



*Our mission is to support women in taking charge of their cancer experience.*

## CALENDAR & RESOURCES

WCRC's Environmental Action Group meets the 4th Monday of the month at WCRC. Call the center at 612-822-4846 for more information.

**April 8, 2006** Book Release of "Heroines: Transformation in the Face of Breast Cancer." Twin Cities artist Jila Nikpay's book portrays 21 women who confronted the chaos of illness to emerge as heroines, with poetry, photos and an essay by Thomas Moore, author of "Care of the Soul." Former WCRC director Ceci Shapland is featured in the book. 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Cowles Library Commons, 2nd floor, Open Book, 1011 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis. Mary Jo Kreitzer, director of the Center for Spirituality and Healing, U of M, will speak.

**April 22** 20th Anniversary Celebration Gala for the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, honoring IATP's founder and outgoing president, Mark Ritchie, with keynote by Jim Hightower, environmental champion from Texas. 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the historic Depot, 225 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis. Call Ana at 612-879-7587 for tickets.

**April 25** Cancer Summit 2006, the Power of Collaboration. Minnesota Cancer Alliance, Cancer Plan Minnesota. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center. Keynote speaker is Tim Byers, M.D., M.P.H., University of Colorado Cancer Center. Visit [www.cancerplanmn.org](http://www.cancerplanmn.org) FFI.

**August 11 - 13** Canoe retreat for cancer survivors, Women in the Wilderness. Call Judith Niemi for details, 651-227-2284.

### Websites you may want to visit

Breast Cancer Action. Check out their newsletter (also in Spanish) at: [www.bcaction.org](http://www.bcaction.org)

Environmental news. Daily updates summarizing media coverage of environment and health.  
[www.EnvironmentalHealthNews.org](http://www.EnvironmentalHealthNews.org)

### In the WCRC lending library

**DVD:** "Visions for Cancer Recovery, a Guided Visualization and Health Meditation," by Mary Hallman, R.N. and cancer survivor. "Breathtaking footage and an original musical score." Just under 20 minutes. Includes a guided relaxation.

**CD:** "Health Journeys" For People Managing Pain," Belleruth Naparstek

### WCRC has 27 new books, including:

"Easy to Swallow, Easy to Chew" cookbook, by Donna L. Weihofen, R.D., M.S.

"Positive Options for Colorectal Cancer," by Carol Ann Larson

"How to Help Children Through a Parent's Serious Illness," by Kathleen McCue

"Surviving Cancer Emotionally: Learning How to Heal," by Roger Granet

"Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book," new 2005 edition, by Susan M. Love, M.D.

"Food Additives: A Shopper's Guide to What's Safe and What's Not," By Christina Hoza Farlow.

Come check out the hundreds of books, tapes and articles. You can also come in to use the computer for health topic searches. Please call ahead to make sure someone is there.

*Note: If you have an overdue book or materials, please return them so that others may use them.*

**Pathways, a Health Crisis Resource Center.** Call for their bi-monthly newsletter that lists programs and services, including massage therapy, healing touch, Reiki, energy work and reflexology. Priority for persons with cancer and their caregivers. 612-822-9061.

**CaringBridge.** This free, not-for-profit Internet service ([www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)) keeps friends and family informed during medical treatment. You can create a secure web page, then write journal entries and photos. Visitors to the site can read updates and post their own messages of support, love and encouragement. This Eagan, MN-based organization was founded in 1997 and now includes 28,000 personalized web sites in all 50 states and many countries, resulting in more than four million guestbook entries. Check it out yourself.

## LATE-BREAKING NEWS

### Board selects new executive director



As this newsletter was going to press, WCRC's board of directors announced that Cheryl A. Maloney, D.Min., was to start March 1 as executive director of the center. Cheryl was born and raised in the Twin Cities but lived for 18 years in the Bay Area of California, where she co-founded the HERS Breast Cancer Foundation. (HERS

stands for Hope, Empowerment, Renewal and Support.) She recently returned to Minnesota to help her parents who are facing health issues. With her education in pastoral ministry and her background in leading a similar non-profit organization, the board was very excited to bring her to the center. You'll be receiving a mailing soon with a message from Cheryl on her vision and plans for the center.

