

ONE CLIENT'S JOYFUL RETURN TO CANCER LIFELINE

By: *Ava Bravata Keating*

No matter the actual weather in Seattle, I found my internal sunshine in a garden of my imagination's creation. In my mind it was my sanctuary; a mixture of meandering wild flower fields and coiffed rose gardens. Off to one side was a million-year-old tree (the kind that oozes wisdom onto all passersby), and a reading bench that lent a place for daydreaming and thinking. After tooling around my sacred garden for a while, I would make my way over to the pond and take to the water in a tiny dinghy. Lying on the bottom of the boat, I'd float, suspended, bobbing this way and that with the movement of the water. When I was good and ready, I'd return to land refreshed and rested. With a quickened stride, I would walk past the wisdom tree, through the roses and wild meadow, and back into "real life," carrying with me a little more peace than I'd had before, grateful that Cancer Lifeline had given me the tools to create a mental sanctuary of my own making.

Outside of the garden, my family was reeling from some devastating news: my mother had breast cancer. She was diagnosed in 2000, when I was eight and my younger sister was four. Although I didn't completely comprehend the ins and outs of her disease, I knew full well that her illness and the fear associated with it was the reason behind the casserole dishes my classmates' parents brought to our door. I knew it was the subject of my parents' hushed late night discussions. I knew that it meant that I'd better learn how to do the family's laundry, and fast. But more notably, I knew it meant that she was fragile, and by extension our family was too. I wondered how to show her I loved her when she was in pain. I wondered what to tell my sister who said that we might "catch" her cancer. I wondered if she would die, and where that would leave the rest of us.

A short while after my mother's diagnosis, our family started attending support sessions and classes at Cancer Lifeline. My parents had their grown up time with other adults, and my sister and I could just be kids with other children who were undergoing similar experiences. It was a great comfort to be in the company of peers who had some understanding of the

things I was going through. At that point, I didn't know many other eight-year-olds who'd grappled with tough concepts like death, and being part of a community of others with this shared experience made me feel less alone, less singled out.

Each night, my sister and I listened to the meditation tape that we were introduced to at Cancer Lifeline. In our imaginations we had been building our own "relaxation gardens" for many weeks, and were beginning to feel at home in the way ours looked and felt. I became accustomed to sailing around my garden's pond every evening—I was able to focus in on what it meant to feel safe and contented in the space that I had created for myself. There is no question that this awareness translated to a greater sense of personal agency outside of the garden, even in light of difficult circumstances. Despite the myriad external factors that could have spun me out of orbit, I was centered.



Although I didn't feel fortunate at the time, more than sixteen years later, I count my family and myself as some of the lucky ones. My mother survived her encounter with cancer and has been in remission for over a decade. I learned the significance of this good fortune in real terms at Cancer Lifeline, and gained a greater empathic capacity for others suffering the ravages of disease. Among its many positive offerings, Cancer Lifeline taught me to conceive of time with those I love as a true gift, and never as a given. I take that sentiment with me always.

My new role as a Lifeline volunteer at Cancer Lifeline is just beginning, but I already feel excited about participating once again in this community of strength. Although the mode is slightly different, the mission is the same—to give helpful and nonjudgmental support for those who are affected by cancer. As an adult, I feel as if this is a homecoming of sorts, and am gratified to more deeply understand and exercise the tenants of the organization that made such a positive impact on my life and my family. Maybe as a Lifeline volunteer I can share with someone else the tools to create their very own coping garden.

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BELOVED BARBARA

The Cancer Lifeline family of clients, friends and supporters is saddened by the passing of Barbara Frederick.

Known affectionately by her friends as “the woman no one could say no to”, Barbara Frederick made a genuine and enduring impression on the cancer community and achieved a new level of respect for the field of emotional support services as a vital part of oncology care. As Executive Director from 1982 to 2005, Barbara took Cancer Lifeline from a single-line phone support service to a nationally recognized provider of innovative and comprehensive support programs for people living with cancer.

In the early 1980’s while researchers were aggressively pursuing breakthroughs in cancer treatment Barbara turned her attention to the often overlooked emotional needs of individuals and families impacted by cancer. She was one of the first to implement yoga classes as a way to counter the side effects of cancer. She embraced the power of art and poetry as a tool to help clients express their feelings of frustration and loss of control. And she launched support groups that provided a welcoming and nonjudgmental environment where clients could express their fears and seek answers.

One of Barbara Frederick’s biggest dreams came true in 1999 when Cancer Lifeline opened the Dorothy O’Brien Center, a dedicated site where people touched by cancer could find comfort, support and respite.

At Cancer Lifeline we will always remember Barbara Frederick as an immeasurable force who continued to offer support and wise counsel until the very end. Just this past winter Barbara reminded us that to be truly great in our field, we need to remain responsive to the changing needs of our clients by constantly redefining how best to serve them. Thank you, Barbara; we love you.

CANCER LIFELINE GOES TO ALABAMA

By: *Meghan Wilkins*

With new leadership at the helm and a fresh outlook for the organization, optimism is high! Riding high with this new wave, we are excited to offer new programming for providers: **Cancer Support Consultation Services**. Identified as a priority in our new strategic plan, we have begun to offer individually customized consultation services facilitated by a Cancer Lifeline trained professional.



