

## Vida con esperanza... Life with hope

support group reaches out to Latina Women

by Ann Gordon, MPH, breast cancer coordinator



*“Las mujeres están ansiosas por aprender acerca de su tipo de cáncer y del tratamiento, así como sobre temas de salud en general,”* dice Martha Carillo, facilitadora del grupo de ayuda *Vida con Esperanza* en Union City. *“Vida con Esperanza* provee a las mujeres latinas de una atmósfera de camaradería, dónde pueden compartir información sobre servicios y ayuda. Es una agrupación que proporciona esperanza, información y ayuda.”

Tres años atrás cuando Martha ayudó a iniciar *Vida con Esperanza*, solamente existían otros dos grupos de ayuda para mujeres en español en la *Bay Area*. No existe ningún grupo disponible en el sur del condado de Alameda, el cual tiene la población latina con el crecimiento más rápido alrededor de la bahía. Al trabajar con el *Centro del Cáncer del Norte de California*, Martha pues comprendió que las latinas tenían necesidades especiales a la hora de utilizar el sistema de atención médica en este país.

El poder apoyar estas necesidades se vuelve particularmente importante cuando una mujer recibe un diagnóstico traumatizante como el de cáncer de seno. Las creencias y costumbres propias de sus culturas; la limitada habilidad de hablar y entender inglés y la necesidad de transporte y de cuidados de niños, a menudo dificultan que las latinas tengan fácil acceso a su tratamiento para el cáncer de seno. *Vida con Esperanza* ofrece una variedad de programas para ayudar a este grupo de mujeres.

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*Vida con esperanza... Con't Page 3 Col.2*

Standing, left to right: Margarita Lopez and Evangelina Sida; Front row, left to right: Martha Carillo, group facilitator, and Alma Ayala

*“Women are hungry for learning about their cancer and treatment as well as general health issues,”* says Martha Carillo, group facilitator, of the *Vida con Esperanza* support group in Union City. *“Vida con Esperanza* provides Latina women with an atmosphere of camaraderie, shared resources, and education. It is an organization of hope, information and support.”

At the time Martha helped start *Vida con Esperanza* three years ago, only two Spanish language support groups for women existed in the Bay Area. There were no groups available in Southern Alameda County which has one of the fastest growing Latino populations around the bay. Working with the *Northern California Cancer Center*, Martha understood that Latinas have special needs when using the health care system in this country.

Being able to support these needs becomes especially important when a woman receives a traumatic diagnosis such as breast cancer. Cultural beliefs and customs, a limited ability to speak and understand English, and transportation and child care needs, often make it difficult for Latina women to readily access their breast cancer treatment. *Vida con Esperanza* offers a variety of programs to help this community of women.

When Velia Sprague learned she had breast cancer in 2000, she had just returned from her brother's funeral in their native Nicaragua; hearing the word cancer felt like a death sentence to Velia. She did not want to go on living. Fortunately, Velia's daughter encouraged her to get treatment by reminding Velia that her grandson, Luis, needed her around!

Velia praises the care she received at Kaiser Permanente and credits her experience with *Vida con Esperanza* as a major contributor to her healing. *“At first, I didn't want to go because I was afraid to talk about the same thing over and over again,”* says Velia.

*“But I found the group makes you feel better. You talk about things. We all share our sickness, pain, and happiness. We're like a family.”*

Two years later, Velia still participates in

## Life after cancer does exist



*“I think I'm setting records now,”* says Tami Hagan, laughing. A bright-eyed, 35-year-old, four-time cancer survivor, Tami tells her story better than any one else can. Not only does she work full-time, she travels to places (on her long-list) throughout the world, has plans to return to school for a master's degree, and is in the early planning stages to establish a support foundation called L.A.C.E. - Life After Cancer Exists.

