

RIBBONS



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Beyond Surviving

by Anthony Casella

In March, The Hope for Change Foundation presented the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Sleepy Hollow with \$5,000 to fund a breast cancer survivorship research project.

Memorial Sloan-Kettering at Phelps Memorial Hospital Center in Sleepy Hollow provides outpatient cancer care. The alliance makes it easier for residents of Westchester County and nearby communities to access Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center's world-renowned cancer care.



Pictured above (from left to right): Nancy Mills, MD, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Sleepy Hollow; Jason Summers, Vice-President, HFC; Carolyn Wasserheit-Lieblich, MD, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Sleepy Hollow; Gina Noto, President, HFC; Maureen Killackey, MD, Deputy Physician-in-Chief and Medical Director of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Regional Care Network; and Anthony Casella, Founder, Hope for Change.

Learning Why We Hope

by Jessica Bitner-Markus

The summer of 2010 marked the start of a new and exciting chapter in the history of the HFC as we began an educational outreach program geared towards educating our participants about breast cancer and how it affects people in our local community. We worked to partner with many cancer support organizations and groups in the area to aid in our desire to learn more about this disease and what we can do to help find a cure. We have

committed to increasing our efforts to educate and inspire all of our performers and crew members to continue to spread our "hope" past the walls of our theaters. Each show we present will also incorporate an educational outreach component so our participants know why it is that the HFC exists and how we can profoundly change the lives of those affected by breast cancer.

We have been blessed to have several breast cancer survivors and breast cancer advocates come and share their stories of hope with us over the past few months. Our summer show Hope Players had the chance to meet two local breast cancer survivors that shared their experiences and answered the many thoughtful and poignant questions they had about living with breast cancer. We also got to hear from a breast cancer sympathizer who has lost both her mother and stepmother to the disease. She was so inspired by the work of the HFC that she participated in a 100-mile bike ride to raise funds for our organization through her stamina and strength (see *Taking a Ride for Hope*). Performers in *Concert for a Cure: Women Fight Back* had the chance to share the stage with two local breast cancer survivors who



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also happen to be theatrical geniuses. We were blessed to hear their stories of survival and get to share the stage with them.

These speakers have inspired us and given us the hope to keep striving to help others who are affected by this disease. It is for them and for all of the breast cancer fighters and survivors out there that we perform. We look forward to expanding the educational component of our mission over the next few months, while working towards making a positive impact in our collective fight against breast cancer.

New York State Recognizes Hope

an excerpt from Karen O'Donnell

The HFC was named this year's recipient of the Arts and Humanities Award by the New York State Recreation and Parks Service. Below is an excerpt from the nomination letter by Karen O'Donnell.



"It is with great pleasure that I nominate The Hope For Change Foundation for the NYSRPS Arts and Humanities Award. Under the leadership of Jason Summers (Vice President) and Alex Malecki, The Hope for Change Foundation joined forces with the Town of Greenburgh's Parks and Recreation Department to develop a Halloween-themed event called 'Spooktoberfest.' Thanks to their dedication and hard work, the event has been extremely successful for four years!

While working as a recreation supervisor for Greenburgh Parks & Recreation in 2007, I started to develop the Spooktoberfest idea, which included a haunted house and haunted trail. Although the majority of our employees were excited about participating in the event, and we could surely count on some volunteers from local high schools, we knew that we

needed more support. I did some research online, and came across The Hope for Change Foundation...

Through Spooktoberfest, Hope for Change has had a tremendous impact on the Greenburgh community by providing community service opportunities for students and adults in the area, raising awareness about breast cancer, and providing an annual event that many families and individuals look forward to attending each and every year! Community members have nothing but positive feedback about the event and their interactions with the organization.

I could honestly go on and on about The Hope for Change Foundation! They are some of the most creative, interesting and compassionate people that I have ever had the pleasure of working with. While I no longer work for the Town of Greenburgh, I take great pride in the connection that was made with The Hope for Change Foundation, and I will continue to help out with the Spooktoberfest event for years to come!"

Award for the VP: Jason Summers is Honored

by Jessica Bittner-Markus

The Hope for Change Foundation is pleased to announce that the 2010 Town of Greenburgh Parks and Recreation Department Commissioner's Community Service Award was presented to Jason Summers at the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board annual end-of-year December meeting. Jason received this award for his work on the town's annual *Spooktoberfest* Haunted Trail and Barn.

Jason, the Vice President of the HFC, has conceived and directed *Spooktoberfest* for the past four years, bringing spooks and scares to all who have attended this event, which is sponsored yearly by the Town of Greenburgh. The Parks and Recreation Department has worked in conjunction with the HFC to use this event as a means of raising money and awareness for programs dedicated to the research of breast cancer.

