

the NETWORK connection

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CANCER SURVIVORS' NETWORK AT SAINT JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL **SUMMER 2009**

A Survivor's Story

Shannon Marsh - Yoga Enthusiast & Cancer Survivor

In my early 30's, I was working long hours at a bakery putting my heart and soul into everything I created. I was tired, as one would expect. However, in the summer of 2002, my intense exhaustion sent me to the doctor. She found a nodule on my neck and ordered a series of tests. After four months and many more tests, the results were still inconclusive. After much frustration, I had surgery in December to remove half of my thyroid - everything looked benign. Then a week later, my phone rang. I returned to my doctor to receive a diagnosis of thyroid cancer.

I was less stressed knowing I had cancer than when I did not know what was wrong with me. At least I could then develop a plan of action. So, early in 2003, I had my whole thyroid gland removed. I was fortunate that I did not need chemotherapy or radiation. I successfully combated the cancer with surgery, radioactive iodine treatment and the support of my family and friends.



Shannon and Jay Marsh enjoying a beautiful day together.

In a sense, cancer gave me the gift to begin teaching something I love - yoga. As a long-time yoga student, I thought it was an appropriate time to begin teaching classes for cancer

In many cases, treatment for thyroid cancer is successful. Honestly,

continued on page 4

Find Who Has the Latest and Greatest Technology

Over 100 years have passed since the discovery of radium to treat tumors. Now robots and other technological equipment are performing procedures that were once inconceivable. Since information and procedures abound for cancer treatment, how do you sort through it all to determine the latest and greatest technology? Unfortunately, there is no quick and easy way. Simply put, you must chart your own path and research each aspect. Here are some key points to know, however, to help you along the way.

First, there are a number of treatment options available for different types of cancers. The latest technologies may work better for some cancers than for others, and these technologies may be more effective for some patients than others. The overall trend in cancer equipment

How To...

An Inside Look

- A Survivor's Story 1 & 4**
Shannon Marsh - Yoga Enthusiast & Cancer Survivor
- How To 1 & 6**
Find Who Has the Latest and Greatest Technology
- Calendar: What's Happening... 2**
- Network Update 3**
Another Inspirational *Sharing the Journey* Cancer Survivors' Conference
Scholarship Money for YOU!
- Support Groups 3**
- Medically Speaking 4**
Is Genetic Testing Right for You & Your Family?
- Volunteer Spotlight..... 5**
Janet Kempe: Courage in Everything
- Did You Know? 5**
You Can Enhance your Well-Being with the Ancient Practice of Yoga
- A Spirit of Giving 6**
Surrounding Survivors with Prayer Shawls
- Free for the Asking 6**
Second Wind Retreat
- At Saint Joseph's 7**
Groundbreaking Research Begins for Pancreatic and Lung Cancers
- Young Adult Survivors 7**
- Coordinator's Corner 7**

SAINT JOSEPH'S
Cancer Survivors' Network
Sarah Penna, Coordinator
Cancer Survivors' Network
678-843-5051 or
csninfo@sjsa.org

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Contributing Writers

- Judith Keiner, Janet Kempe, Alice Kerber, Shannon Marsh, Lynn Peterson & Pamela Wall

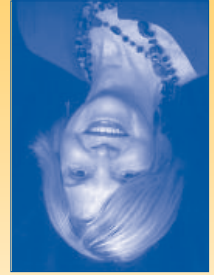
Saint Joseph's Health System - a member of Catholic Health East, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy

Mission Statement
The Saint Joseph's Cancer Survivors' Network is a volunteer organization whose mission is to promote cancer survivorship for all who are living the cancer experience.

Greetings from the Chair...

Summertime is full of vacations and laughter - such a joyous time for cancer survivors! While we are enjoying vacations, there are exciting things happening in cancer research. The new relationship Saint Joseph's has with Georgia Tech is so promising for the future. Read all about it in this *Network Connection*, and enjoy the rest of your summer.

Judith Keiner, Chair
CSN Executive Committee



SAINT JOSEPH'S
Cancer Survivors' Network



the NETWORK connection **SUMMER 2009**

SAINT JOSEPH'S
Cancer Survivors' Network
5665 Peachtree Dunwoody Road, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30342-1764
www.saintjosephsatlanta.org/cancersupport



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what's happening

Save the Date

Saturday, September 12, 2009 – Prostate Cancer Screening at Saint Joseph's Hospital. FREE and offered to the entire community. Please call 678-843-5175 after August 11, 2009 to request an appointment.

