Fall 2020 Newsletter

Hope for two
the pregnant with cancer network

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Message from the Chairwoman - Patty Murray

"To Dream the Possible Dream"

This Autumn, Josh Groban, a popular performer and record producer, released his dusky baritone version of "The Impossible Dream." This song was written for the 1965 American Broadway musical, *Man of La Mancha.* This song is Don Quixote's (the romantic idealist main character) response when he was asked what he means by following "the quest." He speaks about "dreaming the impossible dream," and "to reach the unreachable star."

Unlike Don Quixote, each of our members are optimistically grounded in reality and are following their own quest- a cancer free body and healthy baby. Now, more than ever before, given the global pandemic and the fear of contracting the Covid-19 virus given their compromised immune systems, the shutdowns, quarantines, economic and social instability, each woman is a true warrior who DREAMS HER POSSIBLE DREAM! They hear the original song in their heads and change the words around- They fight the beatable foe (cancer), they run where they dare brave to go, try when their arms are weary, and reach for their reachable and brightest star on this planet, the gift of their precious baby!

2020 has been especially trying for our members, as well as for everyone in the US and around the globe. Oftentimes, just when you think that you've had more than your share of bad news (cancer during a pregnancy, loss a loved one, a major health setback, etc.) something invariably comes along and you come crashing to a halt and internally scream, "Haven't I had enough?!!" When times such as these incredibly materialize and you think that life cannot get any crazier than it already is- but it does- you have to stay focused on the goal, the star. You must take control of what you can, which is in large measure, your attitude, and let go of what you cannot control. Concentrate your attention on short-term objectives, not on targets weeks, months, or even years down the road. Thinking long-term is too daunting and might paralyze you with fear.

If anyone informed me this past March, at the advent of the coronavirus, that businesses in our country would not open up until August, I would have retreated inwards and become despondent. Instead, Hope for Two forged on, day by day, week by week and we've steadily grown thanks to our laser focus on our mission. We have helped 30% more women in 2020 than in 2019 and have recently connected new patients in Pakistan and Japan.

Our reach on Social Media is expanding exponentially and recently we were contacted by one of our members, Jenna, whom we counseled. She stated, "Thank you for being such a great support for so many going through the scariest of times. These are my heroes (she showed a photo on Facebook)... my chemo twins...They are the reason I am a survivor."

No, Jenna, you are the hero, the warrior! Your twins were the reachable stars. You dreamed the possible dream and are a survivor.

Until next time, stay safe, and always, always dream your possible dream.

mystory by Carol Walton

In February of 2000, I found myself at a hospital getting an ultrasound for a possible cyst in the uterine area. I also happened to be eleven weeks pregnant with my second pregnancy and had been experiencing debilitating hip and back pain for a few months. As a runner and active mom of our eighteen month old son, I had pushed through the pain, and was almost relieved that my OBGYN felt something odd when palpating my lower abdomen on my first visit at nine weeks pregnant. Maybe a cyst was causing all this pain!

Those thoughts were quickly interrupted as I watched the technician conduct the ultrasound on the screen. After asking if the area I observed was a cyst, she solemnly replied, "Oh honey, that ain't no cyst". Maybe it was because she also knew that I was pregnant that she

hesitantly shared it was a mass, as I'm sure it was not protocol for a technician to share that. After taking all the pictures she needed, she asked if I'd like to see my baby. We both smiled looking at the tiny fetus on the screen, and it almost made me forget the word "mass" spoken earlier.

Later that afternoon my OBGYN called with the horrific news that based on where this mass was, the retroperitoneal area, this was most likely lymphoma and I needed to see an Oncologist asap. My mind raced, wasn't lymphoma a type of cancer? He set up an appointment for me the very next day.

