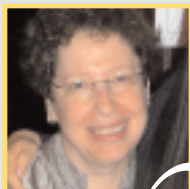


Women At Risk

Looking Back, Looking Forward

A LETTER FROM WOMEN AT RISK'S LEADERS

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We are so proud to continue celebrating Women At Risk's Fifteenth Anniversary with you. This year has been marked by great accomplishments in all facets of the organization. Expansion of our Board membership, additional staff, increased audience for our programs and services and ongoing innovation in research and programming have enabled us to reach an even larger population of women at risk for and with breast cancer.

Commemorating this special year has provided Women At Risk the opportunity to set a goal of raising one million dollars, an unprecedented achievement in our history.

Towards this end, and as a testament to Women At Risk's growth, we have sponsored an exceptional number of successful events in the past few months. This year's luncheon and golf tournaments were sensational. The month of October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, proved to be an accomplishment in itself, with Women At Risk hosting a record of ten different promotional events, spanning multiple cities and states, including an exciting month-long online auction promotion through the Steiner Sports website.

One of our most essential and life-saving programs, The Last Saturday in October held at the Herbert Irving Cancer Center, proved yet again to be extremely valuable, offering free cancer screenings to over 100 uninsured women. Through your support, programs and events like these make Women At Risk the unique and ever-evolving breast cancer organization that it is today.

Looking forward, Women At Risk plans to expand not only the research we fund, but also our community outreach programs, bringing the

highest standards of care, support and information to the medically underserved populations of Washington Heights, Inwood and Harlem. Plans are also in place for a systematic expansion of the High-Risk Program and computerized Registry to other hospitals within the NewYork-Presbyterian network.

We hope you will enjoy this issue of our newsletter, which details the early beginnings of Women At Risk and how our research and programs have grown over the last fifteen years. You will also find articles about our recent events, which exemplify some of the wonderful work we are doing now.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to enhance and save the lives of women at high risk for and with breast cancer. ■

*Susan Furst, Founder and Chairperson
Dr. Freya Schnabel, Medical Director
Lynda Wertheim, President*

P.S. We hope that with your gift, you will bring us closer to reaching our one million-dollar goal!

Mark Your Calendars

Sixteenth Annual Luncheon

MONDAY, MAY 14, 2007

Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, NYC
Grand Ballroom

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

For more information, please call
(212) 305-9525

Women At Risk Resource Library

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

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday

10:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Tuesday

10:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Wednesday*

10:00 p.m.—4:30 p.m.

Thursday

10:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Friday

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
Marianne Glasel
Renee Goodman
Rita Heller
Rise Liskov
Laura Minella
Diane Morrow
Laura Rapp (Dec.)
Sol Ruden (Hon.)
Karen Small
Helen Tarr
Iris Tolksdorf
Angela Vallaro

Women At Risk: A 15th Anniversary Retrospective

By Annie Geddes

In 1991, Women At Risk was founded by a grassroots partnership of physicians and patient/volunteers at NewYork-Presbyterian's Columbia University Medical Center to serve as a research and education program for women at high risk for breast cancer. Over the past fifteen years, Women At Risk has expanded dramatically, growing to meet the needs of women in the New York metropolitan area not only at high risk for breast cancer but also for women undergoing treatment for the disease. With your support, Women At Risk will continue to enhance the lives of women through research, education and support.

Here are some highlights describing how Women At Risk has grown over the past fifteen years in each of our major program areas:

WAR-FUNDED RESEARCH

Over the past several years, WAR has grown from providing seed money to just one research project

to funding more than 40 research projects in the areas of surgery, oncology, radiology, laboratory, epidemiology, genetics, and complementary/alternative medicine. Many of these studies have been presented at national conferences, published in medical journals, and received ongoing support from the National Institutes of Health and other major granting institutions. For highlights of WAR-funded research, please see Page 4.