Sunday, September 13, 2009 – Young Adult Cancer Survivor Connection Initiative Event. This event will be free, fun, and in a fabulous location for young adult cancer survivors (ages 18-40). Details to come. Call 678-843-5051 for more information.

Thursday, October 8, 2009 at 6:30 PM – Cancer Survivors' Network Volunteer Appreciation Event and Annual Meeting. There will be fun, food, and reflection on the accomplishments of 2009. If you have been involved for years, months, or have thought about becoming involved in the CSN, please join us. All are welcome! Call 678-843-5051 to RSVP.

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM – 'N Touch – A Night of Skin Care and Pampering. Join us in the Carroll Conference and Education Center at Saint Joseph's Hospital. This session will focus on lips, eyebrows, hair and skin care (with Clarisonic®). Led by Lana Morris, 'N Touch Director, Professional Makeup Artist, Color Expert, and Bare Escentuals Ambassador of Sephora. (Thank you to Jen Spencer, Director of Sephora Perimeter Mall, for in-kind support.)

Saturday, November 7, 2009 – No More Excuses! Atlanta Lung Cancer Awareness Run & Walk. We are Changing the Course of Lung Cancer. Please come and join us. More details to follow in the mail.

Ongoing Programs & Descriptions

Eating Well, Living Well Nutrition Education Program

Together the Cancer Survivors' Network and the Men's Health and Wellness Center provide this program that is open to all. Join us every quarter from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM in the Carroll Conference and Education Center at Saint Joseph's Hospital. There are different topics for each month. This program is free, but space is limited. Call 678-843-5051 to register. Upcoming sessions are:

- Tuesday, **August 11th** - *Re(de)efined Sugar: Nutrition for Diabetes & Carbohydrate Counting*
- Tuesday, **November 10th** (topic TBA)

Lunch & Learn Program

In 2009, every 3rd Friday of the month (unless otherwise noted) from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM in the Carroll Conference and Education Center at Saint Joseph's Hospital. There are different topics for each month! Call 678-843-5051 to RSVP. Upcoming sessions are:

- Friday, **July 17th**: *Herbs, Supplements & You*
- Friday, **August 21st**: *Getting the Best Cancer Care at Age 55 & Older*
- Friday, **September 18th**: *Peripheral Neuropathies*
- Friday, **October 16th**: *Topic TBA*
- Friday, **November 20th**: *Topic TBA*

Gentle Yoga for Cancer Survivors

Every Sunday from 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM. Please join us! Call Shannon at 404-226-9283 to register.

Monthly Support Groups

Please see the side bar on page three for the list of monthly support groups.

Visit our website at www.saintjosephsatlanta.org/cancersupport.
For information on cancer support services, to RSVP for any CSN event or to verify program location, call Sarah Penna at 678-843-5051 or csninfo@sjha.org.

At Saint Joseph's Groundbreaking Research Begins for Pancreatic and Lung Cancers

Georgia Tech and Saint Joseph's Hospital have joined to begin the first regional research program to study the genetics and cell biology of pancreatic cancer. Tissue and serum samples from patients with cancer are being scrutinized to identify the differences in genetic and cellular features between normal and tumor cells. Findings from this research will be used for the ultimate purpose of developing tests for early diagnosis and identifying specific, targeted therapies to treat pancreatic cancer.

George Daneker, MD, is the Medical Director of Oncology Research at Saint Joseph's Hospital and John McDonald, PhD, Chair of the School of Biology at Georgia Tech are the co-principal investigators of the study. Based on the research strategies from the acclaimed work of Dr. McDonald and Benedict Beningo, MD, with ovarian cancer patients, the current research is the first to focus on pancreatic cancer, accepted to be the most fatal of common cancers. Pancreatic cancer is similar to ovarian cancer in that it often goes undetected until the disease is too far advanced for curative therapy.

Dr. McDonald, recognized as a world authority in molecular genetics and genomics, and Dr. Daneker, a surgical oncologist with an extensive background in basic and translational research, are applying state-of-the-art technologies

toward identifying abnormal molecular and cellular mechanisms. They will use microarray technology to recognize differences in gene expression patterns between pancreatic tumor tissue and normal pancreatic tissue, which is of special interest when developing specific treatments.

There is also interest in the molecular basis of chemotherapy resistance, which could lead to the development of treatment strategies that would make all tumors more responsive to treatment. The research efforts will also focus on screening and early detection, which may lead to the development of a sensitive screening test that only requires one drop of blood to run.

