



The Virginia Thurston

Healing Garden Cancer Support Center

Providing education and therapeutic services to those living with cancer

The Garden View

March 2019

Spring Newsletter

The Power of Fresh Vegetables: Farm Share Program Supports Healthy Cancer Treatment Outcomes

Offering access to fresh produce and nutritional education for those in treatment

The Healing Garden completed its third annual Farm Share program and pilot study last fall in collaboration with Community Harvest Project in Grafton. This annual six-week partnership is designed to offer our clients better access to fresh fruits and vegetables and nutritional education while studying the impact access has to overall health outcomes for clients and their families.

Sixteen Healing Garden clients (including 10 Fund-A-Need participants who demonstrated food insecurity) were offered free membership in a farm share distribution program run by Community Harvest Project. Every week clients received a bounty of fresh produce and engaged in classes and lectures promoting healthy eating habits and addressing their nutritional concerns during survivorship.

Participants reported at the beginning of the program that their top nutritional concerns included having the time/energy required to cook healthy meals, and the cost of fresh food.

Professional Chef Amy Noordzij provided participants with education, delicious, healthy recipes using health-supportive culinary tech-

niques, and the know-how to incorporate immune-boosting foods into meals that could be recreated in home kitchens.

"During cancer treatment the appetite can be compromised; preparing fresh meals with color and presentation sets the digestive system into motion," said Noordzij. "Fruits and vegetables are rich

During cancer treatment the appetite can be compromised; preparing fresh meals with color and presentation sets the digestive system into motion.

Chef Amy Noordzij

sources of phytonutrients which stimulate enzymes that help the body get rid of toxins, build immunity, and improve cardiovascular health."

According to Brianne Carter, MTS, LICSW, OSW-C, Co-Director of Integrative Care, the farm share program has emerged as a

"nutrition support group". She said "The cooking classes and weekly meetings provide a way for clients to navigate through the challenge of re-acquainting with food, their bodies and the changes in their household after a cancer trial."

According to one client, "The most important part of the program was how great it was to learn how to use nutrition to maximize health benefits."

The Farm Share program has demonstrated that access to fresh produce plus nutrition education can markedly improve client health.

Results by the Numbers:

69% increase in vegetable intake

60% decrease in nutritional concerns

27% improvement in well-being

33% spoke to their medical doctors about nutrition



Clients universally stated that a particular benefit of the farm share program was gathering with others to discuss the impact of cancer on their food choices.

More Inside:

Client Storypage 2

Educating on Palliative Carepage 2

Volunteer Voicepage 3

Calendarpage 4



Newlywed Finds Hope at the Healing Garden

A Client Story: Meet Jeannie Karwowski

Jeannie Karwowski was just starting the most exciting time of her life: At age 30 she was a newlywed, recently relocated to Boston, and a career in the field of biomedical engineering were on track. Jeannie looked forward to settling into life with her new husband, with sights on earning a PhD and starting a family.

A Stage II breast cancer diagnosis was not in the plan. When Jeannie found a lump four months after moving to Boston, her life changed in ways she could not imagine. Immediately she traded newlywed life for treatment: rounds of chemo, mastectomy, immunotherapy and radiation.

While doctors provided medical treatment, Jeannie knew she needed more - she was mentally and physically worn out. That's when she found the Healing Garden. "The

Healing Garden didn't look like a hospital at all. It felt like I was being invited to a friends' house. Everyone was so thoughtful. I'm not a patient - I'm family when I'm here."

Over the past two years Jeannie has participated in many of the Healing Garden's services: From massages to mindfulness programs to acupuncture for neuropathy in her hands and feet, Jeannie comes regularly "to take care of my physical and emotional well-being."

Her husband and mother have found solace at the Healing Garden, too, participating in services and caregiver support groups. "I can't find anywhere else where caregivers can come also. It's so helpful for them to share with others and understand what I'm going through." Jeannie and her husband Piotr even come just to walk through the garden



Jeannie Karwowski and her husband Piotr. Jeannie has participated in many services at the Healing Garden since her diagnosis. "It's a special spot. I am so thankful for being introduced here."

and take photos of birds.

"I really don't know what I would have done without the Healing Garden," she said. "When I come here I feel at home."

Healing Garden Now Providing Free Continuing Education Units for Oncology Professionals

Thanks to the generous support of our donors and corporate sponsors, the Healing Garden is now offering free Continuing Education Units (CEU's), for oncology social workers and nurses.

Under the direction of Brianne Carter, Co-Director of Integrative Care, the CEU program will introduce the Healing Garden and our practitioners to a wide range of professionals across the state while educating on issues of survivorship and palliative care.

Our first CEU program was held on February 10th, welcoming over 30 regional oncology professionals for a viewing and discussion of the 2018 documentary film *End Game*. This Oscar-nominated film follows visionary medical practitioners who work with terminally ill patients.

Post-film discussions about life, death and living with illness were lead by Brianne Carter and Jerry Soucy, RN, a Certified Hospice and Palliative Care



Healing Garden Co-Director of Integrative Care Brianne Carter (center) leads a discussion group of oncology professionals.

Nurse (CHPN) with expertise in end of life care. This CEU program was presented in partnership with Good Shepherd Institute.

To be notified of upcoming CEU programs please email brianne@healinggardensupport.org.


Join our Advisory Council!

Join a large community of cancer care professionals, practitioners, donors and volunteers in supporting the mission of the Healing Garden as an ambassador on our Advisory Council. Help promote integrative cancer care, share news, and network with other members. Please email kelly@healinggardensupport.org and find out how our Advisory Council members make an impact.