HIGH-RISK PROGRAM AND COMPUTERIZED REGISTRY

Established in 1991, this unique and comprehensive surveillance program, which started with less than 100 participants, has grown to educate and monitor over 1,700 women at high risk for developing breast cancer. With more than ten years of follow-up data, the WAR Registry serves as a valuable resource for researchers in their ongoing efforts to understand the complex causes of breast cancer and to develop new methods of risk assessment for prevention, surveillance, and effective treatment. Selected findings from our Registry research can be found on Page 4.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Initiated in 1992, WAR's educational programming has grown from serving 200 women a year to annually educating over 50,000 people in the New York metropolitan area. These programs offer timely and accurate information about breast cancer prevention and treatment in a range of venues including:

- The **Laurie Bass Sklaver Annual Symposium**, established in memory of WAR's Past President Laurie Bass Sklaver, who felt passionately about the value of educating women about breast cancer and believed that the distribution of vital information about breast cancer prevention, detection and treatment helps to save lives. Every autumn, approximately 200 people attend these symposiums featuring panels of experts who explore breast cancer and other women's health topics in depth.



Dr. Freya Schnabel, WAR's Medical Director, with Dr. Herbert Pardes, President and CEO of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, at WAR's 2003 Luncheon.

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

Volunteers Needed!

A gift of time and energy is a wonderful way to contribute to Women At Risk! There are certain times during the year when WAR needs help with large mailings and events. If you are interested in volunteering, please call (212) 305-5917.



Hillary Clinton at WAR's luncheon in 2000.

living in Inwood, Washington Heights and Harlem. Programs include:

- Bi-annual **free screening days**, where mammograms and other cancer screenings are provided free of charge to uninsured women in the community. Recent screening days have grown to provide these life-saving services to more than 100 participants per day.
- A bi-weekly **Spanish Support Group** for Latinas undergoing treatment for breast cancer, hosting anywhere from five to 20 women at each meeting.
- At least six **satellite clinics** visited on a rotating basis by our Outreach and Community Program Coordinator.
- The 2006 launch of *Mujeres A Riesgo*, an annual Spanish newsletter which includes articles about breast health, support services, information about neighborhood clinics, and personal stories of Latina breast cancer survivors.

- A **bi-annual newsletter** distributed to more than 10,000 individuals that reports on a range of breast cancer and women's health issues, as well as upcoming events and activities.
- Women At Risk's **website**, launched in 1997, which has grown to include information about WAR and our services, Columbia University Medical Center and links to other organizations and resources.
- On-site **lectures** on breast cancer-related issues at a range of venues.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Helping women cope with breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, WAR's support services now directly serve over 3,000 women annually.

- The **Resource Library**, which began as a service for 500 women a year and now serves nearly 3,000 women and their families annually, is staffed by volunteer breast cancer survivors and offers a range of comforts and informational material to newly-diagnosed women visiting CUMC's Breast Service.
- The **bi-weekly support group** provides an important space for the sharing of information and emotional support.
- A newly established **Patient Navigator Program** will help women diagnosed with breast cancer navigate the clinical process to facilitate appropriate delivery of medical and ancillary services.

PROGRAMS FOR UNDERSERVED AND MINORITY WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY

What began as a patient facilitator program at Columbia's Breast Clinic has grown to reach over 80,000 women annually at various sites. These programs have succeeded in cutting through economic, cultural and language barriers and providing information and care to underserved women

WOMEN AT RISK

BREAST SURGERY FELLOWSHIP

Growing from our commitment to make the highest standard of care available to all women, the annual, one year WAR Fellowship in Breast Sur-

continued



Marianne Glasel, Director of Support Services and the WAR Resource Library, and Lola Ruz-Curry, Outreach & Community Program Coordinator, in our Resource Library.

Support Groups

The Women At Risk Support Group for Women with Breast Cancer

Every other Thursday
10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

For more information, please call
Angie Lloyd, LMSW at
(212) 305-2347.

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.

Fifteenth Anniversary Retrospective, continued

gery was established in 2003, with the goal of improving the quality of breast health care available to patients in communities beyond the New York metropolitan area that WAR directly serves.

WOMEN AT RISK'S FUTURE...

Great strides have been made in the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer, but there is more work to be done. Women At Risk is continuing to expand its research initiatives. Plans are in place to expand the High-Risk Program and computerized registry to other hospitals in the NewYork-Presbyterian network, providing more high-risk women with life-saving surveillance and creating a broader base of data for researchers. Women At Risk also hopes to expand



Volunteers at Last Saturday in October in 2000.

the range of community programs serving northern Manhattan and will continue, and possibly increase, its funding of the Fellowship in Breast Surgery, ensuring the future of one of the premier breast surgery training programs in the country. ■

Women At Risk Research Highlights: A Retrospective of Significant Findings

By Jennifer Chun

Research is the cornerstone of Women At Risk's activities. Findings from [WAR-funded research](#) have led to exciting breakthroughs for women at high risk for and living with breast cancer.

