



NO ONE should face breast cancer alone.

From The Board President



We raise money and give it away...

But, we could not do it without our volunteers — our most valuable asset

I am very honored to again be serving as Board President of To Celebrate Life as we embark on our next 20 years.

Our vision is that **No one should face breast cancer alone.** And, to make this a reality, we raise money and we give it away. It is as simple as that.

So, to whom do we give our money? To Celebrate Life supports nonprofit organizations in the nine Bay Area counties that provide direct and emergency services to women and men living with breast cancer issues. Services include help with rent, medical co-payments, utilities, navigational assistance, food, transportation and holistic therapies.

Local nonprofit organizations that provide breast cancer services apply to the Foundation's Grants Program for funding. Grant decisions are made by a committee of medical personnel, community leaders and Board members. Since our inception 20 years ago, we have granted over \$4.25 million dollars.

Without our volunteers, none of this would be possible. We have a newly formed and energetic volunteer team who are having a lot of fun while making a difference. We are always looking for people to join our volunteer family. If you have skills or talents to contribute, we'd love to hear from you! Please fill out our **volunteer form** or **contact us** to learn how you can help!

Warmly,

Jane Pallas, President
Board of Directors

To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation raises funds to help underserved people in the Bay Area dealing with breast cancer.

SAVE THE DATE!

21st Annual
Stepping Out To Celebrate Life
Gala Fundraiser

Saturday, September 24, 2016
Marin Center Exhibit Hall – San Rafael

IN THIS ISSUE

- From The Board President **1**
- To Celebrate Life - 2016 Volunteer Kickoff - **2**
- Face of the Foundation - Susan Belling **3**
- How Your Dollars Help - Ceres Project - Marin **4**
- "Girl Noticed" - Marin Breast Cancer Survivor Honored **6**
- Tidbits Foundation - Board Announcement **7**
- In Memory - Christina Capurro Sand **8**



Join Our Facebook Community

As we Celebrate our **20 Year milestone**, help us reach our **500 milestone** – Like Us on Facebook!

To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation gratefully acknowledges our **Major Partners and Donors.**

To Celebrate Life – 2016 Volunteer Kickoff

Beginning its 20th year of supporting Bay Area people with breast cancer, To Celebrate Life held its annual Volunteer Kickoff February 16th at the Acqua Hotel in Mill Valley. The event, hosted by the Foundation's Volunteer Committee, was attended by over 90 enthusiastic people eager to make a difference. Volunteers – both old and new – had the opportunity to chat with Board members and Stepping Out committee leads to learn how they could support the Foundation's mission.

The evening's guest speaker, Kaushik Roy, Executive Director of Shanti Project, shared his personal experience when his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and explained the critical services Shanti provides which are made possible with grants funded by To Celebrate Life. Clients of Shanti's Margot Murphy Breast Cancer Program receive help accessing medical care and services such as care navigators, translation, taxi and food vouchers.



Volunteer Committee — From left: Ilene Pearce, Lori Ling, Laurie O' Mara (Co-Lead), Judy Hallman (Board Liaison), Lisa Lucero (Co-Lead), Claudia Gardner, Dianne Sheridan and Kris Geller

A special thank you to our amazing Volunteer Committee for organizing an inspiring and fun-filled evening! If you were unable to attend and have skills or talents to contribute, we'd love to hear from you. Simply fill out our **volunteer form** or **contact us** for more information.

"I have been involved since I modeled in 2011 because I was impressed by this volunteer-based organization that does such amazing work and has fun doing it."

Claudia Gardner – Volunteer Committee



Face of the Foundation – Susan Belling



Susan attended her first Stepping Out event in 2000 when the women in her support group purchased a table and invited her to join them. She had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 1999. “I was so taken with the event I knew I had to volunteer,” she says. And that was the beginning of her long term love affair with To Celebrate Life.

Her volunteer path

Susan has performed many volunteer roles with the Foundation. In 2001 she headed up reservations for Stepping Out. The following year she was asked to serve on the SOEC (Stepping Out Executive Committee). There were four on the committee. “We were very hands-on,” says Susan. “We looked at everything from table linens to décor.”

