

# Women At Risk

## Letter From the President

By Lynda Wertheim

For the past 16 years, Women At Risk has worked at the forefront of breast cancer research, education and support. Over the last few months, we have made many innovations in those areas and I am proud to share those developments with you.

Jennifer Chun, WAR's Research and High-Risk Program Director, recently implemented our new web-based High-Risk Registry database, which will help facilitate the expansion of the Registry to other facilities. In early October, Women At Risk joined Nyack Hospital to conduct a risk perception study and educational seminar on risk and risk reduction strategies. This fall Women At Risk will present research based on data from our High-Risk Registry at two national breast cancer and medical research conferences: one on the interaction of breast cancer risk factors and age, and a second on the assessment of a new risk prediction model.

In less than a year, our new Patient Navigator Program has helped more than 300 newly diagnosed breast cancer patients at Columbia University Medical Center navigate the clinical process and overcome barriers to receiving the best medical care. We look forward to developing this essential resource, since all breast cancer patients benefit from more personalized care and support.

We recently hosted our first Spanish-language lecture to inform women and answer questions about early detection, diagnosis and treatment of the disease. On November 29, we will present the Fourth Annual Laurie Bass Sklaver Symposium featuring the topic, "Mind and Body: Sexuality, Intimacy and Breast Cancer."

A special thanks to all who supported Women At Risk's First Annual Dinner Dance in September. We were honored to welcome Tiki

Barber and Maurice DuBois to our extended family as we celebrated the men who support the women in the fight against breast cancer.

As many of you know, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Please read about our "October Promotions" on page 8 for unique ways to support Women At Risk! ■

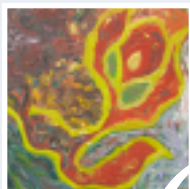
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Lilly Oncology on Canvas

## Mark Your Calendars

The Laurie Bass Sklaver  
Annual Symposium

### *Mind and Body: Sexuality, Intimacy and Breast Cancer*

*Join us as our panel of experts discuss the physical side effects, emotional aspects and interpersonal dynamics of sexuality after treatment for breast cancer.*

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29**  
**5:15 PM – 7:45 PM**

Katie Murphy Amphitheatre  
Fashion Institute of Technology  
NW corner of 27th Street and Seventh Avenue,  
D Building, New York City

To RSVP or for more information,  
call (212) 305-5917  
or email [msierra@womenatrisknyc.org](mailto:msierra@womenatrisknyc.org).

## Women At Risk's Seventeenth Annual Luncheon

*Please join us as we honor outstanding leaders  
in the fight against breast cancer.*

**MONDAY, MAY 12, 2008**  
Waldorf=Astoria, New York City

For more information, call (212) 305-4486.

Staffed by breast cancer survivors, offering confidential one-to-one support.

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

**Monday**

10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Tuesday**

10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Wednesday\***

10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Thursday**

10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

\**Bilingual (English/Español)*

1:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

Herbert Irving Pavilion  
Tenth Floor, Room 1035  
161 Fort Washington Ave.  
New York, NY 10032

***The difference is you...***

Thanks to all our volunteers who make a difference every day in Women At Risk's Resource Library:

Helene Bland  
Clare Cooper  
Marianne Glasel  
Renee Goodman  
Rita Heller  
Rise Liskov  
Laura Minella  
Karen Small  
Helen Tarr  
Iris Tolksdorf  
Angela Vallaro

# Breast Cancer Research Updates

## La Vida Activa/An Active Life Study

By Heather Greenlee, ND, MPH

Investigators in the Columbia University Medical Center Breast Program are studying the effects of a weight loss program on breast cancer survivors. The lead investigators are Dr. Heather Greenlee, a naturopathic physician and epidemiologist, and Dr. Dawn Hershman, a breast oncologist and co-director of the CUMC Breast Program.

Obesity is associated with hormonal profiles that are known to stimulate breast cancer growth. As a consequence obese women are at increased risk of developing breast cancer compared to lean women. Studies are beginning to assess the relationship between weight reduction via exercise and dietary change and breast cancer risk. Breast cancer survivors of Hispanic and African descent are more likely to be obese and sedentary compared to non-Hispanic white women, yet there are few studies of obesity, exercise, dietary change, and cancer risk among these high-risk ethnic groups.

The study is a randomized, crossover pilot and feasibility study designed to test the effects of exercise and dietary change on weight reduction and biological markers associated with breast cancer risk in breast cancer survivors from an ethnic minority urban population. This study will test the effects of a 30-minute circuit-based exercise program that combines resistance training with aerobic exercise in conjunction with a low-fat calorie-reduced diet.