- DNA exposure to certain environmental chemicals was found to be a risk factor for breast cancer, allowing investigators to set up a new way to measure the capacity of blood cells to repair DNA damage in women with and without breast cancer.
- Researchers investigated the biological mechanisms of a newly discovered gene, called *Hint1*, and found evidence that this gene plays a critical role as a tumor suppressor gene in response to DNA damage. These findings have significant impact in breast cancer diagnosis, prognosis, and drug-targeted therapy.
- When looking at differences in breast cancer mortality and recurrences among Ashkenazi Jewish women with and without BRCA-associated genetic mutations, researchers found no difference in prognosis between the groups. These results enhance our understanding of medical management and long-term survival in women with BRCA mutations.

Utilizing data from our [High-Risk Program](#)

[Registry and database](#), studies have significantly improved our understanding of factors that increase a woman's risk for breast cancer.

- Women with a history of lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS) were enrolled in a study that investigated the effects of chemical carcinogens in charcoal-broiled, barbequed and fried meat. The study found that women with LCIS who ate the charred meat may have been more susceptible to DNA damage compared to women with LCIS who didn't eat it, raising awareness of dietary interventions for breast cancer prevention.
- Women with Gross Cystic Disease (GCD) were compared to women without GCD with respect to breast cancer outcome. The results indicated that there were no differences in overall survival between the two groups. These results suggest that GCD is not a significant risk factor for women at high risk for breast cancer.
- Another study found that having a strong family history of breast cancer, a biopsy-proven history of atypical ductal hyperplasia (ADH) or lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS), and obesity (BMI \geq 30) were all significantly associated with the development of breast cancer. These findings helped to further identify women who might benefit most from various risk reduction strategies. ■

Sterling Grit—A Survivor Story

By *Crate Herbert*

When I first reviewed my notes from my interview with Rena Olan I noticed the words “Sterling Grit” written and underlined a number of times. It is a description of Rena, her genuine self: brave, honest, humble, fiercely determined and loved.

“Accept what you have and don't be disappointed with what you don't have.”

Rena Olan is a 64-year-old mother of three sons, and she received the grim news of her breast cancer diagnosis on Thursday, November 28, 2005. As her doctor described her treatment options, Rena thought of her sons Jordan, Jared and Justin, and immediately told her doctor to “lob them both off!”

Five days before her scheduled surgery, Rena shared her news with her family and friends. “I wasn't being heroic,” Rena told me, “I love my boys and wanted to get all the facts before speaking with them. I wanted to protect them.”

“It's all poop!”

Rena chose to have a bi-lateral mastectomy with full reconstruction. Shortly after her surgery the doctor called again and shared more bad news, that she would need extensive chemotherapy. Rena suffered every side effect imaginable, explaining to me with a wry wit, “It's all poop,” a phrase she invented that refers to Part Of the Oncology Process.

Throughout her diagnosis and treatment her family and friends were extremely supportive, accompanying her to chemo treatments, and maintaining a constant stream of visitors to keep her distracted after surgeries. She would see

WAR's Marianne Glasel Provides Expert Perspective

On October 13, 2006, Marianne Glasel, RN, MS, MA, Director of Support Services and the WAR Resource Library, was an invited speaker at a Columbia University Health Sciences Campus event. “Perspectives in Pink” was a forum celebrating the survival of young women in the fight against breast cancer. The program was sponsored by the Black and Latino Student Caucus, Global Health Forum, Queer Health Task Force and the Young Survival Coalition.

In addition to Ms. Glasel, who spoke about “Breast Cancer in Young Women,” two other speakers addressed “Young Women of Color and Breast Cancer,” and “Young Lesbian and Bisexual Women and Breast Cancer.”

“everybody” once a week. And she worked hard to keep her life going during her chemo treatments.

She credits her doctor for saving her life by being so aggressive. But Rena also saved her own life. She explained to me: “I am not a hero. I don't feel sorry for myself, I feel lucky. I really wanted to go on, and not get stuck. I've had my tears, and paid my dues. I am very lucky to have my children.” She uses her brash and delightful humor to deal with the difficulties breast cancer brought to her door.