"Georgia Tech has the most advanced technology and the scientists who can help move these 'bench' research projects closer to 'bedside' treatments for patients at a very rapid rate," says Daneker. "Saint Joseph's brings the clinical expertise to take the treatments directly to the patient faster. It's a very unique partnership that facilitates rapid discovery and satisfies both our missions to bring the best treatments to patients in the quickest, safest way."

Saint Joseph's and Georgia Tech plan on expanding the collaborative research to lung cancers, as well as to prostate and colorectal cancers in the following months.

Young Adult Survivor Connection Initiative

Cancer strikes at all ages. Much attention is already devoted to children and adult patients but little is directed at the underserved population of young adults (ages 18-40). To address this problem the **Cancer Survivors' Network at Saint Joseph's Hospital** (www.saintjosephsatlanta.org/cancersupport) joined forces with **Life Linkage** (www.lifelinkage.com), **Young Adult Cancer Survivors of Atlanta** (www.yacsatlanta.org) and the **Young Survival Coalition** (www.youngsurvival.org). Together they applied for and received a Targeted Community Investment Grant from the **American Cancer Society** (www.cancer.org) in March 2009. The group is now partnering with the American Cancer Society to implement the **Young Adult Survivor Connection Initiative**. The goal is to connect Metro Atlanta young adult survivors with one another, provide education about existing resources for survivors, caregivers, and health professionals, and develop new venues for support and education. **The committee is planning an entertaining and educational event for young survivors for Fall 2009.** This is a new and exciting project for young adult survivors in the Atlanta area. For more information, please call 678-843-5051 or email csninfo@sjha.org.

Coordinator's Corner

One of my favorite words is "organic," which is a current buzz word in reference to food,

materials, and many other environmentally friendly methods. What I am referring to,



however, is a different definition of organic, such as "developing in a manner analogous to the natural growth and evolution characteristic of living organisms." I think this is a wonderful way to explain how programs, such as the CSN, develop, grow, and change. Similar to our own personal growth, family dynamics, and cancer survivorship journeys, programs are also organic. I think that the CSN is a living, breathing entity that is constantly evolving to do its best to address the needs of those it serves. For example, due to a recent opportunity, the CSN has joined with young adult cancer survivor programs in the community to develop new ways to support young survivors. While this is a recent new focus, it does not mean that the CSN is now solely focusing on young adult survivors. Rather, it is evidence that the CSN ebbs and flows with opportunities and the ideas presented by you and the community, much as a living organism responds to needs it perceives in its own body. The CSN is committed to serving the entire cancer community. We welcome you to help us do the best we can, and we hope you will join us and add your own "organicness". – Sarah Penna

How To . . .

continued from page 1

ent and technology is focused on minimally invasive and targeted treatments. One way to determine the types of technologies that exist is to review the National Cancer Institute's Website (www.cancer.gov).

Secondly, once you have an idea of the technologies that exist to treat your type of cancer, you can then begin to determine which facilities have those technologies. The most comprehensive way to determine what technology each facility possesses is through their website and calling for any missing details. Remember that not every website has accurate information, so make sure you are using credible sites.

Third, since advances in technology are published almost daily, it is impossible to know everything. Therefore, consulting with your physician is your most important step. Develop a trusting relationship with your physician where there is open communication to explore options for your treatment. Technology has helped us lead longer and healthier lives, but only you and your doctor can determine the best choice for you. Each individual is unique, and technology alone cannot address this unchanging fact about humanity.

Below are a few websites that will help you begin your research.

American College of Radiology Imaging Network: www.acrin.org

The information provided on this site is designed to help patients better prepare for x-rays and scans and understand how the technology works.

Mayo Clinic: www.mayoclinic.com

Search "Cancer Surgery" under "Tests & Procedures" for techniques, expectations, and risks for surgeries typical for certain cancers.

National Cancer Institute: www.cancer.gov

Search "Cancer Treatment" for a comprehensive guide of standard and upcoming treatment options for cancers.

National Comprehensive Cancer Network: www.nccn.com

A helpful guide that provides summaries of treatment options.

Oncolink: www.oncolink.com/treatment/

Information about cancer treatment, including surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, clinical trials, proton therapy, complementary medicine, and cutting edge technologies.

Saint Joseph's Hospital of Atlanta:

www.saintjosephsatlanta.org

To learn more about the oncology services and technologies available at Saint Joseph's Hospital.

