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## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### Tower Cancer Research Continues Outreach to Patients and Survivors

By Sandra Sims

In recognition of breast cancer awareness month, the Courier spoke with Nancy Mishkin, breast cancer survivor and founder of the Tower Cancer Research Magnolia Council, about the Council's 10th Anniversary, and the upcoming Spirit of Hope Luncheon and Boutique. Mishkin, who is a sculptor, told the Courier that the award luncheon started as a way to increase community awareness of the Tower Cancer Research foundation.

This year, the award luncheon will be held on Oct. 14 at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel and will honor two prominent physicians: Dr. Beth Karlan, professor and Vice Chair of Women's Health Research in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Dr. Arash Asher, the Director of Cancer Survivorship and Rehabilitation at the Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Mishkin explained, "We decided to put on a luncheon with the goal to get people to know our name and understand what we do for cancer survivors and families of cancer survivors. I wanted to start a community."

Honoree Dr. Asher partners with the Council on the Magnolia House which provides cancer patient support and survivorship programs. Describing the goal of Magnolia House, Mishkin added, "We wanted a place where someone could go and feel safe and find 'like' people. Community is very powerful."

The Magnolia House is primarily funded by the Magnolia Council with additional support from individual donations. Linda David, Executive Director of the Tower Cancer Research Foundation, told the Courier that any cancer survivor can participate in the psycho-social programs regardless of whether they are patients of the Tower Cancer Research program. "Anybody with a cancer diagnosis is welcomed," added David. She explained that Magnolia House offers mind/body connection classes at no cost to cancer patients and survivors. David said that the program has grown in numbers over the past three years from 2,500 patients to 10,000 patients.

Two-time cancer survivor Michelle Grant, who will introduce the honorees at the luncheon, told the Courier that she was treated by both honorees during her cancer treatment journey. Grant is a survivor of both breast and ovarian cancer, having participated in the Magnolia House Cancer Survivor rehabilitation program. Grant said her participation in the Grace program was particularly helpful as she prepared for surgery. "I credit patient support to how I was strong enough to get through it," said Grant. David explained that the Grace program, led by Dr. Asher along with Chaplain Bronwen Jones and Dr. Jeff Wertheimer, is an educational support program that helps participants develop coping skills to manage fears related to their diagnosis.

David explained that the teaching is based on Holocaust survivor Viktor Emil

Frankl's book, "Man's Search for Meaning," which addresses finding a purpose in life. She explained that the program helps to restore hope and faith to survivors because it teaches them about adaptive ways of reacting to a prognosis, whether it is terminal or not, and other things that are beyond their control. "There were a lot of requests from people who didn't have terminal prognosis who also wanted to participate," added David.

David explained that the mind/body classes offered for cancer survivors at the Magnolia House include fitness courses such as yoga, Pilates, aerobics, belly dancing, and strength/cardio classes. Courses also include meditation and skin-

care treatment, as well as healing art such as drawing, painting, and collage. "It is important for people to know we are here for them regardless of where they are in their relationship with cancer. We are here to make their journey easier," said David.

Mishkin reflected on the Magnolia Council's journey to keep the Tower Cancer Research and survivor programs accessible and free for all who participate. "We knew we had to survive and we made it. So far, so good." Mishkin added, "Nobody is alone, and that's what's so important."



2017 Spirit of Hope Luncheon & Boutique honorees. Front row of the photo, from L to R: Shelley Warsavsky, Beth Goren, Dr. Jay Orringer, Nancy Mishkin, Donna Rosen.