### WCRC's Betty Sanders makes news

Betty Sanders, who starts her sixth year leading WCRC's Woman to Woman program for African American and African women, was recently featured in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* as one of three stories of survival. Betty and her oncologist, Dr. Brian Rank, shared their stories of how they worked as a team to find medical care for her that was transforming for both of them.



Betty, age 50, lived on a plantation until she was six, with 10 siblings. She never went to a doctor. But at age 37, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and treated by a doctor who did not give the care she needed. After a recurrence two years later, she came to Dr. Rank, angry and mistrusting the medical

system. Now, she has been cancer-free for ten years. Not only has she learned to trust her new doctor, she helps others find the right health care for themselves and navigate through the health care system.

The Woman-to-Woman program is designed to help women of color reduce the barriers that prevent them from seeking and completing treatment for breast or cervical cancer. Betty's work involves contact and compassion. Some clients she counsels by phone. For others, she may drive them to and from chemo treatments and hold their hands, giving them support and hope. Through the years, she has answered hundreds of phone calls, touched the lives of thousands at community events doing presentations and provided one-on-one help for almost a hundred women going through treatment.

Early on, as she worked with women, though, she realized that more was needed. So one of her proudest achievements was to help build a coalition of seven local agencies called Sisters in Harmony to help with the *extra* barriers some women face in their cancer journey, such as lack of child care, housing, transportation and treatment for chemical dependence. As such, Woman to Woman is now part of that coalition, whose goal is to help with cultural navigation of the medical system.

In addition to her work at WCRC, Betty works at Powderhorn/Phillips Cultural Wellness Center twice a week, serves on three non-profit boards, including the African American Breast Cancer Alliance (AABCA), the Breast Cancer Awareness Association (BCAA), and Angels Gate Foundation. She has been honored with the "Speaking of Women's Health" award from Medica, and "Black Woman of the Month" sponsored by the Spokesman newspaper and New You Professional Massage and Spa Services.

"I love the work I do and hope I can continue to do it," she says, "even though it takes a lot of physical and emotional energy." At WCRC she is assisted by Reona Berry and admired by staff and board members, who join her in hoping her dedication and hard work in serving her constituents will continue for years to come.

If you are an African-American or African woman and would like to talk to Betty, call her at 612-822-1910.

**Breast and Cervical Cancer Cultural Navigation Program for African American and African women**

- Are you concerned about breast and cervical cancer?
- Have you seen a doctor for a breast or cervical exam?
- Have you been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer and need help?

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

To arrange for breast or cervical cancer screenings, early detection and prevention education, patient navigation services, support or other services, please call...

**Sisters in Harmony  
(612) 822-4719**

# GIVING VOICE

Published by the Women's Cancer Resource Center. We invite you to contribute your voice. Contact WCRC about deadlines and guidelines.

## FOR SUPPORT, INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS call:

612-822-4846	TWIN CITIES METRO
1-877-892-6742	TOLL-FREE
612-822-4784	FAX
wcrc@wrcrmn.org	E-MAIL
www.givingvoice.org	WEBSITE

## OFFICE AND LIBRARY HOURS:

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday—Thursday, other times by appointment.

Drop-ins are always welcome, but please call ahead to make sure we're here. **Because many of our visitors face the challenges of cancer and cancer treatments, WCRC is a smoke-free and scent-free office.**

## STAFF: (e-mail staff by their first name and @wrcrmn.org (e.g. Nancy@wrcrmn.org))

Nancy Dahlberg, cancer support services coordinator, 612-822-5301

Julia Earl, children's environmental health coordinator, 612-746-4892

Cheryl Maloney, executive director, 612-746-4890

Brad Neuhauser, administrative support, 612-746-4891

Benita Robinson, outreach and education coordinator, 612-822-4719

Betty Sanders, Woman to Woman program coordinator, 612-822-1910

Katou Souphaphan, Lao outreach coordinator, cell phone: 612-250-2865

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Mary Carbonneau, Susan Hubbard, Nancy Okerlund, Catharine Reid, Cathy Jacobson (on leave of absence during transition)

**ADVISORY BOARD:** Jackie Hunt Christensen, Rep. Jean Wagenius, Dr. Ted Schettler, Atum Azzahir, Barbara Brenner, Sara O'Donnell, Dr. Margit Bretzke, Nancy Oster, Jeanne Bearmon, Ralph Moss, Rev. George Wertin and Barbra Wiener

The opinions expressed in *Giving Voice* are those of the authors. WCRC's mission is to provide a forum for discussion, not personal medical advice, which should be determined by patients and their medical professionals.

