

**Caring Connections is a cooperative health program of the Bangor Y and Eastern Maine Medical Center, and is supported by the fund-raising activities of Healthcare Charities.**

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**Survivor Spotlight: Ruth Susee**

One of a series of articles about the lives of women who have experienced breast cancer, this article highlights Ruth Susee who has been actively involved with the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure walks for over 6 years.

*Ruth, Tell us about your own experience with breast cancer.* I was diagnosed in April of 1998. I had my annual mammogram and received a phone call at work the next day. It was a devastating diagnosis and I envisioned a number of different outcomes. After a couple of different biopsies, I had a mastectomy in June and reconstruction the following year. It was very difficult to talk about at first. It took me awhile to get up the nerve to attend the support group meetings, but it was the best decision I ever made.

*What made you decide to do your first Komen 3Day walk?* I had heard about the 3 Day walks and was intrigued but it seemed like a pretty daunting task. 60 miles in 3 days!! Every time I would hear about it I would repeat those words and then say to myself, 'No, I don't think so!!' Then in 2004 a friend and co-worker was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her cancer was advanced and aggressive and there was such a feeling of helplessness. Everyone wants to help but the reality is, you can't do the one thing that you want to do—make it go away! Someone from the Cancer Center in Portland came to our workplace to talk about things we could do to help. Something during that meeting made me think about the 3 day walk. Within the week I had signed up for my first walk in Boston. What a great way to help: raise money for an organization with a goal to end breast cancer! I had to raise \$1800 in order to participate. Once I had raised the money, I had to get serious about the training. I had many doubts about being able to complete the walk but I was determined.

*What was the training like to do a walk like that?*

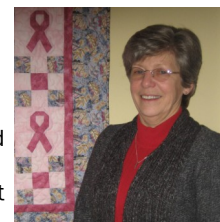
I did some pretty aggressive training for the first few walks. I walked between 3 and 7 miles almost daily and did at least three 15 plus mile walks before the actual event. I don't train as aggressively as that now but I walk a lot year round and try to get a couple of 10 to 15 mile walks in before the event.

*Was it difficult to raise the money?*

Raising the money was (and still is) the hardest part for me. I don't like asking people for money. But I continue to do it because I believe so passionately in the cause. I have had wonderful support from co-workers, family and friends and will continue to walk as long as I can raise money. Currently we have to raise \$2300 to participate in each walk. I have a big yard sale every spring. I get a lot of donations and I collect year round. I already have a great start on this year's sale. I also hold quilt raffles. I am always thinking about ways to raise money.

*What is it like to be in that atmosphere with all those walkers and supporters?*

It is truly an amazing experience. Thousands of people come together in support of one cause. We walk, talk, laugh and cry together. We camp together in 6 X 6 tents (pink of course), use port-a-potties for 3 days, shower in a truck and have no access to electricity. And of course you can't control the weather so it may be 103 (Boston in August, 2006); it may be raining, windy or a combination of both (too many walks to list); it may be cold at night (San Diego, November 2005, a low overnight of 42); or it may be a beautiful sunny day (my favorite). But everyone who participates has a reason: a mother, sister, aunt, daughter, wife, father, son, friend, friend of a friend, self or just a deep belief in helping to find a cure.



To help the 18 year old who has just been diagnosed and needs answers to questions she doesn't even know she should be asking, to help the mother who is trying to cope with the inevitable loss of her daughter, to help a husband who lost his wife 2 weeks prior to the walk, one they were supposed to do together. To cheer with the one who had finished chemo and has no sign of the tumor that threatened her life, or the mother who gets to celebrate another birthday with a daughter in remission. For me it is a very personal, I have 3 granddaughters that I want to grow up in a world without breast cancer. The motto of the 3 day is 'everyone deserves a lifetime' and that is what we all walk for.

*How many walks have you done and how much money have you raised for Susan G. Komen?* I have done 14 walks since 2004 and have raised over \$35,000.

