



Thunder Bay
Breast Cancer
Support Group



Newsletter February 2018 Issue 223

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CANADIAN
Cannabis
CLINICS

Medical Cannabis and Its Uses

Tracey Onuliak has been a resident of Thunder Bay for over 30 years. Tracey's career began as a nurse at the LPH, working on assessment units, active psychiatry, and rehabilitation units. Tracey's passion and desire to assist people to live a healthier life has brought her to the Medical Cannabis field.

Tracey is Team Lead, Medical Outreach Educator, and Cannabis Counsellor, for Canadian Cannabis Clinics, Thunder Bay.

At the February support group meeting, Tracey will be discussing Medical Cannabis and its uses to support various illnesses and disease process. Discussion on becoming a licensed medical cannabis patient. Discussion on various ways of using medical cannabis and how to become a patient at our clinic.

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- The Power of Survivor Sisterhood
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- and More

Thunder Bay
Breast Cancer
Survivors Forum



Next Meeting
February 14th &
7:00 pm at
St. Michael's Church
on Red River Road

The Power of the Survivor Sisterhood

by Anna Crollman, F2F Coordinator, Young Survival Coalition

Source

Early into my treatment I felt isolated and alone, frustrated about the lack of resources available for young women facing a cancer diagnosis. I struggled to find other young women in my area, who would understand what I was going through. The challenges of facing a cancer diagnosis in my 20's were unique. I had different things to worry about than my older counterparts: intimacy, sex, fertility, working through treatment and body image. The faces I saw in the hospitals and waiting rooms didn't look like mine. Doctors, nurses and strangers all told me I was too young. Unfortunately, young women can and do get breast cancer. I just so happen to be one of those unlucky women. One of the 12,000 young women diagnosed with breast cancer each year—the ONE out of every eight women under 45 who will face this disease.

I was fed up. I wanted to find online resources and blogs written by other women like me. I wanted to read their stories, take in their tips and connect with women who knew what I was facing. I wanted to feel less alone in this nightmare. And that's how My Cancer Chic was born. I was a lover of all things beauty and fashion, and cancer wasn't going to change that. Cancer may take my breasts and my hair, but I would keep my lipstick and heels. I would keep my style, and I WOULD find a way to feel beautiful despite it all.

I always loved journaling for myself, but I had never shared my writing with anyone since a creative writing class in middle school. Writing was therapeutic for me—a way to process my grief. I decided if I couldn't find a story like mine, I would share my own. I didn't want anyone else to experience the isolation I felt. Lost in a sea of grey hair and mastectomy bras, I wanted to inspire other young women to find their confidence and see their beauty during this awful time. I wanted them to have the confidence to rock the bald head and feel strong and sexy. One woman at a time, I spread my message and led by example.

Sharing Leads to Sisterhood

The more I shared my story, the more I began to connect with other young women. I found these women through my blog, Facebook, Instagram and through friends and family who shared my story. Women began to email me from around the world. They shared stories of their own—their struggles, their fears and the way my honesty, positivity and vulnerability changed their lives and brought them inspiration during times when they felt hopeless.

That changed everything for me. I found my tribe—my sisterhood. I found inspiration and renewed strength in this knowledge. No matter how bad my chemo reactions were, or how many surgical complications I faced, these women lifted me up. On the days I felt ugly, mutilated and betrayed by my body, they just got it. They got me.



As I neared the end of chemo, a major depression set in. I had been so focused on making it from day to day, staying alive, that I had no idea how to just BE. Cancer changed the way I saw the world, and I was fearful of what the future would hold. How would I go back to my "normal" life and continue on? I didn't feel like me anymore. I felt branded and traumatized. How would I redefine myself at this crossroads?

It was around that time that I learned about Young Survival Coalition. I immediately ordered the Newly Diagnosed Navigator. I wished I had this resource earlier on when I was overwhelmed and needed guidance. I also decided to take a chance and apply for a travel grant* to the 2016 YSC National Summit in Atlanta.



