

Outlook

The Newsletter of the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation



Autumn
2011

Created in collaboration with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows of New Jersey- proud partners in support of kids with cancer. www.ioofnj.org

ECF Kids -Where are They Now?

Joseph Motisi

How long ago did your family receive services from ECF?

Twelve years ago, when I was diagnosed, we were soon contacted by our Caseworker, Michele, and we received counseling and lots of emotional support, for my mom especially.

How old were you at the time, and what was your diagnosis?

I was 15-years old and a sophomore in high school when I was diagnosed with Burkett's Lymphoma. I missed the entire school year, and had to be home-schooled through the summer just so that I could return in September as a junior with my classmates.

Can you give some examples of what ECF did to help your family?

My mom recalls countless phone calls from Michele and the perseverance she displayed - saying sometimes it would take Michele leaving five messages before my mom could return the call - as she was busy running back and forth to Columbia Presbyterian in New York City where I received treatment and was in-patient for months at a time. My mom really appreciated that our Caseworker kept calling and never gave up on her. We also received wishlist gifts during the holidays for me and my brothers for years - it was great!

Can you tell us a little bit about your personal experience with cancer?

I especially remember all the shuttling back and forth to New York for treatment. It was a miserable experience but I remember thinking "just grit your teeth and bear through it." I turned inward to deal with things versus reaching out to people. I really didn't want to talk to anyone. I recall I slept a lot, lost my appetite, and then my hair. I think the whole experience made me grow up a lot quicker than my peers. In a strange way, it helped make me into the person I am today - easygoing, tolerant, living in the moment. I feel closer to my family for all their support.

How old are you now, and what have you been doing with your life since that time?

I am 27-years old now. I graduated from Ramapo College with a major in Communications. I am currently working full-time for a pharmaceutical company in marketing and I really love it. Over the



Joe, now

years I have gone on lots of vacations and trips with my friends. I am fortunate to still have some great friends from high school - they were there for me when I was so ill - and we're still close. I also made some new good friends while away at college. I live a typical life now - I enjoy listening to music, going to the movies, and hanging out with my friends, my two brothers and my family. I like taking walks in the reservation, playing the guitar, and skiing in the winter.

Who are your role models and why?

My parents. When I was younger I took them for granted, but as I've gotten older I have come to appreciate all the love and support they've given me over the years. I admire them both for their unique qualities. My mom is a cheery person who's positive all the time; my dad is dependable and trustworthy. I believe I have inherited some of each of their best qualities.

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

Working in the same job; having a girlfriend or wife; living in my own house. Just "living a full life."

Is there anything you'd like to share with our readers?

Try not to take things, even little ones, for granted. When I think back to all the things I couldn't do like walk up steps or eat normal food, I feel so grateful for my life now. Don't waste time - live in the moment - it's all we have. I saw firsthand how it can be taken away from you without warning. If an opportunity presents itself to me now, I take it! I think having cancer has helped me to put things in perspective, and I believe I have a positive outlook on life overall. For me, the glass is always half full.



Joe, now



Joe, then

Reflections from the Managing Director

Dear Friends,

Just as it is important to maintain a balance in our personal lives, I often reflect on how we as an organization also must find equilibrium on a day to day basis. Some days we hear good news about the kids we help and words of thanks from our families. At other times, the news is terribly sad.

Since our last edition of Outlook, we have experienced sorrow in the loss of Lashon, who was the featured ECF kid on the front page; Mark Haines, one of our board members and CNBC anchor; and Peggy Ballerini, a devoted volunteer in the Southern Region. Although we have been through a time of great heartbreak, all of these wonderful people would have wanted nothing more than for ECF to continue helping New Jersey families in need.

And so, to honor the memory of each of them, and others who have left us, that is exactly what we are doing. We are moving forward, looking for ways to better help those who seek our services, and trying to reach more families. In so doing, we have welcomed Joel Markel, former ECF dad and long-time donor as the new board president; gained new support from a number of private funders and foundations; resurrected past events at the request of regional attendees; and upgraded our computer system to enable us to work smarter.

