



# Seeds of Hope

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## Walk helps couple through treatment

During one of the darkest times of their lives – smack in the middle of Barbara Bird's treatment for stage 3 ovarian cancer – Barbara and her husband Carl did something remarkable: they organized an Ovarian Cancer Canada Mini Walk of Hope in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

Following several rounds of chemotherapy to shrink her tumours and five days after undergoing surgery in Edmonton, Barbara told her story to Yellowknife residents on a sunny morning in September 2010, cut the ribbon at the walk start line and walked the first 100 metres.

"Planning the Mini Walk helped me get through my treatment," says Barbara, who underwent more chemotherapy after the walk as part of a clinical trial. "The Mini Walk gave me something to strive for, something to fight the disease with. I told Carl, 'I'm going through this disease now, so this is the best time to get the word out there.'"

Carl and Barbara Bird

"We were doing something positive about ovarian cancer by bringing awareness to the people of Yellowknife," adds Carl, who is chief financial officer for the city. "It meant that we weren't being held hostage by this disease."

With only five weeks to organize and publicize the event, Carl and Barbara set "a modest \$5,000 fundraising goal – our real goal was awareness." But with the help of corporate sponsors and individual donors, the Yellowknife Mini Walk not only attracted donated ad space and awareness information in the local newspaper, it raised an astonishing \$22,000 and a lot of excitement about the event for 2011 and beyond.

The couple is even in talks with an airline about becoming official carrier for the Yellowknife Mini Walk, in the hope that Ovarian Cancer Canada can fly representatives to the city to present awareness programs to residents. A local golf club will also donate funds raised at its ladies' tournament, which will serve to kick off publicity and fundraising for the 2011 Mini Walk set for Sunday, September 11.

"The north is a very giving place," says Carl. "We hope to build a synergy with local sponsors and with Ovarian Cancer Canada that will expand the walk and awareness campaign to other communities in the Northwest Territories."

For Barbara – who knew "absolutely nothing about ovarian cancer" when she was diagnosed in April 2010 after several months of symptoms including bloating, gas and abdominal pain – the Mini Walk was and continues to be a way to raise awareness of the disease among women and to give back to those who provided her care. She completed her treatment late last year and has returned to work as an administrative assistant.



# Survivorship a top priority



By Elisabeth Ross  
Chief Executive Officer

I am delighted to let readers know that Kathy Scalzo is joining Ovarian Cancer Canada to work on a number of organizational strategic projects. Many of you will be familiar with Kathy's

**Elisabeth Ross** name as co-author of *Picking Up the Pieces*, with Sherry Magee, a book and program we have used extensively in our supportive care programming. Kathy will work with the leadership team on four specific initiatives: a plan for our role in survivorship and support moving forward; the strategic plan for Ovarian Cancer Canada; developing a strategy for our role in the broader gynecological cancer community; and reviewing our programs for health care professionals and setting formal plans to further develop them.

As an organization development consultant and President of K. Scalzo & Associates in Vancouver, Kathy's expertise has been used by more than 200 health care organizations, professional associations and non-profit agencies. I have had the pleasure of working with her through my committee role at the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, and believe that Kathy's experience will be a great help to us as we plan for the next three to five years at Ovarian Cancer Canada.

On the research front, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) has selected two research projects for Ovarian Cancer Bridge Funding. A significant number of promising grant applications to study important aspects of ovarian cancer cannot be approved for funding by CIHR due to lack of resources. Through a partnership with CIHR's Institute of Cancer Research, Ovarian Cancer Canada has funded two \$100,000 awards through CIHR's operating grant competition. Congratulations to principal investigators Dr. Jim Petrik of the University of Guelph and Dr. Barbara Vanderhyden of the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, whose projects have been selected as the most promising and relevant to ovarian cancer.

I'm also happy to announce that Ovarian Cancer Canada is partnering with The Society of Gynecological Oncology of Canada (GOC) to staff a coordinator's position for the Communities of Practice initiative and other projects.

This will include a study to determine the status of wait times and treatment protocols for gynecologic cancers in Canada, with an aim to improve care for women requiring treatment.

In 2005, Ovarian Cancer Canada conducted the country's first national ovarian cancer awareness survey with the assistance of Harris Decima Research. Six years later, we have just completed a repeat survey to see whether there have been changes in awareness of ovarian cancer among Canadian women. Stay tuned in coming months for the results of this exciting project, which will help inform Ovarian Cancer Canada's strategic planning and programming.



Kathy Scalzo

Kathy will work with the leadership team on four specific initiatives: a plan for our role in survivorship and support moving forward; the strategic plan for Ovarian Cancer Canada; developing a strategy for our role in the broader gynecological cancer community; and reviewing our programs for health care professionals and setting formal plans to further develop them.

In this issue of *Seeds of Hope*, I invite you to read about our exciting plans for the 2011 Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope and the roll-out of our new Ovarian Cancer: Knowledge is Power awareness program.