Jason has organized and planned this event every fall with the help and input of several members of the Parks and Recreation Department. With Jason at the helm of this event, it has grown into one of the most successful artistic and financial ventures that The Hope for Change Foundation presents each year. His vision and dedication to this event has added to the lives of the residents of Greenburgh and to the lives

of people who are affected by breast cancer.

The HFC is proud of Jason's work and his ongoing commitment to supporting and embodying the mission of the HFC. We applaud him for sharing his time and talent to support the efforts of the Town of Greenburgh and congratulate him on winning this prestigious award. Congratulations, Jason!

Change for Hope 2011 brings new Prez, renewed focus

by Alex Malecki

Here at HFC, where we are constantly working for change in the form of a cure for breast cancer, are not immune to change ourselves.

It was change that first prompted a college freshman, Anthony Casella, and two high school seniors, Barbara Smith and Jason Summers, to start a community theater troupe known as the Hope Players in 1997 and raise money for local charity. It was that same need for change that prompted those players to found the Hope for Change Foundation and use their theatrical talents to raise money for breast cancer research and awareness.

Now 14 years after that first summer show, HFC is refocusing its efforts on educational outreach as it continues to offer a growing slate of dramatic performances.

"While I am proud of all Hope's accomplishments during my tenure as president," said HFC founder Anthony Casella, "I am happy to take HFC to even greater heights by seeking out new sources of funding and, more importantly, new avenues where HFC's talents and resources can aid researchers and survivors alike."

Newly elected president, Gina Noto, shares Casella's enthusiasm.

"With new board members in Mark Angeli and Donna Casella and the wealth of new experience they bring, I couldn't be more excited about where Hope is going in 2011 and beyond," Noto said.

Save the Date

Friday, November 18, 2011

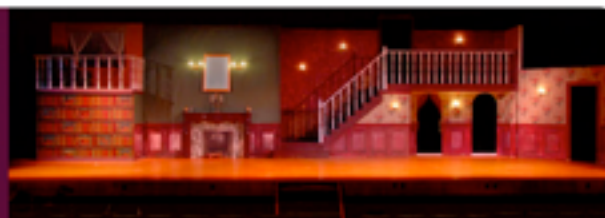
HFC's
Inaugural Dinner Dance



a unique organization
dedicated to
breast cancer
research

HOME ABOUT US CONTRIBUTE CONTACT US

The Hope for Change Foundation



HOPEFORCHANGE.ORG: The updated HFC website was designed by board member Frank Riccobono. We would like to give a special thanks to Reed Prescott, who made the switch to our new, more sophisticated hosting provider possible.

All A'Board: Two New Members of the HFC Board of Directors

by Anthony Casella

The Hope for Change Foundation welcomes two new board members for 2011 – Mark Angeli and Donna Casella. Mark is a Regional Manager for Citibank and sits on various other non-profit boards. Donna has been a devout volunteer for the HFC for over a decade, doing whatever was asked of her and, more often, doing what she knew was needed to make the organization successful. They are welcome additions, and we are lucky to have them.

The rest of the board is as follows: Gina Noto (President), Jason Summers (Vice President), Alyssa Manning (Secretary), Jessica Bittner-Markus (Educational Outreach), Anthony Casella (Founder), Nicole Bauso, John Delfino, Alex Malecki, Frank Riccobono, and Jason Wonsang.

Elections for the board take place in November of each calendar year. If you are interested in being considered for the 2012 board, please email President Gina Noto (gnoto@hopeforchange.org).

The New hopeforchange.org

by Frank Riccobono

This past November, we completed a comprehensive upgrade of our website. In addition to giving the site a much-needed visual redesign, we have moved away from a traditional static website in favor of a dynamic content management system, meaning it will be easier to keep the site up-to-date with current activities. Behind the scenes, the new software running the site also provides us with mass mailing and e-commerce capabilities. The mailing list has already been put to use in advertising auditions for our upcoming April production. In the near future, it will be possible to purchase tickets to upcoming events and to make online donations via the new site.

From Swingin to Spookin: A Look Back at HFC's Past Year

by Alyssa Manning

2010 was an extremely successful year for The Hope for Change Foundation. We began in January with *Concert for a Cure*, a production featuring pop music and showtunes held at the Westchester Sandbox Theatre in Mamaroneck. The show starred 11 members of the HFC family and ran for two nights, which both sold out! With wonderful songs such as “Louder than Words” from the musical *Tick Tick Boom* and the HFC anthem “All for Change,” the audience was dazzled by a stellar evening of musical performances.