Diagnosed with cervical cancer at the age of 29 in 1996, Tami underwent radiation, three radiation implant surgeries, and a hysterectomy. Just before her one year mark, a cancerous lymph node was discovered in her lower back; more surgery and radiation followed. Tami recuperated throughout the next year. She developed a chronic cough which she could not shake for another year. In 1999, a chest x-ray revealed a small nodule in her left lung. Her oncologist, who specializes in gynecology, Thomas Ewing, MD, of Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center, referred Tami to his colleague Howard Kleckner, MD, Hayward Oncology Department chief.

Under Dr. Kleckner's care, Tami withstood surgery for partial removal of her left lung. Six months later, another evaluation showed a small nodule adjacent to the surgical site. More radiation and chemotherapy followed. Today, Tami celebrates almost 2½ years of being cancer free!

*“With the first diagnosis, I thought, ‘I'm 29, I'm too young to die,’”* says Tami. *“But, as strange as this may sound, I think it's been a gift given to me. The hardest part has been watching my family go through this—they are the true survivors. Most people living with cancer experience a resounding change in their attitude and outlook about life. My family and I choose to survive with humor.”*

*“My sister, Debi, uses ‘The Big Toe Theory’ now because anytime I came down with the least little thing, even a cold, I found myself relating it back to cancer. One day, Debi said, ‘What? You think you're going to stub your toe and now you have Big Toe cancer, too?’ We shared a*

Life after cancer: Con't Backcover

## Servicios de Interpretación

puente cultural a una mejor experiencia de atención

Corina Lockerbie y Liz Galindo, intérpretes de la atención de la salud, han hecho de la interpretación una vocación de toda la vida. Después de haber interpretado con frecuencia para sus padres cuando niñas, ahora proporcionan servicios de interpretación certificados para Kaiser



Left to right: Corina Lockerbie and Liz Galindo, health care interpreters, Union City Medical Offices and Hayward Medical Center

Permanente y para toda la comunidad hispanohablante.

Sin embargo, las intérpretes hacen más que interpretar entre el inglés y el español que se hablan aquí en Kaiser Permanente. Las intérpretes actúan como un puente cultural de comunicación, educación y acceso a la atención de la salud entre los afiliados con dominio limitado del inglés y nuestros médicos y personal. Para Corina y Liz, la meta número uno es ayudar a los afiliados a tener una mejor experiencia en la atención de la salud.

“La mayor parte de nuestro trabajo involucra velar por los intereses de los afiliados,” afirma Liz. “Nos especializamos en ayudar a los afiliados a tener acceso al sistema de atención de la salud. Como en muchas culturas alrededor del mundo, los hispanohablantes nativos tienen creencias y costumbres sobre cómo abordar el cuidado de su propia salud y el proceso de curación. En este papel interpretativo, Corina y yo les enseñamos a los afiliados cómo funciona el sistema de la atención de la salud en este país y cómo navegar a través del sistema de atención integrado de Kaiser Permanente.”

Estar al tanto de las necesidades de un individuo, es el pilar de la excelente atención que un paciente y su familia reciben en nuestro Departamento de Oncología. “Los médicos y el personal son maravillosos aquí,” afirma Liz. “Son culturalmente muy sensibles, muy pacientes y se toman el tiempo para ayudar al paciente a entender qué es lo que está pasando, no importa cuánto tiempo tome. Siempre se les explica todo de manera comprensiva.”

Corina y Liz recomiendan que los afiliados, que necesiten ayuda para comunicarse en otro idioma durante sus citas médicas, utilicen un intérprete profesional certificado en lugar de un niño, otro pariente o amigo. Ambas intérpretes de la atención de la salud están disponibles en los Consultorios Médicos de Union City y los Consultorios Médicos de Hayward.

Si necesita ayuda en sus citas médicas, favor de informarnos llamando a nuestra línea telefónica en español: 510-675-4020.

## Interpreter Services

cultural bridge to a better care experience

Corina Lockerbie and Liz Galindo, health care interpreters, have made interpreting a life-long vocation. Often interpreting for their parents as a child, they now provide certified interpreter services for Kaiser Permanente and throughout the Spanish speaking community.