But our most notable accomplishment since the last newsletter is the fact that we have added more than a dozen new families to our list of those receiving free services. It is on behalf of these families that we ask you to help. Will you please allow us to continue providing care to these deserving families by sending a contribution today? Donations can be made online, or in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you and warm regards,



Carol Davis, MA, LPC
Managing Director

PS. Why wait for the next edition of Outlook? You can 'like' us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter@EmmanuelCancer! You'll get up-to-date news on all that's going on! And don't forget to keep an eye on our website: www.emmanuelcancer.org.

A whole new look will be coming soon...

The Faces of ECF

ECF's newest Caseworker, Deborah Vincent, is a Licensed Social Worker in NJ and holds a MSW from Fordham University. She has worked with children in school settings, families caring for loved ones with serious mental illness and veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. Deborah also has a strong interest in grief and bereavement work. She serves families in Bergen, Essex, and Passaic and Union counties.

Although Deborah has been with us for only a few months, she has already made quite an impact in her superior care and delivery of services to her families. Her Case Manager, Gilberto Velasquez states, "Deborah brings a burst of positive and compassionate energy to her role in assuring families are armed with the information to make informed decisions. She is a strong advocate and it is great to have her on our team." She recently told us that she is "honored to be working with children with cancer and their families." The feelings are mutual.



We
Remember

*Khalil, Shemar,
Lashon & Sophia*

They will forever be
in our hearts

Did you know that you could donate your car, truck, van or motorcycle to ECF? Call Steve Clapp toll-free at Car Tech Vehicle Management: 1-888-395-3955. Be sure to mention that you would like the proceeds of this donation to benefit the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation!

Notes from the Development and Communications Office

Recently, ECF has been the proud recipient of generous funding from old friends and new sources alike! In these strained economic times when there is even more competition for grant funding, we feel honored to know that others believe in the valuable services that we provide.

Last October, the very old and outdated computer server in ECF's headquarters crashed, leaving employees to work on an incredibly slow and inefficient back-up server. We were thrilled when the Hyde & Watson Foundation agreed to fund a much needed computer upgrade and incredibly grateful to volunteer Rich Puglisi for flawlessly managing the purchases and installation.

We have received substantial funding to support our Family Services Program. In May, the MGN Family Foundation graciously made a first-time grant to ECF. We also received a contribution from the Meta C. Mergott Foundation, a loyal supporter since 1996. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows of NJ renewed their support with a substantial contribution at a ceremony in June, where we had the opportunity to network and to promote ECF.

Over the years, ECF has seen an increase in the number of Spanish-speaking families seeking services. However, due to linguistic and cultural issues, our traditional programs do not fully meet the needs of Hispanic families. We are grateful to Ronald McDonald House Charities-New York Tri-State and Global for inaugural funding for our newest program, *Connecting with Hispanic Families*, which will meet the needs of more than 25% of our families.

With pediatric cancer comes enormous stress, including the financial strain of mounting expenses and loss of income. ECF has always tried to help families with emergency financial aid, but the ability to do so has been contingent upon available funding. Thanks to the Bear Necessities Pediatric Cancer Foundation and the Provident Bank Foundation, ECF now has a dedicated Family Financial Assistance Fund so we can help a greater number of families in emergency financial situations.

Thank you to all who choose to support ECF. We are exceedingly grateful.

Volunteer Spotlight

♥ ECF headquarters has a savior, and his name is **Rich Puglisi**. Rich came to us in October 2008 offering his expertise in systems administration, and we are still in disbelief at our incredible fortune. Rich has given ECF countless hours of his time upgrading and maintaining our entire computer network. Richard is professional, responsive, communicative, patient, and persistent. He does not rest until a project is thoroughly completed. He has provided us with so much support that, as a non-profit with a limited budget, we would otherwise not have been able to afford. We are so grateful to Rich, and we realize how fortunate we are that he selected ECF as the recipient of his volunteer work.



