

Gildagram



For Friends of Gilda's Club Chicago • Spring 2001 *Living with cancer?
Come as you are.*

A Message From The President—

This issue highlights the phenomenal success of our February benefit performance of **The Producers**. Our event raised over \$300,000 for our organization, and brought many of Chicago's finest business organizations together with one goal in mind – raising funds for our free program of social and emotional support. Our Governing Board and staff did a great job in making this event a success, and I would like to thank my colleagues for their dedication.

Our relationships with our corporate partners don't ebb and flow with our benefit schedule. This year we will hold our second annual Human Resource/Employee Assistance Professionals in-service at Gilda's Club Chicago in May. At the event we will launch our "Lunch and Learn" series. Our dedicated program staff has put together a series of seminars that they will facilitate on-site, free of charge.

Gilda's Club fills a void by providing an important resource to those experiencing cancer. We are based on the belief that people with cancer, and their families and friends, can best learn to live with cancer from one another. One of the most effective ways you can help is to tell someone about Gilda's Club. The more people we help, the stronger we are.

Thank you for your support.

—Steven F. Molo

Gilda's Club Chicago Produces Stellar Benefit

by Pat Morrison & Joyce Szymanski

Bright lights, Broadway... A sellout crowd at the Cadillac Palace Theatre attended Gilda's Club Chicago's second annual benefit on Tuesday, Feb. 13. More than 2,100 supporters of the Club were treated to a spectacular performance of Mel Brooks' new musical "The Producers." The event garnered outstanding corporate support from Presenting Sponsor Credit Suisse First Boston, as well as from Associate Sponsors Deloitte & Touche, Korn/Ferry International, Mercedes-Benz, Sears, Van Kampen Investments and Winston & Strawn. Patron sponsors included Abbott Laboratories, Baxter International, Fleishman-Hillard, Frankel, Grant Thornton, LaSalle Bank, Lehman Brothers, WGN Radio, and W.W. Grainger. The evening raised over \$310,000 for club programming and operations.

The evening began with a cocktail reception in the Walnut Room at the Hotel Allegro. Guests nibbled on hors d'oeuvres and placed bids on silent auction items. Top bids included \$4,200 for dinner with the "The Producers" stars Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick courtesy of Gibson's. Other top silent auction bids included \$1,700 for the use of a beautiful vacation home in Harbor County, Michigan, and \$900 for a trip to Las Vegas for the opening of The Second City Las Vegas. Over \$20,000 was raised for Gilda's Club Chicago in the silent auction alone.

Guests then moved next door to the Cadillac Palace Theatre where Gilda's Club Chicago Board President Steve Molo welcomed the crowd and presented the Sears corporation with the Gilda's Club Chicago 2001 Corporate Vision Award. This annual award goes to an individual or corporation who has made a difference in the lives of others. The inaugural award recipient was Roy Leonard. Sears was recognized for the outstanding leadership, commitment and friendship of Sears employees throughout the Chicago area.

"We are extremely grateful to corporations like Sears who see the benefit of having Gilda's Club in Chicago," said Molo. "It is leading companies like these who are key to helping us provide support to those in need."

Then, "The Producers" producer, Mel Brooks, made a surprise appearance before the audience. "I just got off the phone with Gene Wilder and he sends his love to everyone," Brooks said. Wilder was a co-founder of Gilda's Club and starred in Brooks' film version of "The Producers."

Brooks prepped the audience for his show and said, "This is a filthy, dirty, vulgar show, and you're going to love it!"

"Choosing the play to be our largest fundraiser of the year was easy," said Molo. "With Gene Wilder's ties to the original film, it was a natural."

Special guests at the evening's benefit included Jay Levine and Mary Ann Childers of CBS 2 Chicago, Susan Crown and Bill Kunkler, Joyce Sloane and Sheldon Patinkin, Rob Kolson, Patrick and Shirley Ryan, and Carole Segal.

"We are very grateful to everyone who made this benefit a success," Molo said. "From the sponsors, to those who purchased tickets, to the volunteers, this night was complete because of everyone's enthusiastic participation."

It seems the Gilda's Club Chicago benefit attendees are not only good-hearted, but are trendsetters as well. "The Producers" is now on Broadway where it received rave reviews and is the hottest ticket in New York.



Governing Board president and Senior Partner, Winston & Strawn, Steven Molo with CBS 2 Chicago anchors Mary Ann Childers and Jay Levine.

Featured Member: Susan Chin

by Amy Johnson



Before being diagnosed in 1998 with a form of Leukemia, Susan Chin lived and worked in Chicago as a freelance graphic artist. The youngest of five daughters, Susan's mother also lives in the city.

Susan had initially learned of Gilda's Club Chicago from a brochure in a doctor's office prior to her diagnosis.

Overwhelmed with so many things to take care of after she was diagnosed with cancer, she turned to Gilda's Club Chicago for help. It was hard to ask for help at first, but she knew it was impossible to fight the disease all by herself.

