

weSPARK
Cancer Support Center

13520 Ventura Blvd.
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

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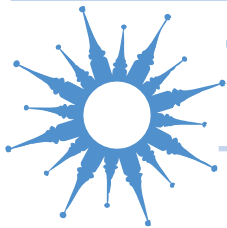
weSPARK is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization offering completely free services to the community. We raise funds through generous contributions from concerned individuals and friends in our community and local companies who understand and graciously support the programs and goals of *weSPARK*. In addition to individual gifts, *weSPARK* raises funds through our special events. Remembering *weSPARK* Cancer Support Center in your will is another time-honored way to further your legacy of giving. Your generous donation and support is greatly appreciated.

Words from weSPARK



weSPARK is filled with amazing guests who exude hope, strength and incredible courage. One guest who has been an inspiration to so many is Talitha Bell. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in August of last year and learned about weSPARK from a brochure at her doctor's office. Talitha, who describes herself as shy, never really felt comfortable in a support group. Instead she was able to find many healing opportunities in weSPARK's classes. Initially, she saw that it would be easy to get sucked into worrying about her treatment and whether her cancer would return; nevertheless she tried to express herself in yoga, tai chi, energy sessions, Return to Wholeness and Reiki. Participating in all these classes, Talitha learned to deal with what was directly in front of her instead of dwelling on her fears. Over time, amidst the nurturing atmosphere of weSPARK, she realized that it is actually easier and more helpful to stay positive. Being present and in the moment has given Talitha a new lease on life. She devotes herself to healing and has made weSPARK her second home, spreading her knowledge and inspiration to other guests.

Participating in healing classes encouraged Talitha to express herself in ways she never had before. She has relished the opportunities to try new things in a safe place without the fear of being judged. weSPARK has taught her how to be in a group. She acknowledges that the classes have been a metaphor for life. For example, in her quilting class she has learned how to deal with people with different personalities. They come together as individuals in a safe and cozy environment and together they are making something spectacular. At first this trying some new things was hard for Talitha, but eventually she learned that it is possible to stay centered and focused even with other people and activities going on around her. One of the biggest lessons Talitha has learned is being grounded, no matter what comes up. Talitha believes that she has come a long way this past year and has acquired tools that help her deal with stress better than she ever has. Using Guided imagery, yoga, tai chi, energy sessions and even her own breath, Talitha has learned how to progress through normal life stressors so that things just flow better for her. ▲



The Art of Living . . . A Profile of Hernando Cote

by Sheryl Lester

With a warm smile and gentle spirit, Hernando Cote is a welcome presence for the other guests and staff at weSPARK, where he has spent many afternoons enjoying a variety of workshops ranging from creative writing to jewelry making. During a recent conversation, Hernando's calm optimism and robust appearance posed a stark contrast

THE ART OF LIVING, continued on page 7

Our Founder,
Wendie Jo Sperber



Schedule At-A-Glance:

MONDAY

- 9am-12pm Return to Wholeness **by appointment**
- 10am-3pm Reiki **by appointment**
- 11:00am Mah Jongg - (taught & played)
- 4-5:30pm Children's Groups
- 6:00pm Teen Support Group
- 6:30pm Grief Support Group - For Widows, Widowers, Partners
- 7:00pm Caregiver's Support Group
- 7:00pm Restorative Yoga

TUESDAY

- 9am-12pm Return to Wholeness **by appointment**
- 10:00am Tai Chi - Beginners Welcome
- 10am-3pm Reiki **by appointment**
- 11am-1pm Creative Writing Group
- 11:00am Kundalini Yoga
- 3:00pm Post Treatment Support Group
- 4:30am Integrative Yoga
- 6:00pm Post Treatment Support Group - Co-Ed
- 6pm-8pm Reiki **by appointment**
- 7:00pm In-Treatment Support Group - Women

WEDNESDAY

- 9am-3pm Qi gong Energy Sessions **by appointment**
- 10:30am Yoga
- 12:30pm Ongoing Treatment Support Group - Co-Ed
- 1:00am Guided Imagery
- 4:15-6pm Reiki **by appointment**
- 6:00pm Breast Cancer Networking Group (3rd Wednesday of the month)
- 7:00pm Look Good / Feel Better (2nd Wednesday of the month)
- 7:30pm Kundalini Yoga

THURSDAY

- 10:00am Yoga
- 12:00pm In-Treatment Support Group
- 12-1:30pm Post Treatment Support Group
- 2:00pm Tai Chi - Beginners welcome
- 3:00pm Integrative Yoga
- 4:30pm Guided Imagery
- 6:00pm Grief Support Group - For family members
- 6:00pm Caregiver's Support Group

FRIDAY

- 10am-12pm NET **by appointment**
- 9:00am Integrated Energy Sessions **by appointment**
- 11:00am Kundalini Yoga
- 11:00am Ongoing Treatment Support Group - Co-ed

DAILY

- 10am-3pm Equine Assisted Therapy (Call Robin @ El Dustberry Ranch 818-995-0277)

*call for details and to reserve space.

