

# WINTER 2002 Women CARE

Women's Cancer Advocacy, Resources & Education

FREE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR WOMEN WITH CANCER

THE 6TH ANNUAL

## Strike Out Against Cancer 2002

Are you looking for 2 hours of free, fun, game playing? Are your feet begging to be inside a pair of stylish red and green two-toned shoes? Are you anxious to win prizes and trophies? And most of all, are you ready to participate in a unique and easy fundraising event?

If you answered "yes" to even one of these questions, you are not alone. Don't ignore your inner voice...the one telling you to join **WomenCARE on Saturday, October 26th for our 6th Annual Strike Out Against Cancer Bowling Benefit at the Boardwalk Bowl** (formerly the Surf Bowl).

Each year the enthusiasm intensifies and the proceeds increase. The teams dress crazier, and everyone has a great time.

It's so easy. Just check-out all the details on the enclosed flyer, and call Monica DeCosta, (831) 234-6227 to sign up as a captain or as a single player.

Thank you to our generous sponsors: Seaside Company, Seagate Technology, Brink's Trophy Shoppe, Robert Taren Attorney at Law, and George Ow Family Properties. Through their assis-

*Daniella Woolf faces the challenges of bowling without breaking a nail.*



tance, WomenCARE can proudly say that 100% of all the team pledges go directly to providing free services to all Santa Cruz County women with cancer, their families, partners, and health practitioners.

Mark your calendars, polish your ball, and gather up your friends, family and co-workers. We promise you won't be sorry!

**Strike Out Against Cancer, Saturday, October 26th.** ♡

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As WomenCARE moves out into her second decade we are grateful for the broad based community support which has made it possible for us to double the size of our home in the past several months. We now have a beautiful new support group meeting room looking out into the trees, right next door to our administrative office. Finally we have the space we need to accommodate the many dedicated volunteers and the staff members who keep our services strong and vital. Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this growth.

Adequate office space means that we can more easily provide a sanctuary where women and their loved ones, who are facing a cancer diagnosis, can find others who understand, through personal experience, the very difficult choices they are facing on all levels—physically, emotionally, spiritually. We know that healing takes place in an atmosphere of safety, acceptance and human connection. Every time a newly diagnosed woman walks in our door we say, "I'm so sorry you have a reason to be here. And since you do, I'm so glad you knew that you could come to WomenCARE. You don't have to go through this alone."

Central to WomenCARE's philosophy is our dedication to giving wholehearted support to each woman's individual decisions about the ways she will respond. This issue includes the individual stories of two women, Barbara Barnett and Betsy Herbert, each of whom speaks poignantly about finding her own way.

Looking into the future, imagining where we will be in another

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## WOMENCARE

617-B Water Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 457-CARE/2273

### **DIRECTOR:**

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### **OFFICE MANAGER:**

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Maribel Cuervo

### **NAVIGATOR PROJECT STAFF:**

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Nita Eder-Stevens  
Path Star  
Lynne Wittenberg

### **VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR:**

LaVerne Coleman

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# Healing Is

"I am very sorry to have to tell you that you are now incurable. The tumor is more extensive than we knew, and there is no way to get rid of it at this point. The only realistic goal of treatment now is to stop it from growing and maybe, if we are really lucky, to shrink it a little. I'm sorry."

This is what I heard from my radiologist on Day One of the extremely aggressive, high-dose course of treatment she had mapped out for me over the next seven weeks. Although I knew that my medical situation was serious, this was the first time anyone had used the word 'incurable' in reference to me, and the power of it slammed into me like a runaway train. I asked her why I should continue with treatment if there was zero possibility of it eradicating the tumor and she replied: "If you don't, the tumor will continue to grow aggressively—it will break through your skin, which is an excruciating condition, it will kill the nerves in your left arm and leave you with a dead arm, it will spread to your other organs and eventually wrap around your spine, which would be a very bad, very serious situation."

I asked to see the films of my CAT scan, and we stood side by side in front of the light box in her office looking at the enormous size of the tumor nesting in my armpit and sprawling across most of the left side of my torso in a deranged mass of meaty tentacles. On a print out of the CAT scan, the physicians who mapped my radiation field had colored the tumor mass in bright red, the vibrant color of fiery passion and exuberant health, and I was stunned by the sight of so much of this now-dangerous color spreading down my left side in a deadly tide of malignancy.

For the first time since my diagnosis, my confidence in my ability to dissolve the tumor that had been feeding on me for most of the last year was shaken to the core. I had already been through two surgeries, three weeks of intensive treatment at an alternative cancer clinic, two months of weekly chemo that only seemed to feed the tumor, and months of complementary treatments. Nothing had worked. The longest I had gone in the prior 12 months without a recurrence was eight weeks, and now I was hearing that I was officially considered "incurable."

Ever since it became undeniably obvious that my chemo was failing and the tumor was continuing to grow at an alarming rate, I could feel the fear vibrating through my doctors when they talked to me, and it was impossible not to notice how I was being looked at more and more like a Walking Dead Woman. But no one had declared me "incurable" before my radiologist spoke this dreaded word on my first day of treatment. I asked if it was possible for radiation to shrink the tumor enough to have it surgically removed, and she replied: "No, that is not a realistic goal at this point." According to her, while nothing could remove the tumor now that it had gained so much ground in my body, I might be able to live a few more years if I received "the proper maintenance therapy," meaning chemo for the rest of my days. Needless to say, the prospect of living out the remainder of this lifetime in a toxic fog of nausea and fatigue while still walking around with the tumor was not a very compelling "treatment goal."

I responded to the extreme shock of the CAT scan's visual confirmation of how much danger I was in, and to my doctor's grim assessment of my condition by ask-



# Always Possible

Barbara Barnett

ing to be left alone for a few minutes. I needed to decide what I wanted to do with all of this devastating information. In the thundering solitude of the exam room, the first thing I thought was: "Healing is still possible even in these circumstances." Then I spiralled through a whole range of feelings triggered by hearing myself declared "incurable." I almost cried, but I didn't. I almost got swept out to sea by fear, but I didn't. I almost bolted out of the office, but I didn't. What I did do, in that vortex of overwhelmingly grim statistics and medical hopelessness, was sit down in a chair and plant my feet on the living earth in order to ground my energy. As I sank my life force down, like a great taproot into the heart of the earth, I breathed into my center until I felt the presence of Spirit waterfalling through me and filling up the clinical sterility of the room. Then I asked my Inner Wisdom if it was time for me to die or if I should continue moving forward with treatment. If it was time for me to leave this body, then I was not going to put myself through any more violent treatments, and I would just go home right then to savor what time I had left. I had scarcely finished asking the question when a strong bolt of clear, powerful certainty shot through me like lightning, and the message I heard speaking in my heart was: "Things look really bad right now, but you need to keep going because something amazing is going to happen." The clarity and truth of this answer was so undeniable that I got up, left the room, and told the doctor that I was ready to begin treatment.