EDITOR: Betty Beier

DESIGNER: Jerri Johnson

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## New board members sought

The WCRC board is expanding membership. Women who have had personal or family experience with cancer and with non-profit organizations are especially welcome to apply. Please contact board president, Susan Hubbard, by calling WCRC at 612-822-4846.

## A NOTE FROM INTERIM DIRECTOR CATHY JACOBSON



We have just completed a very exciting time of transition for the Women's Cancer Resource Center—

the interim time between executive leaders, again. Many of you may remember that I stepped into the last executive transition in 2004. Even though we have done this before, it still takes time and thought to match the needs of the center with the right leader. I would like to share some of my thoughts about why an interim time is always valuable in and executive transitions.

**Interim:** an interval during which continuity is suspended; temporarily assuming the duties of another; intended, used, or present for a limited time.

*Roget's II, 1988*

In his book, *Transitions* (Addison Wesley, 1980), William Bridges describes a transition as having three parts: an ending, a neutral zone and a beginning. He defines the neutral zone, not as empty space, but as a very essential *time between* an ending and a beginning. His belief is that if we

## Executive Exchange

fail to take advantage of the neutral zone we shortchange ourselves by not honoring the ending and finishing well, or by rushing to a beginning, without adequate reflection, reassessment and a fresh look at future needs. Interim management facilitates productive passage through the neutral zone.

During this time the board and staff of WCRC have not stepped back from any of the important support for women in taking charge of their cancer experience. Over a decade ago our founders' compelling vision propelled us to where we are today. Now we are ready to add a new leader, Cheryl Maloney, to the great team of staff, volunteers, community partners and board, as we create the next chapter. Cheryl founded an organization in California that has very similar programs, goals and vision as WCRC's. We're so fortunate to have found her.

Thanks to all of you for the opportunity to share this unique time in the neutral zone with WCRC. It is with great excitement that I return to my role as board member with the hiring of Cheryl!

## The challenge of change

### A NOTE FROM BOARD PRESIDENT SUSAN HUBBARD



I wonder what changes you're facing today as you receive this newsletter? And what has changed in my own life since I wrote these words?

The answer for both of us is, ultimately, everything. So it should be no surprise that today I report that WCRC is once again going through important changes. Newsletter articles are apt to imply that an organization was once static or that some ideal

state for an organization will eventually be reached and we won't ever have to change it again. As if life itself is about getting to the end, rather than going through the experience.

As a WCRC volunteer, one of the many things that I receive is genuine

*The challenge cont. on P. 5*

# WCRC PROGRAMS

## One to One Support

For women with any type of cancer. Call Nancy Dahlberg at 612-822-5301.

## Caring Hands Touch

Free massage and bodywork by trained volunteers for women with cancer receiving WCRC services. Call Nancy Dahlberg at 612-822-5301.

## Kindred Spirits

Peer support for women with cancer from other women who have experienced similar cancer or treatment. Call Barbara Deese, 952-435-2575.

## Spiritual Director

For one-on-one appointments with Jan Bucher call Nancy Dahlberg, 612-822-5301.

## Woman to Woman

Individualized support for African American women. Call Betty Sanders, 612-822-1910 or cell phone 612-275-0174 or Reona Berry, 612-822-4736. Support for Laotian women, call Katou Souphaphan at Lao Women's Association, 612-374-4812.

## Sisters in Harmony

A breast and cervical cancer cultural navigation program for African American and African women. One-to-one help guides women through the complex health system, locates community support resources, such as insurance or transportation, ensures completion of follow-up. Call 612-822-1910 or 612-822-4736.

## Ongoing Groups

Normally held at WCRC at 4604 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis.

Group times and dates may vary. Please call for current information, 612-822-4846 or 1-877-892-6742.

## Environmental Activism Group

Volunteers who study the effect of carcinogens in our environment and work to make our future safer for ourselves

and for coming generations. Meets the fourth Monday of the month at the WCRC office.

## Preventing Harm Minnesota

Working together to keep kids healthy by preventing toxic harm before it begins. Call Julia Earl, 612-746-4892.

