Chances are if you are reading this edition of PARTNERS, you have been touched by cancer. You may be a patient dealing with the many effects of a cancer diagnosis, or a caregiver touched by the life of a loved one with cancer. We have all been witnesses to a life altering event that will forever change us.

Some cancer survivors are looking at cancer in their rearview mirror and others will be on some type of treatment for the rest of their lives. Each day may be filled with pain or relief, gratitude or grief. These are the faces of survivorship.

The stories you will read in the following pages have been written by patients and caregivers who each have had a unique and different cancer experience. It’s less about courage or bravery. It’s more about resiliency in the face of uncertainty.
UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY - AUGUST

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

AYA LOUNGE NIGHT
813-745-4736
MCC - Every 2nd and 4th Thursday
of the month 5 - 7 p.m.,
4th floor, elevator C

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

COFFEE CONNECTION
813-745-2963
MCC - Every 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th
Thursday, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.,
Owl's Den Meeting Room, 1st floor.

JULY

WED., JULY 11
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

WED., JULY 18
Music @ Art a La Carte
Event featuring a Musician-In-Residence
paired with one of our Artists-In-Residence,
1 - 2 p.m.
Moffitt Magnolia Campus,
1st Floor Radiation Therapy
813-745-1836 or
Amanda.Bonanno@moffitt.org

THUR., JULY 19
Acupuncture for Stress Relief in Group Setting
9 - 10:20 a.m.
MRC, Supportive Care Medicine Clinic
Free (accepts donations up to $5.00)
Reservations required, 760-710-7836

AUGUST

WED., AUGUST 8
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

WED., AUGUST 15
Music @ Art a La Carte
Event featuring a Musician-In-Residence
paired with one of our Artists-In-Residence,
1 - 2 p.m.
Moffitt Magnolia Campus,
MCB 4th Floor Infusion
813-745-1836 or
Amanda.Bonanno@moffitt.org

THUR., AUGUST 16
Acupuncture for Stress Reduction in Group Setting
9 - 10:20 a.m.
MRC Yoga Room
Free (accepts donations up to $5.00)
760-710-7836

Visit
MOFFITT.org/calendar for More Upcoming Events!

ABBREVIATIONS
AYA - Adolescent & Young Adult Program
MCB - Moffitt Clinic Building
MCC - Moffitt Cancer Center,
USF Magnolia Drive
MKC - McKinley Outpatient Center
MRC - Moffitt Research Center
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.

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 11 a.m. – 12 p.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.
I remember nearly everything from my day of diagnosis, which is typical for a type A personality, I suppose. I definitely remember the date; the general time of day; the place; the people; the clothes I was wearing; the words; the emotions. When I think of that day, I see a scrapbook of pictures, sometimes a movie. All of the pictures are in order. Some special pictures even have those little black corners (just to show how creative and orderly I can and want to be). Since my diagnosis in October 2014 with Stage IV, non-smoker lung cancer, I have tried at least three different chemo pills (capsule chemo) in hope that one will last longer than a year. When the last pill of the last effort/clinical trial stops working - so does my treatment. To date, I've had three brain surgeries and at least five rounds of radiation on my spine and brain, but, I am feeling good as of now!

I remember nearly nothing from my date of prognosis – so very not the typical type A. No date, no words; just the people, the place and emotions. The scrapbook for this day resembles a child’s weather forecast for a spring week in Ohio: it’s all in crayon and for some reason it is in a 6-year-old’s frame of mind: a big, yellow sun one day, a stick figure in shorts; snowy the next day with big black clouds and big blue raindrops, the stick figure in a winter coat and mittens; repeated numerous times; some pages just scribbled in black. No order. No little black corners.

That day of prognosis can be a doozy! I am not going to lie – that sudden, new knowledge sucks, and sometimes it can still get the best of me. In fact, it was a good thing I was already lying in bed during my most recent knock-out, drag-down sobbing session. I was thinking of all I still could not do (three and a half years after diagnosis and I was not able to ride my bike again yet or run as well as before) and then it came to me: yes, I can cry over and over, it would make me feel better in the short term (and boy did it ever!), but nothing was going to feel as good as actually doing. My great, sweet, wonderful husband took me on a bike riding refresher course very shortly after that, going so far as to hold the bike seat and run and push “dad style.” This gesture of love far outweighed any sadness or frustration. (That scrapbook picture gets corners!)

