FINISHING My MASTERPIECE

Ginny Cowan, Peer Visitor, Patient and Family Advisory Program

I started my masterpiece when my children were young. Now my children are grown and I was facing death and it was still not done. I had seen many quilts that had been left behind unfinished. Is this what would happen to my quilt? I called it my masterpiece. I was proud of all my work. I loved to run my fingers over the blocks and admire the stitches, the colors (pink, lavender and light blue), and the design of each block. It is not a masterpiece by other people’s standards, but for me it was a masterpiece. (continues on page 5)
UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY – MARCH

ARTS IN MEDICINE STUDIO
813-745-8407
Open Arts Studio: relax, create, express, discover and share inspiration
MCC-Every Mon.- Fri., 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.,
Arts Studio, 3rd floor, elevator B
MKC-Every Mon.- Fri., 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.,
Patient and Family Center, 1st floor, by Publix Pharmacy

GENTLE RESTORATIVE YOGA
813-745-6052
Hope Lodge - Every Wed. and Thur.,
3 – 4 p.m., 1st floor
MRC-Every Tue. 12 - 1 p.m., Yoga Room

MEDITATION / RELAXATION CLASSES
813-745-6052
MCC-Every Wed., 12:15 – 1 p.m.,
Day Room, 5th floor, use elevator C

MEET THE EXPERT SERIES
813-745-4710
Cancer experts share information on various topics
MCC-Every Mon.-Fri., 10 - 10:30 a.m.,
Patient Library & Welcome Center,
2nd floor, elevator B
MKC- Thursdays, 10:30 - 11 a.m.,
Patient and Family Center, 1st floor, by Publix Pharmacy

ABBREVIATIONS
ACS - American Cancer Society
AYA - Adolescent & Young Adult Program
MCC - Moffitt Cancer Center,
USF Magnolia Drive
MKC - McKinley Outpatient Center
MRC - Moffitt Research Center
SRB - Vincent A. Stabile Research Building
USF - University of South Florida

FEBRUARY

Thur., Feb. 8 and 22 -
Acupuncture for Stress Reduction in Group Setting,
9 - 10:20 a.m., MRC Yoga Room, Free
(accepts donations up to $5.00), reservations required, 760-710-7836

Thur., Feb. 8, 15 and 22 - Coffee Connection,
9:30 - 11:30 a.m., MCC, Owl’s Den Meeting Room, 1st floor,
(around the corner from Blood Draw)

Wed., Feb. 14 - Tools To Quit, free quit smoking class and free nicotine patches, 2 – 4 p.m., MCC,
Owl’s Den Meeting Room, 1st floor, 813-745-8811
or TobaccoTreatment@Moffitt.org

Tue., Feb. 28 - Look Good Feel Better®, learn beauty techniques to manage appearance-related side effects of treatment, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Hope Lodge, 1st floor,
reservations required, 1-800-227-2345

MARCH

Thur., Mar. 1 and 15 - Acupuncture for Stress Reduction in Group Setting, 9 - 10:20 a.m., MRC Yoga Room, Free (accepts donations up to $5.00), to register call 760-710-7836

Thur., Mar. 8, 15, 22 and 29 - Coffee Connection, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., MCC, Owl’s Den Meeting Room, 1st floor, (around the corner from Blood Draw)

Wed., Mar. 14 - Tools To Quit, free quit smoking class and free nicotine patches, 2 – 4 p.m., MCC, Owl’s Den Meeting Room, 1st floor, 813-745-8811 or TobaccoTreatment@Moffitt.org

Visit MOFFITT.org/calendar for More Upcoming Events!
PATIENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

The following support groups are offered at Moffitt Cancer Center. To learn more about any of the support groups offered, including times and locations, please call the Social Work Office at 813-745-8407.

PATIENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

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FAMILIES FIRST
A bi-monthly therapeutic program offered on Saturdays for patients who are parents and their children (ages 5-18).

FAMILY AND FRIENDS SUPPORT GROUP
Support group for family members, friends and caregivers of cancer patients.
Meets every Tuesday, 1-2 p.m., Magnolia campus, 5th floor of the hospital, room 5140 A. Use elevator C.

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
Support group for patients with any cancer diagnosis.
Meets every Tuesday, 1-2 p.m., Magnolia campus, 5th floor lounge of the hospital. Use elevator C.

METASTATIC BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
Support group for patients with Stage IV metastatic breast cancer.
Meets weekly for six-week sessions throughout the year, from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m., McKinley campus. For information call 813-745-8407.

FINDING BALANCE WITH CANCER
Finding Balance with Cancer is a four-week stress reduction program jointly offered by the Integrative Medicine Program and Social Work. Patients and caregivers learn meditation through group discussion, guided practice and CDs for home use.