When she told me that she had called my oncologist to let him know that I was "not curable by any treatment options available to current radiology practice," I surprised myself by responding: "But that doesn't mean that healing still isn't possible." She was taken aback by this, and with a confused look on her face, asked me what I meant. "All you are telling me is that you are at the limits of Western medicine's knowledge base, but outside your clinical concepts there is a vast universe of potentiality in which anything can and does happen. When people are in predicaments as dangerous as mine, it is vitally important that all the doors of possibility be kept wide open around us so that any healing that is available to us can get in. This cannot happen if you close them just because medicine doesn't have the answer or because the statistics indicate a 'grim prognosis.' I'm not ready to close any of my doors right now. I understand that you have to make sure that I fully understand the seriousness of my situation, and that you don't

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*"If there is anything I've learned from my years working with cancer clients it is that there are dozens and perhaps hundreds of different paths that are healing paths. And each client has to find the one that is the right path for her."*

—Jeanne Wallace, PhD, Nutrition Consultant.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

CALL 457-2273 FOR INFORMATION

**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 14 AND 15**

### *Cancer as a Turning Point, From Surviving to Thriving*

Chabot College, Hayward

It's not too soon to mark your calendars with the date for this remarkable healing event. Free of charge. Pre-registration required. [www.healingjourneys.org](http://www.healingjourneys.org)

**Saturday, September 21,  
10am - 4pm**

### *Writing and the Spiritual Life*

Led by Patrice Vecchione

UCSC Women's Center

Enrollment \$125. Limited enrollment

Proceeds benefit WomanCARE's

Healing Circle.

Reflect on the presence of the spiritual in your life. Discover depth in your writing, sources of creativity, ways to work with doubt and criticism. Craft rituals to support your writing and spiritual practices. Enroll early to be sure of a place.

**Saturday September 21**

### *O'Neill Capitola Women's Longboard Surf Fest: Women on Waves*

At main beach in Capitola. One of the few contests exclusively for women.

Sponsored by the Capitola Chamber of Commerce, Capitola Village

Association and West Wind Surf Club.

Once again this year's event will benefit WomenCARE.

**Wednesday, October 23, 7 - 9pm**

### *Living With Cancer Series*

Free. Michael Stillwater and the Graceful Passages Group present music that touches the heart with hope and healing. See enclosed flyer for location.

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## UPCOMING WOMENCARE EVENTS

Continued from page 3

**Saturday October 27, 12 - 4pm**

### *Strike out Against Cancer*

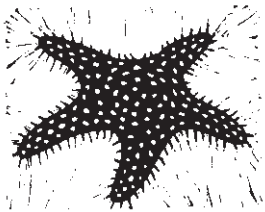
6th Annual Bowling Benefit fundraiser.

See front cover for details.

**Tuesday January 7, 2003**

### *WomenCARE night at Shadowbrook*

Reservations start December 7



## WOMENCARE SUPPORT GROUPS

Call 831-457-2273 for meeting dates and times or for more information on attending any of our groups.

- Drop-In
- Post Treatment
- Metastatic, recurrent or advanced cancer
- Friends & Family
- Lesbians with Cancer
- Spanish-speaking Women with Cancer

# Entre Nosotras Colabora

*Translated by Maribel Cuervo*

### **LOCAL SUPPORT AND NATIONAL ATTENTION**

Entre Nosotras, WomenCARE's program for Latinas with cancer, continues growing in South County. Entre Nosotras has a new home in downtown Watsonville in the Lettunich Building, 406 Main Street, #309. Generous donations of comfortable furniture have helped us create a welcoming home-like atmosphere. Our vision is to have a replica of the Santa Cruz office, with materials and information in Spanish to serve the increasing number of Spanish speaking women searching for help during their healing journeys. We are planning to have a ribbon-cutting ceremony soon, so we will keep you posted.

To increase the support options for Latino women and their families, office hours have been expanded. Chila Correa, our Latina Outreach Coordinator, is available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8 - 1 pm and from 3 - 4 pm to answer calls and help visitors. To build visibility and to strengthen the image of Entre Nosotras/WomenCARE in South County, Maribel Cuervo, Latina Program Coordinator, has joined Chila in visiting various community organizations with information about Entre Nosotras' services. It's exciting to see how this program continues establishing its pres-

ence in the community.

In addition to the steady funding Entre Nosotras receives from our local jurisdictions we have recently received a financial contribution from Newman's Own which will make it possible for us to provide much needed, reliable transportation for our support group members to and from our meetings. With the help of a grant from The Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, and in collaboration with the Familia Center, we will be replicating our Watsonville Entre Nosotras program in the city of Santa Cruz during the coming year.

The lessons we have learned in developing Entre Nosotras here in Santa Cruz County are now being used nationwide as a model for others to follow. Entre Nosotras is considered to be one of the most successful support programs for Spanish speaking women with cancer anywhere in the United States. In June, WomenCARE's Director, Connie Batten, gave a presentation of our work at the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's national conference in Washington, DC. The response to Entre Nosotras was overwhelmingly positive. We know that each little step makes for a long road, so we continue walking. ☺



# Entre Nosotras Collaborates

## **APOYO LOCAL Y ATENCIÓN NACIONAL**

Entre Nosotras, el programa de WomenCARE para Latinas con cáncer, continúa creciendo en el sur del Condado. Entre Nosotras tiene un nuevo hogar en el centro de Watsonville, en el edificio Lettunich: 406 Main Street, #309. Los muebles donados generosamente nos han ayudado a crear una atmósfera hogareña y de bienvenida. Nuestra visión es la de crear una réplica de la oficina en Santa Cruz, con información y materiales en español, para servir al creciente número de mujeres de habla hispana que buscan ayuda durante sus caminos a la recuperación. Estamos planeando tener una ceremonia de inauguración en alguna ocasión futura, así que les mantendremos al tanto.