The Sisterhood Domino Effect

I can say without a doubt that the YSC Summit changed the path of my life. After attending the three-day conference with my husband, I came home with a renewed sense of purpose. I felt beautiful and empowered. I knew that although cancer had changed me, it couldn't control me. I had control over what I would make of this experience and my life moving forward. I decided to use it for good. It was my turn to give back to this community and change the lives of other young women like me.

The connections I made at YSC triggered a whirlwind of opportunities for me to share my story and advocate for others. I began sharing the YSC guidebooks, filming a video diary series, and this past summer, I also started the first Raleigh support group for young women facing breast cancer. This was yet another avenue for me to support young survivors and make a difference in their lives. In five short months, we have grown from five to more than 35 members, and newly diagnosed women are finding us every day. YSC makes our group easy to find. I collaborate with local specialists, hospitals and healthcare providers to provide my group members with valuable connections and resources. I have come to be known as a local resource, a friend and an inspiration for those around me.

In addition to the support group, I am very active in the YSC online community where I have connected with thousands of women across the US. We share our fears, our struggles and everyday advice for treatment and beyond. We celebrate each other's triumphs and mourn those we lose. This sisterhood I have joined is unlike anything I have ever known or experienced. These women I call my "survivor sisters" are like family to me. We share a special bond. We are united in our struggle, our triumphs and our rebirth. This illness will not define us. We lift each other up and celebrate each other with love and support. For anyone who has a sister or has been a part of strong group of women, I am sure you can relate to these powerful feelings.

With each new survivor I meet, my family circle grows. It's a domino effect. One connection leads to the next, and before you know it, you're looped into a plethora of amazing breast cancer resources across the country. No matter where in the world you are, no matter what your background, you are accepted and connected to this lifeline. Despite being strangers, we instantly accept and embrace each other—flaws and all. For those of us that are lucky enough to meet in person, the bond goes even deeper. We can talk for hours sharing our stories, our fears and how cancer has changed our lives. It's like we've known each other for years. As we say in the YSC community: "initiation sucks, but the sisterhood is forever". I never wanted cancer or the treatment that followed, but I wouldn't trade this sisterhood I have gained for anything in this world.

Join Anna in Orlando!

If you are lost, struggling to face a cancer diagnosis alone, know that this sisterhood is waiting to welcome you with open arms. The 2018 YSC Summit is coming up on February 23 in Orlando, FL, and this is a great opportunity to connect with other survivors and learn more about life after cancer, fertility, advocacy and the unique challenges we face. I highly recommend you attend. I guarantee you will leave the Summit with tons of new friends, and you will feel empowered and reengaged in life. The YSC Summit also allows for amazing connections with resources and organizations across the country focused on providing care, support and guidance for young women facing breast cancer. I'll be there with many of my survivor sisters, and I hope you'll join us for a weekend of education, fun and sisterhood.



If you are already a member of the YSC sisterhood, stop and take a moment to appreciate this gift we have been blessed with—a network of women from all walks of life, spread across the world, holding each other close in their hearts. Whatever the future may hold, this group will be here for you. Like an old friend, always by your side.



YSC Summit - February 23-25, 2018 in Orlando, Florida

Connect with empathetic friends—new and old—who understand what you're going through.

Discuss your unique questions and concerns – like dating after diagnosis, navigating your career or managing fear and anxiety – with survivors, co-survivors, and healthcare providers. Learn about the latest research and treatment updates from leading oncologists and researchers.

Join us at the 2018 YSC National Summit for three days of fun, empowerment, workshops, support, and mingling with people who get it.

Who Should Attend?

- Young women diagnosed with breast cancer
- Young women living with metastatic breast cancer
- Co-survivors* and friends
- Healthcare providers
- Patient advocate leaders
- *If you offer the crucial emotional, physical, financial or spiritual support that a young woman needs, you are a co-survivor.

What's in Store?

Check out the schedule and FAQ pages for the latest info. This year we are offering a half-day retreat for attendees living with metastatic breast cancer.

In addition to the informative conversations, you'll have a chance to get to know your fellow attendees in a fun and relaxed environment when you join us for the dinner & dance party and multiple coffee breaks throughout the weekend. So make sure you bring your party shoes and we'll see you in Orlando!

How Much Does it Cost to Attend?