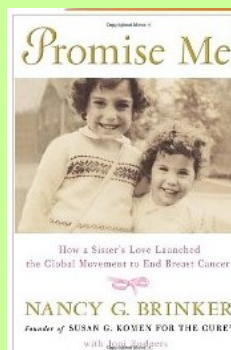
*What advise would you give to someone who is considering doing a 2-day or 3-day event like this?*

I would encourage them to participate at least once. It is an experience you will never forget. If the fundraising is an issue, you can also sign up to be a crew member. There is no fundraising minimum for crew member. There are a lot of different 'jobs' for crew members and there is something everyone can do.

**Thank you so much Ruth. From all of us!**

**"I have three granddaughters that I want to grow up in a world without breast cancer."  
Ruth Susee**

## Book Review



**Promise Me is now available in the Caring Connections library.**

Suzy and Nancy Goodman were more than sisters. They were best friends, confidantes, and partners in the grand adventure of life. For three decades, nothing could separate them. Not college, not marriage, not miles. Then Suzy got sick. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1977; three agonizing years later, at thirty-six, she died.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. The Goodman girls were raised in postwar Peoria, Illinois, by parents who believed that small acts of charity could change the world. Suzy was the big sister—the homecoming queen with an infectious enthusiasm. Nancy was the little sister—the tomboy with an outsized sense of justice who wanted to right all wrongs. The sisters shared makeup tips, dating secrets, plans for glamorous fantasy careers. They imagined a long life together—one in which they'd grow old together surrounded by children and grandchildren. Suzy's diagnosis shattered that dream.

In 1977, breast cancer was still shrouded in stigma and shame. Nobody talked about early detection and mammograms. Nobody could even say the words “breast” and “cancer” together in polite company, let

alone on television news broadcasts. With Nancy at her side, Suzy endured the many indignities of cancer treatment, from the grim, soul-killing waiting rooms to the mistakes of well-meaning but misinformed doctors. That's when Suzy began to ask Nancy to promise. To promise to end the silence. To promise to raise money for scientific research. To promise to one day cure breast cancer for good. Big, shoot-for-the-moon promises that Nancy never dreamed she could fulfill. But she promised because this was her beloved sister. *I promise, Suzy... even if it takes the rest of my life.*

Suzy's death—both shocking and senseless—created a deep pain in Nancy that never fully went away. But she soon found a useful outlet for her grief and outrage. Equipped only with a shoebox filled with the names of potential donors, Nancy put her formidable fund-raising talents to work and quickly discovered a groundswell of grassroots support. She was aided in her mission by her husband, restaurant magnate Norman Brinker, whose dynamic approach to entrepreneurship became Nancy's model for running her foundation. Her account of how she and Norman met, fell in

love, and managed to achieve the elusive “true marriage of equals” is one of the great grown-up love stories among recent memoirs. Nancy's mission to change the way the world talked about and treated breast cancer took on added urgency when she was herself diagnosed with the disease in 1984, a terrifying chapter in her life that she had long feared. Unlike her sister, Nancy survived and went on to make Susan G. Komen for the Cure into the most influential health charity in the country and arguably the world. A pioneering force in cause-related marketing, SGK turned the pink ribbon into a symbol of hope everywhere. Each year, millions of people worldwide take part in SGK Race for the Cure events. And thanks in part to the more than \$1.5 billion spent by SGK for cutting-edge research and community programs, in fact, in the time since Suzy's death, the five-year survival rate for breast cancer has risen from 74 percent to 98 percent when the cancer is confined to the breast. *Promise Me* is a moving story of family and sisterhood, the dramatic “30,000-foot view” of the democratization of a disease, and a certain affirmative to the question: Can one person truly make a difference?

## Recipe Corner

### Quinoa and Black Beans

1 t vegetable oil  
1 onion chopped  
3 cloves garlic, chopped  
3/4 C uncooked quinoa  
1 1/2 C vegetable broth  
1 t ground cumin  
1/4 t cayenne pepper  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 C frozen corn  
2 (15 oz. cans black beans, drained and rinsed  
1/2 C chopped fresh cilantro

- Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the onion and garlic, and sauté until lightly browned.
- Mix quinoa into the saucepan and cover with vegetable broth. Season with cumin, cayenne pepper, salt, and pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes.
- Stir frozen corn into the saucepan, and continue to simmer about 5 minutes

until heated through. Mix in the black beans and cilantro.