Participants will be randomized to either an immediate six months of exercise and dietary change, or a second group who will begin their exercise and dietary change program six months after the study begins. Participants in the immediate group will be followed for an additional six months in order to evaluate adherence to the exercise and dietary change recommendations. Participants in both groups will exercise at a neighborhood Curves® facility at least five times per week for six months and will participate in a series of nutrition education classes. The study is unique in evaluating the effect of an exercise and nutrition program that is widely available in com-

munities across America, rather than the effect of a specialized program restricted to one medical institution.

Study participants will be recruited from CUMC. The study population (n=45) will consist of women of Hispanic and African descent. Participants will: 1) range from age 21–70, 2) be overweight or obese, 3) have a previous diagnosis of breast cancer, and 4) be at least 6 months out from their last surgery, chemotherapy or radiation therapy treatment.

The primary outcomes are adherence to the intervention and change in weight. Our secondary outcomes will assess barriers to participation; predictors of adherence; changes in anthropometric measures (percentage body fat and distribution), serum hormones; and changes in psychological (fatigue, depression) and quality of life measures. The long-term goal of this pilot and feasibility study is to design a larger and longer clinical trial of neighborhood-based physical activity and clinical outcomes among overweight and obese breast cancer survivors from diverse backgrounds.

The study is funded by Women At Risk and Gateway for Cancer Research, and is currently recruiting participants. To learn more about the study, please contact Jennie Mata, study coordinator, at (212) 342-4580.

## Quantitative Assessment of Tissue Toxicity in Breast Cancer Radiation Therapy using Ultrasound Imaging

By Tian Liu, PhD and  
Shermian A. Woodhouse, MD

The conservative management of breast cancer with lumpectomy and radiation therapy has been the preferred standard of care for most women with early-stage breast cancer. The rationale behind this treatment is to preserve the breast and its cosmetic appearance. In attempting to cure cancer, radiation doses reach a level that frequently causes injury to the surrounding normal tissues. Radiation toxicity negatively affects the quality of life of many breast cancer survivors who have

*This issue of Women At Risk's newsletter is made possible through the generous support of  
The Larry and Jane Scheinfeld Foundation.*

undergone this treatment.

Normal tissue injury is a significant problem in radiation therapy. However, little is known as to why some patients develop severe radiation toxicity while others receiving the same treatment do not. Currently, radiation toxicity evaluation is largely based on subjective scales. Improvements in detecting and treating normal tissue injury can be made only if the changes can be accurately and quantitatively assessed. To address this need, we investigated the use of an advanced ultrasound technique to assess quantitatively radiation-induced breast tissue changes.

In the study funded by Woman At Risk, 22 breast cancer patients were enrolled and received a standard course of radiation. Follow-up time was 6 to 94 months with a median of 22 months. Patients were scanned with a clinical ultrasound scanner, and ultrasound radio-frequency (RF) echo signals were acquired from the treated and the untreated breast.

For all patients, the average thickness of the treated breast skin is  $2.54 \pm 0.82$  mm, compared to  $1.68 \pm 0.31$  mm for untreated skin. For the underlying tissue, there are significant changes for the treated breast in the ultrasound measurements. Changes in the ultrasound signal intensity were primarily related to soft tissue stiffness, which correlates the presence of fibrosis. The ultrasound evaluations were consistent with the clinical breast toxicity assessments.

Encouraged by our preliminary finding, we decided to conduct a larger clinical study. We will enroll newly diagnosed breast cancer patients and follow them through their radiation treatment. This research will provide an important step toward a better understanding and the management of radiation toxicity for breast cancer treat-

ment. It will enable radiation oncologists to quantify radiation toxicity and to better inform patients of their individual risks associated with radiation therapy. This method could also be used to study toxicity associated with alternative radiation treatment techniques. Such an assessment tool could be used to evaluate radiation protectors and ultimately improve quality of life for patients receiving radiation treatment.

This study will be presented at the 49th Annual Meeting of American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO), October 28–November 1, 2007 in Los Angeles, CA, and the Annual Meeting of Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), November 25–30, Chicago, IL.

## Study Links Hispanic Women with Advanced Breast Cancer

By Annie Geddes

According to a recent study published in *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, Hispanic women may develop more aggressive breast cancer and be diagnosed with breast cancer earlier than non-Hispanic white women. The study suggests that the racial differences may be due to biological factors, rather than only access to health care. However, study design limitations must be considered before drawing conclusions.