Farewell and best wishes to Leslie Power, Atlantic Regional Manager, who has accepted an exciting position with the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation. A warm welcome to Emilie Chiasson, Atlantic Regional Manager, and to Mandy Dale, Western Regional Awareness Coordinator.



## Ovarian Cancer: Knowledge is Power

Ovarian Cancer Canada is launching its new national public awareness program, **Ovarian Cancer: Knowledge is Power**, an update to the organization's 10-year-old program Listen to the Whispers.

"The purpose of the updated program is to transfer the latest knowledge about ovarian cancer to women across the country," says Karen CinqMars, National Director, Marketing and Communications for Ovarian Cancer Canada. "Until an early detection test is discovered, empowering women with knowledge about signs and symptoms is the most powerful tool we have when it comes to ovarian cancer."

Ovarian Cancer: Knowledge is Power includes 10-minute English and French videos featuring testimonials by women living with ovarian cancer, family members who have lost loved ones to the disease, as well as interviews with family doctors and gynecologic oncologists. Trained presenters of the face-to-face program will use the video and a PowerPoint presentation to deliver ovarian cancer awareness sessions in various locations from community centres to corporate settings.

"We've had fabulous feedback from survivors, doctors, board members and other stakeholders. They felt there was a strong message and that the video captured the diverse women who are impacted by the disease and the different stages of diagnosis," says Karen.

As part of the process of updating the awareness program, Karen and her team explored the opportunity to reach more people using a variety of media. "The new program is designed so that people any time, any place can access knowledge about ovarian cancer and Ovarian Cancer Canada."

A new aspect of the program to be rolled out later this spring will be an online learning tool on the Ovarian Cancer

Lise Jolicoeur

Canada website at [www.ovariancanada.org](http://www.ovariancanada.org). "We worked with Memory Tree Productions on the videos and they also shared with us a learning management system they have successfully used for employee training with a large retail organization," adds Karen. "We've developed online learning modules about ovarian cancer that allow people to watch some video, obtain key messaging, go through some questions and pay it forward by sharing this information with family, friends and colleagues."

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Lise Jolicoeur, an ovarian cancer survivor who appears in the English video believes the new videos and online program will help to get the awareness message out to a younger audience. "My hope is that the program will help make young women feel more connected with ovarian cancer – seeing someone diagnosed at the age of 27," says Lise. "An early diagnosis will help my sisters in their fight with the disease while work proceeds to find an early detection test and ultimately a cure."

*Ovarian Cancer Canada acknowledges the support of Roche Canada, Royal Bank of Canada and The Calgary Foundation in the creation of Ovarian Cancer: Knowledge is Power.*

## Seeds of Hope

*Seeds of Hope*, the newsletter of Ovarian Cancer Canada, is published to inform and support women and their families who are affected by ovarian cancer. Readers' contributions, comments and questions are welcome: [seeds@ovariancanada.org](mailto:seeds@ovariancanada.org) or toll free 1-877-413-7970. Charitable Registration No.: 87297 4845 RR0001



## Striving for early detection

In 2011, our largest awareness and fundraising event rolls out its new brand: **Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope** with the compelling call to action – *Striving for early detection*.

“With the full support and participation of Winners, they will become the event’s presenting sponsor, which allows the rebranding

to clearly align the walk with Ovarian Cancer Canada and the disease ovarian cancer,” explains Allyson MacQueen, National Walk Director.

“We are excited about the growth opportunity as a result of the rebranding because we can approach sponsors as the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope, which is a cause we believe will attract significant interest. The name also clearly ends confusion with other events for women’s cancers.”

*Striving for early detection* is “a tangible goal that people can really get behind,” adds Ashley Thorpe,

Marketing and Communications Manager for Ovarian Cancer Canada. “We’re still looking for an early detection test for ovarian cancer. This messaging covers all aspects of early detection – from funding research for an early detection test to supporting our Ovarian Cancer: Knowledge is Power awareness program to help women learn the signs and symptoms of the disease. We know that knowledge is the best tool until there is an early detection test.”

The walk logo has also been redesigned as a marriage between Ovarian Cancer Canada’s sunflower symbol and a teal ribbon, the international symbol for ovarian cancer. The visual brand and driving theme will be applied to all new marketing and promotional materials such as: tattoos, postcards, t-shirts and much more.

The 2011 walk, which is set for **Sunday, September 11** in 15 cities across Canada will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event founded by Peggy Truscott, who was an Ovarian Cancer Canada volunteer and a woman living with ovarian cancer. This year, the walk is set to break the \$10-million mark in cumulative dollars raised.

For Pat McDonald, an ovarian cancer survivor and a member of the board of directors of Ovarian Cancer Canada, co-chairing the Halifax walk for six years brought her “great satisfaction.”

“As the years go by, my passions have changed from organizing to supporting those in charge and offering any advice I can give,” says Pat. “I feel I ‘gave birth’ to the walk in Halifax and want to see it grow.”