Our next event took place in April at St. Paul the Apostle School in Yonkers: *Swingin' for a Cure*, Hope's first-ever dinner dance. Singers and dancers wowed the crowd with tunes like “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy” and “Mack the Knife,” along with an incredible ten-piece swing band. Hope's dancers got the audience “In the Mood” to get up on the dance floor and show off their own moves, as well. The gym was transformed into an elegant dinner theater space with the help of Donna Casella and Valarie Malfatano by supplying us with beautiful flowers, candlelight, and cloth table linens, and the audience enjoyed a full dinner catered by Rory Dolan's. The show ran for two nights and featured 18 HFC members who all contributed to making this one of the most entertaining and professional spring shows to date.

In June, Hope once again performed at the annual Cancer Survivors' Day at the Westchester Cancer Coalition in White Plains. It is always an honor to be a part of this special day where survivors come together to share their personal stories and struggles and celebrate life. HFC members performed inspirational songs and shared our mission with Gilda's Club in an effort to combine forces against this terrible disease we are all fighting. Jessica Bittner-Markus gave the keynote speech for the event and shared her story of survival and hope with over 100 cancer survivors.



MAKING STRIDES

During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, HFC members participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk at Manhattanville College in Purchase. Three survivors joined the Hope team for this walk, which made the event even more special and motivating. We walked together on a beautiful fall day and our team raised over \$1,000 for Making Strides.

Next came our biggest event of the year, the summer show! Hope took audience members on a trip to Whoville in August with *Seussical the Musical*, performed at Kennedy Catholic High School in Somers. *Seussical* had almost fifty high school and college students participating in the cast and crew, who not only dedicated their summer to rehearsing for this show, but also participated in educational seminars with cancer survivors. Recent survivors agreed to come share their stories with those involved in the show in an effort to spread awareness and understanding. It was incredible to have these women contribute to our educational outreach and it really made an impact on all who were there to hear them speak. The cast and crew of *Seussical* entertained audiences for three performances, as well as held car washes and book fairs to help raise additional money for our cause.

Last but not least, HFC held its annual *Spooktoberfest* at Harts Brook Park in Hartsdale. With the help of over 40 HFC members

and the Parks and Recreation staff, local residents were scared stiff during the haunted hayride and barn. Ghouls popped out of coffins and creepy creations followed attendees running and screaming – all for a good cause!

All of these wonderful events allowed The Hope for Change Foundation to raise thousands of dollars,

and we were able to make our 2010 donation to Memorial Sloan-Kettering and their Breast Cancer Survivorship Research Project in the amount of \$5,000. Whether we were singing to or scaring our audience members, HFC was able to maintain its mission of education as well as raising funds for breast cancer research in 2010.

CONCERT FOR A CURE: Women Fight Back!



The Hope for Change Foundation kicked off 2011 with the second installment of Concert for a Cure at the Westchester Sandbox Theatre in Mamaroneck. This year's show featured 11 women who each chose a song that inspired them or honored a loved one. Before each woman sang, another cast member read a short paragraph explaining why that song was chosen and what it meant to the singer. The audience was moved, and by the time the show ended, there wasn't a dry eye in the house!

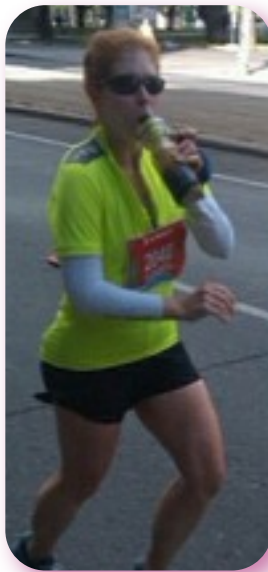
Tour de Gerbi

by Liz Gerbi

On August 29, 2010, I completed the Tour De Putnam Century Bike Ride. It was one of three goals I had established for the year, which included finishing my Masters' work, running a Marathon (completed the Toronto Marathon on my birthday!), and picking another impossible-sounding athletic feat (at least to me) to overcome a long-standing issue I'd had about training alone. In this case, I chose to complete a 100 mile bike ride up and down notoriously steep terrain around Cold Spring, Garrison, Carmel, and Brewster.

I am a huge believer in establishing overwhelmingly large goals for yourself - that whole "shoot for the moon, so even if you fail, you'll land among the stars" ideal, but I am even more convinced that the path you take in the pursuit of crazy-sounding goals often leads you to confront blocks and assets within yourself you never knew existed. For me, I knew it was time to face a fear of running/biking alone which had haunted me since a violent assault in the woods cut my college athletic career short fifteen years ago. From that time on, I had stayed in OK shape, but mostly at the gym - never running or biking out on the open roads and trails that I had loved so much before my assault. And whenever I tried, I would frequently turn around after a few minutes from terrible flashbacks. Often, the heavy breathing involved in aerobic training would be all that was required to send me into a tailspin. So, I signed up for the Century, assuming that if I could do a fraction of it, maybe I could get past these phobias.