The study looked at data on 139 Hispanic women and 2,118 non-Hispanic white women enrolled in a Kaiser Permanente health plan for at least three years. Results found that Hispanic women were diagnosed at a significantly younger age than non-Hispanic women (56 years old versus 61); Hispanic women were almost three times more likely to have stage IV breast cancer; and were twice as likely to have larger tumors with poorer prognoses.

Since all of the women in this study had equal access to health care and used the health care system in similar ways, there are many possible explanations for why these differences occurred. The evidence suggests that there may be true biological and genetic differences between Hispanic and non-Hispanic white women that would lead to these findings.

Dr. Ben Pocock, Fellow in the Department of

## Survivors Needed!

Want to use your breast cancer experience to help others? Volunteering at WAR's Resource Library is a wonderful way to help women and their families by offering support and information. Training will be provided. If you are interested, please call Annie Geddes at (212) 305-3269.



### Spanish newsletters available!

Women At Risk has recently published our second annual Spanish newsletter, *Mujeres A Riesgo!* Inside you'll find articles about nutrition, community resources and survivorship. If you or someone you know would like a copy, please contact Annie Geddes at (212) 305-3269, or [ageddes@womenatrisknyc.org](mailto:ageddes@womenatrisknyc.org).

## Support Groups

### The Women At Risk Support Group for Women with Breast Cancer

For more information, please call Nancy Singleton, Patient Navigator, at (551) 998-4684.

*Co-sponsored by Women At Risk and Social Work Services, CUMC/NYPH.*

### Grupo de Apoyo para las Mujeres Latinas con Cancer del Seno

Every other Thursday  
10:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

For more information, please call Lola Ruz-Curry, at (212) 305-9894.

*Co-sponsored by Women At Risk, SHARE and Social Work Services CUMC/NYPH.*

Breast Surgery at Columbia University Medical Center, pointed out some of the limitations of the study. “Hispanic patients were found from the database simply by last name. Someone with a Hispanic last name might not really be, and someone Hispanic who uses her married non-Hispanic name might be included in the wrong group.” He also added that “the study doesn’t look at body mass index, family history, reproductive history, and factors that might have a significant effect on risk of breast cancer.” Therefore, Hispanic women may not be more vulnerable to this aggressive form of breast cancer than other women.

Many questions remain regarding risk factors for developing various forms of breast cancer, and more research must be conducted. Women of all ethnic backgrounds should be vigilant about monitoring themselves and taking steps to lower their risk. ■

## Conquering Fear and Taking Charge: Women At Risk’s 16th Annual Luncheon

*By Annie Geddes and Sally Sherwood*

A large crowd of supporters joined Women At Risk for its 16th Annual Luncheon at the Waldorf=Astoria in New York City on May 14. The luncheon was chaired by Carole Scherzer, Executive Vice President of Scherzer International.

WAR’s honoree, Linda Kaplan Thaler, the CEO and Chief Creative Officer of The Kaplan Thaler Group, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1990, a time when research on breast cancer



*Luncheon speaker, Dr. Mehmet Oz*

was not widely available to the public and doctors still did not know much about the effects of treatment on fertility. Before treatment, her mother promised her she would “emerge from the experience defiant, courageous and stronger than steel,” which she did indeed. Ms. Thaler defied her fears of failure and went on to found her own company, which now serves clients such as Aflac and Continental Airlines, because, as she put it, “once you conquer the biggest fear of your life, the rest is a piece of cake.”

Inspiring audience members to manage their health to reduce the risk of cancer, luncheon speaker and renowned heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz encouraged people to discuss health issues with their physicians and with their family. Vice Chair of the Department of Surgery at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center, health expert for the Oprah Winfrey Show and best-selling author, Dr. Oz routinely translates complex health information into understandable terms that may lead to healthier living.



*From L–R:  
Linda Kaplan Thaler,  
Luncheon Honoree; Carole  
Scherzer, Luncheon Chair;  
Dr. Robert E. Kelly, Senior  
Vice President, Chief Medical  
Officer and Chief Operating  
Officer, NYPH/CUMC*

To reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases, Dr. Oz recommended daily:

- Two baby aspirin
- Vitamin D: 800 units for people under 60  
1,000 units for people over 60  
Vitamin D regulates cells linked to cancer.
- Folic acid and folate: 400–600 micrograms  
Found in leafy vegetables and fruit, folic acid and folate assist in the development and regulation of cells.
- Green tea, with less caffeine and more bio-flavonoids than black tea

He also offered two tips for food preparation:

- Marinate meat before charbroiling or barbecuing to prevent carcinogenic effects of charring.

- Avoid microwaving food in plastic containers, the residue of which flows into the blood, stimulates estrogen receptors and potentially causes cancer.