My husband Matt and I solemnly sat in the Oncology office less than 24 hours later hearing the words "cancer, Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, twelve centimeter mass the size of a grapefruit, survival rates, chemotherapy, biopsies, etc". Finally, he said the words that shook me, "possible termination of pregnancy". Later he performed a bone marrow and mass biopsy, and ordered an MRI. We were to meet again in a few days to discuss the results and treatment options. I expressed the desire to keep the pregnancy if possible, to forego treatments until after delivery, but the results of the biopsies showed I was in Stage 4 due to bone marrow involvement, and this was a very fast growing and aggressive form of lymphoma. The sooner I started treatment the higher my chances of beating this cancer, and a decision needed to be made quickly about the pregnancy.

My Oncologist arranged for a second opinion at Duke (we were living in Charlotte, NC), and in the meantime, I decided to call the American Cancer Society. Did they possibly have any information on pregnant women with a cancer diagnosis?! After a brief hold, imagine my surprise and relief when she came back on the line with a phone number for a woman named Patty Murray, who had started a support hotline, The Pregnant with Cancer Support Network, for exactly that! I called the number immediately and Patty shared her amazing story. Patty so far had supported women primarily with breast cancer, but did have one woman that had a different lymphoma from mine. I'm ashamed to say that twenty years later I don't remember her name, but speaking with her and hearing that she had undergone treatment while pregnant gave me such immense hope! Her little boy was over a year old, born full term and healthy. Between her and Patty, I no longer felt alone! When we met the oncologist at Duke. He also gave me hope. There was limited research in Europe that showed women who had undergone chemotherapy while pregnant delivered healthy babies, but chemo should begin after week sixteen to give the organs time to develop. The risks noted were preeclampsia and premature births. The risk I faced with my cancer was that if I waited another month and the chemo didn't shrink the tumor, the pregnancy may have to be terminated in the 2nd or 3rd trimester so that more aggressive treatment could take place.

With the support of my wonderful husband and family, and a whole lot of prayer, I gave my oncologist the answer that I was stepping out in faith and waiting for week seventeen to start chemo. The plan was CHOP chemo every 3 weeks for 6 weeks, with a goal of carrying the baby until 38 weeks. Due to a drug switch in my regime, I didn't even lose my hair during this time and have to face the scrutiny that some have faced about taking "chemo drugs" while pregnant. Overall, my baby girl and I did great with only one hospital stay due to severely low white blood cell counts and a fever. She was growing and the tumor was shrinking with each chemo given. It was mind boggling to think about the irony taking place inside of me! I had my last chemo on

July 7, and 5 days later I started contractions at 33 weeks. Try as the doctor's might to keep her in longer with meds earlier that day, she came fast and furious within minutes of reaching the hospital several hours later and weighed 3 lbs 15 oz., 19 inches long. Her initial screams were music to my ears, a sign that the prednisone I was given as part of my treatment had also strengthened her lungs. Her Apgar? 9 out of 10! Praise God, my husband and I cried tears of joy, knowing she was healthy and safe. After a 5 day stay in the NICU, she came home. A week later, however, we were back in the NICU treating jaundice. As her jaundice cleared up, it became evident she was extremely pale and blood tests revealed life threatening low red cell counts. Transfusions had to be given immediately. Her bone marrow was not producing red blood cells, and we were so scared she may not make it. I remember vividly sitting alone in the hospital chapel crying out to God, "You can't take her now! Please don't take her now!" It was another 10 days and many transfusions before Sara stabilized and was able to come home a second time. The specialists caring for her deduced that her bone marrow may have been suppressed from my chemotherapy. They really couldn't find another explanation.