In 2002 Susan joined the Board of Directors and served for seven years. “We had a great board, we worked well together,” she recalls. “Our board rebranded the organization from Marin Breast Cancer Council, a grass-roots nonprofit, to the professional fund raising foundation we have today.”



Above: Stepping Out Model – 2004
Right: With husband, Mike Belling
Stepping Out To Celebrate Life – 2015

Since 2007 Susan has served on the Grants Review Committee, and she stepped up to co-chair Stepping Out again in 2015, the 20th anniversary year of the event. In addition, Susan has volunteered for other To Celebrate Life events and even recruited her husband, Mike, to work on our golf tournament.

From behind the scenes to the runway

2004 was Susan’s “coming out party.” She had undergone gastric bypass surgery and lost 145 lbs. Then she felt ready to model in Stepping Out. “I remember walking on the stage in my gown with

family, friends and other volunteers cheering me on. It was so special,” she says, “something I will always hold near and dear to my heart.”

For Susan, the most rewarding part of volunteering with To Celebrate Life is “the family and friendships it creates.” And, the outreach to people with breast cancer. “Without our help, many nonprofits couldn’t exist,” she notes.

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Her other volunteer role

For 30 years, Susan has volunteered in suicide prevention, grief counseling and crisis intervention in Marin. A certified Crisis Worker and member of the American Association of Suicidology, she became a trainer and public speaker. She now does one-on-one counseling, usually with people who have lost someone to suicide. She finds this dovetails with her work with To Celebrate Life. “It touches so many people, as does breast cancer,” explains Susan. “It’s not just the person who’s going through treatment, it’s everybody around them.”



What would she say to someone who is considering volunteering with To Celebrate Life? “No one should face breast cancer alone. And that’s what we provide.”

How Your DOLLARS HELP

CERES COMMUNITY PROJECT – MARIN — a 2016 Grantee



Margaret Howe
Associate Director
Ceres Community Project

Beautiful. Delicious. Nourishing.

That's how Margaret Howe, Associate Director of Ceres Community Project, describes the meals the nonprofit provides to people in Marin and Sonoma counties who are dealing with breast cancer.

To Celebrate Life has supported Ceres Community Project since its inception in 2007, when Executive Director Cathryn Couch came up with the concept of teens preparing healthy meals for people facing a health crisis, delivered by volunteers called Delivery Angels.

"Kids really want to have meaning in their life, and they want to make a difference. We give them a place to do that."

Margaret Howe, Associate Director
Ceres Community Project

A unique model gaining national recognition

The food is prepared in Ceres kitchens by local teens under the guidance of professional chefs. "Kids really want to have meaning in their life, and they want to make a difference," says Margaret. "We give them a place to do that."

"In a society where teens are often not trusted to take on big responsibilities, Ceres has given me the freedom to be creative, make my own judgement calls, and have confidence in my decisions," says Ceres Teen Leader Rebecca Strull, who has cooked with Ceres for two years.

Ceres not only serves individuals with cancer, they provide nourishing food for the entire family, so everyone enjoys healthy meals. Research has shown that nutritious food can help alleviate side effects and affect treatment outcomes. As a side benefit, the home delivery service relieves patients and their family members of the burden of shopping and cooking. The goal is that after their service ends, they will continue

to eat healthy. Based in their Sebastopol headquarters, Margaret has been with Ceres for seven years. "I've watched the organization grow from a 'mom and pop' to what we are today — a local organization with a national presence." Eleven facilities around the country have been inspired by the Ceres model. "They come here to train and learn the model," explains Margaret. "They all have their own name but they're branded A Ceres Affiliate."