## Treatment Choices Group

Open for all women to explore complementary and alternative cancer treatment options in a supportive group environment. First and third Mondays, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

## Ovarian Cancer Support Group

In collaboration with Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance, 952-890-8775. Open to women with ovarian cancer at any stage. Second and fourth Wednesdays, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

## Breast Cancer Support Group for African American Women

Support for African American women who have, or have had, breast cancer. Sponsored by the African American Breast Cancer Alliance. 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on third Saturdays of the month. For information, call Reona Berry at 612-825-3675.

## Caregivers Support Group

Respite resources and recognition of the men and women who share the care of a family member or friend with cancer. First and third Thursdays of the month, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

## "The Connection"

A free social group for young cancer survivors (18 to 40). Meets on the fourth Sunday of each month for various activities: museums, spa treatments, dance lessons, tours, movies, volunteer projects, dinners and more. For details, call Nancy Dahlberg at WCRC, 612-822-5301.

Co-founders: Alanna at alannagibbs@yahoo.com, and Dawn at sayinggrace@yahoo.com.

The **Young Women's Group** and the **Lesbian Support Group** are taking names of women to determine interest levels. Please call Nancy Dahlberg, 612-822-5301, if you have questions or are interested in these WCRC support groups.

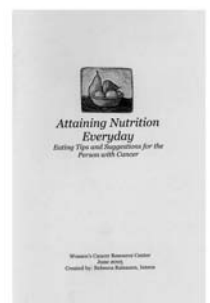
## A Kettle of Soup-port is new program at WCRC

Want help in creating a food support network?

Eating well during cancer treatment can be a challenge, especially if you lack energy or feel sick. WCRC works with women in the Twin Cities metro area to establish a network of friends and family to help! When needed this network will help you with food preparation and clean-up. WCRC provides helpful hints for eating, a one-on-one meeting to identify your needs and one "starter" meal preparation session.

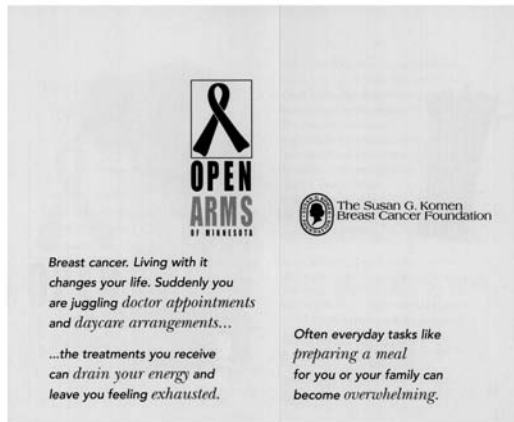
To complement the Kettle of Soup-port program, WCRC intern Rebecca Raisinen recently wrote and produced "Attaining

Nutrition Everyday; Eating Tips and Suggestions for the Person with Cancer," a 17-page booklet that helps deal with side effects of treatment, including nausea, sore mouth or throat, dental concerns, and lactose intolerance, with tips from experts, including dietitians and health care providers. Just call Nancy at WCRC at 612-822-5301 if you are interested in Kettle of Soup-port or would like a copy of the new booklet.



## Nutritious meals available from Open Arms of Minnesota

If you are undergoing treatment for breast cancer, you can receive free meals for yourself and your family. WCRC is participating in a pilot program called Open Arms of Minnesota,



which originally started as a meal service to people living with HIV/AIDS. It now provides meals for women undergoing radiation, chemotherapy, recovering from surgery for breast cancer.

This new program uses dietitians and food service specialists who design menus that reflect the dietary needs of participants. Volunteers deliver meals, free, to a client's home. This pilot program runs until May 2006, when expansion may include services to people living with other diseases. The program is funded in part by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Call Kent Linder, 612-872-1152 to sign up and mention you heard about the program through WCRC.

## WCRC says goodbye to Lisa

Executive director Lisa Simer left WCRC this fall for a new position at Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation. Lisa, a cancer survivor herself, came to WCRC from the Minneapolis Foundation. While at WCRC, she kept current donors and found new ones, including several foundations such as Medica, Boston Scientific and others. She also helped build the center's volunteer base. At this writing, Cathy Jacobson, board member, is acting director and the board will select a replacement for Lisa. Meantime, thanks go out to Lisa and for sharing her amazing talents and gifts with WCRC.

## Free legal help for women with cancer

The law firm of Leonard, Street and Deinard will provide pro bono legal service to women with cancer who would like a volunteer lawyer to help draft a legal document, such as a will or a health care directive. Call WCRC, 612-822-4846, to find out more about this new service.