I, of course, had to want to do that riding/activity; I had to change my opinion regarding the feelings I was having and the feeling I wanted to have. Being told that my treatment would be endless and that I would always have cancer made me feel heavy. Heavy with the whole burden of having cancer Heavy with the thoughts of treatments, doctor visits and schedules. Heavy with knowing what may be coming – sickness or needles or tight blood pressure cuffs. All of it could make you think, “Oh my God, every day of this? For forever?”

I am by no means an expert on this just because I have an endless treatment prognosis; this is just me talking. Just a point of view, a different way to see some things; perhaps just an opinion. And that is what cancer can be – just an opinion. It’s a disease or it’s an opportunity.

Whatever it is, it is your opinion.

Editor’s Note: Dawn died before this article went to print. Dawn and her husband chose to share this article as a part of Dawn’s legacy.
The image contains a text that reads:

As I walked toward the starting line in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, my eyes welled up with tears. I couldn’t believe I was about to run the 2017 Boston Marathon. Dr. Samuel Agresta, one of my first Moffitt oncologists from 12 years ago, was by my side. “Thank you,” I said. He was the one who encouraged me to run Boston.

I was first diagnosed with Ewing’s sarcoma, a rare bone cancer, when I was 23. Right out of college and two months into my first job, I went to a doctor after several weeks of nagging lower back pain. A CT scan revealed a large tumor in my pelvis. I immediately started treatments at Moffitt, which became like my second home as I went through chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. After more than a year, I was cancer-free and ready to move on with my life.

In 2007, I competed in the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii — a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile run. I’ll never forget crossing the finish line after 15 hours of racing, hearing the announcer say, “Congratulations, Chad. You are an Ironman!” I felt more like an Ironman after surviving cancer, but the race was an experience of a lifetime. In the years following, with every clean bill of health, cancer became more of a distant memory.

I got married and had two kids, Samuel and Charlee. In 2015, my cancer unexpectedly came back. I was terrified. All too familiar with what I was facing, I was scared my wife and two young kids might lose me. When I went back to Moffitt, now 33, many things had changed. I was pleasantly surprised to discover the Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) program, which was created to provide more support and resources for young patients.

Whether you’re a teenager or a young adult, being a young person with cancer is incredibly hard. There were times during my first battle when I felt isolated, with very few of my peers understanding what I was going through. The AYA program set out to change that by connecting young patients at Moffitt, helping them with resources they need, and encouraging them that there is life after cancer.

For me, having personal goals during treatment, something that didn’t involve cancer, was helpful. Boston was a big one. In the final mile of the race, with thousands of people cheering, I remember saying to myself, “This is your moment.” It seemed surreal. Part of me still couldn’t believe I had run the Boston Marathon. I was so thankful. Thankful for the amazing team of doctors, nurses and staff at Moffitt Cancer Center. Thankful that I can run and that I’m in remission again. Thankful that Sammy and Charlee still have their dad.

Chad McLeod is a Moffitt patient and two-time survivor of Ewing’s sarcoma. He lives in Lakeland, Florida, with his wife, Erin, and their two children, Sammy and Charlee.

Moffitt’s Adolescent & Young Adult Program (AYA) assist patients ages 15-39. To be in the know for Moffitt’s AYA Program events please visit Moffitt.org/AYA, email AYA@Moffitt.org or call 813-745-4736.
“At times, I do feel pressure to be more hyper-productive as a survivor. And in the darkest moments, I even wonder if the survivor token could have been put to better use with someone else.

Then I tuck my kids in at night and say... This token is not just for me. I’m hanging on to it for them with all my might.”