Para aumentar las opciones de apoyo para mujeres latinas y sus familias, hemos extendido las horas de oficina. Chila Correa, nuestra Coordinadora de Alcance a la Comunidad, está disponible lunes, martes, jueves y viernes, de 8am a 1pm y de 3 a 4pm, para contestar llamadas y atender a quienes visitan la oficina.

Para aumentar la visibilidad y fortalecer la imagen de Entre Nosotras y WomenCARE en el sur del Condado, Maribel Cuervo, Coordinadora del Programa para Latinas, a acompañado a Chila durante algunas visitas a organizaciones comunitarias para dar información sobre los servicios que Entre Nosotras ofrece. Es muy bueno ver como este programa continúa estableciendo su presencia en la comunidad.

Además de los sólidos fondos que Entre Nosotras recibe de nuestros gob-

ernos locales, recientemente recibimos una contribución financiera de Newman's Own, que nos permitirá brindar transportación segura y necesaria para las mujeres que asisten a los grupos de apoyo. Con la ayuda de una beca otorgada por la Santa Cruz Community Foundation y en colaboración con el Centro de Familia, durante el próximo año empezaremos a duplicar nuestro programa Entre Nosotras de Watsonville, en la ciudad de Santa Cruz.

Las lecciones que hemos aprendido durante el desarrollo de Entre Nosotras en el Condado de Santa Cruz, se han convertido en un modelo a seguir que ahora comienza a usarse a lo largo y ancho de la nación. Entre Nosotras está considerado como uno de los más exi-



tosos programas de apoyo para mujeres con cáncer de habla hispana en cualquier lugar de los Estados Unidos. Este pasado mes de Junio, Connie Batten, Directora de Women CARE, dio una presentación de nuestro trabajo en la Conferencia Nacional de la Fundación para el Cáncer del Seno Susan G. Komen, en Washington, D.C. La respuesta hacia Entre Nosotras fue abrumadoramente positiva. Sabemos que cada paso que damos se convierte en parte del largo camino por recorrer, por ello seguimos caminando. ☺

## **WOMENCARE'S HEALING CIRCLE**

**OUR CURRENT LIST OF EDUCATIONAL AND EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS INCLUDES:**

### *The Writing Circle*

**Meets second and fourth Saturday mornings of each month, 10am - noon.**

Open to the writer in each of us, this group allows for creative exploration in a supportive space right where you are. Each session is a surprise, our creations prompted by writing activities and the stories of our lives--bring your notebook, invite your muse.

(Led by Joan Schatz)

### *Art for Healing*

**Meets third Saturday of each month, 10am - noon**

In a safe and encouraging atmosphere we paint, draw, glitter, glue, cut, tear, and use pastels, clay, natural and other materials to explore and express our deepest selves. No art experience necessary, just a willingness to play with art materials and listen tenderly to ourselves. (Led by Wendy Traber)

### *Spiritual Support*

**Meets every other Tuesday evening, 7 - 8:30pm**

Open to women of all faiths and traditions, this group offers a safe, supportive place to explore what is true for you and what feeds your soul. (Led by Paulette Forest)

### *Complementary Treatment Group*

**Meets third Wednesday evening of each month 7 - 9pm**

An educational and collaborative group for women who want a

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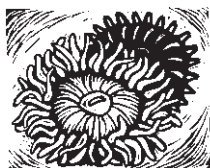
## OUR TEN YEAR CELEBRATION

Jan Adrian

On Friday evening, May 3rd, we filled the Rio Theater in Santa Cruz to celebrate WomenCARE's 10th anniversary. Humorist Terri Tate opened the evening by sharing the wisdom she has gained as a survivor of oral cancer. Only someone who has been there can find the humor in a cancer experience.

Holly Near captivated us with her heartfelt music and stories. Her songs encouraged and illustrated the essence of WomenCARE's philosophy over the past ten years—an acceptance of each person's unique path, and a deep respect for the mystery that holds all life. She said, "If we can allow the place of mystery to exist within, refraining from the need to fill it up with absolutes and explanations, then we always have a connection to the unknown. It does not need to be named. And in our willingness to admit we do not know, we honor the unknown. I believe when we pay attention to the universe, it pays

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# Navigator News

Path Star

**INTERVIEW WITH ANN LINDBERG, RN AND MICHELE FINCH, RN NURSE ONCOLOGISTS AT THE KATZ CANCER RESOURCE CENTER**

*The Peer Navigator Program provides counseling and support to women who have just learned they have breast cancer. Trained and supervised breast cancer survivors help newly diagnosed women navigate the first three months of treatment. The Peer Navigator Program is currently available as a WomenCARE/Stanford University clinical trial, studying the effects of one-on-one lay support during breast cancer treatment.*

*Path Star, WomenCARE's Peer Navigator/Sojourner Coordinator, spent an afternoon at the Katz Cancer Resource Center talking with nurse oncologists Ann Lindberg, RN and Michele Finch, RN about their involvement in this local collaboration.*

**PATH: What is your role in the Peer Navigator Program?**

**ANN:** Michele and I meet with all participants in the Program for an hour to talk about all of their treatment options, to inform them of resources in our community, and to answer any questions they might come in with.

**PATH: What are the common questions asked?**

**ANN:** Will I lose my hair? Will I be nauseous? There is a "common undercurrent unsaid" —the realization that clients are in a new world, a new place and are unsure that they will be up to the challenge.

**MICHELE:** One of my roles is to help put into words what a woman is feeling, what she may be concerned about and cannot form into a question.

**ANN:** In addition to answering questions, our role is to explain—again or perhaps differently—new information on cancer treatment that women want to understand. For example, when we explain how chemotherapy works and why it is given in cycles, we see the

light go on in women's eyes when they finally "get it." There is a new lightness, where women are more relaxed and less stressed.

**PATH: What are the greatest needs women have?**

**MICHELE:** Women have many needs around paying for their cancer treatment. We help women not have to make health care decisions on the basis of money. We help them resolve insurance issues and find ways of paying for meds. We help women without insurance access services.