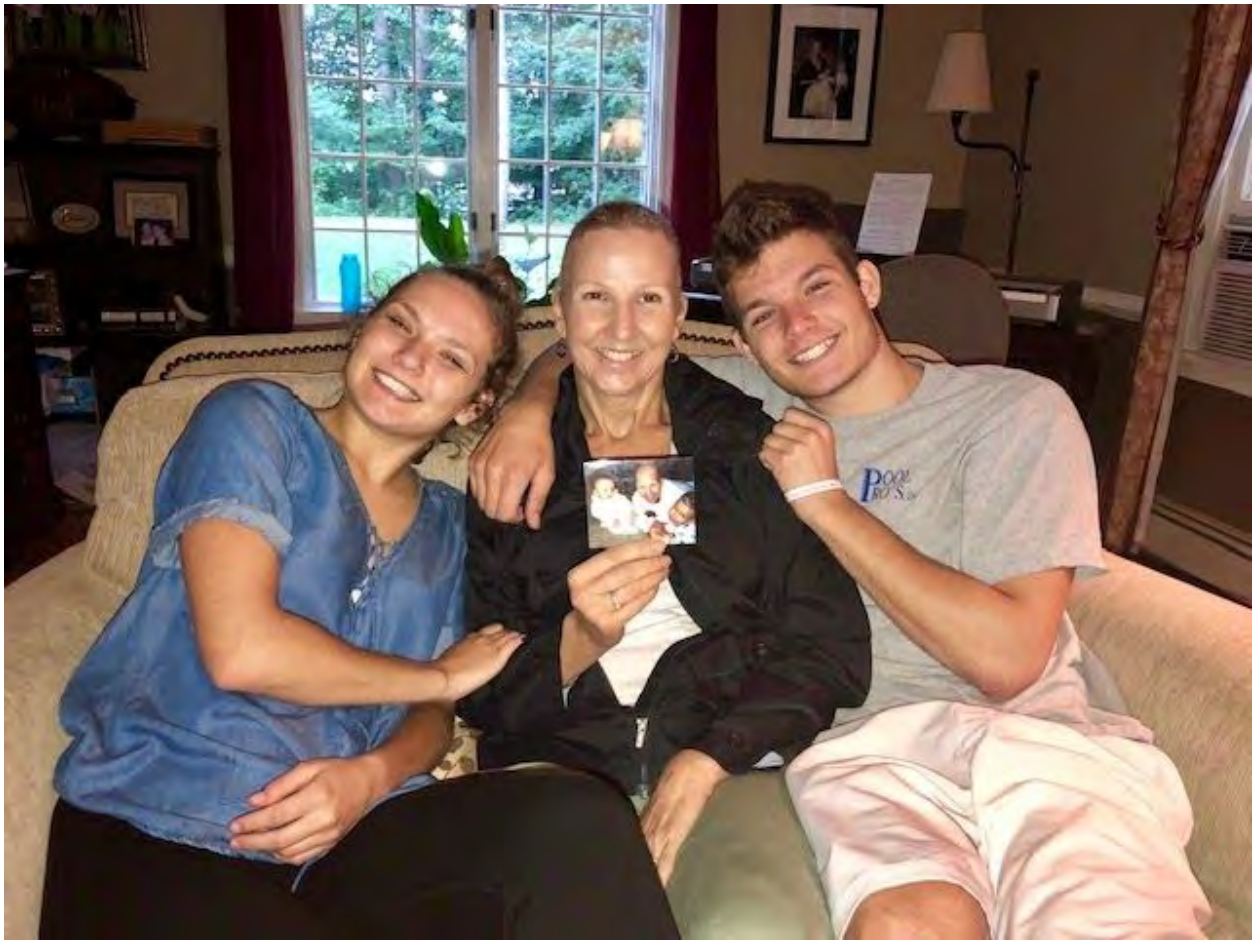
Unfortunately, my battle with cancer didn't end with Sara's birth. Scans revealed the cancer had spread from the original tumor site and I would need a Stem Cell transplant. Six months after her birth I went to Duke and had to say goodbye to my babies. The picture below shows my elation upon our reunion after 6 weeks being apart. The joy was short lived, however, when the cancer came roaring back a few months later. A year after the stem cell transplant, I was in Seattle preparing for a bone marrow transplant using my brother's cells. I was from that area and my entire family lived there, so it made sense to go where I could get the twenty-four hour support I would need. My kids could not be with me due the risks of me having no immune system, and stayed behind with my husband in Charlotte for the 5 months I lived in Seattle during treatment. Sara was now eighteen months and my son Dillon, three and a half. It was so excruciating being apart, but they visited twice, and I returned home shortly before Sara turned two. Thankfully, I was declared in remission a few years later.

