting information to submit for consideration for the next issue, send to: **in the LOOP**

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