**PATH: What is an experience that really touched you while working with the Peer Navigator Program?**

**MICHELE:** A woman was at odds with her doctor. After I talked with her, she went back to her doctor and they found a peaceful way to communicate. When I called back to follow-up, the woman was so touched that I cared; that she was being thought about.

**ANN:** My favorite moment was helping a woman who had just moved to the area and knew no one. Helping orient her to the community and the local resources was very satisfying.

**PATH: How do you feel about being a part of the Peer Navigator Program?**

**ANN:** Great! Women really need Navigators through this process. I like it that when our appointment is over, I know that the woman will have ongoing contact with WomenCARE.

**MICHELE:** I like it that once women connect with our resources they know that "no matter what, I can call and there will be people there to help me."

As the interview came to an end, both Ann and Michele expressed appreciation that, as nurses, they were included in the Peer Navigator Program and that there is recognition of the need for the medical component. ☺

# Our Amazing Volunteers

LaVerne Coleman

Every Monday morning, Maggie Tranchina shows up for her three hour office shift at WomenCARE, and to quote staff member, Path, "WomenCARE is in good hands when Maggie is here. She blends this deep compassion and efficiency and it feels so welcoming."

Volunteer work is not new to Maggie, who has been involved in projects as varied as conducting a children's choir in Indiana, and serving as an elementary school reading aide, and being President of the PTA. While volunteering at the San Jose school where her children were students, she organized groups of par-

ents to spend days on the streets monitoring traffic and counting cars in a successful effort to get the crossing guards reinstated.

As her children grew, Maggie returned to school and graduated in the first class of paralegals at Santa Clara University. She worked 15 years in a law firm and five in a high tech company. Then, just before Christmas in 1997, she was diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer. She responded by seeking to educate herself once

again. Maggie didn't follow a formal curriculum—her texts were medical and the classes were held in doctors' offices and hospitals.

Almost four years later, after going through various cancer treatments, taking the prescribed drugs, and losing and regaining her hair, Maggie decided to volunteer at WomenCARE. She had retired from her career, but liked to work, and hoped her experience on the cancer journey might be helpful to other women.

An important service WomenCARE volunteers provide is a willing and compassionate ear for anyone seeking information or support relating to a cancer diagnosis. "I very much like the occasions," Maggie says, "when people call or come in, with whom I can identify. They tell me how they feel and I'm glad when I can ease their fears a bit."

"I think that as agencies go, WomenCARE is warmer, more compassionate," Maggie continues. "Other organizations I've dealt with were more corporate, less personal. They offered resources but not the amazing connections women so quickly find here. We have great resources, too, like the lending library, the Peer Navigator Project and community referrals. But it's the personal needs of individual women that get taken care of. What we do is tangible. I'm rewarded by being here. When I volunteered I didn't expect to get this positive feeling that I have. It's very special to be involved in WomenCARE." she adds.

Besides being a Monday morning angel at the WomenCARE office, Maggie loves to sing, even if she only finds time for it in the shower and the car these

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

- To post flyers around town for special events
- To regularly monitor the internet for cancer websites and keep our own links updated
- To review and evaluate newly published and recommended books and tapes for our library
- To answer phones and provide office support
- To be a Sister Offering Support
- To provide practical support to women undergoing cancer treatment



## WOMENCARE'S HEALING CIRCLE

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safe place to gather, sort through and share information about the many complementary cancer treatments. (Led by Robin London, Kathleen Pouls, Maile Pouls, Connie Batten)

### *Sacred Circle Dance*

**Meets one time**

**Saturday, October 5, 1 - 3pm**

Quaker Meeting House

An afternoon of dances, both lively and meditational, to marvelous music from many cultures. Steps are simple and repetitive, enlivening and healing. No prior dance experience necessary. See enclosed flyer for details (Led by Joan Rawles-Davis)

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## THE HEALING CAPACITY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Jan Adrian

*Cancer As a Turning Point, From Surviving to Thriving™*

Free conference for anyone touched by cancer.

September 14 and 15, 2002  
Chabot College in Hayward.

This conference is designed to heal, celebrate, empower, and awaken those lives that have been touched by cancer.

Keynote speakers include Wayne Muller, Shakti Gawain, Marty Rossman, MD, Jeanne Wallace, PhD, CNC, Terri Tate, and SARK. Musical presenters include Beth Baker, Sista Monica, Steven Walters and The Sacramento Taiko Dan.

One purpose of the conference is to help participants view cancer in the context of the whole person (mind, body, spirit, and emotion), not just as a disease of the body. People with cancer, their friends and family, and healthcare providers are invited to attend the conference. Fourteen (14) CEUs are available for RNs, MFTs, and LCSWs.

Comments from conference participants:

“It was so much more than I anticipated. A beautiful experience. I loved the balance between spirit and science; seriousness and humor; the music and audience participation.”

“The conference gave me strength and courage, and the ability to love and be grateful again. Bless you all.”

For on-line registration and information see the web page at <http://www.healingjourneys.org> To receive a brochure, call Healing Journeys at (831) 464-0885. ☎

## Healing in Harmony

Betsy Herbert

I was as bewildered as the next woman when, just a year ago, I received my diagnosis of metastasized breast cancer. Suddenly I was faced with the need to make choices among a vast array of treatment decisions. Information was coming at me from every direction about breast cancer, about metastasis, about websites,

*The more information  
I gathered, the more  
I became.*

about conventional treatment options, about complementary and alternative treatment options, about what to eat, what not to eat, about what to think and what not to think, about how to manage stress and how to deal with pain. I felt an urgency to learn as much as I could as fast as possible. Everyone, it seemed, had an idea about what I should do, and each piece of advice came from a friend or loved one who was deeply concerned about my well being. The more information I gathered, the more bewildered I became. I felt overwhelmed by too many choices. How could I possibly sort through them? How could I find my own way through such a tangle of apparently contradictory opinions?

En route to my first appointment with my oncologist, my sister reminded me that all I needed to do was listen to the options the doctor would recommend for treatment. Just listen and think about them. I could feel my anxiety subside. Some of the tension in my chest relaxed its grip.