When Sara was in her Junior year of high school, she decided to write a research paper on pregnancy and cancer for a capstone project in her AP Chemistry class. She contacted and interviewed physicians in the International Network on Cancer, Infertility, and Pregnancy, learning more from research done around the world. The highlight, however, was speaking with Patty Murray, and in turn, she gave Sara several women to interview who had also traveled this journey. All of the women Sara spoke with were elated that she was seventeen and healthy, as their kids were much younger. One of them shouted to her eight year old son, "Hey! I'm speaking to a girl who was also a chemo baby, and she's almost out of high school now"! The project not only impressed her teacher but lit a passion in Sara to study fetal development in utero, and her goal is to become a P.A. in Pediatric Oncology.

One month before Sara was to graduate in 2018, my lymphoma reared its ugly head again. It was back after a sixteen year remission. We waited until after her graduation and my son's return from college to tell them. Once again I had a fight ahead of me, but my babies were now adults and chose to become my caregivers. Over the course of the next year they were with me for treatments and appointments, taking turns juggling their own school schedules and commitments. It was hard to accept them putting their young adult lives on hold to care for me, but they wouldn't have it any other way. In August of 2019 we got the wonderful news I was in

remission. My husband and I feel so blessed to have had them with us as we look back on that year!

I'm amazed at this organization twenty plus years later and how much it's grown. It's been a privilege to support women over the years, to share that they are not alone and that many of us have gone before them. Back in early 2000 the internet was new, and Google, Facebook and Instagram didn't exist, but Patty Murray had the foresight to know that women needed hope and each other. I'm so grateful she and the other pregnant women she met in that oncology office in upstate NY decided to form a support network. I'm grateful I found their number, and spoke with her and the women who had gone before me. Had my pregnancy been even five years earlier, the above story might not even exist. Thank you Patty, your organization, and the many brave women who have found themselves pregnant with cancer that continue to share their stories. God Bless You all.



Special Deliveries
babies born to mothers who were born with cancer

Anastasia, born Jan 9th, 2020 at 6lbs, 6oz. I was 39 weeks and went through 16 rounds of chemo and a couple surgeries while pregnant with her.

Kaylee was born this past Wednesday, 9/2 at 36 weeks and 2 days. 6lbs, 18 inches long. Port placement surgery, 9 weeks of Carboplatin and Taxol followed by two tumor excisions.

Philip is already 16 months! He was born on 5/8/19 at 37 weeks via c-section after going through a lumpectomy, port insertion surgery, and 7 rounds of chemo. He weighed 6lbs 4oz and was 19” long. I was diagnosed with IDC (ER positive, PR negative, HER2+) the day after I found out I was pregnant with my third baby. I’m so thankful for our healthy and feisty little miracle!

BEHIND EVERY
GREAT DAD

3 rounds of chemo starting at 27weeks pregnant. She is now 2 months old and 9lbs 8oz! Growing and healthy.

Payton
Born February 5th, 2020
Weighed 6 pounds 4 ounces
One month premature
I have stage 2 triple positive breast cancer and went through a double mastectomy and 6 rounds of chemo while pregnant with him... he’s now 7 months old, happy, and healthy!

Lucy, born 7/2/19 at 5 pounds, 12(ish? I should remember this), 37.5 weeks. About 2 weeks after my last round of chemo

Adalynne
Born August 24, 2020
Delivered at 34+4
4 pounds 15 ounces
Spent 13 days in NICU.
I had cervical cancer.
We went through 3 rounds of chemo. Hysterectomy (left ovaries) after csection.

Serafina Adalia and Magdalena Aliza born 5lbs 11oz and 6lbs 1oz at 37.5 week via c-section. I was diagnosed at 25 wks with hormone positive IDC 2B, grade 3 breast cancer. We did 7 of the 8 dose dense chemos while pregnant.