Adding some fresh tomato adds a nice splash of color.

Yield: 10 servings  
Nutrition facts: 142 calories, 1.5 g. fat, 0 cholesterol, 467mg. sodium, 25.6 g. carbohydrate, 6.9g. fiber, 6.9 g. protein.

allrecipes.com



### Quinoa and Black Beans

**Prep Time: 15 min**  
**Cook Time: 35 min**

## Breast Cancer at 29

Amy Wadsworth's blog is about her journey through her surprising breast cancer diagnosis. The ups and downs of cancer. Trying to live, trying to laugh, trying to love and deal with breast cancer all at the same time.

Amy Wadsworth  
114-11 Roberts Cemetary Rd  
Vinalhaven, ME 04863  
Amymoose2005@yahoo.com  
November 27, 2010

Mr. Cancer Cells  
Left boob and 2 lymph nodes  
In some lab  
Portland, ME

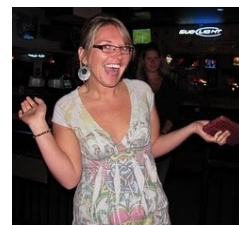
Dear Mr. Cancer Cells,  
I am writing you to tell you to suck an egg, go play in traffic and eff yourself. I do not care which order you do these things as long as they are done. As you know, you and I have a love/hate relationship. You thought you could come in and invade my boob and then my body. Well, you did a great job trying I will give you that. But I spotted you before it got too serious. You have taught me a lot so far which means I can't completely hate you. I will tell you what you have done to make me hate you and how I turned it into love.  
~You took my summer of swimming, partying and dating foolish boys away but because of that I learned that dating foolish boys is never a good idea, partying is overrated and I can swim anytime I want.

~ You caused by boobies to be whacked off but now I have bigger boobies that won't ever sag.  
~ You made me surrender to the medical field with all their drugs, surgeries and sanitary rooms but I found an ND who helps me with nutrition, acupuncture, supplements and she helps me find a nice balance between eastern and western medicine.  
~You made it so I can't work but instead I have had the chance to experience how generous and loving the community where I live can be.  
~ You took my life and put it in the middle of a huge storm but I am learning to dance in the rain and love the thunder.  
~You have made me lose my hair but now I get to flaunt my perfectly shaped dome.  
~You have tried to make me feel insecure but instead I feel empowered and confident.  
~You tried to put the fear of god into me but I know that fear is a non reality and the god is pure love.  
~ You have made me scream, cry and feel like I am going crazy but I have a huge support system with shoulders to cry on

and ears that will listen.  
~You tried to make my world spin until I felt sick but I figured out that slowing everything down is a great idea. That I am better off to take life minute by minute. I can't control the future and now is all I have.

So, I guess you should know that you have not destroyed my life. You have made my life better. So, I can't completely hate you for what you have done. Instead I should say thank you for waking me up, thank you for teaching me what is important, thank you for helping me detach from the drama. Don't get me wrong, I still want you to go eff yourself and to know that you are never welcome to invade my body again.

Yet another strong woman who plans to kick your ass.



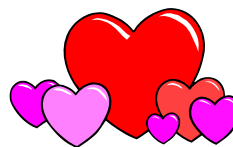
Read more of  
Amy's Blog at  
[http://  
amywadsworth.  
blogspot.com](http://amywadsworth.blogspot.com)

*Used with permission*

## Valentine Potluck and Game Day

It has already been a very cold and snowy winter! Want to escape for a few hours of good food, good friends and fun games? Times like these warm our hearts and bodies and bring us the kind of laughter

that heals. Please let us know if you plan to attend by calling Caring Connections at 941-2808. Bring a dish to share or not—we would love your presence anyway. Also, bring a favorite game if you would like.