Sources: www.curetoday.com

A Spirit of Giving**Surrounding Survivors with Prayer Shawls**

Sometimes cancer survivors just need a hug. If that hug is a soft handmade shawl, the experience can be repeated over and over. This is the case with the lovingly crafted garments provided by the Prayer Shawl Ministry at St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Johns Creek. The women who create the shawls are all volunteers who meet the first Thursday of each month. They range in age from twenty year olds to those in their eighties. There are beginners and experts but all work together under the guidance of Christy Medina to produce these gifts of hope in three days. Using patterns from the Prayer Shawl Ministry website and their own creativity, these women knit and crochet soft, warm comfort for those receiving treatment. All the materials are donated by the parishioners. Three times a year Christy brings a dozen or more prayer shawls to the Cancer Survivors' Network at Saint Joseph's Hospital after they have been blessed by a priest. These prayer shawls are then given to survivors who are patients in the hospital, receiving radiation treatment, or chemotherapy. The Prayer Shawl Ministry is truly a labor of love shared with people who are strangers to the members of this ministry. What a wonderful Spirit of Giving!

For more information, please contact Christy Medina at 770-521-2857 or cvmolina@comcast.net.

Free for the Asking**Second Wind Retreat**

Ever just want to run away into the hills leaving cancer behind? Then you might want to explore Second Wind Retreat. Located in the beautiful foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, this oasis of calm is a nature escape. You will stay in a beautifully appointed Craftsman style cabin, fully equipped with everything needed for comfort. At this two bedroom cottage with a breathtaking view of the mountains you can watch horses graze, hike the forest, fish in the creek, and sleep with the windows open to hear the Little Fighting Town Creek. Mostly you get to calm down and remove yourself from all responsibilities.

Located in Epworth, GA, this house was built with love and gratitude by Mike and Marti Nunn after her battle with breast cancer. The mountain valley gave them respite from the ordeal. Since January 2009 they offer that solace to other cancer survivors and their caregivers.

To stay at Second Wind you must have a signed Physician Referral Form provided by Second Wind since no medical treatment is provided and the nearest hospital is 20 minutes away. The length of stay varies from a weekend up to one week. Since each patient has different dietary needs, you provide your own food. Occupancy is limited to the patient and the caregiver. The Retreat is offered at no charge to guests, but donations to sustain this program are appreciated. For more information please visit their website www.secondwindretreat.org.

Network Update**Another Inspirational *Sharing the Journey* Cancer Survivors' Conference**

On March 21, 2009, Saint Joseph's welcomed 250 cancer survivors, caregivers, and cancer care professionals for an uplifting day of education, inspiration and support at the annual *Sharing the Journey* Cancer Survivors' Conference.

Thank you to all of the participants, the more than 50 volunteers, Saint Joseph's staff, and the 15 fabulous speakers. We offer special thanks to the dedicated planning committee: Herman Anderson, Alisa Beattie, Jerry Broder, Cynthia Copes, Bill Hartigan, Charlotte Hartigan, Peggy Hinds, Toby Kaye, Judith Kelner, Gladys Long, Dick Mace, Paul Miller, Sally Miller, Bill Moss, Frank Petraglia, Minnette Stennett, Marty Wilson, and Conference Chair, Janet Kempe.

Thank you to our supporters and exhibitors: Platinum Supporter: Saint Joseph's Mercy Foundation. Silver Supporters: Jaxon Photography, Sanofi Aventis, Southern Refreshment Services. Contributors: Aflac – Mindy and David Ellin (Independent Agents), Coloplast. Exhibitors:



Diane and Jeanne smile for the camera during lunch.

Breast Friends, Chemo-flage, The Chuck Sarratt Cancer Foundation, Inc., Georgia Cancer Foundation, Georgia Ovarian Cancer Alliance, Georgia Prostate Cancer Coalition, The Joan Gaeta Foundation, Inc., Juice Plus, Kidea, Lung Cancer Alliance, Men's Health and Wellness Center at Saint Joseph's, The Mystic Path, Soul to Soul, Susansnaps: The Ultimate Gingersnaps, Therapeutic Solutions, Inc., Young Adult Cancer Survivors of



J.C. and Mary enjoying each other's company.

**Scholarship Money for YOU!**

There are many wonderful programs and conferences for cancer survivors. Unfortunately, the financial cost can be prohibitive. To help make these important programs more accessible to people in the Atlanta area for the third year the CSN is offering the Margaret A. Riley *Sharing the Journey* Scholarship Program.