## Pastor's Wives Group to be cancer-screen champions

Because church communities are recognized as promising venues to reach African Americans on health matters, WCRC's Benita Robinson will be working with the Pastors' Wives Group (eleven churches in North Minneapolis) starting in February to increase cancer screening and education. The project is in partnership with the Pap Project Team of Cancer Plan Minnesota. Two zip codes in particular, 55411 and 55412, were identified as having higher than estimated rates of cervical cancer incidence and mortality and these localities will be among the first to benefit from the team's work.

Through her work at WCRC, Benita Robinson is part of Cancer Plan Minnesota's Cancer Alliance, a coalition of groups that pools resources to collectively fight cancer. To contact Benita, WCRC's outreach and education coordinator, call 612-822-4719.

**CANCER PLAN MINNESOTA UTILIZES TASK FORCES AND PROJECT TEAMS STATEWIDE TO FOCUS ON FOUR AREAS: EXPANDING CLEAN INDOOR AIR POLICIES, REDUCING DISPARITIES IN CANCER SCREENING AND TREATMENT, IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT LOCALLY AVAILABLE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CANCER PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND INCREASING COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING.**

**ON CANCER PLAN'S WEBSITE, [WWW.CANCERPLANMN.ORG](http://WWW.CANCERPLANMN.ORG), YOU'LL FIND INFORMATION ABOUT THE ALLIANCE, THE PAPER PROJECT, LINKS TO ADDITIONAL CANCER SITES AND THE REPORT: "MINNESOTA CANCER UPDATE 2005," KEY STATISTICS ON ALL CANCERS DIAGNOSED AMONG MINNESOTA RESIDENTS.**

## Honoring Caregivers Celebration is a public event that's highly personal

On October 22, cancer survivors and their caregivers gathered at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul for an interactive performance sponsored by WCRC that gave cancer survivors the chance to publicly thank those who supported them through their cancer journey. The event, in its fourth year, was led by Ellen Hufschmidt, director of Rites of Change: Honoring Life Transitions, consisted of an original dance and music composed for the event, a blessing of and presentation of thank-you scarves and a reception. Watch for news of

the next event slated for November 2006. The scarves and a DVD of the 2004 ceremony are available for sale at WCRC at \$10 each.



*The challenge cont. from P. 2*

satisfaction by giving some relief from the stress that comes as a natural part of change. I am pretty sure that this is the most important thing we can do for each other. "Good" change, like the change we want to see in the world or the "bad" change, like those we are most afraid of, all put pressure on us and we all deeply experience change as inevitable. Not being able to escape this constant shifting, we can get some relief from the pressure of unending change by influencing how change happens

By influencing, I mean seeing how kindly we can treat ourselves and one another as we navigate these

transformations. WCRC challenges me to be a kinder person than I was in the very last moment. It is an awesome opportunity to go through these changes with all of you and especially the women on the staff and board—women who rely on my kindness and women I have come to trust. Every day our kind and dedicated staff help women through the changes they experience because cancer has affected their lives. A friend gave me a refrigerator magnet that has the famous Masahide quote that I think touches the heart of change. It reads: "Barn's burnt down...now I can see the moon." I hope you all enjoy the night sky.

## Dreamtime and the Department of Defense

BY PATRICIA WARD, PSY.D.



Last August I had the honor of representing WCRC at a conference to evaluate research proposals submitted to the Breast Cancer Research Program sponsored by the Department of Defense. Research funds appropriated by Congress are managed by the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command's Congressionally Delegated Medical Research Programs (USAMRMC, CDMRP).

I'd spent July reading proposals steeped in such government acronyms as well as unfamiliar scientific terminology. At the event, 60 former and current cancer patients (called "consumer reviewers") and 350 scientists met for three days to review proposals. To witness the interaction between cancer survivors and top cancer experts was very powerful.

At lunch one day I happened to sit next to a fellow "consumer," Wanda Easter Burch. Wanda told me that her father, who had passed away a year before her diagnosis, had appeared in her dreams to tell her she had breast cancer. She took the warning very seriously and visited her doctor. The results of the mammogram and ultra sound were inconclusive. Wanda's

dreams continued. Amazingly, her doctor referred her to a surgeon. She shared her dream experience with the surgeon and told him that recent dreams had shown her exactly where the tumor was located. The surgeon handed her a marker and said, "Show me where." He performed a fine needle biopsy and later verified that Wanda had breast cancer.