**Wednesday, February 16**  
**Isaac Farrar Mansion**  
**12 Noon to 2:30PM**



## Honoring Your Body

### During and After Treatment: Hair Loss

*[Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of four articles devoted to the range of concerns that women express about their body image before, during and after a breast cancer diagnosis. ]*

As was stated in the last newsletter worries about body image are diverse and unique to each individual. Physically, concern include pain, scarring, lymphedema, menopausal symptoms and changes in function from neuropathy (nerve damage). Emotionally, women report depression and anxiety; feelings of anger and distrust toward their bodies; and frustration from the loss of sexual pleasure, ability to have children, sense of femininity and more. In interviews, three issues come up most often: breast changes, hair loss, and weight gain and loss. This months topic is hair loss.

Many women report that losing their hair can be "far more traumatizing than losing a breast or even getting a diagnosis." Losing your hair can make you feel much more vulnerable.

Jill lost her long, curly hair during chemotherapy. "Right after I went bald, I didn't want to leave my apartment," Jill says. "It made such a huge difference because when people see you like that, they know you're sick."

One way to regain power is to plan ahead. Experiment with wigs, scarves, hats and other head coverings. Jill cut her hair before it fell out. "I made the decision myself to buzz cut my hair. I thought, "I'm going to take control and do it." Jill says.

Hair loss can be tough for those around you. Barbara's young daughter asked her never to leave the house bald. And her husband wanted her to cover her head during intimacy because "to him it felt too much like I was a man," she says.

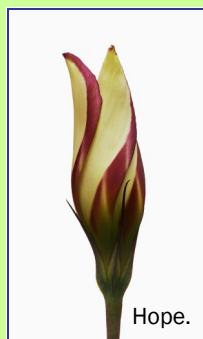
Remember, your loved ones' reactions to your hair loss (and other body changes) have to do with their own beliefs and fears, not with their love for you. Do what feels right for you, and communicate with them about the reasons for your choices. Doing so could help them open up about their worries.

*This article was adapted from the Summer 2010 newsletter of **Living Beyond Breast Cancer**.*

*Please note that while the women survivors quoted in this article are based on real individuals, their names are fictitious.*

*You feedback and comments regarding this and all articles in the newsletter are welcome. Call us at 941-2808 X 337 or email us at [careconn@BangorY.org](mailto:careconn@BangorY.org)*

**If you feel stuck, get help. Ask to talk to a mental health provider, talk with a staff member at Caring Connections, ask to be connected to another woman from the Women's Network who has or is experiencing circumstances similar to yours, or call one of several Helplines that are available. One available helpline is provided by Living Beyond Breast Cancer at (888)753-LBCC (5222) to speak with another woman with breast cancer.**



## Poetry Corner

### Fully Puntuated

By Jane Levin

hope is a dangling participle  
grammatical error/broken  
rule.

You have cancer

hope is a comma,  
another breath,  
another day, more

hope is a semi-colon;  
separation  
between what  
was  
what  
may be

period

## Resources and Activities



### Maine Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC)

#### The Support Service

*Fund of MBCC* provides Maine residents with financial assistance for services or items related to breast health or breast cancer. More than 300 people statewide will receive financial assistance from the MBCC this year. For more information, to request an application, or to become a member/volunteer of MBCC, call 1-800-928-2644, visit the website at [www.mainebreastcancer.org](http://www.mainebreastcancer.org) or write to:

**MBCC, 499 Broadway, PMB 362, Bangor, ME 04401**  
**Phone/Fax: 1-800-928-2644**



### Cancer Support Center of Maine

2nd Anniversary Celebration  
 February 3, 5:00PM to 8:00 PM,  
 Alamo Theater, Main Street,  
 Bucksport. Donations gratefully  
 accepted. Raffles and Silent  
 Auction. Wine and beer available  
 for purchase. *Good Food \* Good  
 Friends \* Good Entertainment*



