



# AFFORDING CANCER CARE IN AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMY

A few months ago, I hoped the downturn in the economy would soon be just a bit of history. Those months pale in comparison to where we are today-hoping for an upturn sooner rather than later. The indiscriminate nature of a downturn like this brings heightened anxiety to families with a cancer diagnosis. These families are coping with additional medical bills in addition to worries about taking care of normal life activities. The ripple effect begins as patients have to make choices about the "if and when" to see a doctor or pay a mortgage.

Put simply, even in a recession (or depression), cancer still exists.

Always striving to be optimistic, I reflect on the work we have done to prepare for times like these. Our patient groups and classes have record attendance. We are offering new treatment options.

Patients are letting us know how thankful they are.

While the economy may be in a state of uncertainty, it is clear that the Cancer Center is able to continue offering quality and compassionate care to patients because of this generous community and the prudent decisions of the Board of Trustees. Have our endowment funds been affected by this financial crisis? Yes, and now we rely on your financial support to fulfill our mission more than ever. We certainly have much to be thankful for including you who have helped us get where we are today!

Rick Scott  
President



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*The charitably supported Cancer Center of Santa Barbara provides state-of-the-art care to those on the journey to live with, through and beyond cancer by retaining devoted personnel from nationally renowned medical programs, acquiring the latest technology and research trial protocols, as well as integrating patient support, wellness, and survivor programs.*

(805) 682-7300

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## Minding the Gap

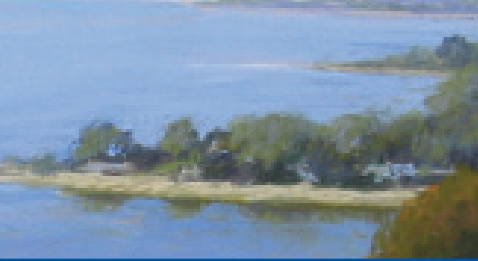
It is not unusual for cancer patients under treatment at the Cancer Center to reveal extremely personal information about their lives as they journey forward. Daily appointments scheduled for months at a time create an environment where emotional support becomes necessary to carry patients through. Often in these intimate times we find that many families' finances are increasingly taxed as they get further into their treatment course. Staying gainfully employed becomes difficult as treatment carries on month after month. In less affluent socioeconomic communities, many people are unaware of early detection screening processes, that when utilized, provide a much better chance at a cure in less time. Because a cancer diagnosis is sometimes delayed, the treatment process can bring life to a virtual standstill.

Such is the case for Blanca Caro, a private duty housekeeper, who at the age of 40, was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her oncologists at the Cancer Center agreed that in addition to a mastectomy,

Blanca would need weeks of radiation treatment and months of chemotherapy. But her earning power came to a screeching halt after her surgery. The \$500 a month child support she received was not sufficient to cover her rent, utilities, transportation, and food for her three "hungry" teenagers.



The Cancer Center's acute knowledge of cases like Blanca's prompted the Board of Trustees to establish a patient assistance fund years ago. Twenty-five year social work veteran of the Cancer Center, Mary Solis, jumped at the chance to help this woman find immediate solutions to her problems. In fact, Mary's innovative ideas and community partnership programs earned her the title of National Oncology Social Worker of the Year in 2004. Blanca was able to receive all of the tools necessary, both financial and emotional, from Mary's



# PROGRAM POINTS

## Minding the Gap continued from page 1

collaborative work among seven agencies that helped her carry out her battle plan. Thankfully, Blanca won and is now back to the work she is so thankful to have.

When Americans travel to England, we are struck by the warning phrase to "mind the gap" between the station platform and the speeding trains in the London Underground. In context, the unfamiliar phrase makes perfect sense – don't fall in the gap (mind the gap) lest you become injured. In the case of the Cancer Center, it is dedicated professionals like Mary Solis, and her team of social workers, who "mind the gap" for our patients by standing between a solid foundation and a speeding train.

Mary and her team tirelessly pursue resources to make immediate change in the lives of patients. But, for the first time in 25 years, Mary observed a sign in late December 2008 that it could potentially be more difficult to "mind the gap" in the challenging times ahead.

She says, "I could always say in complete confidence that I will find you a grant to cover one or two months of rent or mortgage payments, while you await your disability check." Today with the recent change in the economy, even foundations are beginning to pull back and now she must use the words, "I will *try* to find you the funding."

Our hope is that every cancer patient will be courageous enough to tell us the truth of their circumstances, especially in an economy such as this where we know people are having to second guess every expenditure, so that we can

treat them and put them on the road to recovery faster. AND, we hope that those of us living healthy lives will collectively "mind the gap" for our fellow community members. It will take

both generous and sometimes sacrificial dollars to lift up those who are truly at the end of their rope.

In 2008, the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara provided more than \$4 million of charity care and community benefits. Mary notes that her staff performed the following:

- 1,825 hours spent acquiring mortgage, rent, transportation, and food resources for patients
- 735 hours spent counseling families coping with the disease
- 260 hours spent leading groups where patients and families can dialogue and learn to support one another

We ask that you consider joining us with an early year charitable gift. Thank you for considering the impact these gifts will have on the lives of many in our town.