Register by January 1, 2018 and pay an early bird rate of just \$145. Registration fees are \$175 after January 1st through February 16th and \$200 onsite.

For more details go to <https://summit.youngsurvival.org/>

Do's and Don'ts for Healthy Eating Post-Cancer

by Emily Helck, YSC Sr. Marketing & Communications Manager - Young Survival Coalition

Source

As a young breast cancer survivor, I often wonder about my diet: what I eat, what I don't eat, and what I think I really should eat. Is my diet helping me stay healthy? What about superfoods — are they even real? To help demystify food post diagnosis, I sat down with Julie Lanford, a specialist in oncology nutrition. You can watch our entire conversation [here](#), but here are some of Lanford's quick Do's and Don'ts to keep on hand.

DO eat more fruits and vegetables

We know that nationally, few of us are getting enough fruits and vegetables each day. Surprisingly, according to Lanford, cancer patients and survivors are no different. If nothing else, Lanford says, making this change is key. "Keep track of how many fruits and vegetables you eat and make sure you're having them at your meals...Find the ones you like and include more of those."

DON'T get nutrition advice from celebs

The advice tends to be all over the place, and we know that nutrition is something personal and individual.

DO drink water most of the time

Recharge and replenish with plain water first. Drinking sweetened or artificially sweetened beverages is okay once in a while, but try to make water your primary source of hydration.

DON'T eliminate entire food groups

If you're looking at diets to try, Lanford says the elimination of an entire food group is a red flag to watch out for — it often will not reflect a healthy diet. (The exception is of course if you have a known or suspected allergy.)

DO learn to cook something new

Experiment with different recipes — have fun and be adventurous with food. Lanford has a wide selection of great, healthy recipes for cancer survivors on her site.

It's also important to remember that there will be times, like during chemotherapy or other treatments, when it's okay to reach for the chips or cookies, if that's all you're able to eat at that time. Give yourself permission, and remember why you're doing what you're doing. As Lanford says, "The purpose of healthy eating is to nourish our bodies so we can enjoy life." Not, in other words, so we can obsess further about food.

Julie Lanford will be joining two sessions at the YSC Summit in Orlando, including a one-hour breakout for co-survivors that will feature a live cooking demo (tasting encouraged!).

For more on the 2018 YSC Summit, including how to register, visit summit.youngsurvival.org.



Cheese Tortellini with Pumpkin & Ricotta

Source



Prep Time - 15 minutes
 Cooking Time - 30 minutes
 serves - 4

A warm and hearty dish to serve in cold-weather months, when pumpkins and winter squashes are among the most powerfully nutritious vegetables on the market.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 pounds sugar pumpkin or butternut squash, seeded, peeled, and cut into 3/4-inch cubes (about 4 cups)
- 1/2 cup reduced-sodium, fat-free chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon leaf sage, crumbled

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 12 ounces cheese tortellini
- 1/2 cup part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1/3 cup grated Romano cheese
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

Instructions

1. In large nonstick saucepan over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion. Cook until golden, about 10 minutes. Add pumpkin, broth, sage, salt, and pepper. Cover. Cook just until pumpkin is tender, about 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in large pot of lightly salted water, cook tortellini until tender, following package directions. Drain. Toss with ricotta in large bowl.
3. Add pumpkin, Romano cheese, and parsley to tortellini mixture. Gently toss to combine. Serve at once.

Nutrition Info

calories - 305
 fat - 12g
 saturated fat - 3g
 cholesterol - 27mg
 sodium - 945mg
 carbs - 36g
 protein - 15g
 fiber - 5g

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 OR contact Michelle or Shannon to discuss privately.

Upcoming

YSC Summit

February 23-25, 2018
Orlando, Florida

Bachelors for Hope Charity Auction

April 13, 2018
[More info](#)



Network News

Don't forget to check out the Spring 2017 edition of Outreach News brought to you by the Canadian Breast Cancer Network.

[Click here to check it out!](#)



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.

For Support and Encouragement



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

(807) 475-0025 (Voice Mail)
bcsg@tbaytel.net
breastcancersupporttb.com



www.cbcn.ca



Breast & Hereditary Cancer Support

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



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