But interpreters do more than interpret between the spoken English and Spanish languages here at Kaiser Permanente. Interpreters act as a cultural bridge of communication, education, and access to health care between limited English speaking members and our physicians and staff. For Corina and Liz, their number one goal is to help members receive a better health care experience.

“Most of our work involves member advocacy,” says Liz. “We specialize in helping members access the health care system. As in many cultures around the world, Spanish language natives hold beliefs and customs about how to approach taking care of one’s health and the process of healing. In this interpretive role, Corina and I teach members how health care works in this country and how to navigate through the Kaiser Permanente integrated system of care.”

Being aware of an individual’s needs is a mainstay of the excellent care patients and their families receive in our Oncology Department. “The physicians and staff are wonderful here,” says Liz. “They are very culturally sensitive, very patient, and take the time to help a patient understand what is happening no matter how long it takes. Everything is always explained in a caring way.”

Corina and Liz recommend that members, who need language communication assistance at their medical appointments, use a certified professional interpreter rather than a child, other relative, or friend. Both health care interpreters are available at the Hayward Medical Center and Union City Medical Offices.

If you need assistance at your medical appointments, please let us know by calling our Spanish language phone line at 510-675-4020.

## Meet Debbie Moore, RN, Nurse Practitioner



*“...as the family caregiver for my husband, I gained a new perspective about what our patients and families endure day-to-day”*

I am as passionate now about caring for patients with cancer and their families as I was when beginning my nursing career in 1977. My work and dedication in caring for people with cancer is a reflection of love for my mother. Her fight against breast cancer, and her death, had a tremendous impact on my life; it clearly influenced my decision to become a nurse.

Our Oncology Department is an incredible place to work; it feels like family. During the long cancer illness of my husband, Paul, I realized how amazing the care and support is here—our physician oncologists, nurses, pharmacists, medical staff—everyone. And patients and families were so supportive and forgiving about the time I took off; as the family caregiver for my husband, I gained a new perspective about what our patients and families endure day-to-day.

Like many people who lose their loved ones, I’m beginning a new chapter in life—it includes becoming a Grandmother! I’m so excited and looking forward to this joyous event. As many of you know, I have three beautiful children, ran five marathons in the past, and remain an avid shopper and chocolate lover.

Years ago when my own children were quite young, they would ask me, ‘Did you save any lives today?’ Thinking that only Emergency Room nurses saved lives, I would answer, ‘No.’ But I do help save lives and touch people every day—as do all of us who have dedicated our life’s work to caring for people with cancer. We do bring hope, comfort and compassionate caring as well as the skill and expertise to treat cancer.

Becoming a nurse and specializing in Oncology is one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I love what I do and am so appreciative of the rewards my work has brought me. I feel blessed having known and cared for so many people over the past 25 years.

Cuando Velia Sprague se enteró de que tenía cáncer de seno en el 2000, acababa de regresar del funeral de su hermano en su nativa Nicaragua. Al escuchar la palabra cáncer, Velia sintió como si le hubieran dado una sentencia de muerte. No quería seguir viviendo. Afortunadamente, la hija de Velia la exhortó a buscar tratamiento recordándole que su nieto, Luis, la necesitaba a su lado. Velia elogia la atención que recibió en Kaiser Permanente y reconoce su experiencia con *Vida con Esperanza* como el factor que más contribuyó a su curación. “Al principio, no quería ir porque tenía temor de hablar de lo mismo una y otra vez,” dice Velia. “Pero me di

cuenta de que el grupo hace que uno se sienta mejor. Uno habla de cosas. Todas compartimos sobre nuestras enfermedades, nuestro dolor y nuestra alegría. Somos como una familia.”

Dos años después, Velia todavía participa en *Vida con Esperanza* y anima a otras mujeres a unirse al grupo. “Estamos aquí para ayudar. Nosotras hemos pasado por eso y podemos cuidar de mujeres para quienes el cáncer es algo nuevo. Si la gente sabe que somos latinas, entonces sabrá que hablamos su idioma y que pueden hablar de sus problemas en sus propias palabras,” afirma Velia.