Ernest and Martin born may 19th 2020 at 29.5 weeks weighing 3.3 lbs and 3.11 lbs and went through 4 round of A/C with them and a double mastectomy

Jarian R.L.
October 10, 2019
6lbs 2oz
Induced at 36 weeks

Luna - born on 6/1/2020 - 6lbs 6 oz @ 36 weeks

Londynn born August 24, 2019 she was 4 lbs 11 oz 4 rounds of chemo and left mastectomy done during pregnancy. Thankful for a strong healthy now 1 year old princess.

08/23/20 20:55
babytrend

Keiana-Hope 6 pound 14 oz. My 5th baby since my CML diagnosis 💗 born at home on the 9th of July.

River Ireland
6lbs 15oz
Nov 2019. She did 4 rounds of AC chemo with momma. Stage 3 breast cancer. She is amazing and perfect.

Pearl Evelyn, born 8/22/2020 weighing 3lbs 13oz at 33+1. (Induced due to oligohydramnios.) I was diagnosed with soft tissue sarcoma (grade 3 retroperiteneal UPS) at 15w, underwent tumor resection at 16w, and had one round of AIM chemo at 30w. Five more rounds to go, resuming treatment next week.

Camilla, Born 7/7/2019 at 8 pounds, 37 weeks. Had cervical cerclage, 4 rounds of chemo while pregnant, 6 other more sessions after C Section then 25 rounds of radiotherapy, 4 rounds of brachytherapy and the rest is history!

Joud
September 10th, 2019
7lbs 2 oz
Induction at 39(almost 40) weeks
He did 3 rounds of A/C and Cytoxan chemo with me and we had a long but beautiful birth. He's now turning this one this week and as beautiful and perfect as ever. Mom's that are going through pregnancy and cancer, you got this!

Noah! Born 1/3/2020 at 37 weeks via Csection 7lbs 2 oz. Diagnosed at 19 weeks with Triple Negative BC. 7 cycles of chemo together. Now a very healthy, happy 8 month old!

Zaydan born Aug 7,2019 born at 34 weeks via c section and was 4 lbs 1oz ..did 4 rounds of chemo while pregnant..This is him now at one

JOHNNY CASH
THE
MAN IN BLACK

Aurelia born 4•11•20 at 32 weeks. She was 4lb6oz. I went through 3 rounds of HYPER CVAD while pregnant.

Allison born October 14th 2019. 8 lbs 11 oz of perfect! Mastectomy and 4 rounds of chemo while pregnant!

March 7, 2020
Hudson
6 lb 14 oz
Born @ 36 weeks via c section after 52 hours.

Avery Faith-born January 10, 2020 at 5 lbs 12 oz. We went through 4 rounds of chemo together before her induction at 37 weeks.

William, born 07/16/20 at 37 weeks
6lbs 2oz, 19 inches. Went through 4 rounds of AC and a mastectomy with me.

Benjamin
Born 10/16/20
Birth weight 4lb 10 oz
Went through 4 rounds of chemo with me, born 10 weeks early. I was dx with stage 3 idc of the left breast. I’m still undergoing treatment but he brings me so much joy!

Audriana born on 6/27/2020. 5 lbs 13 oz. She went through 4 AC chemo, 1 Taxol, and two surgeries.

I gave birth in October to my daughter, Indiana, at 38 weeks and 1 day. She weighed 6lbs6oz. This sweetie underwent 2 rounds of CHOP-E chemo with me before the induction.

My love, Lucy- 3lbs 4 oz and born at 31 weeks

I gave birth exactly a month ago. Her name is Chloe. I had a c-section at 37 weeks, due to timing with the chemo sessions. She weighed 5lb 13oz.
This is her today!

1 month old
Chloe
With grace in her heart and a crown on her head

Loretto
Born on 1/25/20 6lb 11oz
Went through mastectomy and chemo with me
Born 3 weeks early
Finished chemo and radiation after giving birth to him
He's such a light

Harper born February 12th, 2020 at 36.5 weeks. Weighing 5lbs 3 oz. 8 rounds while pregnant.