I had the pleasure of implementing our first contracted training for our Cancer Support Consultation Services recently when I traveled to Alabama to facilitate an Active Listening training for the Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center. As recognized and knowledgeable leaders in the cancer support community, we were chosen by Forge to help with the inception of a 24/7 Breast Cancer Support Line. This training was modeled after our Lifeline training – which has been a vital support line for people affected by cancer for over 40 years now.

From the ground up, the Active Listening training will serve as the foundation for not only the Forge Breast Cancer Support Line, but for all other support services that will follow. The most impactful part of the training was working with the dedicated and passionate women who believe in the benefits of this support –and want to do something about it! And secondly, knowing that they reached out to Cancer lifeline because we are trusted experts in providing cancer support services. My favorite line was, “Why reinvent the wheel when you already do it so well?”

My sentiments exactly. And if you would like to find out how Cancer Lifeline can support you or someone you know, please give us a call. Meghan Wilkins at 206.832.1296.

BREAKFAST WITH FRIENDS RAISES \$180,000

“Who would’ve thought you could have so much fun at breakfast!” commented Anna Hastings as she exited the ballroom of The Westin hotel clutching her new copy of the Cancer Lifeline cookbook, a package of organic wheat berries, and a sack of healthy multigrain Apple Muffins. The occasion was Cancer Lifeline’s Breakfast with Friends spring fundraising event which collected over \$180,000 from generous donors to provide vital support services for people living with cancer.

Nearly 300 long-time supporters and new friends braved the early morning time slot and Seattle’s rush hour traffic to be a part of this annual event which would make a difference in the lives of men and women living with cancer throughout our community.

Keynote speaker Fran Lewis, R.N., PhD from the University of Washington offered a research based assessment of the role of support services in improving treatment outcomes. Past Cancer Lifeline client, Ava Keating shared her moving personal experience of coming to support sessions at the Dorothy O’Brien Center with her family when she was 8 years old. Now 24, Ava remembers how being among others who were going through a similar experience lessened her fears and anxiety over her mother’s breast cancer. “The professional staff at Cancer Lifeline taught my sister and me valuable coping skills that kept our whole family grounded during one of the most frightening times of our life.” (See cover story.)

Honorary Chair, Nancy Evans received the Barbara Frederick award for her long time devotion to and support of Cancer Lifeline.



CANCER LIFELINE NOW OFFERS INDIVIDUALLY CUSTOMIZED CONSULTATION SERVICES BASED ON OUR CLIENT’S NEEDS INCLUDING:

WORKPLACE PROGRAMMING

- Work with a Cancer Lifeline professional to identify cancer related needs in the workplace
- Learn about ways to support a co-worker who is going through cancer treatment
- Provide managers and human resource personnel with guidance and tips on how to support an employee with cancer
- Opportunity to have on site cancer support services based on workplace needs

SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATION TRAINING

- Understand value of support group structure
- Understand threats to group process
- Learn and enact basic behaviors to facilitate group process

ACTIVE LISTENING TRAINING

- Extensive active listening training facilitated by a trained Cancer Lifeline professional
- Cancer specific peer role play scenarios
- Educational materials including cancer related articles and information on the psychosocial impact of cancer
- Purchase of training curriculum and right to share materials



Thanks for GivingBIG

Friends and supporters demonstrated their commitment to making cancer support services available to all people living with cancer through their combined donations of over \$30,000 to the annual GiveBIG campaign on May 3, 2016. In addition to the Seattle Foundation’s stretch funds, Cancer Lifeline offered donors an added incentive by developing our own pool of matching funds collected from generous board and advisory board members. Over 150 donors contributed to this year’s record revenue from GiveBIG. On behalf of all our clients, Thank You!

SAVE THE DATE

Keep your calendar open for Saturday evening, October 15, 2016. Cancer Lifeline’s Resources for Hope gala to benefit the Patient’s Assistance Fund will be held within the unique environs of The Ruins. Lynn Behar and Jane Caron will be co-chairing this year’s event. Tickets are \$250. For more information call 206-297-2100.

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NEW CLASS OFFERINGS FOR SPRING

RECLAIMING YOUR LIFE IN SURVIVORSHIP

Kirkland: EvergreenHealth, Halvorson Cancer Center
Renton: Valley Medical Center
Dates & Times TBA

COPING WITH CANCER & POST TRAUMATIC STRESS

Seattle: Northwest Hospital, Medical Arts Building
June 11, 11am – 12pm

FINANCIAL SUPPORT & CANCER

Kirkland: EvergreenHealth, Halvorson Cancer Center
June 8, 6:30 – 7:30 pm, July 5, 6:30 – 7:30

IMMUNOTHERAPY CANCER TREATMENT

Seattle: Northwest Hospital, Medical Arts Building
August 9, 1-2 pm

For descriptions and a full list of Cancer Lifeline classes and support groups, visit our website at www.cancerlifeline.org or stop by the Dorothy O'Brien Center at 6522 Fremont Avenue North to pick up a catalog, or call 206-297-2500. All classes are offered free of charge.



Barbara Frederick
October 29, 1930 – May 6, 2016

Memorial gifts may be made to the **Barbara Frederick Fund for Innovation in Cancer Support** by going on-line at www.cancerlifeline.org or by sending a check to Cancer Lifeline, 6522 Fremont Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98103. This fund will ensure that Barbara's wish for creative, innovative programming remains available and free of charge to all who are touched by cancer.