### Cancer Support Center of Maine Workshop “Creating Health” A Sustainable Healthy Lifestyle.

Body and Energy Awareness/  
 Risk Reduction/Sustainable  
 Changes” Saturday, February  
 19, 2010, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM,  
 Aqua Pura for Your Health—The  
 Water Store, 193 State Street  
 Bangor, ME 04401. **FREE!**  
 (Donations Gratefully Accepted)  
 But space is limited. RSVP  
 Cancer Support Center of Maine  
 207-469-6363. Presenters;  
 Theresa Soucy, Body Talk  
 Practitioner (body awareness  
 and energy practices to promote  
 better health) Barbara Vittum,  
 Executive Director CSCOM (risk  
 reduction of cancer through  
 positive choice), Martha  
 Ohrenberger, health coach (steps  
 for creating sustainable healthy  
 lifestyle shifts)



**CancerCare** (NOT Cancer Care of  
 Maine—but a National  
 Organization) offers frequent  
**FREE “Connect Workshops”**.  
 that are a way for people to  
 learn about cancer-related  
 issues from the convenience of  
 their home or office. Leading  
 experts in oncology provide the  
 most up-to-date information on  
 the telephone. You can listen to  
 the workshops on the telephone  
 or via live streaming through the  
 internet. You can register by  
 calling 1-800-813-4673 or  
 online at [www.cancer.org/connect](http://www.cancer.org/connect).

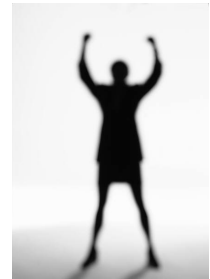
Upcoming workshops include:  
**Caring for Your Bones When You  
 Have Breast Cancer: What’s  
 New**, February 11, 1:30 to 2:30  
 PM; **Advances in Treating  
 Chemotherapy-Related Nausea  
 and Vomiting**, March 23, 1:30 to  
 2:30 PM. You can also listen to  
 previous workshops on the  
 CancerCare website. Just log on  
 to [www.cancer.org/podcasts](http://www.cancer.org/podcasts).



Since **Caring Connections** is a  
 collaborative program of the  
**Bangor Y** we have a unique  
 opportunity to participate in  
 their many programs. Fitness  
 staff has recommended the  
 following programs as possibly  
 of particular interest to Caring  
 Connections members:  
**Group Active:** Mon. 9:30 AM,  
 Wed. 5:30 PM, and Sat. 8 AM;  
**Zumba Gold :**Thur. 8:30 AM;  
**Gentle Yoga Fitness and Flow:**  
 Tue. And Fri. 8:15 AM, Sun 9:15  
 AM; **Tai Chi for Health** Thur.  
 12:10 PM. You may be eligible  
 to attend these programs for  
**FREE**. Please contact Robin or  
 Suzanne at 941-2808 X 337 or  
 338 if you are interested in  
 attending one of these classes  
 for free.



**CLUB 11** is a group of  
 volunteers who meet in the  
 Isaac Farrar Mansion at 11  
 AM every Wednesday before  
 the Bangor Caring  
 Connections Support Group  
 Meeting. They are a huge  
 help to the Caring  
 Connections staff by  
 assembling various handouts,  
 flyers, posters, educational  
 materials, and whatever else  
 is on tap for the week. There  
 is often much laughing and  
 merriment going on around  
 these tasks. When asked why  
 they participate, members say  
 things like: “It helps me feel  
 like I can give back”, “I feel  
 like I belong”, “I get caught  
 up on people’s lives”, “It is  
 another way to feel support”,  
 “If I miss a week I am afraid of  
 what I miss”, “When I am out  
 in the community I see Caring  
 Connections materials and  
 think—‘I might have helped  
 prepare that!’, “It gives me a  
 greater appreciation of what  
 all Caring Connections does”,  
 “Socializing”, “Helps me feel  
 useful”, “We can talk about  
 things that are beyond the  
 purpose of the Support  
 Group”. “Informal  
 atmosphere” If these reasons  
 sound interesting to you,  
 come join in. Just show up.  
 Bring your lunch. Or not. We  
 would just love to see you.  
 For more information talk with  
 one of the Caring Connections  
 staff members.



