



CATHY DEROY



So far, 2018 has been an exciting and expansive year for the Magnolia Council. The Council has seen its establishment of Magnolia House take firm root and thrive as a haven for cancer patients. Magnolia House is the embodiment of one of the Council's defining achievements – the delivery of psychosocial programs to any cancer patients in the community desiring to partake of them. By providing free fitness, therapeutic and holistic programs, Magnolia House helps participants manage the physical and emotional challenges they face, and affords them the opportunity to meet and form relationships with others dealing with similar challenges. Since its inception in 2013, Magnolia House has seen thousands of participants. In 2017 alone, we had over 5,000 patient visits. Clearly, Magnolia House is serving a meaningful purpose in improving the lives of people who are coping with a cancer diagnosis.

Another important aspect of the work of the Magnolia Council is involvement in community education. As part of that, Council members attend presentations by prominent local speakers who share their expertise in areas of interest to the group. The Magnolia Council's Speakers Series presentations this year have been inspiring and stimulating. In February, we had a deeply moving discussion led by Tower's Community Program Director, Kelli Sargent, with three Magnolia House participants (Cathy Baker, Daphne Bishop and Jacklyn Eghbalich) who generously and openly shared their personal stories of the ways in which Magnolia House has benefited them, and has enhanced the quality of their lives.

In April, our own Dr. Solomon Hamburg addressed the Council. It is impossible not to feel enthusiastic and determined to redouble our efforts in support of the critically important work of Tower Cancer Research Foundation after listening to Dr. Hamburg's update on advances being made in the fight against cancer. He described, in non-technical terms (well, maybe there were a few technical terms), the thrilling promise of precision medicine and its targeted approaches to cancer diagnostics, screening and prevention, as well as treatments.

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In June, the Council enjoyed a presentation by dermatologist, Dr. Vicki Rapaport, who addressed the current outlook on skin cancer. Dr. Rapaport led an in-depth discussion about the detection and prevention of skin cancers, and the various treatments now available when skin cancer is diagnosed. The lively participation of the Council members who were present demonstrated their high level of interest in this subject that affects everyone.

Our final speaker for the year was Dr. Matthew Torrington, a specialist in addiction issues. He addressed how to manage pain while avoiding addiction to prescription painkillers. It is

a subject with applicability to pain management in connection with cancer but with broader applicability as well.

Going forward, the Magnolia Council has taken on an exciting, albeit challenging, fundraising goal. Having brought Magnolia House to fruition through monies raised by the Council, our hope is to fund a new, \$500,000 Senior Investigator Grant in the field of targeted therapies, and that this grant will be an important part of Tower's overall Power of Precision Campaign. The grant recipient, Dr. Xiaojiang Chen, has created a mutant DNA repair protein that irreversibly binds to cancer-cell-specific DNA errors occurring during cancer growth, leading to cell death. The aim is to develop this protein into an effective drug for cancer therapy. Suffice it to say, the Magnolia Council is proud to support the innovative research that will be funded by this new grant. We hope you will help us to achieve our inspirational, new goal.

*Cathy DeRoy
President, Magnolia Council*