

cancer care



Dignity Health.
French Hospital Medical Center

Hearst Cancer Resource Center

Hearst Cancer Resource Center

About Cancer Care

Hearst Cancer Resource Center at French Hospital Medical Center provides comprehensive support services for all cancer patients in our community at no charge, and appreciates the generosity of our donors who make it all possible.

Fighting With the Help of Friends and Dragon Power

By Robin O'Connor

My fight with the cancer beast began in April 2006 while I was paddling with a dragon boat team in Newport Beach and preparing for competitions in China. I found the tumor during my routine breast exam. My support was my husband Pat, survivors on my boat, and my special warrior friends Andi and Wilma. I competed in China, had a successful lumpectomy and radiation, and got my life back.

In January 2020 we retired, moved and I joined the Central Coast SurviveOars dragon boat team. I found my posse!

In June 2022, the beast returned. I was diagnosed with metastatic triple negative breast cancer and began the necessary chemotherapy. With the support of my posse, I started infusions, shaved my head and continued to paddle with the SurviveOars.

After joining a Zoom support group with the Hearst Cancer Resource Center, I realized that while my oncologist, Dr. Akpek, works hard at keeping me alive, I rely on HCRC to keep up my quality of life. They provide free resources like a Registered Dietitian, support groups, wig and makeup advice and Intuitive Collage. I also participated in Cancer Wellfit, an exercise program specifically for cancer survivors.

With the tough realization that I will be on some sort of cancer treatment for the rest of my life, I am grateful to have all of the resources that HCRC has to offer; and I'm still paddling with my posse on the dragon boat!



The mission of the Central Coast Dragon Boat Association is to build a community of dragon boat teams for all levels of competition, AND to empower and support cancer survivors in the sport.

Check us out at CCDBA.org!



Laura Liss, MA, MSW

The Power of Pausing

By Laura Liss, MA, MSW, Certified MBSR
(Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) Instructor

It's great news that mindfulness is seeping into many layers of society. Mindfulness training is offered in various organizations and you can find tons of tips on social and printed media about the benefits of bringing kind and purposeful attention to everyday living.

My mindfulness journey began with a yoga practice. While raising three kids and running a business, yoga helped release physical tension and mindfulness meditation created space to be with the joys and struggles. After participating in a Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course, I found myself slowing down more often to truly be in the moments.

When I received a breast cancer diagnosis months after my mother died from metastatic breast cancer, I froze in disbelief. I was deeply mourning the loss of my mom, and with the loving support of my husband, I made some difficult decisions. Before surgery, I found that anchoring attention to my breath helped calm my nervous system. This lesson stayed with me.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, developer of MBSR, defined mindfulness as: paying attention to the present moment, on purpose, without judgment. This sounds simple, but it's not easy and the benefits wear off, just as a muscle weakens when you don't use it. We're all well trained in distraction (screen time, to-do list, the news) and cultivating a consistent mindfulness practice greatly enhances our natural capacity to be in the moments.

Will engaging in a mindfulness practice mean you'll always be happy and calm, spreading joy wherever you go? Probably not. It will likely help you to make friends with yourself and notice when judgment or challenging emotions like fear, sadness and anger arise so you can work with them. This self-acceptance can be life-changing. You might also become more aware of the power of pausing and creating space to respond skillfully rather than reacting from habit. These practices often allow for more clarity, ease and resilience. And yes, with kind attention to the moment there can be many opportunities to experience joy!

Join Laura as she explores this topic at our educational event below.

The Power of Pausing

Learn more about mindfulness practices that have benefited many in coping with the ever-changing landscape of life. Participants receive a free journal.

WHEN: Wednesday, May 29, 2024 • 5:30 pm

WHERE: Wacker Family Auditorium, Copeland Health Education Pavilion
at French Hospital/Third floor

To RSVP, contact: hcrc@dignityhealth.org or call 805.542.6234

SECOND ANNUAL
CANCER SURVIVORSHIP CELEBRATION AND SPEAKERS PANEL

The Hearst Cancer Resource Center is pleased to present

Survivors to Thrivers...

Celebrating Cancer Survivorship



Robert Johnson, MD
Radiation Oncology



Lindsey Levenson, LMFT
Cancer Survivor



Holly Taylor, RN
Cancer Survivor

Please join us to celebrate the cancer survivors and thrivers among us. Our panel will share the wisdom accrued from many years of surviving and/or treating cancer patients as well as the latest updates in cancer survivorship medical care, mental health and personal stories. The event will offer practical guidance for staying well, improving quality of life and maintaining hope through your cancer journey and beyond.