I took a deep and spacious breath, remembering the lessons I have learned over many years as an educator within the community of home schooling families. I often ask parents about the feelings that come up for them when they enter particular cultural institutions: supermarkets, shopping malls, large urban airports, hospitals, and public schools. Almost universally they comment on their feelings of overwhelm, bewilderment and personal insignificance. Often they go on to talk about their perceptions of having choice or no choice, of exercising or relinquishing their personal power in such settings. Parents who choose home schooling want to help their children learn to exercise personal power, based on an inner knowing of what is uniquely right for them. As I reflected on my work with parents and children, I knew that, even with all the confusion surrounding me, I could return to this same inner knowing.

I asked myself the question I had so often asked the families I worked with: How do I find the place inside myself where visions/hopes/dreams/fears and ideas can be sifted and sorted?

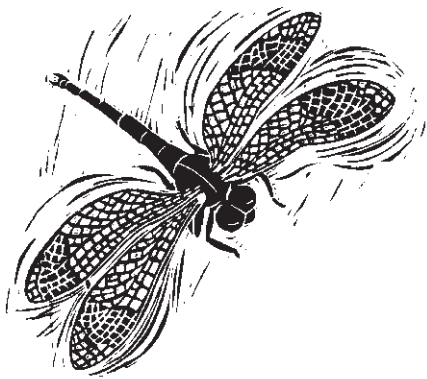
I found new versions of familiar methods that had worked for me in the past. I sought out others who could listen openly to my questions, my confusion, my fears. Being part of the support group for women with metastatic, recurrent or advanced cancer at WomenCARE has helped me negotiate the journey on my own true path. In our group we cultivate the technique of Deep Listening as a tool for self-knowledge

*I asked myself the question I had so  
asked the families I worked with:  
How do I find the place inside myself  
where visions/hopes/dreams/fears  
and ideas can be sifted and sorted?*

# Barbara Ehrenreich on Breast Cancer Culture

The following is an excerpt from Barbara Ehrenreich's keynote address to Breast Cancer Action's 2002 Town Meeting. To read or listen to the entire speech, go to: [www.bcaction.org](http://www.bcaction.org)

In the 70s I was an activist in what we then called the women's health movement. We campaigned for safe contraceptives, against unnecessary surgery,



for the option of unmedicated childbirth, for the right to choose abortion.

In the area of breast cancer, we battled against the practice proceeding directly from biopsy to mastectomy, without even letting the patient wake up to make the decision herself. We wanted women to have the information and the right to make their own health care decision.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer 2 years ago, I did what any veteran of the Women's Health Movement would do: I started researching, looking especially for support and information from other women who had the disease. I ordered a half dozen books, mostly women's accounts of their breast cancer experiences. I waded out into the net and found scores of breast cancer websites, which I nervously devoured. I was looking for tips, ways to survive the treatments, questions to ask the doctors, and of course emotional support-sisterhood. I was sure that I would find the Women's Health Movement alive and

well and able to help me.

I found a lot. But what I found shocked me. Yes, I found useful tips and information, but I found something else—that a whole culture (I don't know what else to call it) has grown up around breast cancer. And it certainly did not contain the sisterhood I was searching for.

How to define breast cancer culture? It's very pink and femme and frilly - all about pink ribbons, pink rhinestone pins, pink t-shirts and of course a lot about cosmetics. . . . The culture of breast cancer is highly commercialized. First, in the sense that many apparently grassroots fundraising efforts are in fact sponsored by large corporations eager to court middle-aged females. Among them: Revlon, Avon, Ford, Tiffany, Pier 1, Estee Lauder, Ralph Lauren, Lee Denim, Saks Fifth Avenue, JC Penney, Boston Market, Wilson athletic gear.

So what does it hurt to have this massive breast cancer culture? You could say: whatever gets you through the night...But there are at least 2 major problems with it:

First, the breast cancer culture has encouraged a dangerous complacency about current medical approaches to breast-cancer treatment. Implicit in all the pink ribbons and the drumbeat for regular mammograms was the promise that your cancer could be cured—if only you bring it to the doctors' attention early enough. In other words, there's nothing wrong with the so-called treatments—the burden is on you to get your tumor detected "early."

But as I wrote to the Komen message board: not all small tumors are "early" and more easily treated. In fact, there is no single disease "breast cancer"—probably a multitude of diseases

## HRT INCREASES BREAST CANCER RISK

In early July, the Women's Health Initiative reported that the risks of long-term hormone replacement therapy (HRT) outweigh its benefits. Unacceptable levels of breast cancer and heart disease were found among the more than 6,000 women in the study. The Women's Health Initiative Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) recommended that women in the estrogen plus progestin study stop their study pills. In their judgment, it has become clear that the health risks of taking estrogen plus progestin now exceed the benefits. The DSMB made this recommendation because of the following risks: The number of women who developed breast cancer was higher in women taking estrogen plus progestin pills than in women taking placebo pills. The number of women who developed heart attacks, strokes, and blood clots was higher in women taking estrogen plus progestin. For more information about this report, go to [www.whi.org](http://www.whi.org). If you would like information about effective ways to take action, go to [www.bcf.org](http://www.bcf.org) 🖱

## WOMENCARE WISH LIST

1. DSL Router
2. Computer network setup
3. Small color TV and VCR
4. iMac computer 🖱

Continued on page 10

# Can You Hear Me Scream?

**Raven Stevens**

Can you hear me scream?  
That's me...  
That edgy feeling...  
The tenseness, just below the  
surface of  
our interaction.

Can you hear me scream?  
That's me...  
The one with the furrowed brow...  
As I wince beneath the pain...  
The muffled whimper you hear as  
another wave blows through me.

Can you hear me scream?  
That's me...  
Listening to the social worker tell  
me why I don't  
qualify for food stamps...  
Breathing, listening and  
thanking her for her time.

Can you hear me scream?  
That's me...  
With tears in my eyes as I watch  
the leaves  
turn color and I wonder,  
what happened to spring?

Can you hear me scream?  
That's me...  
Trying bravely to show you the  
new stubble growing  
on my head...  
And you say to me "wow, it's so  
gray."  
I quietly put my hat back on...

Can you hear me scream?  
That's me...  
Smiling at you as you say to me  
"it's almost over..."  
while I realize,  
it's only just begun...

## BARBARA EHRENREICH

Continued from page 9

of various degrees of virulence. But right now, they're all being treated as a single disease.