Updating the attendees on developments in the field of breast cancer, Women At Risk's Medical Director, Dr. Freya Schnabel, explained that doctors have made significant inroads in screening and treatment for high-risk patients, including the use of MRIs for more detailed data. She also cautioned that recent statistics attributing the decline in breast cancer to reduced application of hormone replacement therapy may be premature. Nonetheless, she urged women to remain vigilant about early detection and surveillance. ■

## Spotlight on Terry Baranoff: Dedicated Supporter

By Annie Geddes

Terry Baranoff doesn't have any personal connections to breast cancer, yet for the last eleven years, she has worked tirelessly on behalf of Women At Risk to raise funds and spread awareness about the work of the organization.

Since 1996, Ms. Baranoff has helped with Women At Risk's luncheon from behind the scenes. An assistant at Warburg Pincus LLC, which annually buys two tables at the luncheon, Ms. Baranoff not only coordinates the seating for the tables to ensure that specific staff members are able to attend and learn about WAR. (Newly hired women and people with close connections to breast cancer are given first priority to attend.) This year, she and co-worker Stacy Vega raised almost \$3,000 for WAR through the sale of raffle tickets to Warburg Pincus staff.

"Just because you take care of yourself and eat properly, and you don't have any genetic predisposition for cancer, doesn't mean that you can't get sick," said Ms. Baranoff. "Women At Risk has a lot to offer because it makes women aware of health issues; it makes women get that mammogram."



*Raffle table at this year's luncheon, which Ms. Baranoff helped make a success.*

Ms. Baranoff learned about Women At Risk through her boss, Sidney Lapidus, the husband of WAR Board Member and long-time supporter, Ruth Lapidus. Ms. Baranoff has been with Warburg Pincus for the last 22 years.

Women At Risk would like to thank Ms. Baranoff for her continued work and support. For more information on how to get involved with Women At Risk, please call Kitty Silverman at (212) 305-9525. ■

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**Please visit WAR's Website:**  
[www.breastmd.org/  
war.html](http://www.breastmd.org/war.html)

## Helping Women Help Themselves

Saturday,  
April 14, 2007  
Free Screening Day  
Statistics

- 109 women received breast screenings
- 143 women received cervical screenings
- 46 women received colorectal screenings

*With your support, Women At Risk is able to help provide these life-saving services free of charge.*

## “Lilly Oncology on Canvas” Comes to CUMC/NYP

By Annie Geddes

For people affected by cancer, art serves as an important outlet to express the complex range of emotions they are experiencing. To honor the cancer journey and the way that people cope with it, Eli Lilly and Company in partnership with the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, sponsors an international art competition, “Lilly Oncology on Canvas: Expressions of a Cancer Journey.”



The 2006 competition invited people from all over the world to express on canvas and in narrative what gives their cancer experience meaning. People diagnosed with any type of cancer, their families and friends, cancer advocates, and health care professionals were eligible to compete. Judges received more than 2,000 entries from 43 countries, including 492 pieces of art from the United States. Prizes were awarded to 36 winners, who received donations to the cancer charities of their choice. Various pieces were selected to travel around the country through 2007 and 2008.

Women At Risk hosted the traveling exhibit at the Breast Service at Columbia University Medical Center for three days in June, with a cocktail reception to celebrate its opening. The 25 pieces on display, ranging from photography to watercolor to mixed media, were met with overwhelmingly positive responses. WAR is proud to have been able to bring this inspiring work to our community. Thanks again to Eli Lilly and everyone else who helped make this possible. ■

*CUMC breast surgeon Dr. Kathie-Ann Joseph delivered remarks at the reception to celebrate the exhibit.*

### Creative Ways to Give

Many of our donors have found remarkable, innovative ways to give to WAR. We would like to highlight some of these donors, and to express our deepest gratitude to each of them.

- Changing the focus of their gift to reflect Women At Risk’s evolving needs, The Frances Lear Foundation gave WAR a generous grant of \$35,000 which will enable us to update our High-Risk Registry to a new state-of-the-art web-based platform.
- Terry Baranoff and Stacey Vega from Warburg Pincus LLC raised almost \$3,000 for WAR by selling luncheon raffle tickets to their colleagues. See page 5 for a spotlight on Ms. Baranoff, who has worked for years to help Women At Risk.
- Eli Lilly and Company underwrote the reception for and helped coordinate “Oncology on Canvas: Expressions of a Cancer Journey.”
- In July, the new owners of Terramar Sports, Ben and Marty Lieberman, asked Linda Shapiro, the company’s previous owner, to designate the first \$1,000 of their profits to any charity. Ms. Shapiro chose Women At Risk, which she has been affiliated with since 1994.
- Meryl Foster collaborated with WAR Board member Marianne Flanagan to create and host a small party on May 11, 2007, where Ms. Foster sold items from her high-end home collection and donated the proceeds to WAR.
- A special thank you to the companies participating in Women At Risk’s October Promotions. Please see Page 8 for a complete list of promotional activities.
- Banco Popular is partnering with Women At Risk during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. Banco Popular will help distribute copies of *Mujeres A Riesgo*, WAR’s Spanish newsletter, and our Fall 2007 English newsletter at 47 branch locations throughout the New York metropolitan area.