One scholarship will be awarded to a cancer survivor, caregiver, or cancer survivorship volunteer. A second scholarship will be awarded to an oncology professional. Both scholarships are given so that recipients can attend a cancer-related educational or support program of their choice and it will cover up to \$1000 of costs. We welcome your application.

Do you want to go somewhere, but don't know where? Call us to explore your options. Information and an application are available online at www.saintjosephsatlanta.org/cancersupport or by calling 678-843-5051. Applications are due to the CSN office by Friday, August 28, 2009.

Margaret A. (Maggie) Riley is the former director of the cancer program at Saint Joseph's and has been a tireless advocate for cancer survivorship for over twenty years. This scholarship program was established in her honor to recognize her extraordinary career and commitment to cancer survivorship.

Support Groups at Saint Joseph's**COLORECTAL CANCER**

1st Friday of every month
10 a.m.

GRUPO DE APOYO PARA LATINAS/LATINA CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

2do Viernes del Mes a la 11.
(Conducted in Spanish).

También, hay Amigas en Contacto por teléfono. Para más información, favor de llamar Gladys Long 770.640.5528 ext. 111.

LUNG CANCER SUPPORT

3rd Tuesday of every month
10 a.m.

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT

1st Wednesday of every month
7 p.m.

SURGICAL PROSTATE CANCER

3rd Thursday of every month

7 p.m. Sponsored by the Men's Health and Wellness Center at Saint Joseph's. Call 404.841.5670.

CANCER SURVIVORS AND CAREGIVERS' TELEPHONE CONNECTION

We can connect you with someone who will listen to and support you! Call 678-843-5051.

Programs meet in the Conference Room on the first floor of the Florence Hays Erb Clinical Speciality Center at Saint Joseph's Hospital, unless otherwise noted.

All programs are FREE and open to everyone in the community.

The CSN maintains a listing of cancer support groups in the Atlanta and surrounding areas. Go to our website to print the list:
www.saintjosephsatlanta.org/cancersupport

or contact Sarah at 678-843-5051
csninfo@sjha.org for more info.

VOLUNTEER CALL!

The CSN updates this list annually. We need help to make the many phone calls necessary to complete this task. If you would like to help, please call Sally Miller at 678-843-4918.

Survivor's Story

continued from page 1

survivors. Yoga makes me feel at home in my body and with myself. Teaching it gives me the opportunity to give back to the cancer community, and being a survivor offers me a unique level of understanding of other survivors. I live for the moment right after yoga class ends when I can witness a beautiful sense of peace wash over my students. Since 2003, teaching yoga has been one of the most gratifying experiences in my life.

Being diagnosed with cancer can mean different things to different people. To me, I'm still the same Shannon, but now I find it easier to slow down. I take time to notice things around me and am now more conscious of the love in my life. It allowed me to be more vulnerable and give my heart to someone who would take care of it. Today, I am still teaching yoga and have also found myself back in the kitchen.

So, in the end, all is well. I do not worry myself about recurrence – what's the point? I tell myself, "All is well," because I am here, alive, and in the present.

thank you!

A heartfelt "thank you" goes to the All Saints Catholic Church Men's Club and Tom Simon for their hard work and generous donation to the Cancer Survivors' Network on behalf of the Dunwoody Charity Golf Tournament.

Medically Speaking

Is Genetic Testing Right for You & Your Family?

All cancers are genetic, but not all cancers are hereditary. Cancers are genetic because a malignancy involves changes in a cell's genes. In some cases, people inherit a genetic mutation through family, increasing the risk of developing cancer. Also, exposure to cancer-inducing agents called carcinogens can increase one's risk.

Genes are the smallest functional units of the inherited information in DNA. Each person inherits a set of chromosomes from each parent. Therefore, there are different versions of genes, called alleles, present. Whether a trait is seen depends on if the trait is dominant or recessive. Dominant traits show up (are expressed) if only one allele is involved. Recessive traits require both alleles in order to be expressed.

Most cancers are sporadic and caused by several acquired, not hereditary, mutations. Small percentages, five to ten percent, of cancers are inherited and pass from one generation to the next in an autosomal dominant pattern. Every generation can be affected. However, having a mutation does **not** guarantee cancer will develop. This is because **cancer is a multifactorial disease** in which both environmental factors and genes interact to cause cancer to develop. Factors that may increase the risk of hereditary cancer include: early age of onset, bilateral disease in paired organs (breasts, ovaries, etc.), multiple primary cancers in

the same individual, multiple cancers across three generations, clustering of specific tumor types, and Ashkenazi Jewish heritage.

