

hope

# THE WellnessConnection

Fall/Winter 2007

cancer support, education and hope

## Bill Barnard



Fit and robust for much of his life, Bill Barnard didn't have much experience with the medical community when he was diagnosed with metastatic Melanoma in May of 2006. He'd just turned 50 the previous December. "One day you wake up and you are a stranger in a strange land. You have to navigate through a whole new system, learn a new language."

Bill joined a support group in August of 2006. He attends every week. His wife attends a support group for loved ones and caregivers. "You know, I really believe it is harder on my wife than it is on me. I go to treatment and I'm occupied. My wife has to wait and worry. I'm glad she has a group where she can talk about what it's like for her."

"I encourage people to come to The Wellness Community sooner in their disease. They will learn how to navigate—how to be that stranger in a strange land."

"When I started attending the group in 2006, I thought, okay—you go into the hospital, you get

it fixed, you're done. I soon realized that there were people in the group who'd been dealing with cancer for many years. One guy in my group has been dealing with kidney cancer since 2001. What stands out about him is not his struggle, but his amazing spirit. I find it a big help to talk with people, to know that I'm not the only one who feels this way. We get good advice and on this journey you learn that you need to be your own advocate.

*The Wellness Community has helped me learn to live with the kind of uncertainty that comes with having cancer."*

"Today is a pretty good day. I look at life like that now. It is a progression that takes place over time. The sooner you get your bearings and learn what questions to ask, the better off you will be. I am in a much better place emotionally than I was before I got the diagnosis. In some ways, The Wellness Community saved my life!"

Bill's last PET scan in October shows he is cancer free.

## Special Honors for The Wellness Community San Francisco East Bay

*We are grateful that our Wellness Community has received several honors and distinctions:*

*The first Wellness Community was founded in 1982 in Santa Monica by Harold Benjamin. Today, there are 24 Wellness Communities located throughout the United States, plus centers in Tel Aviv and Tokyo, and online at The Virtual Wellness Community.*

*The Wellness Community San Francisco East Bay was opened in Walnut Creek in 1990 by Shannon McGowan, and it is still the only organization of its kind in the region.*

- The Wellness Community San Francisco East Bay was the first to become a Center of Excellence, following a comprehensive accreditation process. There are now seven Centers of Excellence worldwide.
- We are an international training site for Executive Directors, Program Directors and Facilitators from other Wellness Communities.
- Margaret Stauffer, our Program Director, was selected to serve on the National Wellness Community's Program Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee for Training.
- Jim Bouquin, our Executive Director, was elected by his peers to serve on the National Executive Director Advisory Council.
- We are one of five Wellness Communities currently participating in a major research study sponsored by the national office and the University of California, San Francisco, to evaluate the effectiveness of support groups for people with cancer.
- We are one of ten Wellness Communities who will provide a comprehensive new "Live Well! Life Beyond Cancer" for survivors in 2008, sponsored by the Lance Armstrong Foundation.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently awarded a major grant to The Wellness Community and ten national health organizations for a pilot study on the information and support needs of people with hematological cancers, such as leukemia, multiple myeloma or lymphoma. This five-year project will focus on enhancing quality of care and access to clinical trials. We are one of three Wellness Communities selected to participate in the project.

## Lori Wilcoxson

Lori possesses a talent for creating beauty. She devotes a significant portion of her volunteer time serving on The Wellness Community's Gala Committee, orchestrating decorations. Her dedication doesn't end there. She and her husband, Norm, are also major donors. They sponsored a table at the Gala this year, and donated auction items and decorations. Together with two other couples, they also won a Jazz and Dinner Event for Fifty with some spirited bidding in the live auction—all in the spirit of giving back to the community.

*"I really wasn't very familiar with The Wellness Community when they recruited me to serve on the Gala Committee. But you feel the love the moment you walk through the door."*

I wish that I'd had their services when my mother was diagnosed with cancer when I was a child of fourteen. The Wellness Community supports the entire family, as well as the patient. It's a wonderful place."

Lori has recently been appointed to the Leadership Council, a group of prominent business and community leaders who support the work of The Wellness Community. "I want to do what I can to make this organization grow. I know that if I were diagnosed with cancer The Wellness Community would be there for me. I feel fortunate to be able to help ensure their future, so they continue to make a difference for so many people."

## The Wellness Gala 2007

*The 7th Annual Wellness Gala, sponsored by John Muir Health, was our most successful ever!*

Over 300 guests attended the Wellness Gala 2007, which raised almost \$140,000 for The Wellness Community. The proceeds will underwrite support for over 200 cancer patients and their families in the coming year.