Thursday, June 13, 2024 • 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Wacker Family Auditorium

(in the Copeland Health Education Pavilion/Third Floor at French Hospital)

1911 Johnson Avenue, San Luis Obispo

Space is limited; reservations required.

Please call Hearst Cancer Resource Center
at 805.542.6234 or email us at HCRC@dignityhealth.org



EMAIL US

JUNE IS NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS MONTH



PREVENTION MATTERS!

HPV infection has no treatment, but a vaccine can help prevent it

DON'T WAIT TO VACCINATE

HPV Vaccination is Cancer Prevention

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that infects about 13 million people each year and it can cause six types of cancer. While HPV cannot be treated, there is a safe, effective, and long-lasting vaccine that can prevent it. The HPV vaccine works best when given to boys and girls between the ages of nine and 12. HPV vaccination is cancer prevention: It can prevent more than 90% of the six HPV cancers when given at the recommended ages.

Research shows that starting the HPV vaccine series at age nine gives children the best protection from HPV cancers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, and the National HPV Vaccination Roundtable agree that HPV vaccination starts at age nine.

If you missed the recommended time frame for vaccination there is still an option. Anyone ages 15 to 26 can still be vaccinated to protect yourself from HPV; however, three doses are required instead of two. Talk to your healthcare provider about what is available based on your age.

For more information, please visit the American Cancer Society's website at www.cancer.org

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

You are invited to attend the San Luis Obispo County support group sponsored by French Hospital Medical Center's Hearst Cancer Resource Center:

Prostate Cancer Support Group

Third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Hearst Cancer Resource Center

1941 Johnson Avenue, Suite 201, San Luis Obispo, California



The Prostate Cancer Support Group provides a forum promoting open discussion for men to learn about a prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment options. The meetings offer objective, unbiased information about prostate cancer and encourage men to discuss concerns openly and share solutions to common problems.

To register or for more information, please call or email:
805.542.6234
HCRC@dignityhealth.org

Share the Hope

The French Hospital Medical Center Foundation is pleased to announce that Share the Hope, a fundraising event held on Saturday, April 6, 2024, raised more than \$464,000 to benefit the Hearst Cancer Resource Center (HCRC) Endowment.

The endowment, initially funded by The Hearst Foundation, provides vital long term support, allowing Hearst Cancer Resource Center to continue providing programs, services, support, and information to cancer patients and their families for many years to come. Share the Hope has been held annually since 2008, raising crucial funds to support the HCRC. This year, guests were able to enjoy a champagne reception at the incredible Neptune Pool at Hearst Castle. Staff members and patrons engaged to talk about the HCRC and enjoy the scenic view that the venue provides. The reception was followed by a gourmet dinner at the historic Hearst Ranch Dairy Barn with an exciting live auction and music. More than 175 guests attended.

Additional endowment funding is still needed to support the long term efforts of the HCRC and provide local cancer patients with critical services and resources. To learn more about giving opportunities at the French Hospital Medical Center Foundation and ways to get involved, please visit supportfrenchhospital.org.



Hearst Cancer Resource Center staff members helped put on the champagne reception at the Neptune Pool for guests at the recent Share the Hope event. Pictured left to right: Lisa Steinbeck, Cancer Registrar; Ashley Hahn, MSW, LCSW, Social Worker; Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN, Nurse Navigator, and Ramie Castilleja, Program Coordinator



Staff Spotlight

**Julie Neiggemann,
RN, MSN, OCN**

Nurse Navigator

Q: How long have you worked at HCRC?

I have had the privilege of working as the nurse navigator at HCRC since December of 2020. Prior to that I had clinical experience as an oncology bedside nurse at City of Hope National Medical Center and also spent a number of years as an assistant professor of nursing at Biola University. Immediately before transferring to HCRC I served as the breast/GYN nurse navigator at Mission Hope Cancer Center in Santa Maria.

Q: Why is HCRC important to you and/or this community?

A cancer diagnosis can have a wide-reaching impact that affects every aspect of a person—physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. And this includes their loved ones. HCRC provides a centralized place where patients and caregivers receive support to navigate challenges, receive comfort and resources, learn about their diagnosis and treatment, and establish a sense of community with other individuals that just get it. I am proud to be a part of such a center that can provide this for anyone in SLO county who is impacted by cancer.

Q: What is something personal that you enjoy and would like to share?