Tyler! Born 08/31/2020, 4lbs 15oz, 17.5” long. We went through 6 chemo cycles together before our c-section at 34.2wks.

Everly Grace, born May 25 2019. 5lbs 15oz at birth. 8 rounds of chemo while I was pregnant

Cayden (5lb) Connor (6lb3oz) 11.26.2019. Dx with stage 2 triple + breast cancer at 25 weeks pregnant with my miracle twins. 3 rounds of AC chemo before planned c-section at 36 weeks.

Haylen born 5/9/20 6 lbs 8 oz. Born at 37 weeks by induction. Had mastectomy at 11 weeks. Two rounds of herceptin/perjeta before I found out I was pregnant.

Marcus. Born 6 pounds 14 ounces. 39 weeks by c section. We did surgery, 4 rounds of AC and 9 weeks of taxol together. I was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer the same time I found out I was pregnant.

GAP

David, born 1/21/19, 5lbs 11oz. Induced at 35weeks, after 6 rounds of chemo in utero. Now 20 months old and perfectly healthy

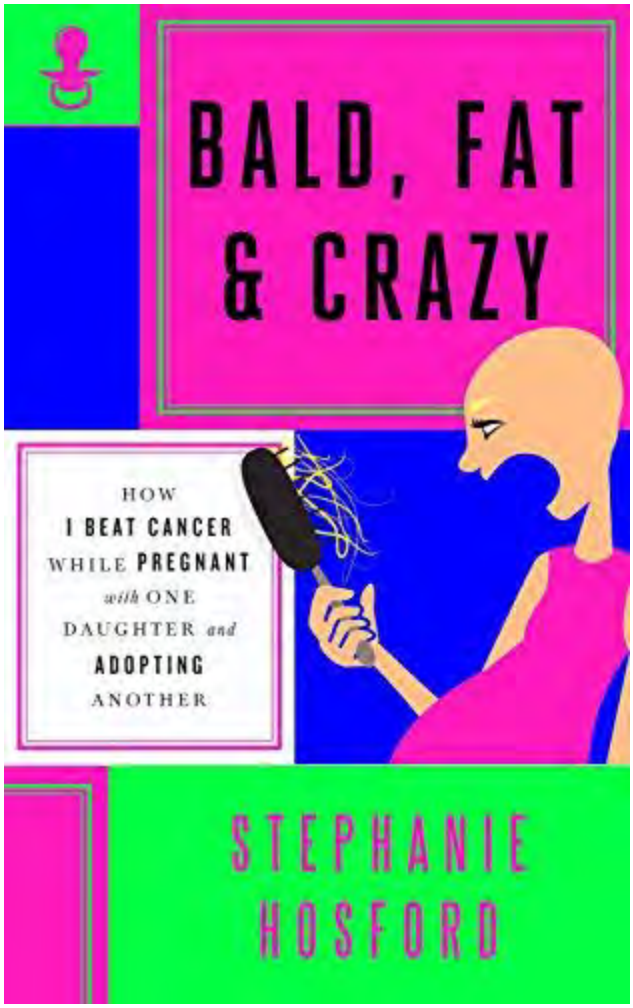
Dante - born Aug 3rd 2020 by induction at 38 weeks, weight at birth was 6lbs 3oz. Did 4 rounds of chemo (AC/Cytoxan) during pregnancy and surgery was at 36 weeks.

Alec, 5lbs 13oz... now 7 months!

Oh my heart! You beautiful momma's and perfect babies! Love all these pics!
Just to share a little hope that life AFTER cancer can happen too! I've fought cancer 3 separate times so far (was pregnant through one of those times) and just delivered healthy baby #10 into our family in April! She is perfect!