As the country’s top individual fundraiser for the 2010 walk, Pat



Pat McDonald fills the clothesline at her Nova Scotia cottage with Walk of Hope T-shirts from the past decade.

“continues to give back to an organization that is the only one dedicated to overcoming ovarian cancer in Canada. I am also continuing to do my part to educate more women about the disease through my involvement with the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope.”

### WHAT'S NEW IN 2011?

- Visit our new walk website at [www.ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca](http://www.ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca) / [www.randonneedelespoir.ca](http://www.randonneedelespoir.ca). Registration and fundraising online are easier than ever before! Check the website for more information on a special prize for people who register online by April 15!

- Register for one of 15 national walks in Comox Valley, Victoria and Vancouver, BC; Edmonton and Calgary, AB; Saskatoon, SK; Winnipeg, MB; Windsor, Toronto, Barrie and Ottawa, ON; Montreal, QC; Halifax, NS; Moncton, NB; and St. John's, NL.

- Keep an eye out online for information on Canadian Olympic figure skating silver medalist Elizabeth Manley and how she will continue to lend her support to our cause through the 2011 walk.

“The rebranding clearly aligns the walk with Ovarian Cancer Canada and the disease ovarian cancer.”

- Is distance or health keeping you from participating in the walk? Then register online as a Virtual Walker. Also, check out our Sunflower Dedications that allow you to honour a loved one with a sunflower along the walk's Path of Hope.

- A big vote of thanks to our walk sponsors: Winners, presenting sponsor; Electrolux, premium sponsor; and national sponsors KPMG, HomeSense and Blue Cross.



## Mini Walk a hit!

The Ovarian Cancer Canada Mini Walk of Hope was created so that smaller communities could host a walk close to home. In 2010, 38 Mini Walks were held across the country. “The Mini Walks are a huge success and they provide us with a great opportunity for continued growth,” according to Claudia Connor, National Walk Coordinator. “We are pleased to welcome back our existing Mini Walks and we encourage new Mini Walks for 2011.”

Want to know more? Drop Claudia a note at [cconnor@ovariancanada.org](mailto:cconnor@ovariancanada.org) for details. This year, Claudia plans to “focus on supporting and further strengthening Mini Walks by helping organizers to tap into local resources and community connections – from sponsors and media, to volunteers and more participants.”

Mini Walk registration is available online and it's free! Claudia reminds Mini Walk participants that they can also solicit sponsorship online through the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope website. The majority of the Mini Walks will be held on Sunday, September 11, 2011 while a few are held at other times throughout the year.

# What's new in research?



**Dr. Barbara Vanderhyden, Corinne Boyer Chair in Ovarian Cancer Research at the University of Ottawa and chair of Ovarian Cancer Canada's Research Committee, comments on two**

**recent research studies that attracted considerable media attention.**

## CANCER SURVIVAL STUDY

In a six-country study comparing cancer survival rates, Canada took top spot for ovarian cancer with a five-year survival of 42% for diagnoses between 1995 and 2007. Australia came in at 38% and the United Kingdom (UK) was at 36%.

These findings are from a study of survival rates for lung, colorectal, breast and ovarian cancers published recently in *The Lancet* and conducted by the International Cancer Benchmarking Partnership. When all four cancers are taken into account, survival rates are higher in Canada than in the UK, Denmark and Norway and are similar to those in Australia and Sweden. These countries were selected because the populations are comparable in terms of wealth, universal access to health care and the nature of cancer data available.

In a six-country study comparing cancer survival rates, Canada took top spot for ovarian cancer with a five-year survival of 42%...

"It's good to see Canada ranking as well as or better than most," says Dr. Vanderhyden, noting that British Columbia on its own had the highest survival for breast and ovarian cancer. However, she also points out that data representing Canada came only from four provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. "It would have been interesting to see how Canadian survival would have been impacted if the study had included Quebec – where the Jewish and

French-Canadian populations both have hereditary factors that contribute to an increased risk for ovarian cancer."

## BLOOD TEST FOR CANCER

Four leading US cancer centres are conducting studies on a blood test that is so sensitive, it can spot a single cancer cell among a billion healthy ones. Johnson & Johnson is also working with Boston researchers to bring the test to market.

This "liquid biopsy" has implications for cancer screening, treatment, follow-up and recurrence. Testing to date among patients considered in remission after cancer treatment has identified stray cancer cells in two-thirds of this population.

"We're probably making cancer cells all the time and then fighting them off. So when you have a test that becomes this sensitive, you have to be concerned about exactly what you are finding: are you picking up a real early cancer or are you picking up a stray cell that looks like a cancer cell but is actually in the process of being eliminated from the body?" asks Dr. Vanderhyden.

"Overall, this test is a big step forward in terms of being able to monitor cancer. But, there's a lot of work to be done to see how best to use the test. The sensitivity works in their favour in some regards but it also has lots of additional cautionary notes associated with it."