BREAST CANCER CONNECTION
Support group for all patients with breast cancer meets the first Tuesday of every month, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the McKinley campus, Gruden Huddle Room, 1st floor.
My friend was on the phone, 3,000 miles away, helping me understand. She told me, “When my nephew was going through chemotherapy for leukemia, and I was struggling with how to calm and steady myself so I could be strong for his family, I did a visualization.”

She said, "My boys were very little at the time. I decided to create a vision for five years into the future. I imagined that my nephew and my sons were playing basketball together, laughing and healthy. And Robin, I swear to you, five years later, long after my nephew was better and I had forgotten all about my visualization, one day the boys were all out playing basketball in my driveway and I just froze! It had come true! You should try it.”

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I was so heartsick. My life seemed to have gotten completely off course. I had only been married 11 months, had lived through two unsuccessful pregnancies, and now was facing surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, hormonal therapy. I was in my 40s and the possibility of having children in my family was fading away. It was so difficult to visualize and be positive. Any time I created a scene in my head, my pessimism crept in and mocked me. Who are you kidding? IT IS NOT POSSIBLE.

I decided to write down my vision, because if I had it in ink then my negative thoughts couldn’t erase it all away. I wrote:

A VISUALIZATION FOR FIVE YEARS FROM NOW
A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN. LOTS OF FLOWERS. TWO LAUGHING, PLAYING CHILDREN, RUNNING AROUND, HAPPY. NED AND I SITTING NEARBY, SMILING, ENJOYING OUR KIDS.

Writing it down seemed brazen and wrong. Like, I was tempting fate in a presumptuous and forbidden way. I folded the paper and put it in my journal. And I forgot about it.

I lived through all the treatments. I got back to work. My husband and I adopted first one girl from Guatemala, and then a second. We moved to a house on the river. And one day I was in the backyard with my family and I thought OH MY WORD OH MY OH MY—and I searched for the piece of paper in my journal, which had been written a little more than five years before. I couldn’t breathe.

I know it sounds unbelievable. I don’t believe in destiny or fate or miracles. But I absolutely believe in the power of hope, and in the possibility of creating our own futures with dreams and hard work. Mostly I believe in what we all can accomplish together with a little luck and a lot of imagination. Visualizing my own future helped me to make my hopes concrete.
It is a sampler with 12 different blocks. The blocks were pieced and quilted all by hand but still needed to be joined together and the quilt edge finished with a binding.

My oncologist gave me poor odds of surviving so I had gotten my affairs in order. I had lots of complications, two surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation. I was in a wheel chair. I could not concentrate enough to read, and on bad days I asked my husband to speak for me. In the midst of all this it bothered me that I had not finished my quilt, so on a good day I got together my sewing things and started sewing the blocks together. I sat in my lounge chair next to the window and sewed the same simple stitch over and over again. I could handle this. I did not have to think, just sew. It was meditative. I am told that the brain activity is different and healing when you are meditating. I don’t know about that but I do know I felt true contentment while sewing. I kept it up and finished my quilt. I will pass it on to one of my sons to remember me by. I have quilts my grandmother made for me that I remember her by.

I was lucky and lived. Now I live to make more quilts. I have made seven quilts since recovering. I donated four to charity. Would you like to join me in making a community quilt for Moffitt? Beginners are welcome.

If Ginny’s “masterpiece” inspires you to quilt, she would love to teach you how to get started. We welcome all patients and caregivers who might be interested (no experience necessary) to contact Kim Buettner, Manager, Patient and Family Advisory Program, at 813-745-1390 to learn more.
What Is Your North Star?

By Christine Healy, Licensed Oncology Social Worker

Patients often share wonderful stories about what keeps them going during their cancer treatment. The challenges of chemotherapy, radiation and the resulting fatigue are often draining, both physically and emotionally. It would be easy to fall off course, lose our way or feel spiritually challenged. The stressful thoughts of an uncertain future can break down even the toughest among us.

Polaris, also known as the North Star, has been a reliable gauge for navigation, particularly for the wearied traveler. Sometimes presenting itself with a powerful, laser like focus and, at other times, a murky, shadow in the seemingly all too distant future. A daughter’s wedding, a grandson’s graduation and even a quilt can become a meaningful point to which we look to help us navigate through this difficult and unfamiliar path. These important people, events and objects assist us in getting through the overwhelming times, when we need to lean on someone or something else to spark our motivation. Throughout this issue, you may find the inspiration you need as our patients, caregivers and staff share their experiences about staying the course and creating their own North Star.