The Garden View is the newsletter of the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden Cancer Support Center, the premiere provider of integrative oncology care in Massachusetts. We offer therapeutic services, support groups and counseling for those who are affected by cancer – men, women, and their caregivers – regardless of cancer type, prognosis, or financial ability to pay for services.

Founders:
William Thurston
Elizabeth Tyson-Smith

Find us on 
@VirginiaThurston
HealingGarden

Board of Directors:
David Martin, MBA, Chair
Karen Shea, Vice Chair
Timothy Wondolowski, CPA, Treasurer
Thomas Mackie, Esq., Clerk

Marcia Croyle
Jennifer Cunningham-Butler
Sarah Hindle
Holly Kouvo
Sharon Pontes

Anne Rarich
Pamela Sawyer, MHA
Ruth Silman, Esq.
Jon Way, MD

Staff:
Margaret Koch, Executive Director
Brianne Carter, LICSW, MTS, OSW-C, Co-Director of Integrative Care
Christine Zinke, LICSW, Co-Director of Integrative Care
Kelly Marchand, Executive Assistant & Care Coordinator
Max Roberts, Expressive Arts Therapy Intern
Alison Peterson, Business Manager & CFO
Rachel F. Lucas, PR/Marketing

The Virginia Thurston
Healing Garden
Cancer Support Center
Providing education and therapeutic services to those living with cancer

**145 Bolton Road
Harvard, MA 01451
healinggardensupport.org
978-456-3532**

Sharing Healing Therapies with Patients of the Family Health Center of Worcester

Impacting Cancer Survivorship Across the Language Divide

Healing Garden practitioners have been privileged the past few months to get to know patients at the Family Health Center of Worcester, bringing education and support services to those with a cancer diagnosis.

The culturally diverse group of patients speak a variety of languages including Albanian, Spanish, and Portuguese. We have found that compassion transcends the spoken language: Through translators, Healing Garden therapists have offered insights into healing practices and experiences that could help relieve the stress they might feel as a result of their diagnoses.

On February 28th a group of 10 patients and 3 translators came to the Garden for a retreat to experience some of these practices right here on site. Attendees were invited to try various therapies from sound therapy to touch therapy including massage and Reiki. Many of the patients had never experienced these kinds of holistic body-mind therapies before.

Attendees resoundingly responded that the retreat was a positive experience. One patient said: "When you walk in here it feels like a different world. I wish everyone could have a chance to visit this place. Perfection."

We are grateful to the Expect Miracles Foundation for funding this retreat for the benefit of our friends at the Family Health Center of Worcester.



Patients from the Family Health Center of Worcester participate in art therapy (top) and group therapy (bottom) at a retreat on Feb. 28th hosted by the Healing Garden.

Volunteer Voice

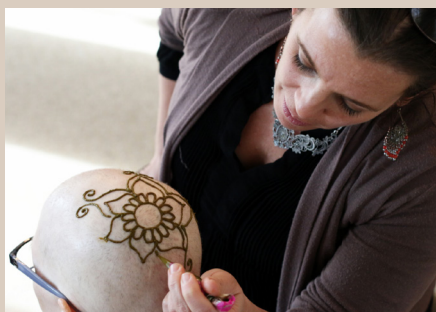
Henna Artist Helps Clients Find Beauty in Vulnerability

Henna artist Mandy Roberge has been volunteering her artistry at the Healing Garden once a month since 2016, designing free, semi-permanent henna tattoos for our clients. Each tatto is inspired by the client's cancer journey.

Mandy is the owner and creator of

Wicked Good Henna and hand-makes her skin-safe henna from henna powder, lemon juice, and essential oils.

Our clients especially love Mandy's "henna crowns" designed for people who have lost their hair due to chemotherapy



treatment. "Every time I do a crown I feel like I get the gift of that person's trust at probably the most vulnerable time in their life, which I take very seriously and is a huge honor for me."

Mandy lost her father to cancer in 2017, and is often moved to tears as clients open up to her. "I gave one client a hand tattoo and she said it was the first time that she had received a loving touch from a stranger since her diagnosis. I was moved beyond words. I always walk out of the Healing Garden better for having been there," she said.



5 Ways you made A Difference in 2018:

1 180 workshops/classes, 60% offered free of charge

2 85 free support group meetings with 519 attending

3 1,361 lbs of fresh vegetables obtained for clients with food insecurity

4 175 Acupuncture Visits

5 107 Psychotherapy Sessions

With every donation you improve life for patients and their caregivers who face life with cancer.

145 Bolton Road
 Harvard, MA 01451



Joining a support group at the Healing Garden is the single most helpful thing I have done for myself since my cancer diagnosis. Because of the support group I retained my ability to smile, and even to laugh, while living with cancer.

Healing Garden Client

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join Us!

SWING INTO SPRING

APRIL 25, 2019

10th Annual Gala & Auction
to Benefit the Virginia Thurston Healing
Garden Cancer Support Center

Nashoba Valley Winery
Bolton, MA

Join us for great wines, good friends, and a fun
night to benefit cancer support services.

Send a Message of Support in our Program Book!
See our website for additional opportunities and
for event tickets:

healinggardensupport.org

Spring Concert Series

All concerts start at 3:00 pm, \$15 per person, cash or check at the door. Proceeds benefit programs for those affected by cancer.

March 31	THE SATURDAYS blend of folk & bluegrass
April 28	SUZANNE CABOT & PAMELA HINES jazz-vocal & piano
May 5	PAN LOCO steel drums, calypso & reggae
June 16	ESPRESSIVO TRIO flute, harp, trumpet

Please visit healinggardensupport.org for scheduling updates or cancellations. Presented in partnership with the Hip Hop Mamas Dance Company.