**Intake and sign up required for all programs

Why Yoga? *by Lauren Maher, CYT*

As a yoga instructor and yoga therapist, I have long been a strong believer and proponent of the healing aspects of yoga. Whether it be a new lightness in expression, transformed posture, or a newfound physical strength, time and time again I have watched yoga transform my students. However, it has been the experience of teaching yoga at *weSPARK* that has solidified my faith in yoga's incredible ability to heal, uplift and transform.

There is no question that facing a cancer diagnosis and its ensuing treatment is one of life's greatest challenges. Most everyone at *weSPARK* is familiar with the staggering variety of physical, mental and even spiritual ailments and imbalances that can accompany cancer. Though yoga may not be a cure for this, its holistic approach to health can help to soften the edges of the disease and its treatment, providing guests with a greater sense of physical and mental well being.

The philosophy and practice of yoga is holistic, it takes into account the health of the entire person—body, mind and spirit. Yoga treats a person as a whole, rather than a collection of problems and ailments. Indeed, in yoga participants are treated as essentially whole and perfect, even if we are having an experience of disease or pain. Yogis believe that underneath all of our pain and suffering, there is a radiant light of health, wholeness and truth. Like the sun, it is always shining—even if it is sometimes covered by the clouds.

On a physical level, yoga incorporates stretching, bending, twisting and balancing movements. These postures help to stretch and strengthen the body and increase stamina, flexibility and circulation. A skilled yoga therapist is well versed in anatomy and physiology and will understand which postures can help a student. Utilizing that base of knowledge along with a healthy dose of intuition, a yoga therapist can design a simple series of postures and breathing techniques specific to their students' needs.

Yoga provides a tool-kit for all kinds of situations. Someone who is recovering from a mastectomy may need gentle heart openers, or to simply lie supported on a bolster to open the heart, break up scar tissue and increase lung capacity. Meanwhile, someone who is struggling from chemotherapy fatigue might benefit from energizing right nostril breathing or a mild inversion. A person with digestive troubles may benefit from a simple knee-to-chest stretch. It is a benefit to most students to simply lie down and rest, feeling nurtured and cared for by their yoga instructor. The psycho-physiological value in feeling relaxed and cared for cannot be underestimated. As the physician Francis Peabody once remarked, "The secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient."

These days, the detrimental effects of stress on the nervous system and immune system are well known. It is evident that we all must practice self-care and self-love. In many ways, yoga can be an antidote for the continual stress and strain that occurs while experiencing cancer. Yoga's holistic approach engages the practitioner on a physical, emotional and spiritual level and helps to facilitate deep rest and relaxation, providing opportunities for greater health and healing. ▲



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Wendie Jo Sperber

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weSPARK

13520 Ventura Blvd. Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

Tel (818) 906-3022 Fax (818) 906-3021

info@wespark.org www.wespark.org

weSPARK Santa Clarita (661) 288-2322

to his personal struggles — the 74 year-old has been diagnosed with Stage 4 kidney cancer and he is also dealing with the painful realization that he could no longer care for his wife of 52 years, Celmira. “After seven years as her sole care-giver, I became ill and was too weak to watch over her, particularly when I was undergoing chemotherapy and it was a very difficult time. She is now in a convalescent home near our house where she gets the treatment she needs and I see her every day.”

A gifted artist who started drawing at eight years old in his native Colombia, Hernando enjoyed a long career Los Angeles as a successful production artist and designer. “After I retired in 1997, I told myself I would spend my time doing what I like best, which is oil painting at my home studio. I also have three grown children and seven grandchildren, and I want to stay well so that I can be with them, enjoy them and watch the babies grow up. I get a lot of support from my family and from *weSPARK* and that makes me happy.” In fact, during our morning chat, Hernando receives a phone call from one of his grandsons who will be accompanying him to a doctor’s visit later that day, and his emotional bond to Robert is quite evident during their brief conversation.