“Estoy de acuerdo con todo lo que Velia dice. Todos reaccionamos de diferente forma,” afirma calmadamente Margarita Lopez. “Con mi primer cáncer de seno en 1999, asistí a un grupo de apoyo en Palo Alto y una amiga me llevó a otro que se reunía en Kaiser Permanente en Fremont; pero no continué yendo. Era muy duro. Pensé que ya no tenía cáncer hasta año y medio más tarde, cuando el cáncer se formó en mi otro seno.”

Margarita se armó de valor para regresar a un grupo de apoyo en Kaiser Permanente. A pesar de que el asistir a este grupo la ayudaba, ella se sentía sola, culturalmente. “Me preguntaba si era la única. Quería estar con mi propia gente,” dice Margarita. Pronto se enteró sobre *Vida con Esperanza* y aún continúa asistiendo cuando le es posible.

Cuando una participante del grupo está muy enferma o pierde la lucha contra el cáncer de seno, su familia de amigas en *Vida con Esperanza* lo sienten profundamente. Y ya sea que sólo una persona asista a la reunión semanal, o que seis o siete personas lo hagan, Martha Carillo está ahí. Ella llama a las participantes del grupo antes de cada reunión y verifica cómo están. “Está bien si alguna persona no puede venir, nosotros estamos aquí cuando ellas vienen,” afirma Martha.

En la actualidad, bajo el patrocinio de Tibericio Vasquez Health Center, *Vida con Esperanza* se reúne semanalmente en el Centro de Servicios en Union City. Kaiser Permanente ha proporcionado apoyo al programa a través de su programa de subvención a la comunidad, conferencistas invitados y la creación de una versión en español de *Look Good Feel Better (Luzca bien y siéntase mejor)*, un programa de consejos de belleza y de cuidados personales para las mujeres que se encuentren sometiéndose a la quimioterapia. El grupo de apoyo *Vida con Esperanza* está abierto a todas las mujeres en la comunidad. Es en verdad una agrupación que proporciona esperanza, información y ayuda.

El grupo de apoyo *Vida con Esperanza* se reúne los jueves de 5:00 p.m. a 7:00 p.m., en el Centro de Servicios, 505 “H” Street, Union City. La participación es gratuita. Para obtener mayor información, favor de llamar al número (408) 938-2193 ó al (510) 471-5907 anexo 120; o pase por mi oficina en el Departamento de Oncología.



“... I found the group makes you feel better. You talk about things. We all share our sickness, pain, and happiness. We're like a family.”

— Velia Sprague, Kaiser Permanente and *Vida con Esperanza* support group member with grandsons Luis, age 9 and Ernie, age 4



says Margarita. She soon learned about *Vida con Esperanza* and continues to attend whenever possible.

When a member is especially ill or loses the fight against breast cancer, her family of friends at *Vida con Esperanza* takes it hard. And whether one person attends a weekly meeting, or there are six or seven, Martha Carillo is there. Before each meeting, she calls members and checks on how they are doing. “It’s okay when a person cannot come, we are here when they can,” says Martha.

Now sponsored by the Tibericio Vasquez Health Center, *Vida con Esperanza* meets weekly at the Centro de Servicios in Union City. Kaiser Permanente has provided support for the program through its community grant program, guest speakers, and in creating a Spanish version of *Look Good Feel Better*, a self-care and beauty tips program for women undergoing chemotherapy. *Vida con Esperanza* is open to all women in the community. It is truly an organization of hope, information, and support.

The *Vida con Esperanza* support group meets Thursdays, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Centro de Servicios, 505 “H” Street, Union City. Participation is free. For more information, please call 408-938-2193 or 510-471-5907 ext. 120, or stop by my office in the Oncology Department.

