



## Thunder Bay Breast Cancer Support Group



Newsletter June 2017 Issue 218

### Opportunities to Give

Canadian Breast Cancer  
Network

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### Join us for the June Wind-Up!

The June wind-up meeting will be June 14th at 7:00 at the Church. Please join us for dainties, tea and coffee as we break for the summer months. Sweet Escape Bakery has once again generously offered to donate the treats!



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### Knitted Knockers

At the last Support Group meeting held in May, there was a request for information about "knitted knockers".

The website is <https://www.knittedknockers.org/make-a-knocker/> for anyone interested in getting a kit. However, this is a great reminder that if getting a prosthetic is a financial burden - please remember the Butterfly Story is here to help and can provide funding for prosthetics and other related items. Check out <https://www.breastcancersupporttb.com/the-butterfly-story> to learn more or get the application form.

### Breast Cancer Support Group Phone Line

Starting in September, the breast cancer support group phone line will no longer be monitored. The voicemail will provide details of our meetings and information regarding supportive services and the CBCF peer support help line. If you need to reach out over the summer months, the phone is checked once a week.

**Next Meeting**  
June 14th

7:00 pm at  
St. Michael's Church  
on Red River Road





## Local breast cancer survivor honoured with provincial award

[Check out the Source](#)

Passionate and determined are two words that describe Debora Prokopich Buzzi, this year's recipient of a prestigious Human Touch Award from Cancer Care Ontario. Debora was nominated by staff at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre's Regional Cancer Care Northwest and Prevention and Screening Services, two programs where Debora has contributed as a Patient Family Advisor. Since 2009, Debora has been involved with discussions, initiatives, teams and councils at a local and provincial level to improve cancer patient care.

As a breast cancer survivor, Debora contributes to improving experiences for others. "In 2007 I was diagnosed with breast cancer," recalled Debora. "I have a finance and administrative background, so I didn't know what needle biopsies, core biopsies, sentinel biopsies, and wait times were or supposed to be. I advocated for myself throughout my entire journey."

Debora surprised her cancer care providers by carrying a binder, full of appointment and treatment information, with her to all appointments. Asking questions and keeping close contact with the breast assessment coordinator started Debora's volunteer career with our Hospital.

"It wasn't a conscious decision to become involved with patient-centred care initiatives, it just happened as I went through my diagnostic journey," said Debora. "When I went through my experience 10 years ago, we realized there wasn't enough patient information available. I didn't know the medical language, and my family couldn't be with me for some tests. That made the experience harder for me."

Debora's volunteer resumé with Ontario's cancer system is a long one, and includes work with: the Diagnostic Assessment Program at the local and provincial level; symptom management; the pain management clinic; education resources for patients; sitting on councils with Regional Cancer Care Northwest and Prevention and Screening Services; advocating at the provincial level for exercise programs in treatment and survivorship phases of the cancer journey; and influencing cancer screening campaigns. She has also been a keynote speaker and panel member numerous times for Cancer Care Ontario.

"We will never be able to quantify the true value of Debora's commitment to Ontario's cancer system, but we do know that patient care has improved because of her. Patients now have access to better education resources, enhanced access to information and health care providers, and have a chance to enroll in the Wellness and Exercise program for people with Cancer (WE-Can program) in Thunder Bay," said Kelly-Jo Gillis, Manager of Preventive Health Services at our Hospital.

The WE-Can Program is particularly important to Debora. She was part of the inaugural WE-Can class

in 2010, and after completing the 10-week program Debora felt like she got a piece of her life back as her physical and mental health improved. This is a program that she continues to fundraise and advocate for. Winning the Human Touch Award was a surprise to Debora. "I opened the email from the CEO of Cancer Care Ontario, and started to cry," said Debora. "I didn't know what I had done for the cancer system, and I don't think of it like that. I just say what I have experienced and I give suggestions on how to make things better."

### **Women's College Hospital brings accessible BRCA genetic testing to Canadians**

[Check out the Source](#)

Approximately one in 200 Canadians has a BRCA mutation, which puts women at a higher lifetime risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer, while male mutation carriers are at an increased risk of developing prostate and other cancers. The Screen Project is a national Canadian initiative to make BRCA1 and BRCA2 screening available to all Canadians over 18 years of age at an affordable price. Canadians can now order a BRCA test from home for \$165 USD. Individuals who are unable to afford the cost are eligible for financial assistance.