Hernando, who is currently in remission, goes on to explain that he first visited *weSPARK* on a friend’s recommendation and it has deeply affected his life and outlook in a positive way. “It is definitely for me and I love it. I like to participate in different programs because it makes me forget about my sickness. I enjoy challenges and am always glad to learn something new; I don’t want to sit home alone and be afraid, I want to keep moving forward the best way I can. *weSPARK* is a special place because everyone understands what you are going through and I often think my problems aren’t that bad compared to other stories I hear. When I am taking a class and keeping busy, I am not fixating on my health, which gives me perspective and the motivation to stay upbeat,” he adds.

“The support groups are also interesting and present a great opportunity to connect with other cancer patients who are having similar experiences. It helps me mentally to clear my mind and I always feel comfortable sharing my thoughts. I especially look forward to my Tuesday workshop and immediately register for any new classes that interest me. *weSPARK* has become an extremely important part of my life and treatment.”

“I will also admit that I am not afraid to die, because I realize we all must, but I want to get the fullest out of my life. Nothing is going to stop me, not even my cancer — I still have hope and no one is going to take that away. I will never give up.” ▲



LOOK GOOD ... FEEL BETTER

Join us at *weSPARK* for a night of beauty & fun, plus a make-up kit provided by the American Cancer Society.

We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in Sherman Oaks.

Space is limited, must call to sign-up.

To sign up, call Patricia at 818-906-3022

Upcoming Programs:

Sherman Oaks

Goal Setting Jump Start 2009

Thursday, January 8th at 7:00pm

Let’s define our goals, affirm the positive, image success of Mind/Body/Spirit, find our emotional centers, and let the universe do the rest.

Facilitated by: Cheryl O’Neil, Metaphysical Hypnotherapist



Create a Vision Board

Tuesday, January 16 at 1:30pm

What experiences would you like to welcome into your life in 2009? Using a variety of art and collage materials, create your vision of the life you want. If you can dream it, you can create it!

Facilitated by: Angela De Vita, MA, ATR, CHT



My Bridge 4 Life (5-Week Series)

Tuesday, January 20 at 7:00pm

An Interactive Workshop for Cancer Patients & Caregivers.

Facilitated by: Roger Holzberg



Reflections: Photo Journaling

Monday, January 26 at 2:30pm

A disposable camera can be used to document a great journey. Unencumbered by technology and free to reflect what is in your heart. Please join us to learn how to translate feelings into images!

Taught by: Raleigh Robinson



Nutrition & Cancer Update 2009

Wednesday, January 28 at 2:30pm

with Rachel Beller, MS, RD

from the Beller Nutritional Institute

Santa Clarita

Create a Vision Board

Tuesday, January 13 at 1:30pm

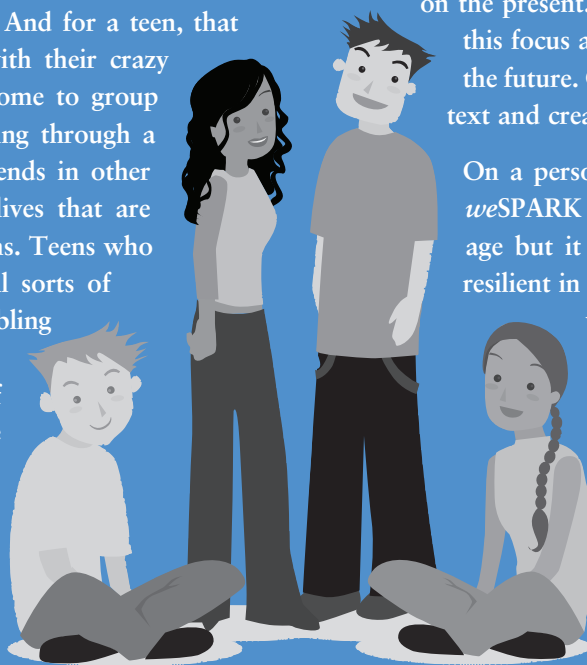
What experiences would you like to welcome into your life in 2009? Using a variety of art and collage materials, create your vision of the life you want. If you can dream it, you can create it!