Is genetic testing right for you and your family? Consult with your health care provider and either a genetic counselor or an oncology



Alice Kerber, RN, MN, AOCN, Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist at Saint Joseph's Hospital, discussing genetic testing.

nurse with specialization in genetics. There are also **ethical** considerations such as the impact of testing and the results, whom and when to tell about testing, and the purpose for the information. **Economic** issues, including the cost of testing, can be significant. Although many insurance companies cover some portion of the

testing, a comprehensive test can cost \$3000. **Practical** issues include the timing, treatment and surveillance decisions, and testing of children and siblings. There may be unexpected **emotional** responses such as a sense of guilt if carrying a mutated gene, or difficulty recognizing that not everyone in the family may want the testing or results. All of these issues warrant careful consideration. Only you can make the decision about whether testing is right for you.

Resources:
www.geneclinics.org
www.hhs.gov
www.myriadlabs.org

Author:
Alice Kerber, RN, MN, AOCN
678-843-7118, akerber@sjha.org

Volunteer Spotlight

Janet Kempe: Courage in Everything

Q What is your CSN program involvement and for how long?

A In 2006, I participated in a CSN Support Group Facilitator Training class. I met Judy Kelner, who introduced me to the annual Sharing the Journey Cancer Survivors Conference. The next thing I knew, I was officially on a CSN committee. I am now serving my second term on the CSN Executive Committee and was the Chair of the 2009 Conference Committee.



Janet with her puppy, Jacob, smiling for the camera.

Q What has helped you the most on your own cancer journey?

A Being around other survivors and participating in my survivorship on a daily basis. We are positive people not consumed with complaints or judgment. We know, all too well, how quickly things can change, but also that 'this too shall pass' when faced with hardship.

Q What is the best part about what you do as a volunteer?

A What I enjoy the most is meeting someone who is surviving even longer than the one I met before. Recently, I met a 42-year-survivor of ovarian cancer. I am a 6 1/2 year survivor. If she can survive 42 years, SO CAN I!

Q What made you want to volunteer?

A I feel a strong sense of purpose in my survivorship. My 'new norm' is the need to 'give back' by working with other survivors. They inspire me to live and to share my story. I enjoy participating with the CSN because volunteers can give what fits their schedule and needs. I enjoy the 'behind the scene' activity. Wherever you volunteer, a need for your experience or con-

nections will undoubtedly surface. This journey is a testimony that we are all fibers, woven together within the same cloth.

Q Can you give us some words that you live by?

A The words I live by are all positive and they encourage me to feel and express optimism in everything I do. My goal statement for this year is: "This year I choose to have courage in everything I do."

Coping with Caregiving

American Cancer Society is providing **Coping with Caregiving: Getting Information On What to Expect.** Call in to listen on August 13, 2009 from 7:00-8:15 PM and August 18, 2009 from 10:00-11:15 AM. To register, call 1-800-966-3589 or go to tinyurl.com/augustcaregiver.

Did You Know?

You Can Enhance your Well-Being with the Ancient Practice of Yoga

Why practice yoga? In a word – STRESS! Stress is a part of everyday life. When we build up our resilience to stressful situations, we cope better, feel happier and more centered, and generally enjoy life more. The physical postures practiced in Hatha Yoga, combined with attention on breathing, encourage a calmer mind and reduce stress levels. Yoga is a unique practice because it can be safe for people of all ages and abilities, and it is inherently non-competitive. You don't even have to be able to touch your toes to participate!

In addition to stress reduction, there are many benefits of yoga. They include: increased flexibility, strength, and balance; better posture; improved moods; lower blood pressure and heart rate; increased circulation; improved lymphatic system operation; improved body image; better sleep; and increased range of motion in the joints.

After practicing yoga for eleven years, I can say that it is "addictive," because I always leave feeling restored, renewed, and filled with peace.

So, what are you waiting for? **Come join the Cancer Survivors' Network every Sunday morning at 9:30 AM for free Gentle Yoga for Cancer Survivors.** Call Shannon Marsh at 404-226-9283 for details and to register.

About the author: Shannon Marsh is a cancer survivor, certified yoga instructor, and cooking instructor. She is happiest while pursuing heart-opening backbends in yoga class or baking up a batch of her well-loved scones. Shannon has been gratefully teaching yoga with the CSN since 2004.