# Women At Risk's First Annual Dinner Dance

A Celebration of the Men who Stand with the Women

Wednesday, September 26, 2007 • The Central Park Boat House, NYC

Thanks to all who made this event a huge success! Here are some photos from the evening:

*Celebrating the Men who Stand with the Women  
(L-R) Alan Furst and Larry Scheinfeld*



*(L-R) Tiki Barber,  
Honorary Chair; Bonnie  
Pressman, Dinner Chair;  
and Maurice DuBois,  
Auctioneer*



*(L-R) Susan Morrissey, Tiki Barber and Barbara Warren.  
Susan and Barbara's company, White + Warren are long time  
supporters of Women At Risk.*



*(L-R) Madelaine Haberman-Sprung and  
Jane Scheinfeld, Auction Chair*

## Breast Cancer Basics for the Community

In keeping with our mission of serving women in our community, Women At Risk cosponsored its first Spanish-language lecture on Saturday, September 29. The program addressed the basics of breast cancer, including preventive care, treatment options, local resources, and survivorship. Women from the Washington Heights neighborhood and across the city attended this event, which was also sponsored by the Columbia University Breast Cancer Screening Partnership, and SHARE: Self-Help for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer.

## Celebrating Survivorship

Seeing a group of women dancing in a garden on a Spring day is a beautiful thing. What makes it more beautiful is knowing that each woman there is a breast cancer survivor.

On May 18, over 150 women came together to celebrate overcoming the disease at an event co-sponsored by Women At Risk, Columbia University Breast Cancer Screening Partnership, Columbia University Department of Surgery, the Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Care Center/Recruitment CORE, and NYPH/CUMC. Inspiring remarks, live music and refreshments made the day joyous and memorable for all who attended.

## October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

*Women At Risk encourages you to shop for the cause!*

### **Joan Hornig Jewelry at Bergdorf Goodman**

754 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY

*100% of profits donated to Women At Risk\**

\*Note: With any Joan Hornig Jewelry purchase throughout the year, you may designate the profits to Women At Risk!

*Special shopping day: Wed. Oct. 3rd • 11 AM–4 PM*

### **Zaro's Bakery—Pink Ribbon Cookie**

Available at all four Zaro's Bakery locations inside Grand Central!

*\$2 per cookie sold donated to Women At Risk*

*Special shopping days: Wed. Oct. 3rd–Fri. Oct. 5th • 5 AM–12 AM*

### **GIELLA Cosmetics**

#### **Swarovski Crystal Swing Compact**

Available YEAR-ROUND at all GIELLA locations or order by phone: 888-221-0469

*100% of profits donated to Women At Risk*

### **Olive and Bette's—Specially-designed T-shirt**

Available at all Olive and Bette's locations in October (Visit [www.oliveandbettes.com](http://www.oliveandbettes.com) for store locations)

*100% of proceeds donated to Women At Risk*

### **Steiner Sports**

#### **Bid on exclusive autographed sports memorabilia**

including items from sports legends such as

Derek Jeter, Jason Kidd and David Ortiz!

Items are auctioned off daily from Oct. 5–25.

(Go to [www.steinersports.com](http://www.steinersports.com) to place your bid!)

*40% of proceeds donated to Women At Risk*

### **White + Warren**

#### **Three 100% Cashmere Items** (in Rose Hip):

Hooded Duster, Camisole w/ Pocket Detail, Tap Short

(Available online at [www.whiteandwarren.com](http://www.whiteandwarren.com))

*50% of profits donated to Women At Risk in October*

### **On the One\***

153 Main Street, Mt. Kisco, NY

#### **White + Warren Travel Wraps**

*15% of proceeds donated to Women At Risk, Oct.–Dec.*

*\*Look for On the One's ad in the November 2007 issue of Westchester Magazine—who Women At Risk thanks for generously donating this advertisement space!*

New York-Presbyterian Hospital  
Columbia University Medical Center  
622 West 168th Street  
New York, NY 10032-3784

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*Women At Risk*