To hear such a story in a scientific environment reminded me that our dreams and intuition often inform our intellect. Wanda's experience demonstrates how help frequently comes to us in unusual ways.

To learn more about Wanda Easter Burch go to [wandaburch.com](http://wandaburch.com). The New World Library has published her book, *She Who Dreams*. For more information about the CDMRP please contact their website at <http://CDMRP.army.mil>.

*Patricia facilitates WCRC's Treatment Choices Support Group. To receive a copy of the current speakers schedule contact Nancy Dahlberg at 612-822-5301 or at [Nancy@wrcmn.org](mailto:Nancy@wrcmn.org). The schedule is now available online at [www.givingvoice.org](http://www.givingvoice.org). Upcoming speakers include chef, Jeff Woodward and acupuncturist, Colet Lahoz.*

# WCRC's Environmental Action Group leads Organic Land Care Initiative

BY EAG CO-CHAIR SUSAN NORDBYE

Pesticides—toxic by definition—have been linked to cancer, reproductive abnormalities, neurological diseases and impaired brain development. Concerned about these issues, WCRC's all-volunteer WCRC Environmental Action Group (EAG) is working on an Organic Land Care Initiative to eliminate pesticide use on Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board property—playgrounds, sports fields, lakeshores, riverbanks and wildlife areas.

The initiative proposes to change Park Board policies and prohibit most uses of pesticides. Minneapolis Parks Commissioner Carol Kummer, together with Commissioner Annie Young—a former WCRC Environmental Program leader—discussed strategies for passing the initiative this fall at an EAG meeting, and in January the group helped develop formal language for the initiative and arranged for Commissioner Kummer to promote the plan as part of a plenary panel in the *Preventing Harm to Growing Brains* conference at the University of Minnesota.

Initial endorsements by additional community organizations are now being secured for presentation to the Park Board, and plans are underway for an EAG member with professional qualifications to work with park managers in delineating the steps required for implementation of an organic “vegetation management” plan.

All are welcome to join our effort! EAG meetings are held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. each fourth Monday at WCRC. Besides working on policy initiatives, EAG members participate in events such as the Living Green Expo and conduct “Smart Choices” community group presentations on reducing toxics in the home. EAG meetings provide a forum for exchanges of ideas and information for those concerned about links between cancer and the environment. For more information, contact Susan at 612-822-7499.

## In grateful memory of Mary Swenson

Mary Swenson died on March 31, 2005, almost days after writing an article for this newsletter about the work of WCRC's Environmental Action Group, which she had led as a volunteer since the early 2000s. Mary worked closely with Carol Johnson at WCRC to help pass the Pesticide Notification Act for school children and also worked on WCRC's Toxic Industry Tours. “I was honored to work with her and learn from her,” said Julia Earl, coordinator of “Preventing Harm Minnesota.” “I was impressed by her determination to minimize environmental contributions to cancer. We miss her.” Said Carol Johnson, WCRC's former environmental coordinator, “Mary brought to the Environmental Action Group the courage to challenge the establishment. She was always willing to speak out on environmental issues at legislative hearings. She worked all of her life for social justice and the environment.”



## Watch those plastics. Here's a smart guide

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's Food and Health Program has released a guide deciphering the triangular embossing with a number in the center that is found at the bottom of most plastic containers. According to the Institute, health risks occur when using plastics in cooking and food storage, since hormone-disrupting chemicals from some plastics can leach into foods and beverages.

With food, use the following numbers: 4, 5, 1 and 2. Avoid 3, 6 and 7 unless a 7 is labeled as the new bio-based plastic.

The Institute recommends avoiding plastic bottled water, unless you're traveling or live where water quality is questionable, since bottled water is less regulated than tap water. The Institute suggests installing a home water filter or filter pitcher if worried about tap water quality. They also recommend avoiding micro waving plastic containers.

For more information about the Smart Plastics Guide, contact Kathleen Schuler, MPH, 612-870-3468 or [kschuler@iatp.org](mailto:kschuler@iatp.org).