David Dauman, Patient Advisor, Patient and Family Advisory Council and Peer visitor

“Having lived through cancer while loved ones did not; I am left wondering ... Wondering why some face death and walk away; while others face death and pass through.”

To sit among friends at a concert and know that I am the one who no longer wonders, “Will I get cancer?”

From being carried in the grey
To freely standing still while gulping in the radiant color of flowers
From throwing away meals because they did not taste good
To eating like every meal was Thanksgiving
From being forced to rest
To [as Jonny says] purposefully getting up in the morning
From wondering who will go with me
To never being left to go alone

Stephanie Hulbert, Patient Advisor
Patient and Family Advisory Program
“With multiple cancer diagnoses, I have decided to replace SURVIVOR with THRIVER; it feels right for me personally. Each and every day I make a conscious choice to THRIVE no matter what the day brings. As a THRIVER I choose to fully LIVE my day.”

Zoe Marcus, Patient Advisor, Patient and Family Advisory Council and Peer visitor

“Being a survivor to me means to never stop educating. Telling people that they need two opinions and one should be from Moffitt. To keep their head and their heart in the game and never quit... there is always hope. Every day you wake up, you’ve beat cancer one more day.”

Juliann Finger, Patient Advisor, Patient and Family Advisory Program

“To survive means to celebrate and grieve at the same time. It means living long enough to witness the not-surviving of others.

It means being precariously perched on the tight-rope between gratitude and guilt, hope and hurt, joy and fear. Surviving means learning to love the balance.”

Robin Gordon, Patient Advisor, Patient and Family Advisory Program
October 1st, 2013 was the worst day of my life. On that day, I realized that my wife of over 50 years, Lee, had stage IV pancreatic cancer. Thus began my life as a caregiver. We had the usual shock of this can’t be true to yes it is and now where do we turn. Thankfully Moffitt was our temporary life boat in a stormy sea of terror. Lee and I had 12 months together before she died. I have to admit they were quality months where we grew even closer together. Alas, she died and I was left without my best friend, mother of our four children, and the person I loved more than anything in the world.

When we experience any kind of devastating loss, overwhelming feelings may arise within us making it difficult to cope. And while it may feel like we are caught up in a never-ending state of sadness and emptiness, it is important to remember that this feeling is not a permanent state of being. Instead, grief is part of a process of letting go that in many ways can be a gift, allowing us to begin to turn darkness into light at the end of the tunnel.

My emotions that accompanied Lee’s loss ranged from shock or denial to anger. Sometimes I even blamed Lee for abandoning me. I felt guilty that I did not do enough to save her from death. While these emotions seemed to come and go sporadically, it was important for me to feel them and allow them to flow until I began to have moments of strength, faith and yes laughter in between bouts of sorrow. As time passed, I am talking months and years, other emotions came up. One that I am dealing with now is the feeling of being disloyal or giving up. As my life moves on and I develop new friendships I do not want to forget the beautiful relationship I had with my wife. However, I realize that as memories fade the 50 year relationship with Lee has transformed me into who I am today, and I am a better person for it.

Finally, I am certain this process of grief has not passed for me. It has been more than three years since Lee died. There are those little moments when a song or picture or old friend calls that I will drift back to remembering what once was. Just like a painful injury dissipates over time the scar still remains, so does the death of a love one leave a blemish on your emotions forever. It has occurred to me that death is a natural movement in the dance of life. You don’t need to know all the steps just, “dance like no one is watching.” It has been working for me so far.

Editor’s Note:
Bill now volunteers at Moffitt as a Peer Visitor through the Patient and Family Advisory Program. Bill connects with other patients and caregivers who have faced similar life experiences. If you would like to learn more about ways to get involved at Moffitt email PatientAdvisors@Moffitt.org or call 813-745-2963.
The foods we eat can positively or negatively influence our body’s inflammatory response. Although acute inflammation is essential for healing a wound or fighting off an infection, chronic inflammation can cause illness. Scientists believe that prolonged inflammation can damage our body’s healthy cells and weaken our immune system. This weakened state can increase the risk of diseases like dementia, heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer.