Researchers at the Cancer Research Unit of Women's College Hospital have partnered with Veritas Genetics to evaluate the benefit of population-based genetic testing. They hope that this study will reduce mortality from breast, ovarian and prostate cancers. If you test positive for a BRCA mutation, you will be contacted by the Familial Breast Cancer Research Unit at Women's College Hospital. If you test negative or inconclusive, you will receive a report from Veritas Genetics.

To participate in the study and to find out more about The Screen Project, visit [www.thescreenproject.ca](http://www.thescreenproject.ca). You will be able to access a video and educational materials to learn more about hereditary cancer and genetic testing.

### **2017 National Lymphedema Conference**

Montreal, QC, October 27-28

This bilingual event is co-hosted by the Canadian Lymphedema Framework and the Lymphedema Association of Quebec in collaboration with McGill University Health Centre and Concordia University. Join health professionals and patients in Montreal at the Omni Hotel Mont-Royal on October 27 and 28 for an exciting and robust agenda.

Registration: <http://canadalymph.ca/conference/registration/>

### **Butterfly Story Fund**

The Butterfly Story fund is now accepting applications! Looking for ways to thrive as a survivor but need a little financial help? The Butterfly Story is here for you! Want to attend the Luncheon of Hope, We-Did exercise classes or another great event? Fill out an application and it will be considered for funding. It can be challenging to ask for help sometimes, but please know the applications are kept in the strictest confidence! If interested, please check out the application form [here](#) OR email [thebutterflystory@hotmail.com](mailto:thebutterflystory@hotmail.com) OR contact Michelle or Shannon to discuss privately.

## **A pregnant mom faces aggressive breast cancer**

source: <https://cbc.ca/en/blog/our-stories/pregnancyandbc>

In August 2015 when Tanya Figg of Coaldale, Alberta was six months pregnant with her second child, she was diagnosed with Stage III invasive mammary breast cancer. Her immediate thought was “what did this mean for me and my family?”

“Life changed,” said Tanya. “My husband and I, along with family, went from guessing the gender of our baby to questioning whether the baby and I were going to live.” In every treatment decision she made, Tanya, then age 37, had two rules: “Cancer would not control my life and it would not take away the innocence of my children.” She and her medical team at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre in Calgary had a long discussion about possible treatments. Tanya reviewed medical journals and concluded that the benefits of neoadjuvant chemotherapy outweighed the risks. Chemotherapy started in September 2015. When her hair fell out as a result, she got down on her knees with her two-year-old daughter, Anabella, and explained that she had a new hairstyle. “My husband, Paul, and I were very open with her. We wanted to keep things as normal as possible .”

Tanya would attend the local hospital accompanied with her daughter twice a week for blood work. Laboratory staff gave Anabella a syringe so she could play doctor and help take care of her mother. The cancer treatments were exhausting, but whenever Tanya had energy, she would spend time with her daughter. Together they built a snowman, go for a little walk or play on the swings at the park. They would also take afternoon naps, read books, and do art projects.

On November 19, 2015, after 35 weeks of gestation, Tanya delivered a healthy 5-pound, 12-ounce baby girl, whom she named Gabrielle. The delivery was scheduled between chemotherapy treatments when Tanya was at lower risk for infection. It truly took a community to help my family go through cancer. “I felt every emotion, from grieving the loss of not having a normal pregnancy to relief in seeing that my child was perfect and healthy” said Tanya.

The next step in treatment was a lumpectomy in March 2016, followed by a mastectomy in April when cancer was discovered in other areas of the left breast. The final treatment was radiation, which finished in July 2016. Anabella was alarmed by the sore, red area on her mother's chest, crying for Tanya to go to the doctor. Tanya explained that she had an owie but had special cream and bandages and that the doctors were taking care of her.

Snuggle time was especially important for Tanya and Anabella. So, with each surgery and radiation, Tanya had to explain that her left side was sore and they created a new snuggle. Tanya also had to be careful how she held and burped her new baby. If it takes a village to raise a child, “it truly took a community to help my family go through cancer,” said Tanya. A wide range of friends and family members helped with tasks such as cooking meals, cleaning and providing childcare. Tanya's mother had a significant role in supporting her and her family through treatment. The goal was to have minimal disruption of her daughters' routines and to have consistent caregivers for them.