Worse, current treatments—surgery, chemotherapy and radiation—carry no guarantee of long-term survival and are notoriously debilitating and disfiguring themselves. Every year, more than 40,000 American women die of breast cancer, large numbers of whom had duly submitted to screening mammograms and to the nightmarish treatments that ensued.

Even mammograms are something to worry about: Only one carcinogen has been definitely established as a cause of breast cancer, and that is ionizing radiation of the kind emitted by mammography machines.

A second big problem with the pink ribbon culture: While they want a cure—we ALL do—they say almost nothing about the need to find the CAUSE of breast cancer, which is very likely environmental. This omission makes sense: breast cancer would hardly be the darling of corporate charities if its complexion changed from pink to green.

But by ignoring or underemphasizing the issue of environmental causes, the pink-ribbon crowd function as willing dupes of what could be called the Cancer Industrial Complex: by which I mean the multinational corporate enterprise which with the one hand

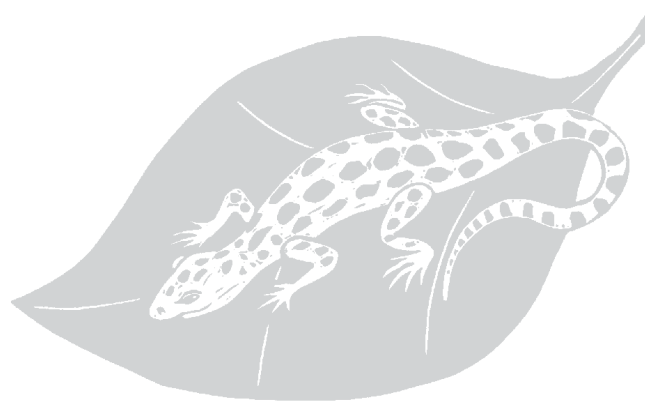
doles out carcinogens and disease and, with the other, offers expensive, semi-toxic, pharmaceutical treatments. Breast Cancer Awareness month, for example, is sponsored by AstraZeneca (the manufacturer of Tamoxifen) which until 1999 was also the fourth largest producer of pesticides in the United States, including at least one known carcinogen.

we don't need to be infantilized when we're dealing with a potentially fatal disease, we don't need to be patronized with cosmetics and jewelry, and told to keep smiling, no matter what.

We don't need more "awareness" of breast cancer—we're VERY aware, thank you very much. We need treatments that work, and above all, we need to know the cause of this killer, so we can stop it before it attacks another generation.

And we certainly don't need a breast cancer culture that, by downplaying the possible environmental causes of cancer, serves as an accomplice in global poisoning—normalizing cancer, prettying it up, even presenting it, perversely, as a positive and enviable experience.

What we need is a truly sisterly response to this ghastly disease—one that is both loving and militant, courageous and caring, willing to confront the Cancer Industrial Complex and, when necessary, the entire \$16 billion a year breast cancer industry. ♡



## HEALING IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE

Continued from page 3

want to give me any false hope regarding a cure, but you don't need to give me false hopelessness either. If I were in your place and had to talk to a patient with a CAT scan like mine, I would have said something like: "Your tumor is more extensive than we thought, and statistically the chances of eradicating it with radiation are extremely low, but that doesn't mean that it's impossible. We just have to stay focused on what we're doing and on achieving the best possible outcome. I will be doing this when I treat you, and I hope that you will receive the treatments in this way, and together we'll see what we can accomplish." Then I would have felt as though you are working with me, instead of feeling stranded out here on my own."

I'm not sure how much of what I said registered in the data driven mind of my doctor, but it resonated within me with more certainty than anything I'd ever heard from an oncologist. While I have immense appreciation for the technological brilliance and playful kindness that I received from my radiologist, my deep trust in the message conveyed by my Inner Wisdom is the only reason I chose to continue with radiation. And, just as it had promised, before I had reached the halfway point it was clear that "something amazing" was occurring. The "incurable" tumor began to shrink, and by the end it was not only "a little smaller", but completely gone!



Afterwards, when I had bloodwork, a bone scan, and another CAT scan to see if any tumor mass remained or if I had any metastases (and I had been warned that it was highly unlikely that I wouldn't after carrying such a massive tumor for so long), all of my results were normal! Against all medical odds, I had morphed from a Walking Dead Woman into a Dancing Miracle Babe!

All along, even when my medical condition looked "exceedingly grim" (my oncologist's words), this miraculous healing had been waiting for me.

What continues to electrify me every time I think about it is how easy it would have been to completely miss my Inner Wisdom in the face of all the medical negativity surrounding me. If I had bought into all the "poor diagnostic factors," the hopeless

statistics, and my "incurable" status, I would never have been able to even hold the thought of healing in my mind, much less embody it the way I am doing now.

In May, I celebrated the second anniversary of my diagnosis (Stage III-A infiltrating ductal carcinoma) and the completion of my first cancer-free year! As I walk around in a state of perpetual awe and gratitude, I am aware that I am still navigating the sea of uncertainty that everyone else living with a cancer diagnosis wakes up to each morning, but in the midst all of the unanswerable questions surrounding the cure for cancer, I am absolutely certain of one thing: Healing is always possible. 🐾

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 1

ten years, I wish we were expecting a decreased need for our services. Nothing would make us happier than to work ourselves out of a job. The near epidemic numbers of new cancer diagnoses each year, though, are evidence that the problem is very large indeed, and that it is not going away. Research strongly suggests a link between the rise in cancer rates and environmental factors. In this context we include the incisive perspective of Barbara Ehrenreich to bear on the larger implications of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

As we grow into the next ten years may we continue to be blessed by the loyal support of our local community, may we be able to make a difference in the health of our worldwide community, and may we never forget our vital link to the healing power of paying close and caring attention to the very personal stories and struggles of individual women and their loved ones. 🐾

—Connie Batten



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT FEBRUARY TO JULY 2002

Thanks to the following community members and organizations for their generous contributions that help WomenCARE maintain free services available to the Santa Cruz Community:

**BREAST CANCER RESEARCH PROJECT (BCRP)** awarded a two year grant to WomenCARE's Peer Navigator Program to expand services with Familia Center of Santa Cruz. (\$20,000)