A study published online in the Journal of the American Medical Association Oncology in January 2018, found diets high in pro-inflammatory foods were associated with a significantly higher risk of developing colorectal cancer in both men and women. The diets with higher inflammatory potential were high in red meat, sugary beverages, and processed foods containing refined grains and saturated fats.

The good news is that we can reduce chronic inflammation by choosing plant-based foods that are high in antioxidants and fiber. This anti-inflammatory diet includes bright multi-colored fruits and vegetables, whole grains and legumes, olive oil, nuts, seeds, and spices such as turmeric, ginger and garlic. In addition, fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi and miso soup contain probiotics that help reduce inflammation.

Everyone can benefit from optimal nutrition using an anti-inflammatory approach to strengthen the immune system. Choosing healthy foods, along with getting adequate sleep, engaging in regular physical activity, and practicing stress reduction exercises can reduce long-term disease risks.

For more information, please call Moffitt’s Nutrition Department at 888-663-3488.

JOIN US AT THE COFFEE CONNECTION!

Every 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Thursday of the Month
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Moffitt’s Magnolia Campus
1st Floor, Owl’s Den Meeting Room
PATIENT LIBRARY & WELCOME CENTER HAPPENINGS

Jane Garland, Patient Advisor, Patient and Family Advisory Program

Sometimes it is hard to believe it has been more than 14 years since I endured cancer treatment. I remember how frightened I was, not only of the cancer, but of the treatment, tests and unknown challenges I faced. As a cancer survivor, it is now my privilege to provide orientations to patients and their families. Often, the patients attend orientation before their first appointment, making me the first person they see at Moffitt. I am aware that Moffitt can be overwhelming and I do my best to take the mystery and anxiety out of the complex campus.

After volunteering with the Patient and Family Advisory program for more than two years, I was offered the opportunity to conduct orientations. As a cancer survivor who receives follow ups here at Moffitt, I am passionate about our mission. I trained for the program for about a month and then gave many practice orientations to staff and volunteers. Now, it is my honor to present orientations to our patients.

I cannot fully explain how rewarding it is at the conclusion of the orientation to see relief on the faces of patients and their families. After orientation, patients and families have a better idea of what to expect, they have tools to assist them with organization and this big cancer center is less confusing. For me, conducting orientations is the most rewarding part of being a Moffitt volunteer.

ORIENTATION QUICK FACTS

WHAT: 30 minute, three part presentation providing helpful information on Moffitt and our services.
WHERE: Magnolia Patient Library & Welcome Center or McKinley Campus Patient and Family Center.
WHEN AND HOW: Please call 813-745-4710 to schedule.
BONUS: Patients receive a shoulder bag full of resource, information, organizational tools, a caregiver resource guide, a Moffitt t-shirt and a journal.
IMPORTANT: You do not have to be a brand new patient to attend orientation.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

LEARN HOW SHARING YOUR VOICE CAN IMPACT THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Ask about the Patient and Family Advisory Council at PatientAdvisors@Moffitt.org.
INTRODUCING…

The
YOUR STORIES Collection

Your Stories was created by Moffitt patients, survivors, caregivers and team members and is a beautiful collection of:

- Personal stories
- Poems
- Paintings, drawings and photographs.

Pick up a complimentary copy of Your Stories on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at:

**Magnolia campus**
Patient Library & Welcome Center, elevator B, second floor

**McKinley campus**
Patient and Family Center, first floor, by Publix Pharmacy

**Moffitt at International Plaza**
Patient and Family Resource Center, second floor

To learn about the many unique opportunities to discover, express and share your story call 813-745-4710.

HELP DRIVE CANCER RESEARCH

Cancer touches all of us, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender or status. When you order a Moffitt specialty license plate, you are helping researchers and scientists develop the medicines and protocols that will advance cancer treatments and help cure patients.

ORDER YOUR PLATE TODAY AT MOFFITTPATE.org
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.*

• Walking tours on select days
• View online at MOFFITT.org/Orientation
• Receive a free messenger bag with Moffitt resources and organizational tools.

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 813-745-2963.