**Smart Plastics Guide**  
**Healthier Food Uses of Plastics**  
 For Parents and Children

Plastics are widely used to store and package foods and beverages. They include disposable and reusable containers, plastic wraps, cutlery, water bottles and baby bottles. Plastic is convenient, lightweight, shatterable and relatively inexpensive. However, there are both environmental and health risks from the widespread use of plastics.

**Environmental problems:** Most plastics are made from petroleum, a non-renewable and slowly depleted resource. Plastic packaging also creates unnecessary waste. Although plastic is lightweight, it is bulky so it takes up a large volume of landfill space.

**Health risks:** Use of plastics in cooking and food storage can carry health risks, especially when hormone-disrupting chemicals from some plastics leach into foods and beverages. Plastic manufacturing and incineration creates air and water pollution and exposes workers to toxic chemicals.

**Choose less polluting products to reduce exposure to chemicals from plastics.**

**What plastic labels mean**  
 Not all containers are labeled and a recycling symbol on a product doesn't mean it's recyclable. Commonly, only #1 and #2 with narrow necks are recyclable, but some communities recycle other plastics with narrow necks. Check with your local municipality or waste disposal company.

**PVC: The toxic plastic**  
 Polyvinyl chloride, also known as vinyl or PVC, poses risks to both the environment and human health. PVC is also the most recyclable plastic.

- Vinyl chloride monomers have caused risk of liver cancer.
- Vinyl chloride manufacturing creates air and water pollution near the factories, often located in low-income neighborhoods.
- PVC needs additives and stabilizers to make it usable. For example, lead is often added for strength, while phthalates are added for flexibility. These toxic additives contribute to further pollution and human exposures.
- Chlorine in an emissions from PVC manufacturing and disposal or from incineration of PVC products settles on grasslands and accumulates in meat and dairy products and ultimately in human tissue. Chlorine is a known carcinogen. Low-level exposures are associated with decreased birth weight, learning and behavioral problems in children, suppressed immune function and disruption of hormones in the body.

**PE:** Polyethylene terephthalate, ethylene, used for soft drink, juice, water, detergent, cleaner and peanut butter containers.

**HDPE:** High density polyethylene, used in opaque plastic milk and water jugs, bleach, detergent and shampoo bottles and some plastic bags.

**PVC or V:** Polyvinyl chloride, used for cling wrap, some plastic squeeze bottles, cooking oil and peanut butter jugs, detergent and window cleaner bottles.

**LDPE:** Low density polyethylene, used in grocery store bags, most plastic wraps and some bottles.

**PP:** Polypropylene, used in most Rubbermaid, deli wrap, syrup and yogurt containers, straws and other closed plastic containers, including baby bottles.

**PS:** Polystyrene, used in Styrofoam food trays, egg cartons, disposable cups and bowls, carry-out containers and opaque plastic cutlery.

**Other:** Usually polycarbonate, used in most plastic baby bottles, 5-gallon water bottles, "sport" water bottles, metal food can liners, clear plastic "sippy" cups and some clear plastic cutlery. It is also used in dental sealers and new bio-based plastics.

# Preventing Harm here, there, everywhere

By JULIA EARL

"SMART CHOICES" COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS FOCUS ON CREATING NON-TOXIC HOUSEHOLD ENVIRONMENTS THROUGH THE USE OF INEXPENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE SAFE CLEANING PRODUCTS.

Preventing Harm Minnesota, based at WCRC, is now working with Oromo\*, Somali and Slavic (Russian-speaking) community groups to get the Smart Choices message out to their members so that they may help create healthy, non-toxic environments for their children. The community members have enthusiastically embraced the message and action steps: making Alice's Wonder Spray™; teaching peers about the potential dangers posed by the more than 80,000 chemicals in use in cleansers, personal care products, paints and furniture; and by helping members to identify where to dispose of toxic waste.

Preventing Harm MN continues to provide information and resources with childcare providers and parents at the PICA Head Start program, which serves thousands of families living at or below poverty level. We continue to conduct outreach and education in a wide variety of communities ranging from churches to universities to neighborhood associations.

*\* The Oromo people are an ethnic group in Ethiopia.*



*Julia Earl trains Twin Cities immigrant communities on non-toxic cleaning products*

In addition to education, we are actively involved in a variety of advocacy efforts including: precautionary policies in municipalities; protective ground water standards; reduced mercury emissions; and improved statewide pesticide policies.

If you are interested in learning more about PHM, have suggestions, or would like a presentation for your group, please call Julia at 612-746-4892 or send an e-mail: [Julia@wrcmn.org](mailto:Julia@wrcmn.org).