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY** awarded a one year grant to expand the Entre Nosotras Latina project to the City of Santa Cruz region. (\$8,700)

**ROSENLUND FAMILY FOUNDATION** made a donation in honor of Isabelle Rosenlund, to help build Sisters Offering Support (SOS), a program that provides peer support to Women with all types of cancer. (\$2,000)

**PATTI STUMPF** made a contribution toward providing practical support to women who are going through cancer treatment. (\$2,000)

**NEWMAN'S OWN** donated generously towards our practical support program for the Entre Nosotras in Watsonville. (\$2,000)

The **SANTA CRUZ CANCER BENEFIT GROUP** contributed proceeds from another tremendously successful Annual Spring Forward Against Cancer Gala. (\$7,500)

**PAT RUTHERFORD'S TRUST** memorial bequest to support the Art for Healing workshop series. (\$3153)

**SOROPTIMISTS OF MID SANTA CRUZ COUNTY** donated proceeds from their spring yard sale. (\$1,500)

**CHARLIE HONG KONG RESTAURANT** has donated 100 gift certificates to the Peer Navigator Program for peer lunches. (value \$500)

**IN CELEBRATION OF THE MUSE**, produced by Amber Somrall and Dena Taylor contributed proceeds. (\$5,000) ♡

## IN MEMORY OF

Annette Barr's Mother  
Beatrice Benich  
Robert Duane Brill  
Margaret Cheap  
Amy Cooperstein  
Taube Curaco  
Sara Harrah  
Rita Macuda

Heidi Marsh  
Ruth Myers  
Barbara Navarro  
Mimi Roth  
Sally Schwartz  
Annie Seiler  
Lynn Sukenakl  
Elisa Tarsey

## IN HONOR OF

Caroline Bliss-Isberg  
Sherrie Brown  
Carolyn Coleman  
Connie Millslagle

Ann Peretta  
Roberta Valdez  
Kim and Ded's 10th



# We Thank the Following for Their Generous Financial Support

Deb Abbott, Marcy AlanCraig, Joyce Angell, Marian Atcheson, Donna & Delbert Bailey, Mary Bashford, L.C. Bechtel, Wendy Black, Deborah & Alan Blumberg, Marie Bourget, Jennifer Brill, Sydney & John Brokaw, Erin Bucci, Lori Butterworth, Sue Clarry, Carolyn & Curt Coleman, James Cochran, Lin Colavin, Kirsten Commons, Bruce Cooperstein, Roxanne Potter Cummings, John Dalbey, Margery Davies, Donna Seda-Degaglia, Eadie Deutsch, Daryl Dichek, Carol Douglas-Hammer, Robin Drury, Carolyn Flynn, Christine Forbus,, Terry Forman, Julia Frisch, Karen Freitas, Liz Martin-Garcia, Donald Gardner, Robin Garmann, Leslie Geary, Genevieve Giuliano, Doris Goodman, Shawn Gould, Jacquelyn Griffith, Ashley & Diane Haddad, Ashley Halderman, Meg & Don Harlor, Rachel Hawkins, Richard Harrah, Ofek & Lory Haydon, Debra Houston, Barbara Howley, Martha Hughes, Karen Katz, Jo-Ellen Kenefick, Carolyn & Stephen Kessler, Barbara Kimball, Bridget Kryszczuk, Diane Lame, Jan Landry, Mary Lehrer, Susan Mankowski, Susan Maresco, Carol Maynard, Dennis Maynez, Sally McLeod, Ritu Meister, Linda Melton, Sherrel Miller, Pam Moriarty, William Munro, Barbara Murray, Cindy Myers, Vivienne Orgel, Val & Peter Parkhill, Deanne Pernel, Linda Perry, Carol & Robert Peterson, Kelsey Ramage, Sandra Rice, Isabelle Rosenlund, Judith Romiti, David Skinner, Sara Smith, Alexandra Joynt Snyder, Richard Spencer, Charlotte Spitzer, Mark Steele, Rabbi Sharon Stiefel, Neils Sundermyer, Kathy Tappero, Gregory Tarsey, Andy Todd, Kasum & John Tracy, Dee Vogel, Teresa Wahala, Lorraine Washington, Phyllis & Richard Wasserstrom, Rachel Wedeen, Mary Weiland, Jeff Wells, Carl White, Richard & Robert Wilkinson, Laurel Zane, Katherine Ziegler

*Donations from January to August 2002. We apologize for any unintended omissions.*



## THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED TIME AND SERVICES

### FOR THEIR TIME IN DECORATING OUR BEAUTIFUL, NEW SUPPORT GROUP ROOM:

Liza Livingston and Diane Grunes,  
Design Committee  
Colin Alder, and Alan Stormes of  
Elements 2000—custom made  
bookcase  
Barbara Bailey-Porter—paintings  
on loan  
Jan Adrian of California Futon—  
coffee table  
Helen Behar—side table  
Howie Grunes and Clark Bingham—  
handymen  
Joan Peterson—Dismantling old  
bookcase

### FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND DEVOTION TO OUR COMMUNITY SERVICES:

Bruce Cooperstein  
Zoe Design  
West Wind Surf Club  
Peets Coffee & Tea  
Santa Cruz Medical Clinic  
BookShop Santa Cruz  
United Way of Santa Cruz County  
SBC Employee Giving Program  
Rio Theatre  
High Society producer, Jeff Greenwalt  
Soroptimists of Santa Cruz County  
Santa Cruz Cancer Benefit Group

### FOR HELPING SUPPORT IN CELEBRATION OF THE MUSE 2002:

Amber Coverdale Sumrall  
Dena Taylor  
Lynne Boule  
Tracey Weiss  
Donna Seda-Degaglia  
Mariposa Bernstein  
Path Star  
Joyce Mangouney

### FOR BEING AMONG OUR WONDERFUL AND DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS:

Gloria Melnitsky  
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Peggy Casper  
Isabelle Rosenlund  
Barbara Ingman  
Sylvia Brown  
Holly Cornelius  
Jane Schwarmberger  
Jacquelyn Marie  
Lucy Saldavia  
Susan Archibald  
Sarah Ferguson

## OUR TEN YEAR CELEBRATION

Continued from page 6

attention to us. It is a relationship. But when we try to name it, define it, make it a safe and understandable source, we underestimate the power of the unknown and limit the resources it can make available to us.”