Ceres in Marin

Ceres began serving clients in Marin five years ago and recently moved to larger quarters in San Rafael in order to meet the increasing demand in the county. Teens cook here two days a week, preparing meals for 20 to 25 clients. Says program manager Linda Dovbish, "Support from To Celebrate Life helps provide whole, organic food to our clients with breast cancer." Linda has been with Ceres for three years. What does she love about her job? "The circle of community," she says, referring to the clients, teens and adult volunteers. "It's beautiful to see the experience that Ceres has created."



Linda Dovbish
Program Manager - Marin
Ceres Community Project

Who is served

In 2014, 67% of the organization's Marin clients had breast cancer. "The To Celebrate Life grant is huge for us," says Linda. Ceres works with people of all economic levels. About half are single. "So many people need the support. Marin is so interesting because we have people with low income and people who are well off but may not have family to support them," explains Linda.

What Ceres clients say

On October 30, 2015, Patty S. underwent a double mastectomy with immediate DIEP flap reconstruction, a very complex surgery. When she was released from the hospital, her dear friend from Ashland, Oregon stayed with her for a week and made sure she had tasty, nourishing meals. When Ardyce left, Ceres took over. "It was like an angel came to see me," says Patty of her first visit from Delivery Angel, Anne.



Patty S. – Client
Ceres Community Project

“She was so kind, she wrapped her arms around me. I started to cry, I was so grateful for the nutritious food.”

Patty was referred to Ceres by the Marin Center for Independent Living, another To Celebrate Life grantee. A long-time volunteer and lead photographer for Stepping Out, Patty is ecstatic about the Ceres food. “It’s very healing and nutritious.” She also describes it as “very colorful and aesthetically pleasing. “I feel so blessed to live in a community where we have services like this,” says Patty.

Another Ceres client, Ellen M., has been through chemotherapy, surgery and now radiation. She has two children, 19 and 17. “Having Ceres’ truly delicious food delivered at a time when I am so fatigued has been an incredible blessing. My family and I just love the food and I can feel it restoring my energy,” says Ellen.

Her kids came on board pretty early with liking the food and now her husband is fully on board. “It’s starting to change the kinds of foods that we crave,” says Ellen. “We look forward to receiving it every Thursday so we don’t have to worry about cooking something nutritious.” “With so much gratitude to you and all the volunteers as well as your amazing chef.”

To Celebrate Life is proud of our longtime partnership with this amazing organization:



Teen chefs prepare meals in the San Rafael kitchen.
Ceres Community Project – Marin

“Having Ceres’ truly delicious food delivered at a time when I am so fatigued has been an incredible blessing. My family and I just love the food and I can feel it restoring my energy.”

Ellen M. – Client
Ceres Community Project

“The To Celebrate Life grant is huge for us. So many people need the support. Marin is so interesting because we have people with low income and people who are well off but may not have family to support them.”

Linda Dovbish, Program Manager
Ceres Community Project – Marin

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

DONATE TODAY!



“GIRL NOTICED” — Marin breast cancer survivor honored in national mural art project*

A Marin cancer survivor’s visage is now larger than life in downtown Novato, part of a nationwide art project honoring women with stories of triumph.

The charcoal sketch of Lucas Valley resident Laura Holmes Haddad was added Thursday to Florida artist Lori Pratico’s national honor role of inspirational women, a project Pratico calls “Girl Noticed.”

Pratico, 47, has done 11 mural sketches of women across the country so far. She has traced the likeness of a 23-year sober woman on the brick exterior of a Michigan market. On the wall of a building in Indiana, the artist drew the image of a woman who ran to lose baby weight and ended up with an invitation to join the U.S. Olympic track team.

Pratico was struck by the story of Haddad, 40, whose sketch — some 15 feet across — she added to the whitewashed wall of Novato’s Old Town Glass.

“Because Holmes Haddad has turned her negative experience into one that can help others, she deserves to be noticed.”

Lori Pratico
Florida artist – “Girl Noticed” Project

As a stage four inflammatory breast cancer survivor, Holmes Haddad has used her experience to help others battling the illness. Since last fall she has written a blog on surviving cancer, and she is now writing a book, “This is Cancer: Everything You Need to Know from the Waiting Room to the Bedroom,” which is slated to publish in October.