“What's inside of me is inside of me.”

Rena's outlook on life, having survived breast cancer, is full of appreciation for the gifts in her life. But she is no Pollyanna, stating: “What's inside of me is inside of me. Do I have fear? You bet I do.” But Rena doesn't let that slow her down, not for a moment. In October of this year, Rena is “putting the girls back on my chest... that's really trick or treat!” ■

YES! I want to help Women At Risk celebrate its 15th Anniversary fighting breast cancer, and help WAR reach its \$1,000,000 goal!

I would like to contribute to research, education and support services with my gift of \$_____.

YOUR NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ EMAIL _____

Payment method: Check Please charge my: Amex Visa MC

NAME ON CARD _____ ACCOUNT # _____

EXP. DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

Mail to: Women At Risk, 601 West 168th Street, #7 & #8, New York, New York 10032

Helping Women Help Themselves

April 8, 2006
Free Screening Day
Statistics

- 96 women received mammograms, 26 of which required follow-up.
- 127 women received cervical exams, 7 of which required follow-up.
- 30 women received colorectal exams.

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



Bonnie Pressman, WAR Luncheon Chairperson and Board Member, and Vera Wang, Luncheon Honoree.

Women At Risk Raises Funds and Awareness

Fifteenth Anniversary Luncheon

By *Annie Geddes*

More than 600 people were challenged to continue fighting breast cancer with advocacy, urgency, and compassion at Women At Risk's Fifteenth Anniversary Luncheon, held at The Waldorf-Astoria on May 15, 2006.

Vera Wang, the premier international fashion designer and this year's honoree, has lived with the threat of breast cancer and its devastating effects throughout her entire life. She takes "consolation in the work of Women At Risk and other such organizations that give us hope that some day there will be a cure," and vowed to continue the fight for this and future generations.

"This has been an interesting year for breast cancer," said Medical Director of WAR and Chief of Breast Surgery at Columbia University Medical Center, Dr. Freya Schnabel. "The rest of the world is catching on to our interest in high-risk women," and taking steps towards preventing breast cancer, as exemplified by the studies and trials currently going on for women at risk in other parts of the world.

In a rousing speech, keynote speaker Cokie Roberts cited the tradition of strong American women and our historical battle with breast cancer, which has only been addressed in recent decades as a result of women's attainment of power through political involvement. She noted that societal factors and tenuous medical developments have been harmful to women's health, despite the progress made in the field. "Women born before the baby boom have been guinea pigs for progress in women's health," she added, citing unknown long-term effects of birth control pills and hormone replacement therapy.

Political commentator for ABC News and Senior News Analyst for National Public Radio, Ms. Roberts issued a call to action on three major issues: earlier breast cancer screening and treatment for African American women; increased insurance incentives for mammograms; and more funding for the education of future nurses to count-



Dr. Herbert Pardes, President and Chief Executive Officer, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital; Cokie Roberts, Luncheon Speaker; Susan Furst, WAR Founder and Chairperson; and Lynda Wertheim, WAR President.

er the looming shortage of these professionals.

Ms. Roberts urged everyone in the room to contact their Congressperson and advocate for the passage of bills that would improve prevention and treatment of breast cancer. "Advocacy makes all the difference in the world, and we must stay vigilant!" ■

Women At Risk Chosen as "A Cure in our Lifetime" Beneficiary

By *Kitty Silverman*

On Monday, May 17, over 160 women gathered at Crabtree's Kittle House in Chappaqua for the annual "A Cure in our Lifetime" luncheon to raise money for breast cancer.

Each year, the group selects a breast cancer charity to be the recipient of the funds that they raise at the event. Women At Risk was honored to have been chosen as this year's beneficiary. Over \$150,000 was raised at the event and will go towards two areas. A portion was allocated to breast cancer research studies being conducted by Columbia oncologist, Dr. George Raptis. The other portion will be used to start a new Patient Navigation program for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients at Columbia University Medical Center's Breast Service.

The event was both inspirational and informative, with Fox 5 News Co-Anchor Rosanna Scotto as the day's host, and Dr. Freya Schnabel, Women At Risk's Medical Director, and Dr. George Raptis updating the group with the latest news in the breast cancer arena. ■

Golfing for a Cure: Women At Risk's 3rd Annual Golf Tournament Sponsored by CANON U.S.A.