**SERVICIOS PARA EL CÁNCER DE SENO DISPONIBLES EN ESPAÑOL  
BREAST CANCER RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN SPANISH**

Línea telefónica en español de consejos y citas de Kaiser Permanente: 510-675-4020  
Kaiser Permanente Spanish language advice/appointment phone line: 510-675-4020

Servicio de información del cáncer del Instituto Nacional del Cáncer: 800-422-6237  
National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service: 800-422-6237

*Confíe en el Mañana*, libro y video disponibles en los Centros de Educación para la Salud de los Kaiser Permanente en Hayward, Union City, y Fremont

*Confíe en el Manana* book and video available at Kaiser Permanente Health Education Centers in Hayward, Union City, and Fremont

Grupo de Ayuda *Vida con Esperanza*: 510-471-5907 anexo 120 ó 408-938-2193  
*Vida con Esperanza* Support Group: 510-471-5907 ext. 120 or 408-938-2193

Página Web: <http://www.y-me.org/espanol/> Web Site: <http://www.y-me.org/espanol/>

## Chemotherapy Overview Class



“One of my greatest joys is being able to do public speaking and lead cancer education and support groups like the *I Can Cope* and *Chemotherapy Overview* sessions,” says Debbie Moore, RNNP. In a recent session, members spent time with Debbie to learn more about managing the side effects of chemotherapy treatment.

Left to right back row: Carol Venezia, Herbert Linton, Lou Ann Wilde, Debbie Moore, RNNP, facilitator, Teresita P. Papa, and Anne Condos with her family, husband, George; Front row left to right: daughter, Diana Prendergast, and Anne's mother, Penelope Conomosac



# Make your wishes known

by Michael Jensen-Akula, MD



## Many of us are uncomfortable

talking about death and dying. But planning ahead and making your wishes known to your family can make a difficult time easier for everyone. "It's always best to plan ahead when you're in stable health and not facing a medical crisis," says Michael Jensen-Akula, MD, of our Oncology Department. "Filling out an Advance Health Care Directive form helps to avoid future confusion and conflict, especially at a time when decision-making may be difficult."

An Advance Health Care Directive lets you choose someone as your "health care agent." It gives that person legal authority to make health care decisions for you if



you are unable to speak for yourself. "Completing an advance directive can provide peace of mind for you and your family," says Dr. Jensen-Akula. "Advance medical planning is something we recommend for all adults, regardless of health status." As physicians, we want to know what the patient wants and keep his or her goals at the center of treatment. Advance directives help us do that."

You can get an Advance Health Care Directive kit here in Oncology, or from our Health Education Department, or by calling our Member Services Call Center at 1-800-464-4000.

Source: Member and Marketing Communications, *Member News*, Winter 2001



Judy Nelson with Howard Kleckner, MD

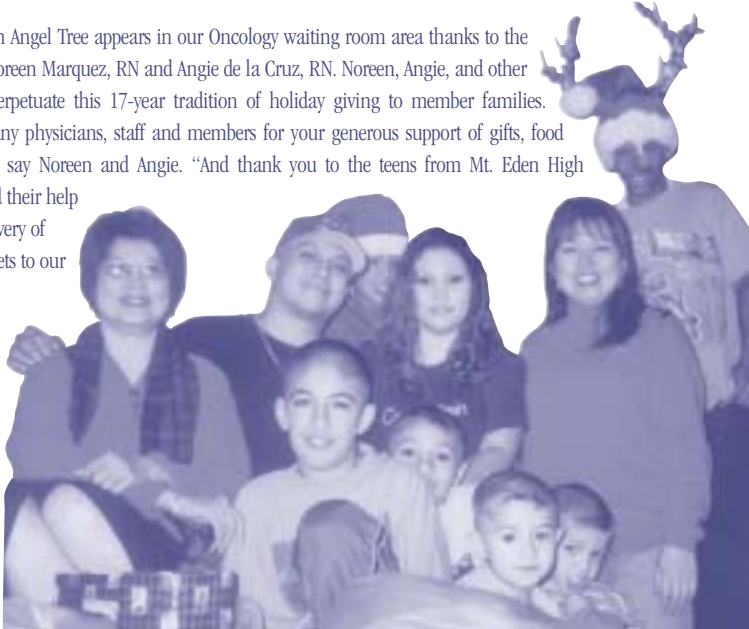
It's hard to believe Judy Nelson retired from Kaiser Permanente Hayward Medical Center 25 years ago when it seems like it was just yesterday. But this healthy, energetic 90-years-young former clerical services supervisor 'keeps on going'! A colon cancer survivor for about 17 years, Judy takes life 'a day-at-a-time.' What's her secret? "I rely on my faith and maintain a positive outlook. And I've had lots of family support," says Judy.