WARNING/MISE EN GARDE
WARNING/MISE EN GARDE

Book Review - Bald, Fat & Crazy: How I Beat Cancer While Pregnant with One Daughter and Adopting Another



By Stephanie Hosford

Stephanie Hosford, a member that came to us for help in 2008 and has been a valuable Hope for Two volunteer support woman, has penned a well-written story of her nine month roller coaster ride of being a mother of one, adopting a child from China, and then finds out that she is expecting another child just days after being diagnosed with breast cancer. Suddenly, Stephanie, a 37 year old Occupational Therapist and a tri-athlete from Los Angeles, was fighting for her life, her children, and her sanity. The book was born out of her blog by the same name, where she chronicled her crazy journey. She takes readers on a gut-wrenching, tearful, and joyous ride, from the first days after hearing the words, “You have cancer” to the tender

homecomings of her new baby and then her adopted daughter. Her personal story is filled with hope, humor, and examples on how to find your inner strength when you need it the most.

Bald, Fat & Crazy is available for purchase at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and any independent bookseller.
To view other books reviewed by Hope for Two, visit our website:
http://www.hopefortwo.org/category/book-corner/

Ask the Therapist
By Christine Bylewski

Question: I am worrying about COVID, cancer and my pregnancy. I wake up at all hours thinking the scariest thoughts. I don't know how to stop being so anxious."

Response: Thoughts always seem darkest at night when there are few distractions to divert your attention. So take a minute or two during the day to focus on your breath. Sit down and close your eyes and breathe in with awareness. Breathe out with awareness. When you wash your hands, breathe in with awareness. Practicing breath awareness during the day makes it easier to get into it at night. Focusing on what you can control reduces anxiety and creates a distraction from worry. As you practice, you will build confidence in your ability to let go of dark thoughts more easily. Try not to criticize your practice or worry about " doing it right". With time, you will feel more connected with your breath and realize how it anchors you, which lends itself to a sense of calm.

Recap of Asbury Hall Event, November 2019

We would like to take a second to thank all of those who attended or made a donation to Hope for Two's most recent fundraiser at Asbury Hall last November. Thank you to the event's co-chairs, Amy Carnevale and Marissa Cohely, for helping to make it our most successful fundraiser, by far, to date. A special thank you to our keynote speaker Kelly Kinderman, who was diagnosed with Hodgkin's while pregnant with her daughter (as per photo).

Thanks for making it our most successful fundraiser!

Hope for Two is Hiring!

Hope for Two is looking for a motivated individual to assist us with our Social Media Strategy. Tasks include regularly posting to the Hope for Two Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as reaching out to potential new patients or Volunteer Support Women who are active on Social Media.

The employee's work will be an estimated 5 hours per week. Please email patrick@murraymedia.org for details.

Dr Cardonick's Cancer in Pregnancy Registry is Looking for 18 Year Olds or Older to Participate in a Survey

The Cancer and Pregnancy Registry keeps track of pregnant women treated for cancer and follows both mom and children after delivery. Showing normal growth and development of these children has been reassuring to newly diagnosed women. It would be wonderful to look at the young adult children of women treated for cancer in pregnancy. **If you have a child** that is 18 years or older who would like to participate, this involves receiving a confidential email for the adult child to complete a global health survey. The survey is sent and received via a secure protected site called redcap.

Please email the research team for more information at Cancerinpregnancy@cooperhealth.edu. A copy of the survey can be reviewed first as well.

Follow Hope For Two on Social Media!

Hope For Two... hope.for.two

The Pregnant with Cancer Network

Facebook Birthday Fundraisers

Special thanks to the following people who helped fundraise for Hope for Two through Facebook fundraisers.

> Brittany Paige Stem, Kristin Napper, Heather Sullivan, Laura Ashley Schmidt-Foster, Ulyana Fenyn, DeAnndrea L Isaacs, Carrie Boos, Marie Spalding, Carla Delgado, Erin Marie Daly, Andrea Holmes, Jessica Packer, Lindsey Rosenfield, Mary Mackenzie Watson

An effective way to donate to our organization is to donate directly to our website at hopefortwo.org/donate or to do a birthday fundraiser through Facebook. Email us at info@hopefortwo.org if you need any assistance!