Facilitated by: Angela De Vita, MA, ATR, CHT

weSPARK Teens *by*

Kim Tortorici thoroughly enjoys working with the teens at weSPARK. She gets the fact that teen brains don't function the same ways as adults do. In fact, teens are not geared to talking about cancer all the time. A common refrain for teens when asked about having a loved one with cancer is "I think about cancer 24/7, I don't want to talk about it." The wonderful thing about the teen group is that the teens tend to bring up all kinds of issues that affect their lives, in addition to cancer, and that is because Kim has done an amazing job instilling trust and cohesion in the group. The teens feel comfortable talking about cancer and other life issues when their needs arise.

Recently, a teen remarked that the other group members "know more about me than anyone." And for a teen, that sentiment is really important. Even with their crazy and demanding schedules, the teens come to group to find support from other people going through a similar experience. Sure, they have friends in other places, but those friends have home lives that are incredibly different than weSPARK teens. Teens who have a loved one with cancer have all sorts of special issues. There are frequently sibling changes when a parent is sick or has passed away. There is a certain level of forced maturity when chores need to be accomplished and life needs to go on and a parent is not available, physically and/or emotionally. Sometimes a teen just needs a safe place to vent and admit the frustration of "not getting to be a kid."



Another issue common to teens is guilt. They don't want to feel like a rebel for wanting a regular life. When they go out they often wonder if they should be home taking care of their loved one. They also worry about something happening when they are not there. So when these kids get together they can discuss these stressors as well as what is feeling good in their lives right now. Who and what are the special people, poetry, pets and events going on today? Teens need a safe place to laugh and kid around and feel normal. The need to be nurtured and taken care of and given the freedom to talk about the other issues in their lives that do not involve cancer. At home, life can feel darker and it is difficult for teens to abandon their worries and stay focused on the present. In group, Kim helps them to maintain this focus and avoid talking about and dwelling on the future. Outside of group, these teens email, talk, text and create their own support system as well.

On a personal note, Kim loves working with our weSPARK teens. Developmentally, it is a difficult age but it is also an exciting time. Teens are so resilient in spite of their sadness and loss. Working with them is a powerful reminder that life goes on and Kim is inspired to live her own life more fully. This work challenges her own strength in the face of hard times and helps her believe what the teens teach her every week, that all will be okay. ▲

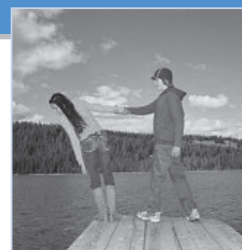
The Magic of Mandalas

weSPARK is pleased to offer an artistic class that enhances the lives of cancer patients and their families. In every culture there is circular artwork. In fact, Mandala is a



Sanskrit word meaning circle. Our goal is to create a dream board in a circular collage using all sorts of arts and crafts. The process is unique to each individual. You can create a Mandala for something you desire, something you want to purge or move on from; it can be a remembrance of the past or a wish for the future.

Mostly it is a representation of you in this very moment. The wonderful thing about the process is that you cannot make a mistake. There is no expectation or judgment. The idea is to take where you are and be in the moment. You may start with a circle as the template but in the safety of a supportive and positive group, you can feel free to color outside of the lines so that your art represents how you feel and think. Join Diane and Karen as they introduce us to the wonderful world of Mandalas April 29th. ▲



Are You a Teen with a Family Member or Loved-One Battling Cancer?

Come to weSPARK, a place where you can meet and talk with other teens facing some of the same issues.

Monday nights 6:00pm

Facilitated by: Kim Tortorici, MA

Spring 2009 Tributes

In Honor of:

<i>Honoree . . .</i>	<i>With Love From . . .</i>
Mark Brown	Bruce & Amber Gendein
Russ Diamond	Patricia Limon
David Green	Managing Partners Roundtable
Norma Henderson	Vicki & Nelson Carr
Maureen McLaughlin	Pat Quinn
Roberta Morgan	Mickley Gantman
Victoria Petersen	Laure Graham Miller
Larry Rennie	Bruce & Elaine Lazarus
Ruth Rubeni	Benjamin Rubeni
Carmen Sanchez	Gabriel Sanchez
Suzanne Shane-Mandler	Sharon Rosett
Hillel & Lisa Sperling's twins	Michele & Michael Ginsburg

In Memory of:

<i>Honoree . . .</i>	<i>With Love From . . .</i>
Anne Ablon	Tom & Gerry Donnelly
Ann Ablon	Michele & Michael Ginsburg
Ann Ablon	Sue & Hal Kassner
Ann Ablon	Charlotte & Rudi Specter
Ann Ablon	Milton & Suzanne Russikoff
Anne Ablon	Helene & Fred Kimmel
Anne Ablon	Gerry & Tom Donnelly
Ann Ablon	Charlene & Burt Sperber
Ann Ablon	Merryll & Robert Klausner
Melanie Rose Bardwell	Betty Rose
Maxine Barrett	Sharlene Miyagishima
Blanche Bogolanoff	Harry & Arlette Lumer
Blanche Bogolanoff	Judy & Les Pinchuk
Irv Butcher	Thel Levine
Gene Cline	Sally Winsberg
Pam Conway	Cherie Meagher
Julie Del Gado	Terri Rosoff
Julie Del Gado	Diane Meltz
Julie Del Gado	Janice Silver & Family
Julie Del Gado	Everyone at weSPARK
Julie Del Gado	Stanley Wolfson
Joe DeSilva	Everyone at weSPARK
Claire Dicker's Mother & Grandmother	Charlene & Burt Sperber
Leonard Friedman	Gary Friedman
Don Goodman	Melissa Goodman
Martin & Dorothy Kagan	Marilyn Kagan
Bryna Kerska	Gwen Schwengel
Bryna Kerska	Mark & Sally Schaffer
Bryna Kerska	Paula Gallardo & Jeff Gaskin
Bryna Kerska	Robert & Anna Freibrun
Bryna Kerska	Jackie Ubleman
Bryna Kerska	Bob, Dot, Kurt & Kyle Schaefer
Bryna Kerska	Janis Winklhofer
Bryna Kerska	Lou & Bill Woodruff
Bryna Kerska	Marion O'Mara
Bryna Kerska	Sarah Taylor
Bryna Kerska	Sam & Heather Morris
Bryna Kerska	Everyone at weSPARK
Bryna Kerska	Edward & Denise Garratt
Jan Klein	Everyone at weSPARK
Jan Klein	Helene Blumner
Jan Klein	Pam Huff
Jan Klein	Cindy Freymueller

In Memory of:

<i>Honoree . . .</i>	<i>With Love From . . .</i>
Jan Klein	Sharon Henish
Jan Klein	Irene Kabrin
Jan Klein	Charles & Karen Zumpft
Jan Klein	Herb Slavin
Jan Klein	Kevin & Debi Cox
Jan Klein	Lee & Howard Fink
Jan Klein	Martin & Janice Goldman
Jan Klein	Joel Hoffman @Aztec Financial
Jan Klein	Ruth Nunokawa
Jan Klein	Hirshfield Family
Jan Klein	Grace Anderson
Jan Klein	Vera Adams
Jan Klein	Ellen Gilbert
Jan Klein	Brian Schneider @ Phyl-Mar
Jan Klein	Rene & Tom O'Malley
Jan Klein	Jerome Bauer
Jan Klein	Sam & Paulette Kardashian
Jan Klein	Mike Clark
Jan Klein	Carol Schenasi
Jan Klein	Remory Family
Jane LaBate	Lynn LaBate
Sherrie Levenson	Sylvia Silver
Harlene Marshall	Eileen Goodkofsky
Harlene Marshall	Everyone at weSPARK
Michael Morin	James & Gayle McKenna
Gloria Neff	Arthur Toretzky
Michael Pollack	Steve Winard
Sally Robbins	Milton & Suzanne Russikoff

In Memory of:

<i>Honoree . . .</i>	<i>With Love From . . .</i>
Sally Robbins	Charlotte & Rudi Specter
Barbara Rosenbaum	Nita Metz
Richard Rosett	Sharon Rosett
Vera Scammon	Cheryl O'Neil
David Silver	Milton & Suzanne Russikoff
Judy Slavin	Herb Slavin
Stephen Sorenson	Joy Thurmond
Stuart Sperber	Michael & Margaret Lyons
Stuart Sperber	Gary Tungate
Wendie Jo Sperber	Gary Tungate
Wendie Jo Sperber	Marian Lobl
Wendie Jo Sperber	Karen Wallace
Wendie Jo Sperber	Rose Cicinelli
Wendie Jo Sperber	Katia McClain
Wendie Jo Sperber	Teresa O'Neill
Wendie Jo Sperber	Jack & Ann Sperber
Wendie Jo Sperber	Gloria Baran
Helen Steinberg	Sylvia Silver
Helen Steinberg	Jill & Joe Goldstein
Max Stern	Barbara Jampel
David & Sarah Topp	Michael Topp
Eva Worley	Deyna & Joe Alexander
Eva Worley	Andrea & Don Katz
Eva Worley	Bob, Suzi, Eric, & Jessica Guerin
Eva Worley	Zina Handley
Eva Worley	Susan Eskenazi
Eva Worley	Lorri & Irwin Spiegel
Rina Ziv	Eddie Ziv