## Angel tree spirit of giving a holiday tradition



Every holiday season an Angel Tree appears in our Oncology waiting room area thanks to the care and outreach of Noreen Marquez, RN and Angie de la Cruz, RN. Noreen, Angie, and other Oncology staff, help perpetuate this 17-year tradition of holiday giving to member families. "Thank you to the many physicians, staff and members for your generous support of gifts, food certificates, and cash," say Noreen and Angie. "And thank you to the teens from Mt. Eden High School who volunteered their help with wrapping and delivery of the Angel Tree gift baskets to our four families."

Left to right, front row, seated: Noreen Marquez, RN, with the Munoz family, Andrew Jr., Lorenzo, Mauricio, and Jesse; Middle row: Andrew Sr., Marie, and Angie de la Cruz, RN; Back row: Jonathan Ner and Jonathan Jones



### Life after cancer: Con't from page 1

good laugh and I gained a new perspective," says Tami. "You know, there are times when you can't help but think it's spreading here or there."

Tami's current big challenge is to finish the Team-in-Training's *Wildflower Triathlon* for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in May. The event marks her 36th birthday. Participating both in honor and in memory of friends, Tami says, "The more I learn about this terrible disease and the treatments these brave patients must endure, I am inspired! Every time I dread getting up at

5:00 a.m. to go to the gym, get in a cold pool, or feel like my one lung is going to pop as I run to the top of a hill while training, I remind myself of these people, their bravery, and how truly blessed I am to even attempt a triathlon."

As Tami reviews plans for this year, each challenge represents her choice to live life to its fullest extent and somehow make a difference. "Am I nuts?" she asks her family and friends.

Not in the least, Tami—you say it best, 'life after cancer exists!'

## LifeLines

### LOCAL CANCER CLASSES & SUPPORT GROUPS

**Cancer Support Groups** call for more information, we have numerous groups available

**Prostate Cancer Support Group** a monthly support group for patients & family members

**I Can Cope** a 7-session class for newly diagnosed patients and their families

**Chemotherapy Overview** a one-session class on side effect management for patients undergoing chemotherapy is held the first Thursday of every month

**Look Good, Feel Better** a one-session class on self-care and beauty tips for women undergoing chemotherapy is held every other month on Mondays

**Breast Cancer Education & Support Program** 6-week class for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients

**Mind Body Medicine Program** 8-session workshop for those interested in improving their health & managing stress

**Kaiser Permanente Health Education:** Hayward and Union City: 510-784-4531  
Fremont: 510-248-3455

### WEB SITE RESOURCES:

[www.kaiserpermanente.org](http://www.kaiserpermanente.org)  
[www.permanente.net/doctor](http://www.permanente.net/doctor)  
<http://hayward.kp.org>  
<http://fremont.kp.org>  
[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

Note: Web site links are provided as an educational tool. Any medical content that you feel may be important to your health should always be discussed with your Kaiser Permanente physician.

### OUTLOOK EDITORIAL STAFF

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We want to hear from you! Comments, ideas, stories – contact us at the Oncology Department, Kaiser Permanente Hayward Medical Center, 27400 Hesperian Blvd, Hayward CA 94545 or send an email to: [Howard.Kleckner@kp.org](mailto:Howard.Kleckner@kp.org).