By Kitty Silverman

On Monday, July 24, Women at Risk hosted a pro-am tournament for the Women's Metropolitan Open at the historic Fenway Golf Club in Scarsdale. Event Co-Chairs Susan Furst and Karen Reed, as well as all of us at WAR, would like to thank the sponsors, participants and donors who made the day such a success.

Thirty-one foursomes participated and raised over \$120,000, helping to ensure the future of WAR's vital programs. The largest portion of funding is being earmarked for our research program.

In addition to CANON U.S.A., which served as the event's underwriting sponsor, support was provided by Dun & Bradstreet, Jones Apparel Group, Judy and Paul Konigsberg, Lincoln, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network, and Westchester Magazine.

If you know of any corporations who would like to form teams or provide sponsorship for the 2007 tournament, please contact Karen Reed at (516) 869-9649. This Spring, please keep an eye out for posters in your locker room and look for the "save the date" notices in your mailbox. ■

October Promotions

By Sasha Growick

In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Women At Risk coordinated ten promotional events, an unprecedented achievement in our his-



Outside On the One in Mt. Kisco during their October promotion benefiting WAR.

Keri and Brian Zaro pose with a special pink ribbon cookie outside Zaro's during their week-long October promotion for Women At Risk.



tory. From quality clothing to delicious cookies, Women At Risk connected with a range of businesses to make this past October a huge success. We would like to thank the following organizations who made this success possible: Theory, On the One, Zaro's Bakery, Sticks and Strings (including Margo Kornfeld, and Emily and Debbie Trock), Giella Cosmetics, Steiner Sports, White + Warren, Last Licks and Olive & Bette's. With the support of these businesses and the participation of people like you, Women At Risk was able to reach out to a much wider audience and raise thousands of vital dollars for the fight against breast cancer. ■

Women of Color Symposium Dispels Breast Cancer Myths

By Christine Rein

More than 300 women recently attended "Breast Cancer in Women of Color: Dispelling Myths, Learning the Truth," a symposium that Women At Risk co-sponsored on Saturday, September 16.

To address the fact that African American and Latina women die from breast cancer at a disproportionate rate, topics presented at the symposium focused on risks, screening and treatment, overcoming barriers to care, and options in complementary and alternative care for younger women of color. This symposium was an interdisciplinary initiative by clinicians, social workers and survivors. ■

Women At Risk Hosts Bi-Annual Free Mammogram Screening Day

By Lynda Wertheim

Women At Risk's circle of friends expanded once again on Saturday, April 8 as we renewed our sponsorship of the Free Mammogram Day. Spearheaded by Karen Schmitt, Director of the Breast Cancer Screening Partnership and member of the Women At Risk Advisory Council, the event provided free mammograms, cervical screenings, and colorectal exams for uninsured women over age 40 from Washington Heights, Inwood and Harlem. We also continued our tradition of providing activities and treats for the children who accompanied their mothers, grandmothers and caregivers.

New York Mercantile Exchange and members of our circle of friends provided additional funding for this valuable community program. ■

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Please visit WAR's Website:
www.breastmd.org/war.html

Women At Risk's Lola Ruz-Curry Honored by Lifetime Television

By Annie Geddes

Women from New York City have long known that Lola Ruz-Curry, Women At Risk's Outreach and Community Program Coordinator, is an exceptional leader, advocate and educator in the field of breast cancer. On October 11, 2006, Lola was recognized by Lifetime Television as a Breast Cancer Hero, allowing the rest of the world to know about her tireless work in the field. Lola was nominated by the LatinaSHARE program at SHARE: Self Help for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer, which trained her to be a support group facilitator, and for whom she recruits other Latina breast cancer survivors to volunteer.

Now in its sixth year, Lifetime's annual "Breast Cancer Hero Project" honors ten outstanding breast cancer survivors and community leaders who are helping to make a difference. Lola, an 11-year breast cancer survivor, was nominated for her work helping Spanish-speaking women come to terms with their diagnoses and understand their treatment options in a supportive and informative group setting. Lola has both worked for Women At Risk and volunteered for SHARE for eight years, and we couldn't be more proud of her!

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