“It is our job to deliver hope to our patients – that’s what drives me every day.”
– Alan List, MD
President and CEO, Moffitt Cancer Center

“What got us through the tough times was our desire to enjoy our newly started retirement life. We want to see more of this beautiful world. We want to create more memories with our families and friends. We are even more grateful for each day we are given.”
– Pat Sullivan, Peer Visitor,
Patient and Family Advisory Program

“I tried to define my singular purpose in life. What is the one thing that only I can do with my remaining days? For me, that was being the provider and role model for my children. Then every decision and challenge was processed through the filter of how can I minimize cancer’s impact on maximizing my impact toward this purpose. Easier said than done on many days, but having a strong focal point really helps.”
– David Dauman, Patient Advisor,
Patient and Family Advisory Council and Peer Visitor
From the first day I joined Moffitt 14 years ago I knew this organization had a tremendous opportunity to make a significant impact on the prevention and cure of cancer. After a while, I began to realize it was not an opportunity, but rather a responsibility. We can accomplish things here that most organizations cannot even dream of doing, and we’re seeing that more and more each day.

– Dr. Thomas A. Sellers
Center Director and Executive Vice President, Moffitt Cancer Center

It can be a stressful time for our patients and their families during the holidays; some of our patients cannot celebrate at home. We love seeing the smiles on their faces as we spread the holiday cheer by singing carols throughout the hospital. We know we are making a difference through a hobby that we love.

– Rebecca Young,
Moffitt Staff and Chorale Director

When my wife, Lee, and I learned she had cancer, it was a smack up against the head. We were dazed, ‘Why us? This can’t happen.’ Our local doctor said Lee had at best three to four months left with stage IV pancreatic cancer. After notifying our four children and other family members of the bad news we held each other and cried. Pretty normal I think. Then things changed. We found Moffitt and a team of caregivers and social workers who woke us up to the reality of what lied ahead. Instead of saying ‘why me’ we realized we were blessed to have shared 51 years of marriage and over 60 years as best friends. We decided to spend what time we had left celebrating a wonderful life together. Three months turned into 14 months thanks to the great treatment we received from the Moffitt team. I have to admit that last year with Lee was one of the best we ever had. You can either run away from adversity or face it. We chose the latter. A very good decision for us.

– Bill Reading, Peer Visitor,
Patient and Family Advisory Program

At the ripe old age of 18, I spent years dealing with pain, surgeries, months of feeling awful and chemotherapy. It was my parents who pulled me through. I knew they would be devastated if they lost me, and I wasn’t ready for my life to end.

– Jackie Beuashaw, Patient Advisor,
Patient and Family Advisory Council

I was two months pregnant when doctors diagnosed my mother with brain cancer and gave her three months to live. My mother desperately wanted to see her first grandchild and this gave her the fortitude to keep going. When I gave birth to my son, she was unable to hold him because she had lost the ability to use her arms, so we put my son on her chest and the pure joy in her face was amazing! I believe her strong desire to see her grandson kept her going until her body finally gave up. I can still see her smile.

– Laurie Reed, Peer Visitor,
Patient and Family Advisory Program
Pioneering the Patient Navigator Program

Cathy Elstner, Moffitt Nurse, Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Patient Navigator and Barbara Wampler, Moffitt Nurse, Head and Neck Patient Navigator

The Patient Navigator is a registered nurse who offers individualized assistance to patients, families and caregivers to help overcome system barriers. They work directly with the clinical team to coordinate care during active treatment and throughout the cancer care experience. We know the cancer journey is often complex including multiple visits with different departments. The Patient Navigator is a resource; acting as a primary contact, reinforcing education, assisting with care coordination and finally ensuring a smooth transition through Moffitt's system.

Moffitt decided to pilot this program in two areas with hopes of expanding it to other areas in the future. Knowing young adults have unique needs, Moffitt decided to pilot the Nurse Navigation Program with young adult patients in the Sarcoma, Gynecology and Neuro Oncology Clinics. Cathy Elstner, BSN, RN has been working with young adult patients for many years.

The second area is the multidisciplinary clinic of the Head and Neck Program. Having worked in the Head and Neck Clinic for 22 years, Barbara Wampler BSN, RN, OCN, has seen an increase in the number of treatment options available for this group of patients. The need to coordinate between surgical, medical and radiation oncology, speech therapy, nutrition and psychosocial support as well as community resources made this a perfect choice for one of the first groups to benefit from the service a navigator could provide.

The goal of the Navigator Program is to provide the best possible experience for our patients and their loved ones who walk in our doors until their last treatment is complete.

Cathy is available at 813-745-5073 and Barbara can be contacted at 813-745-4942.
SPOTLIGHT ON...