On Saturday morning, about 30 of us gathered at Frederick Street Park to commemorate the loss of those who have passed on during WomenCARE’s first decade. Thank you to Jan Landry of Hospice and Brendell for conducting this important event. It gave us a chance to not only express our sorrow, but also to voice our appreciation for the founders of WomenCARE, and for all those women who have kept “Heidi’s Vision” alive. 🐾

The WomenCARE Newsletter is brought to you through the countless volunteer hours of those listed below. Input, ideas and sponsorship of future issues are welcome and needed. Enjoy!

**PUBLISHER:** WomenCARE Board of Directors

**EDITORS:** Deb Abbott & Connie Batten

**DESIGNER:** Zoë Design

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Jan Adrian, Barbara Barnett, Betty Herbert, Raven Stevens, LaVerne Coleman, Maribel Cuervo, Diane Grunes, Path Star, Connie Batten

Articles printed reflect the authors’ opinions and are not necessarily those of WomenCARE. Editorials are not intended as medical advice, and publisher disclaims any liability for use of medical information and results thereof.

## OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

Continued from page 7

days. Sometimes we lose her to travel, which is a passion she shares with her husband. Places she has visited are too numerous to list, but Thailand has been her favorite because “it’s so beautiful and the people are absolutely gracious and kind.” When Maggie says, “The stuff I do at the office is minor.” the staff unanimously disagrees and crosses their fingers, hoping none of her travels will keep her away too long.

Volunteers are the face and heart and backbone of WomenCARE. They are the ones who respond in “personal and human ways” as Maggie says. Without the help of Maggie and the many others who offer their talents and so much of their time, WomenCARE would be unable to provide the free services that are available to any woman living with cancer and the friends and family who support her. WomenCARE volunteers are vital, their compassion is essential, and their commitment is deeply appreciated. 🐾

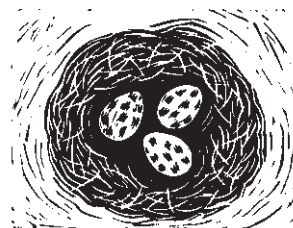
## HEALING IN HARMONY

Continued from page 8

and caring. Within the atmosphere of Deep Listening, each member can hear the aha’s within herself. When you are being heard, you can hear yourself. And once you can hear yourself, the choices you need to make become clear. During the course of this year, I have found that a synthesis of standard Western medical and non-conventional healing methods has proven most meaningful.

I’ve also drawn on the power of music and dance, as they have been a source of joy and guidance to me throughout my life. I’ve been trying to view my cancer experience as a dance. When I go to Outpatient Oncology for a chemo infusion, I experience it as a dance in which the technicians and I participate. Each step along the way is filled with grace, and the grace comes because all of us who are involved work together with a sense of mutual respect. The same is true with my acupuncture sessions and radiation treatments.

I’ve expanded this vision of mutual involvement to include my support group. It is comforting to hear voices echoing my own experiences: “Chemo wasn’t so bad this week.” or “It’s so hard to take a shower.” Hearing the women express their triumphs and frustrations makes me feel much less alone; we are moving together through cancer. There’s a sense of a symphony, as many aspects of our healing work in harmony. 🐾



# In Memoriam

**SOME PEOPLE COME INTO OUR LIVES AND QUICKLY GO...  
SOME PEOPLE STAY AWHILE AND LEAVE FOOTPRINTS ON OUR HEARTS...  
AND, WE ARE NEVER THE SAME!**



WomenCARE wishes to acknowledge and honor those women who have gone ahead of us this year, yet stay always in our hearts:

Jeanne Fennel

Ruth Myers

Mimi Roth

Annie Seiler

Batya Sharon

Sarah Poyadeau

*Fresh bouquets of exquisite flowers greet our visitors and support group members at the WomenCARE office each week. Many thanks to The Flower Shack for this ongoing donation.*

## Strength comes from seeing

Strength comes from seeing:  
the eye that fiercely holds  
the mark  
so arrow surely follows.  
Do not be deterred!  
And when you have the need,  
I offer my protection—  
Only call  
and I am there.

O my sisters, come!  
there is pleasure in leafy glen,  
in sinew to race with the wind!

O come!  
We gather now on sacred ground,  
and bonding, link the earth  
around,  
to free the spirit, heal the  
wound—  
a sisterhood of wind and moon.

—Nancy Rose Meeker

**FROM THE BOOK:** *LIFE PRAYERS*, ELIZABETH ROBERTS & ELIAS AMIDON, EDS.



—Nancy Matlock (1948-1994)

"Hopefully, with community support, WomenCARE can begin to mobilize the activist energy that exists in Santa Cruz to take a stand against the nation's number one killer."

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# WomenCARE

## WomenCARE's Statement of Philosophy

WomenCARE is a community of women which provides advocacy, resources, education and support to all women with cancer, their families, friends, and health practitioners throughout diagnosis, healing, surviving, or dying.

WomenCARE is directed and led primarily by women with cancer or a cancer history.

WomenCARE respects and depends upon the wisdom that comes from a diversity of culture, economic background, age, sexual orientation, and physical ability and thus strives to be an organization embracing the widest diversity of women.

Cancer weaves innumerable changes—small and profound—into women's lives. We acknowledge cancer as a complicated disease that can strike any woman. We believe that no woman is to blame for getting cancer. WomenCARE honors the unique relationship each individual has to cancer.

WomenCARE helps women to explore diagnostic and treatment choices from worldwide and multicultural options using information and common sense. We honor and respect a woman's individual decisions, including choosing not to begin or not to continue treatment.

In coalition with other organizations, WomenCARE is committed to uncovering and challenging the current politics of cancer. We strive to rectify the insufficient funding for prevention, education, treatment, and research of women's cancers as well as the inequitable access to medical and alternative treatments and quality support services.

WomenCARE understands the necessity of, and is committed to, creating an organizational structure and process which promotes the health and well being of all women involved in WomenCARE. ♡

WomenCARE's services are provided FREE to women with cancer (or a cancer history) and their families and friends. For more information, call 457-CARE (457-2273).

Our gratitude to The Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County and The Soroptomists of Mid-Santa Cruz County for providing funds to produce and mail this newsletter.