## Study finds at least half of all breast cancer is related to the environment

By BARBRA WIENER

An analysis of 350 studies has found that half of the breast cancer cases in the U.S. are not related to genetic risk or lifestyle choices, but rather to pollutants in the environment. An Oakland Tribune article reports that the review, "State of the Evidence," released January 24, 2006, buttresses what many researchers have suspected: that repeated low doses to chemicals that are normally considered harmless, can have a profound effect.

The report by the San Francisco based organizations, Breast Cancer Action and Breast Cancer Fund, analyzed findings from more than 350 experimental, epidemiological, and ecological studies. It suggests that for half of the 211,240 women diagnosed in 2005, lifestyle choices and genetics played no role. Breast cancer rates have steadily climbed since the 1940s. In the U.S. one in seven women will be diagnosed in her lifetime, which is triple the rate in 1960.

The report says that recent science makes it clear that

cancer arises from a multitude of factors, from slight genetic mutations, to altered hormone production and low doses of radiation. Industry continues to maintain there is no evidence that low doses of compounds (such as bisphenol-A, a synthetic hormone used as an additive to make plastic shatterproof and extend the shelf life of canned goods), can have deleterious effects. A legislative effort to ban these chemicals from children's toys failed recently after industry scientists said there was no cause for concern!

"There is no one culprit for rising breast cancer rates," says Nancy Evans, health science consultant for the Breast Cancer Fund. What happens when several compounds get combined with one another or with radiation from X-rays? No one knows yet. But new research from the National Academy of Sciences suggests there is no safe radiation dose. "We have to have a replacement for mammography. It's so aggressively promoted, especially for young women," Evans said.

### Alice's Wonder Spray™

(FROM CLEAN HOUSE, CLEAN PLANET BY KAREN LOGAN)

For a safe, effective all-purpose cleaner, combine in a 32 oz. spray bottle:

1/4 cup white vinegar

2 tsp. borax

Hot water, almost fill bottle, but leave room for dish soap  
(below)

1/4 cup liquid dish soap, either Palmolive or Seventh  
Generation

10 to 15 drops of essential oil for scent



*Julia Earl's training session on non-toxic cleaning products results in some hands-on experience*

## Control lawn weeds without poisons

Soon spring will come and green lawns will emerge. The Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides recommends corn gluten meal for weed control. Corn gluten meal is a by-product of the process for making corn starch and syrup. When applied to lawns, the meal prevents normal root development of

sprouting seeds. It also fertilizes the grass. Timing is crucial. Follow recommendations on the package. Water after spreading on the lawn and let it then dry out. For pesticide free solutions for pest and weed problems, e-mail the coalition at [info@pesticide.org](mailto:info@pesticide.org) or check their website: [www.pesticide.org](http://www.pesticide.org)



*Planting flowers at WCRC is a family affair. Three generations donate time and flowers to WCRC*

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Association of Universalist Women

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*While we make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this donor list, from time to time errors may occur. If your name is misplaced, misspelled or omitted, please contact Brad Neuhauser, administrative support, Women's Cancer Resource Center at 612-746-4891 so that we may correct our records. We apologize for any incorrect information this newsletter may contain.*

## Now you can give to WCRC online

Gifts in honor of, in memory of, or just in general to support the work of WCRC are now easier than ever to make. Just log on to [www.givingvoice.org](http://www.givingvoice.org) for a secured site to use your credit card for giving a tax-deductible contribution. We are so grateful for keeping WCRC in mind when you plan your charitable giving.

## Give stock, take a tax break!

For a great tax break, you may be interested in donating appreciated stock to WCRC. When you give, you can take a tax deduction for the current price of stock and you avoid capital gains tax on the appreciation. Stock must be held more than one year. Call Cathy Jacobson at 612-746-4890.



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- Volunteer management
- Marketing
- Statistics: create and implement
- Information packets
- Reception
- Staffing at health fairs and community events
- Master gardener
- Resource manual updates
- Environmental handouts and research
- Video reviewer and book return phone person for library
- Administrative support/general office

#### **Items:**

- Digital camera
- Tea (not loose)
- Rolls of stamps, first class
- Treadmill (for staff to exercise during wellness break)

#### **Services:**

- Production and printing for new WCRC Holistic Directory