To contact the Cancer Center's Support Services staff, please call (805) 682-7300, or email [SupportServices@ccsb.org](mailto:SupportServices@ccsb.org)

Mary Solis, L.C.S.W.  
Support Services Manager





# YOU CAN HELP



With so many sporting events taking place every month in town, how do you decide between them? Do you look for a scenic route, a challenging but manageable distance, or an event that supports a cause that you believe in?

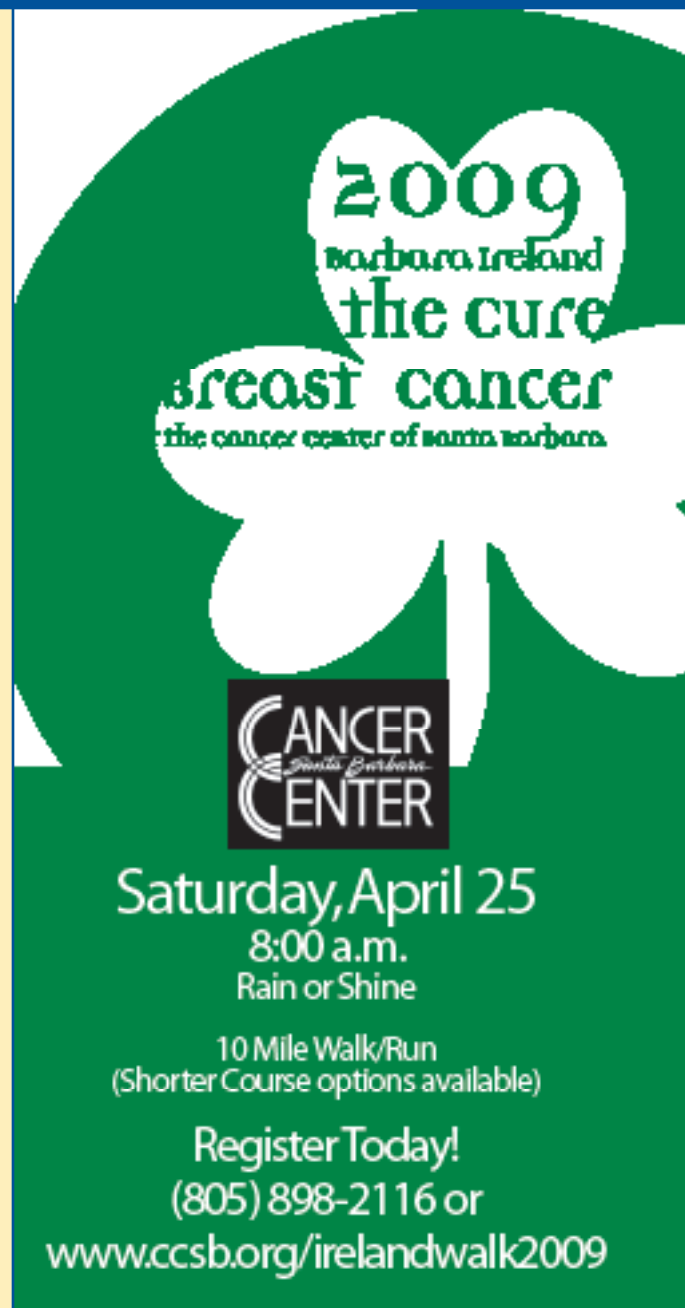
The *Barbara Ireland Walk for the Cure* features all of these and goes one step further. One hundred percent of all entry fees and pledges directly support breast cancer research at the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, who cover all of the costs associated with the event, every dollar brought in by a participant goes to further clinical breast cancer research and education in Santa Barbara.


**Mentor Corporation** is a premier sponsor of the 2009 Walk. A leader in aesthetic surgical products, locally-based Mentor Corporation has been an instrumental partner with the *Barbara Ireland Walk for the Cure* for the last several years. Their partnership with the event began with Andrea Fox, a Brand Manager for Mentor Corporation. Andrea committed to helping the Walk because she is a breast cancer survivor. Andrea said, "Mentor understands what a breast cancer diagnosis means to a woman. Patient education is at the heart of what we do so patients can make decisions and choices that are right for them. I have made it a personal goal to share my story and help women become better aware of the possibilities and options that exist."

Thank you, Mentor Corporation. Thank you, Andrea!

To learn more about the *Barbara Ireland Walk for the Cure*, please call (805) 898-2116.

**2009**  
Barbara Ireland  
**the cure**  
**breast cancer**  
the cancer center of santa barbara



**Saturday, April 25**  
8:00 a.m.  
Rain or Shine

10 Mile Walk/Run  
(Shorter Course options available)

**Register Today!**  
(805) 898-2116 or  
[www.ccsb.org/irelandwalk2009](http://www.ccsb.org/irelandwalk2009)



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