VIRTUAL REALITY becomes a REALITY

Sarah Hoffe, M.D., Moffitt Physician, Gastrointestinal (GI) Program

Understanding a cancer diagnosis is not easy. The words describing the problem and its treatment are large and confusing. Doctors at Moffitt are trying to find an easier way for patients to “digest” the news and make sense of what this means for themselves and their family.

Many times the patient does not even hear any words after the term “cancer.” This happened to Moffitt patient John Tucker when his local doctor told him he had pancreatic cancer. He remembers still being confused when he saw his Moffitt surgeon, causing him a lot of stress. That was over five years ago now.

Patients in the GI Clinic will soon have a new tool to help them that Mr. Tucker has tested. He did so by putting on a pair of special glasses and entering a “virtual” world. He walked around a colorful painted area of a pancreas cancer sitting near a blood vessel. He was able to move around and see the cancer itself to understand what surgery would do to his body.

“If my surgeon, Dr. Malafa, had been able to show me this when I was diagnosed, wow, it would have changed everything,” Mr. Tucker said. “I think I would have “gotten it” much better. I think I would have slept better at night. I hope more patients like me can benefit from this new technology.”

The new Chairman of Moffitt’s GI Department, Dr. Jason Fleming, will be unveiling Virtual Reality for patients with pancreatic cancer soon.

This tool is available at the GI Clinic, Magnolia campus, Moffitt Clinic Building, 5th floor. For more information call 813-745-3980.

DO YOU QUALIFY FOR LUNG CANCER SCREENING?

Are You:

✓ 55 - 80 years old?
✓ a current smoker?
✓ a former smoker who quit after 2002?

Qualifications for screening are based on a smoking pack year history scale

Ask your clinic or call 1-888-663-3488
Faith Guided Me Through Adversity

Tony Winter, Moffitt Staff, Chaplain

When I was 14 years old, I became a C-6 quadriplegic following a motor vehicle accident that damaged my spinal cord. I had to learn how to function with most of my body paralyzed from my chest down. I spent the next six months recovering and rehabilitating. Here are a few things that helped me through that experience.

**Hope:** Initially I was determined to walk again. I needed that hope until I adapted more to my disability. Then new more attainable hopes appeared. When I am not satisfied, I always keep hope there is something better than the current state and take steps forward. If circumstances cannot change, my attitude toward it can.

**Community:** When I was first injured there were several people with spinal cord injuries that inspired me and my family to see that I could survive and enjoy life like they did. It helped me to be with other spinal cord injured people at the rehab centers. At home, I have been greatly loved and supported by family. Spiritually, I find it important for me to be a part of a church.

**Seek Joy:** The day of my car accident was one of the hardest days of my life, but it didn’t ruin my life. I have found activities I could enjoy. I spend time with my family. I swim. I drive. I bicycle. I sing. I work every day now as a chaplain with people who have cancer. I love my life.

To speak with Tony or learn more about our Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care program, please visit Moffitt.org/chaplaincy-spiritual or call 813-745-2856.
In November 2016 our life took an unexpected turn when my husband, Jack, developed stage 4 cancer at the base of his tongue, which required surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. We were looking at a rough road ahead. Hope became one arm of the treatment regimen. During the next several months hope was our “true north”; sometimes flickering dimly, other times shining brightly, but thankfully never extinguishing completely.

Having been a nurse for 41 years and an oncology nurse at Moffitt for 27, I knew the cancer journey well. My husband had successfully beaten two other cancers, but this new diagnosis was by far the most serious. Some people say they wish they had a crystal ball, but I am glad we didn’t. Many days were extremely difficult to get through, and I am not sure knowing the challenges ahead of time would have helped.

Life is a juggling act. Some days you manage better than others. I was trying to work full time, manage unexpected hospitalizations and the complex care my husband suddenly needed, deal with multiple appointments which he could no longer drive himself to, keep family and friends informed and keep up with the minutia of day-to-day life. We learned to ask for and accept help, which was entirely foreign to both of us. My manager, director and peers were so supportive. We leaned on faith, family and friends, always hoping tomorrow would be a better day.

Moffitt has incredibly caring staff. I always knew this. At each and every encounter they gave us hope and support, going above and beyond to care for us.

Our journey continues. Christopher Reeve was quoted as saying “Once you choose hope, anything is possible.” He was right.
Patient and Family Orientation

Learn how to:

Connect with programs and services
Partner with your care team
Find your way around Moffitt

• 30 minute orientation
• Presented in English and Spanish
• Scheduled Monday – Friday

Call us! We'll find a time that works for you.

813-745-4710 | Orientation@Moffitt.org

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If you would like to be involved in making Moffitt the best it can be for all patients and families, contact the Patient and Family Advisory Program at PatientAdvisors@Moffitt.org or 813-745-1390.