**When we speak  
 we are afraid our  
 words will not be  
 heard or  
 welcomed. But  
 when we are  
 silent, we are still  
 afraid. So it is  
 better to speak.**

~ Audre Lorde

## Caring Connections

Caring Connections  
Bangor Y  
17 Second Street

Phone: 207-941-2808 X 337 or 338  
Fax: 207-941-2812  
E-mail: careconn@BangorY.org



We welcome all feedback to the newsletter. Please contact us with your comments and suggestions. We also welcome reader contributions of articles, poems, recipes or art work.

·If you are uninsured.

·If you have insurance that does not fully cover your mammogram or Pap test  
·If you have insurance with a high deductible.

### **You may qualify for no-cost breast or cervical health exams .**

Women 40 to 64 may qualify for breast & cervical health screening at no cost at Caring Connections. Screening services are provided through Eastern Maine Medical Center and the Center for Family Medicine. This screening program is part of the Maine Breast & Cervical Health Program (MBCHP). You can call MBCHP directly at 1-800-350-5180 or call Caring Connections to see if you can receive no-cost health services.

If you are between the age of 20 and 39 you may qualify for no-cost breast health services from Bridging The Gap. Bridging The Gap is a grant program of Susan G. Komen for the Cure—Maine which provides assistance to young women who have a breast symptom or who are considered high risk for breast cancer due to family history.

If your social, church, professional, or education group would like to know more about breast health, we can provide that information in a comfortable and relaxed format. Call Caring Connections for more information about this free community service.

### **We're on the web!**

[www.bangory.org/content/4029/caring\\_connections](http://www.bangory.org/content/4029/caring_connections)

## Breast Cancer Support Groups

### **Bangor:**

#### **Daytime Meetings**

#### **Wednesdays**

**12 Noon to 12:30 p.m.**

Land Exercises in the parlor of the Isaac Farrar Mansion.

**12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.**

Isaac Farrar Mansion of the Bangor Y. The Means Pool (warm water) is open to group members EVERY WEDNESDAY from 2 to 3 p.m.)

#### **Evening Meeting**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 5:30 – 6:45 p.m.**

Isaac Farrar Mansion  
This meeting is open to breast cancer survivors as well as their adult family members, relatives and friends.

#### **Young Survivors**

**1st Thursday**

**12:30 to 1:45 p.m.**

Isaac Farrar Mansion

Please call Caring

Connections at 941-2808 X

337 or 338 if possible, prior to attending your first Bangor meeting.

### **Calais:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 3:00 p.m.**

Calais Regional Hospital. Call **Mona VanWart at 454.3906** or **Eva Beckett at 454.2006** for more information.

### **Dover-Foxcroft:**

Call **Robyn Simmons at 564-**

**7071** for information about activities in the Dover-Foxcroft area.

### **Ellsworth:**

A new group will be starting at the Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center in the next few weeks. Call **Caring**

Connections 941-2808 X

337 or 338 for more information.

### **Houlton:**

Call **Janet Vose at 532-5969**

or email her at

[jvose@houltonregional.org](mailto:jvose@houltonregional.org)

### **Millinocket:**

**First Thursday of the month**

**at 10 a.m.** Lifestyle and Fitness Center—White Birch Building, Millinocket Regional Hospital in the Multi-purpose Room.

**Robin Stevens (723-5465) and Terrylyn Bradbury (723-5644)** are the Katahdin area

contact persons for women diagnosed with breast cancer.

### **Pittsfield:**

**4th Wednesday of the month at**

**5:30 p.m.** Contact **Beth Bacon**

**at 487-4079** at Seabasticook Valley Hospital to learn about the support group.

### **Presque Isle:**

There are currently no meetings in the Presque Isle area but we hope a new group will develop in the near future. If you would like to develop and manage a support group in the Presque Isle area, please call us at 941-2808.