Going through treatment, the most important lesson was how much she cherished the simple joys of



family life, such as the opportunity to build a snowman with Anabella.

Tanya's treatments are now complete. Looking back, she said "While there have been difficult times on this journey, I can say I made it! I am grateful for the many silver linings and wonderful people that have come into my life this past year. This journey is far from over, but today I can say there is a happy ending."

### **Boobie Boogie – Saturday September 30 2017**

Performances by: Lady Gaga, Neil Diamond, Elton John, Patsy Cline, Elvis and Abba

The Dragons of Hope Dragon Boat team will be hosting a dance at the CLE Coliseum on Saturday September 30 2017. The dance is in support of the Dragons of Hope paddling and competing in the International Dragon Boat Festival in Florence Italy in July 2018.

Entertainment will be provided by the Legends in Concert starting at 9pm, and continue with a DJ for dancing. The Legends will be joined by Lady Gaga, Neil Diamond, Elton John, Patsy Cline, Elvis and Abba. Join us for a great night of dancing, music, raffles and beverages! All proceeds will support the Dragons of Hope travel to the Festival.

Tickets are available from all Dragon Boat members and are \$10.00.....you can also get them at The Whole Nine Yards, and Dulux Paints Memorial Avenue.



### **Black Bean and Corn Salad**

Source: <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/eat-healthy-get-active/eat-healthy/find-healthy-recipes/appetizers-side-dishes/black-bean-and-corn-salad.html>

This salad is a great side dish for Mexican entrées or can be used as a dip for tortilla chips to start the meal. Use the measurements as a guide, but feel free to tinker. Remember this salad when you have leftover corn on the cob.

Serves: 8 to 10

Prep time: 15 minutes or less

Total time: 15 minutes or less

### **Ingredients**

- 2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup fresh, frozen, or canned no-salt-added corn, drained
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 red, yellow, or green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- ½ small red onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro

### **Instructions**

In a bowl, combine black beans, corn, tomato, bell pepper, onion, and jalapeño. In a bowl, combine lime juice, oil, and cumin and drizzle over bean mixture. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with cilantro.

## For Support and Encouragement

### Upcoming

June Wind-Up  
June 14th at 7:00  
St. Michael's Church

Boobie Boogie  
Saturday, September 30, 2017  
CLE Coliseum

2017 National Lymphedema Conference  
Montreal, QC, October 27-28

*No matter how dark  
the clouds seem to be,  
there is always sunshine  
waiting to shine through.*

### Encouragement Cards

In October, the Breast Cancer Support Group and the Butterfly Story co-hosted a 'Survivors' Tea' at Sweet Escapes Cake Café and Bakery. By all accounts, it was a great event! Survivors who attended were asked to fill out cards with words of encouragement for other survivors. Over the next few months, we are going to share some of those of sentiments.

Thunder Bay  
Breast Cancer  
Support Group



As fellow support group members, we would be happy to hear from you.

435 Heather Cres  
Thunder Bay, ON P7E 5K8

(807) 475-0025 (Voice Mail)  
[bcsg@tbaytel.net](mailto:bcsg@tbaytel.net)  
[breastcancersupporttb.com](http://breastcancersupporttb.com)

### Sharing the Journey

Along your journey you have found support and encouragement from our support group. If you have two hours to spare a month, we encourage you to consider becoming a Steering Committee Member. The wisdom gained from your experience can help us strengthen the group and will help to ensure the continued success of the Breast Cancer Support Group. Call a Steering Committee Member at 475-0025 to learn how you can take part or email [bcsg@tbaytel.net](mailto:bcsg@tbaytel.net).

**Next Meeting**  
June 14th

7:00 pm at  
St. Michael's Church  
on Red River Road



[www.cbcn.ca](http://www.cbcn.ca)



**Breast & Hereditary  
Cancer Support**

[www.willow.org](http://www.willow.org)  
1-888-778-3100



**Thunder Bay Regional  
Health Sciences  
Foundation**

The Thunder Bay Breast Cancer Support Group gratefully acknowledges the funding support of the Northern Cancer Fund of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation. All gifts made to the Foundation stay in Northwestern Ontario to benefit its residents.

[healthsciencesfoundation.ca](http://healthsciencesfoundation.ca)



Supportive Care  
(807) 684-7310  
Toll Free  
(877) 696-7223  
No Referral Needed