♥ We are saddened by the recent loss of **Peggy Ballerini**, Southern Regional Volunteer. "When Peggy first walked in the door here at the Center, we knew from the beginning that she was a very special person. Peggy was always smiling, cheerful, and so willing to do any task to help ECF," said Laurie Ehrlich, Southern Regional Center Director. Since that day in 2009, Peggy helped in a variety of ways, including working on our mailings, helping out on the computer, working in the food pantry to stock shelves, and reaching out to her own friends in order to get them to help ECF as well.

"Each time Peg came to the Center to volunteer, she never failed to bring food for our pantry. She appreciated the opportunity to volunteer even though she was undergoing treatment for cancer. Some days, I knew Peg was not feeling well, but she never complained. She just wanted to be part of our ECF family. We considered her a valuable member of our team."

All of us at ECF are honored to have known her and will miss her more than words can express. Peggy's commitment to ECF spurred on many in her immediate and extended family to support our organization. She loved coming to ECF, where she felt welcomed and appreciated. Her legacy is about caring for other people, giving back, and making a difference in the world. She sure made a difference here, and we will always remember her fondly and with great respect.



Event News

ECF's *Fine Art & Craft Show* returned to Franklin Lakes on the weekend of May 14th and 15th. Approximately 35 vendors from the tri-state area displayed their painting, sculpture, woodwork, jewelry and more. There were also several food vendors and an on-site raffle. Local teenagers volunteered to help manage the event, including the daughter of former Caseworker Jane Watson. We were thankful that the rain managed to hold off until Sunday. Despite the weather, many attendees were glad to see the event return.



Daryl McMenemy and Diane Betancourt representing The Celery Farm Soap Company located in Allendale, NJ. Credit: Brian Reilly

Sunday, June 5th, was a beautiful day at the shore, with over 75 people participating in the *4th Annual Mitchell McAllister Walk*. Held in memory of Mitchell, a brave ECF teen who loved the boardwalk, this fun-filled event raised over \$4,000! ECF thanks Mitchell's parents, Marie and Maynard, and his brothers, Mike and Mark, for chairing the event and bringing their friends and family to the walk.



Prizes were awarded for the creatively decorated tables.

The Eastern Region's *3rd Annual Spring Tea Party* once again was a successful fundraiser for families in Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean counties. We thank event chair Izola Fix and all the volunteers for their hard work, and to the participants for their creative decorating. Tea was provided by Bigelow.

The Central Region's *2nd Annual High Tea* was held on June 12th, at St. John's Baptist Church in Scotch Plains. The event honored ECF mothers, and included a variety of vendors as well as a fashion show hosted by Coldwater Creek and emceed by volunteer Claudia Rodriguez. ECF moms and volunteers were models in the show. We are grateful to all who participated in this delightful event, including former ECF mom Juanita Painsion who ad-

ressed the audience with her moving story, and new volunteer Andy Abramowitz who filled two tables with her friends.

If you missed these events, be sure to look for their return in 2012. If you can't wait that long and want to get in on the action, there are dozens of creative ways for you to have fun with friends, family, or co-workers while supporting ECF. Here are some events that volunteers can host: Cash for Gold Party, Card Party & Raffle, Crabfest, Dress Down Day, and Mitzvah Day. If interested, please contact us at (908) 322-4323 ext. 16 or e-mail us at emmanuelcancer@gmail.com.



Models showing off their outfits for the gang.

Notes from our Families

Thanks for all your help. You guys are the best...Cathy

ECF has helped me tremendously with the support of my Caseworker, Eileen, as well as the volunteers. I don't think I would have made it through this without someone who understood what I was through. Thank you ECF...Theresa

God bless you all and thank you for your kindness...Wendy

Thank you for the air conditioner, it keeps me and my family cool...Xaria

Thank you all so much for sending the supplies for Tony's sister, Samantha. I forgot how much a baby uses. Also, thank you for all the support you have given us and Tony's grandparents throughout Tony's diagnosis and treatment...Tony and Karen

Please pass on our thanks and appreciation to all involved in the food basket program. It makes things so much easier for us. Thank you for everything! You help get us through the difficult times...Sue