In addition to having a job that I love, I also enjoy being outdoors in the beauty the central coast has to offer, particularly hikes along the coast. My faith, family, and friends are deeply important to me. I also enjoy nature and macro photography, reading, running, and spending time with my now-senior French bulldog, Sirius.

Turn to us for answers

HEARST CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

1941 Johnson Avenue, Suite 201
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.542.6234
Monday–Friday
9AM–4:30PM
dignityhealth.org/hcrc
Please call for an appointment

Thomas Spillane, MD
Medical Director

Shannon D’Acquisto
Director, Cancer Survivor
HCRC@dignityhealth.org

Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN
Nurse Navigator

Ashley Hahn, MSW, LCSW
Social Worker

Eloisa Medina
Patient Navigator
805.786.6130—en español

Angela Fissell, RD
Registered Dietitian

Ramie Castilleja
Program Coordinator

Lisa Steinbeck
Cancer Registrar

IMAGING CENTERS

FHMC San Luis Diagnostic Center
1100 Monterey Street, #210
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.542.9700

FHMC Women’s Health and
Imaging Center
1941 Johnson Ave., Suite 104
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.597.6700

SLO ONCOLOGY & HEMATOLOGY HEALTH CENTER

715-B/C Tank Farm Road
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Direct: 805.543.5577

Care Providers:
Thomas Spillane, MD
*Medical Oncology Director of
Clinical Trials*

Gorgun Akpek, MD, MHS
Robin DiBiase, NP, OCN
Daniel Lewis, MD
James Malone III, MD
Lin Soe, MD
Tim Soucek, PA

SLO INFUSION CENTER

715-B/C Tank Farm Road
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Direct: 805.786.6140
Nurse Line: 805.786.6144

Susan Diaz, RN, OCN
Director

DIGNITY CANCER CARE CENTRAL COAST

Mission Hope Cancer Center
1325 East Church Street, Suite 102
Santa Maria, CA 93454
805.219.HOPE (4673)

850 Fair Oaks Avenue
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
805.474.5300

Kathleen Sullivan, PhD, RN
*Vice President, Post Acute Care and
Health Services Operations*

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Dignity Health Home Health
& Hospice
800.549.9609

Palliative Care
805.739.3950

COASTAL CANCER PARTNERS

The Hearst Cancer Resource Center has partnered with these organizations to bring programs and activities to the community:

17 Strong
seventeenstrong.org

American Cancer Society
cancer.org

Camp Kesem Cal Poly
campkesem.org

Cancer Connections
cancerconnectionslo.org

Cancer Support Community
cscslo.org

Cancer Well-Fit Program
cancerwell-fit.com

Central Coast Dragon Boat Association—Central Coast SurviveOars
ccdba.org

DreamMakers SLO
dreammakerslo.com

Hats for Hope
hatsforhope.com

Jack’s Helping Hand
jackshelpinghand.org

Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
lls.org

SabesWings
SabesWings.org

Surfing for Hope
surfingforhope.org

Teddy Bear Foundation
teddybearcancerfoundation.org

Hearst Cancer Resource Center

Mailing address:
1911 Johnson Avenue,
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Street address:
1941 Johnson Avenue, Suite 201,
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

HCRC Advisory Committee

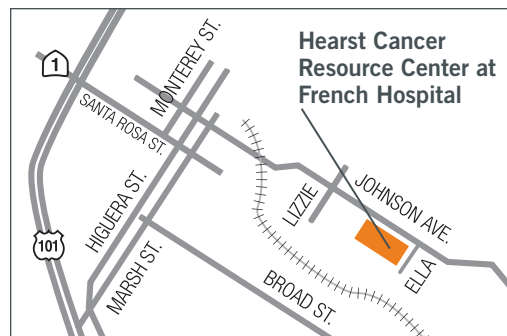
French Hospital Medical Center

Patrick Caster—PRESIDENT AND CEO
Julia Fogelson, MSN, RN—CNE
Tessa Espinoza—CPO
Thomas Vendegna, MD—CMO

Committee Members

Sandy Dunn—CHAIR
Gayle Cekada, MD
Edwin Hayashi, MD
Jack Hearst
Stephen Hearst
Stephen Hilty, MD
Robert Johnson, MD
Noreen Martin
Susan Minker, MD
Don Oberhelman
Colleen Russell, DPT
Thomas Spillane, MD
Jackie Starr
Christine Williams

Hearst Cancer Resource Center



Hearst Cancer Resource Center

Commission on Cancer Community Cancer Program

1911 Johnson Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA, 93401
805.542.6234



A QUALITY PROGRAM
of the AMERICAN COLLEGE
OF SURGEONS