Laura Holmes Haddad was a model in To Celebrate Life’s Stepping Out gala fundraiser in 2014.

*Excerpts above are from the story “Girl Noticed” by Stephanie Weldy which appeared in the Marin Independent Journal on March 19, 2016. [READ](#) the entire story.



Artist Lori Pratico works on a charcoal and chalk mural of Lucas Valley resident Laura Holmes Haddad on the back wall of Old Town Glass in Novato. It is one of several Pratico will be installing across the country.

Photo credit: Alan Dep – Marin Independent Journal
Story by: Stephanie Weldy – Marin Independent Journal



Laura Holmes Haddad turned out to see artist Lori Pratico’s sketch of her face, part of Pratico’s nationwide “Girls Noticed” project.

Photo credit: Alan Dep – Marin Independent Journal
Story by: Stephanie Weldy – Marin Independent Journal

TIDBITS

Foundation – Board Announcement

To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of Jane Pallas as President and Tracy Hogan as a new member of their **Board of Directors**. They will support the board in overseeing the organization's operations and fundraising efforts benefiting their Bay Area Grants Program.

This is the second time Jane has served as the Foundation's Board President. From 2002 to 2007, Tracy co-produced Stepping Out To Celebrate Life, the Foundation's annual fashion show gala fundraiser.

Become a 2016 Stepping Out Model

Are you, or is someone you know, a breast cancer survivor? To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation welcomes women and men diagnosed with breast cancer to model in our annual gala fundraising event — Stepping Out To Celebrate Life. Model applications are still being accepted for our premier gala fundraiser September 24, 2016. Models of all sizes, ages and stages of treatment or post-treatment are invited to participate in this very special experience.

Many members of our volunteer-based organization had the opportunity to model at Stepping Out and found the experience to be self-affirming and a positive direction during and after a very difficult time.



2015 Stepping Out To Celebrate Life *An Evening of Enchantment*
From left: Models Nadine Suto, Margie Torres and Magali Zimmerman

“Our grantees and their work with so many in need regularly remind me that I am one of the lucky ones.”

Jane Pallas
President, Board of Directors

We hope you will step onto the runway September 24th for an uplifting evening of joy, inspiration, laughter and fun as we honor and celebrate the lives of women and men surviving breast cancer. To get started, fill out the **Model Application** or contact info@tocelebratelife.org for more information.



2015 Stepping Out Model Tom Mautner
with Lynn Asher

In Memory

CHRISTINA CAPURRO SAND — 1962–2015



To Celebrate Life remembers our longtime volunteer, friend and supporter — Christina Capurro Sand. The excerpt below is from Board Past President Jeanne Capurro's 2014 fundraising page honoring Christina — benefiting To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation.

Eight years ago, a young woman was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Following surgery and during her recovery, that young woman was housebound with a small child. She wanted to do something for others that she could manage from her home computer. We needed a webmaster. She learned the process. After taking online courses she served this Foundation for seven years, pro bono, until last year when she decided to go back to school and obtain her Masters in teaching – which she did.

Last month this very special woman was diagnosed with another brain tumor, this one aggressive, a glioblastoma multiforme. Her treatment schedule requires chemo and radiation treatments running concurrently. While chemo and radiation can keep this tumor at bay for a number of years, the oncologist has told us that this volunteer has 2 – 3 years – maybe 5 years if she is blessed.

This woman, Christina Capurro Sand, is my daughter, and epitomizes all that is very special in our volunteers. Like them, she demonstrates courage, faith and humor while dealing with a very serious health issue. Unlike the people this fundraising effort will serve, Christina has wonderful and talented doctors, and the ability to procure those necessary medical services.

Christina's courage and strength was inspirational and her wonderful sense of humor will be greatly missed by her To Celebrate Life family. Our deepest condolences to Christina's family and friends.

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 that **no one should face breast cancer alone.**

Your donations enable our grantees to continue their work supporting Bay Area people struggling with breast cancer.



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



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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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