Tributes:

50th Anniversary	Frank & Barbara Bereny	Jill & Joe Goldstein
Get Well	Teri Jacoby	Patty & Larry Goodman
Get Well	Merle Panish	Judy & Sol Hailpern
Happy Birthday	Dr. Ben Engel	Beverly & Mel Rosenthal
Happy Birthday	Robert Fox - 80	Valerie Brucker & Lee Myers
Happy Birthday	Libby Hershberg	Reina Robbins
Happy Birthday	Reggie Marsh - 80	Annie Broyles
Happy Birthday	Jack McGee	Janise & Bob Andres
Happy Birthday	Reina Robbins	Libby Hershberg
Happy Birthday	Mel Rosenthal - 80	Charlene & Burt Sperber
Happy Birthday	Jerry Schwartz - 90	Jill & Joe Goldstein
Happy Holidays	Inger & Stanley Colton	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Everyone at weSPARK	Bob & Cecile Wynn
Happy Holidays	Todd Davidson	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Dr. David Grossman	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Betty Heron	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Melody & Jerry Loustalot	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Carol & Joe Ruby	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Nancy & Noah Saxe	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Michele Shack	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Pam Stark	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	Arthur Toretzky	Daniel Tatar
Happy Holidays	Beverly & Fred Vickter	Sally Winsberg
Happy Holidays	weSPARK Staff	Dorothy, Nick, & Jenna
Happy New Year	Leslie & Robert Crane	Chris & Desly Fryer
Speedy Recovery	Mike Dingman	Sally Winsberg
Speedy Recovery	Lance Schneider	Selma Brown
Speedy Recovery	Irwin Schwartzman	Jill & Joe Goldstein
Thank you	weSPARK Staff	Lynn Fredman Weiss



Santa Clarita Valley Happenings

weMeditate in Santa Clarita

Today, a holistic approach to healing includes a thorough awareness of how our minds enhance our recovery process. Mindfulness is a spiritual discipline which calls on the power of your mind to manage physical and emotional pain. For people living with cancer, staying in the present and being mindful about your healing ability is very important. It is easy to overlook the potential to soothe yourself and help with your recovery. Even though you worry, right at this moment, you are safe. Instead of feeling anxious, it is better to focus on what you can do to take care of yourself. Meditation helps you maintain this focus. Cancer patients will realize that there is a deep inner part of the self that keeps you present and valuing right now. Once you experience the serenity that comes from Mindful Meditation, you will discover that bad news does not change who you are.



Vipassana, the 2600 year old Buddhist term for Mindful Meditation means “sitting on the cushion daily.” It teaches the fundamentals of meditation practice, not Buddhism. It can be used by anyone experiencing stress to develop an ability to be with life as it unfolds. Meditation decreases suffering. It acknowledges that no matter what is going on, you are okay. Your mind wants to plan and think because it wants a conclusion. By sitting on the cushion you will learn how easily you are consumed by your thoughts about the past and future. Meditation makes you aware of this tendency. It creates some space from the clutter in your mind and shifts your focus so that you can be physically, emotionally and spiritually aware in the present moment. Instead of feeling heavy

hearted, body weary, depressed or anxious, notice your thoughts with a non-judgmental attitude and listen to your breath. Now you are meditating.

Meditation gets easier with ongoing practice and is definitely worth the effort. So, pay attention, be awake and gain insight into the present. It will help you discover that the present is a place where you can learn to accept and trust your own experiences. Be mindful and cultivate your inner strength, balance and healing ability to better enjoy life.

weSPARK Cancer Support Center in Santa Clarita is thrilled to offer a Meditation class twice a month on Wednesday evenings. Join us for Restorative Yoga with Lisa Weill at 6pm and then the Meditation class led by Master Teacher Kathleen Fletcher at 7pm. ▲

Santa Clarita Valley Schedule At-A-Glance:

MONDAY

- 11:00am **In-Treatment Support Group**
Facilitated by Tara Shore, MA
- 4:00pm **Children’s Group**
Facilitated by Tara Shore & Sharon Earle
- 6:00pm **Post-Treatment Support Group**
Facilitated by Tara Shore, MA
- 7:30pm **Restorative Yoga**
Facilitated by Susie Jacobson

TUESDAY

- 9:30am **Integrative Yoga**
Facilitated by Susie Jacobson
- 11:00am **Metastatic Support Group**
Facilitated by Sharon Earle, LMFT
- 6:00pm **Caregivers Support Group**
Facilitated by Sharon Earle, LMFT

WEDNESDAY

- 11:30am **Kundalini Yoga**
Facilitated by Lisa Weill
- 6:00pm **Restorative Yoga (2nd Wednesday of the month)**
Facilitated by Lisa Weill

THURSDAY

- 11:00am **Creative Writing Workshop**
Facilitated by Tara Shore, MA
- 6:00pm **Bereavement Group**
Facilitated by Sharon Earle, LMFT
- 7:30pm **Tai Chi**
Facilitated by Valencia Martial Arts

FRIDAY

- 10:00am **Gentle Yoga**
Facilitated by Susie Jacobson
- 11am-5pm **Reiki**
Facilitated by Nicki Rothwell (by appt. only)

An intake is necessary before participating in our programming.

weSPARK Cancer Support Center
26370 Diamond Place Suite 507
Santa Clarita, CA 91350
(661) 288-2322

Group Therapy Beneficial for Breast Cancer Survivors

by Tara Shore, JD, MA

“When first diagnosed with cancer I was scared and very apprehensive about talking. I’m so glad I took that first step and called *weSPARK*. With *weSPARK* I have found a close knit family of support, comfort and care. With so many diverse classes and support groups, *weSPARK* has given me hope!”

A recent study led by Ohio State University confirmed what *weSPARK* guest, Shari, already knows: Group therapy for women with breast cancer may help them not only to cope better with their disease but also live longer. After following 250 women (who attended a support group for the first year following diagnosis and treatment) for 11 years, the study found that women who participated in group therapy were 56 percent less likely to die of breast cancer and 45 percent less likely to have their cancer return. Although

we do not recommend that women go to therapy in order to cure their cancer, the study concluded that “group sessions, among other things, aimed to reduce the women’s distress, train them how to relax and improve coping skills, improve their diet and exercise habits and discourage smoking and drinking alcohol.”

Addressing therapeutic issues following a cancer diagnosis most likely reduces stress which then increases the immune system. Too few cancer patients take part in support therapy which improves mood and quality of life, helps with adherence to medical regimens and improves general well-being. Our Santa Clarita *weSPARK* guests agree. Kris, a breast cancer survivor really enjoys coming to support group. “*weSPARK* is my safe

place. After a day of battling cancer...*weSPARK* is like a warm blanket that is wrapped around me. It is a place to get in touch with why I am angry or sad [and where I] learn to accept and realize that I am not the only one having these thoughts or emotions.” Karen, another breast cancer survivor, echoes these sentiments. “Coming to support group helps me not to feel alone. Getting therapy at *weSPARK* has been a life changing experience for me. Every group I have attended at *weSPARK* has taught me an important lesson and I feel so grateful because I know that these lessons have been given with love.”

Bernie Siegel has been working with and writing about cancer patients for a long time. He says there are three things you need to do upon diagnosis: accept, retreat and surrender.

Acceptance has nothing to do with your prognosis. You simply accept that you have cancer and that you are a participant in your journey. Retreat means withdrawing to a quiet place where you can be aware of your thoughts and feelings. It means knowing that the source of true peace and quiet is within you. Your role is to be fully alive to yourself and to your loved ones. The third step is to surrender. This does not mean giving up, it means that by surrendering to events and accepting the nature of life, you will experience peace. It is not doing nothing, it is about doing the right things. Here at *weSPARK*, we offer you many tools to enhance your journey: yoga, guided imagery, energy sessions, meditation, etc. Accept your situation, retreat into your oasis of love and serenity and surrender to the life you deserve. ▲



Kids Corner

The “wee”SPARK programs provide the following:

“wee” SPARKS Ages 4-8 • “Tweens” Ages 9-12

Using circle time, games and arts & crafts, these programs allow our younger guests to interact with others experiencing similar challenges.

Call to enroll your child in the appropriate group.

Sherman Oaks call (818) 906-3022 • Santa Clarita call (661) 288-2322