However, while starting training (and a few early-on panic attacks out on the road), it soon became clear that I was going to need something to push me beyond my comfort zone, to FORCE me to do what was necessary to get past this hurdle. I never considered biking for a charity, probably because I was never sure that I would be able to finish the ride. Then, serendipitously, Vice President Jason Summers asked if I'd be free to accompany an annual Cancer Survivor's Day event involving. Perhaps it was that I



had a friend who was finally winning a long, terrifying battle with breast cancer, or it had finally been enough time since my own mother's untimely passing from cancer, or the unusual beauty and strength emanating from the attendees, but something in my head and heart was struck to its core that afternoon. I laughed, cried, and stood in rapt attention at the speakers that day - Jessica Bittner-Markus, in particular, gave a speech that continues to strike me as one of the bravest speeches I have ever heard delivered. And something finally occurred to me. In a flash, I realized that my struggles were only in the past, while I was surrounded by women who face their worst fears daily, yet managed to dig up the strength to sing, smile, and provide support for one another. Surely, if these women could battle such a frightening opponent daily and SUCCEED, it seemed ridiculous to live in fear of a few bad memories.

So, I asked Jason if HFC would mind if I tried to raise some money with my effort, so in the back of my mind I could maintain an image of these amazing women when I wanted to quit. I asked friends and family if they could donate a dollar or two to my cause - something NOT very easy for me, by the way, as I'm not very good at "selling myself" - and by the time "Tour De Gerbi" (as I jokingly called it) came around, I raised over \$600. It might not seem like a lot of money or a particularly amazing feat - after all, I was one of the riders who rolled into the parking lot when the event was packing up, I was so slow - but I am proud to have contributed that to such an inspiring organization. However, in reality, I think it's me who is ultimately in debt to Hope, for allowing me to learn so many amazing lessons.

Personal Best: Brian Ennis Lifts for a Cure

by Alex Malecki

When White Plains resident and longtime HFC member Brian Ennis "lifts things up and puts them down", he does so with a purpose. This past November, he helped take some of the burden off of breast cancer survivors by "Lifting for a Cure."

A competitive power-lifter for the past two years, Ennis was first introduced to the sport when he read a book which noted that all workouts center around the squat, a quadriceps exercise for the thigh, and the dead lift, which works the core muscles (lower back, gluteus and abdominals). He bought a few physical training sessions with the owner of a gym, who happened to be a competitive power-lifter.

"At the end of the half hour," Ennis said, "I was hooked."

On Nov. 7, 2010, he got his entire Missing Link Team into the act at a 100% Raw Powerlift Federation meet in South Burlington, Vermont. Taking either pledges per pound lifted, or a flat donation, Ennis raised more than \$500 for The Hope for Change Foundation. One sponsor in particular, donated \$0.05 per pound up to Ennis' personal best of 1260 pounds, then \$1.00 for each pound over as an added incentive.

"Everything lined up right for this meet," Ennis said, noting that he was able to take pledges throughout October, which is recognized as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



For Ennis, it was another way he could help Hope and raise money for a future show, since he was unable to help out with the summer 2010 production of *Seussical the Musical*. It was also fun, he said, as he got to train and compete with a tight-knit group of like-minded people.

Not unlike his friends here at HFC, he added.

Ennis has been involved with HFC since its second production and first summer performance as the Hope Players. Over the years he has acted, directed, choreographed, stage managed, built and painted sets, and of course, lifted things up and put them down as a member of stage crew.

HFC would like to formally thank Brian Ennis for his efforts in promoting greater breast cancer awareness by "Lifting for a Cure."

"Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible."

~H. Keller

2011 EVENTS

Pretty In Pink

An interactive 80s prom featuring a live band, singers, dancers, and light refreshments.

Friday, April 29th and Saturday, April 30th

8:00pm

St. Paul the Apostle School

77 Lee Ave.

Yonker, NY

Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, and \$10 each for groups of 10 or more

Call [914-206-9617](tel:914-206-9617) to reserve tickets now!

Cancer Survivor's Day

Sunday, June 5th

Gilda's Club

White Plains, NY

More info to come

Memorial Sloan Kettering Survivor's Dinner Dance

Thursday, June 9th

DoubleTree Hotel

Tarrytown, NY

Not Open to Public

Godspell

Friday, July 29th and Saturday, July 30th at 8:00pm

Sunday, July 31st at 3:00pm

The Ursuline School

New Rochelle, NY

More info to come

Spooktoberfest

October 2011

Harts Brook Park

Hartsdale, NY

More info to come

HFC's 1st Annual Dinner Dance Benefit

Friday, November 18th

Geola Manor

Jefferson Valley, NY

More info to come

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