We are grateful to John Muir Health for again serving as the Presenting Sponsor of the Wellness Gala, and to InVision Communications for again producing this wonderful event.

We also thank the following sponsors:

### Gold Sponsor

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### Silver Sponsors

ConocoPhillips, Diablo Valley Oncology & East Bay Medical Oncology, Kaiser Permanente, Merrill Lynch, San Ramon Regional Medical Center/Tenet Foundation, Sutter Solano Medical Center, Washington Mutual

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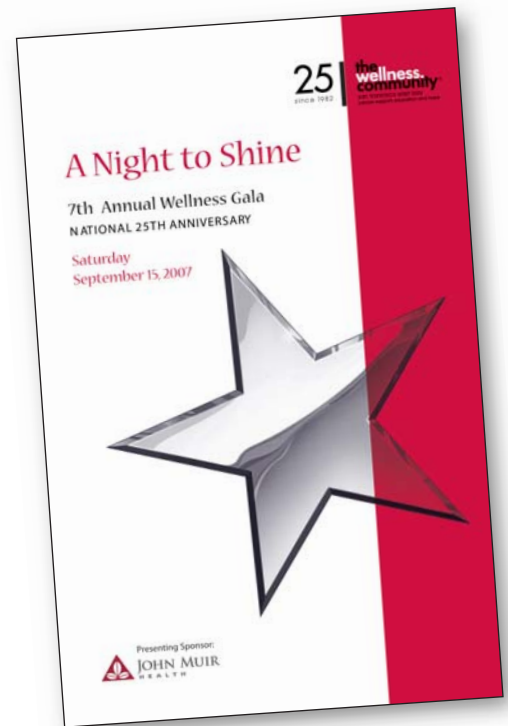
Comcast Cable Communication, First Bank, Longs Drugs, MasterCard International, PDL BioPharma, Sutter Delta Medical Center, Tyris Corporation, Wells Fargo

### Table Sponsors

Alliance Imaging, Ayers Family, Blanding, Boyer & Rockwell, Bill & Susan Clarkson, Elaine Jacobs Family & Friends, the Family Transition Group, Chris & Eric Lefler, Tad & Isabel Moore, Union Bank, Jerry Weintraub, and Norm & Lori Wilcoxson.

### Patron Sponsors

Kenneth Keene, Doug Regalia, Scott Valley Bank, Van Loben Sels/RembeRock Foundation, and Jodi Weis.



*We celebrated the 25th anniversary of The Wellness Community by recognizing our founders, and we were honored to have a special presentation by Harriet Benjamin, the inspiration for the first Wellness Community. We also presented the following special awards:*

### Community Spirit Award

**McKesson Corporation.** A loyal, longtime supporter of The Wellness Community, McKesson is America's oldest and largest healthcare services company with its roots dating back more than 174 years.

### Participant Inspiration Award

**Claudine Fletcher.** Claudine is a survivor of multiple myeloma. She and her husband, Paul, are participants at The Wellness Community and have provided extraordinary support and inspiration for other survivors.

### Shannon McGowan Inspiration Award

**Dr. Bob Ayres.** Dr. Bob is a beloved physician and community leader who was instrumental in founding The Wellness Community San Francisco Bay Area.



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Please feel welcome to call  
The Wellness Community  
at 925-933-0107 or  
visit our website at  
[www.twc-bayarea.org](http://www.twc-bayarea.org).

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**February 22, 2008  
6-9 pm**

*Join Changes Salon & Day Spa and the Wellness Community for an evening of celebration, new beginnings and hope.*

You are invited to share in the grand opening of Changes expanded spa. The evening will include: Gourmet Food and Wine Tasting with commemorative wine glass, Spa Tours, Raffle and much more. All net proceeds from the entrance and raffle tickets to benefit The Wellness Community.

- Tickets go on sale Wednesday January 2, 2008
- General admission \$30

Gold admission \$100 (*with VIP gift bag—Limited Quantity*)

Platinum admission \$250 (*with VIP gift bag and 5 cocktail length services—Limited Quantity*)

- Raffle Tickets \$5, or Five for \$20

For information please call 925-947-1814 ext 236. For email updates, please send email with contact information to [csd@changessalon.com](mailto:csd@changessalon.com)

**Diablo Valley  
Oncology/Hematology  
Medical Group**

Matthew Sirott, MD  
Robert Robles, MD  
Jewel Johl, MD  
Tiffany Svahn, MD  
Lori Orr, COO

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