"Losing your independence is the worst part for me," she said. "I was physically active in the past." Gilda's Club Chicago planned a Team Convene for Susan and people organized to help her.

Team Convene sessions create an active support network of family and friends by defining and anticipating areas where assistance is needed, and solving practical problems. The sessions avoid overload on family members, and put in place a network to help in times of crisis.

"It's amazing how many people want to help you," she said.

Besides going to the doctor or the grocery store, Susan also needed help with researching bone marrow centers for a cure for her cancer.

Team Convenes are structured differently for each member. Susan said, "It's a great idea. It helped me organize my thoughts on what I needed to do."

Her initial treatment lasted two weeks, but the side effects were so severe that she was placed in isolation at the hospital for three months and in rehabilitation for one month. Susan has a weakened immune system and it makes her cancer more isolating than most and for longer periods of time.

She wasn't really able to participate in the programs that Gilda's Club Chicago has to offer until after a bone marrow transplant. "It is a miracle that I am here," Susan said, and for that she is grateful. It has been a long struggle but she is doing better and is in remission. In March 2000, she joined a wellness group at the Club.

As far now, she lives with cancer. She said, "It isn't just about getting your body back or getting rid of cancer, it's psychological and social issues that a doctor can't help you with. At Gilda's Club Chicago, you can talk about anything on your mind."

For Susan, that means getting together with people who have cancer, talking about cancer, and sharing experiences that have been a large part of her healing.

Susan has to be particularly careful about her weakened immune system, which limits her social activities. Having activities like those at Gilda's Club Chicago are an important outlet.

"Gilda's Club Chicago reminds you about living," she said.

Photos from Gilda's Club Chicago second annual benefit



Featured Volunteer: Lenore Harris

by Lisa Juscik



Gilda's Club Chicago offers many wonderful programs to the community it serves which are facilitated by just as many wonderful volunteers. Among its greatest assets are the networking groups it offers to its members. Lenore Harris is a volunteer who joined Gilda's Club shortly after its inception in Chicago. She has dedicated much of the last few years to helping those people who are battling ovarian and head, neck and lung cancer.

"The first time I came in contact with Gilda's Club Chicago was when they had a table set up at the Oncology Nursing Society," Harris said. "They were looking for volunteers to help facilitate some of the groups they were offering at the Club."

Harris gave the Club her name and shortly thereafter began volunteering, just six months after Gilda's Club Chicago opened its red door.

Harris earned her Bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois and her Master's in Psychiatric Nursing from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. She began working in oncology in the early '80s and has been involved with various cancer centers ever since. At Gilda's she facilitates the Ovarian and Head, Neck and Lung support groups.

"I meet with the members for approximately an hour and a half and I answer questions and guide the discussion so everyone who has ideas, questions, and/or concerns to share, has opportunities to do so," Harris said.

Although both support groups (ovarian and head, neck and lung) deal with cancer, each present different challenges.

"The Gynecological Cancer Group is obviously all women," said Harris. "Members in this group have an easy time sharing and communicating with each other."

Harris said the Lung, Head and Neck group is primarily comprised of men, although there are some women in the group.

"Some members may have voice and/or airway compromise, making it harder to talk," she said. "Sometimes a group member may only be able to communicate through writing."

Regardless of the group, the members in each gain valuable insight into the battle they are fighting.

"The networking groups provide members with opportunities to learn what others with the same diagnosis have experienced and can prepare members for common occurrences and side effects before, during, and after treatment," Harris said. "Discussions often include how to assertively yet respectfully ask the fast-paced healthcare team to take more time to answer key questions."

Harris said members teach each other how to live life to the fullest. "Once people begin to participate, they generally wish they would have started coming to group when first diagnosed," she said. Not only does Harris help the people who attend the groups, but she also gains valuable insights from those she works with.

"I am inspired by those who provide valuable service by sharing heart to heart," said Harris. "Insights developed during cancer battles and shared with group members are priceless to someone who is struggling with difficult issues now and will be useful in the future to that person yet to meet who has a similar story."

Gilda's Goings On

- * Our first **Allied Health Professionals Open House** held on May 1 was a success. Dr. Steven Rosen from the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University spoke about the need for social and emotional support during the cancer experience. Donna Mohr, Dr. Rosen's patient and Gilda's Club Chicago member, shared her personal story.

- * Welcome to Gilda's Club Chicago's new outreach coordinator, **Kathleen Hanks**. Kathleen joined the Club in January, and brings a strong knowledge of outreach and marketing to the staff team – along with a good sense of humor!

- * Our first **"Cancer in the Classroom"** presentation for school professionals was held at the Club on March 23, and was attended by 68 teachers, nurses, social workers and psychologists.

- * We are delighted to welcome three new group facilitators to our community: **Kaveh Zimmanian, Ph.D.; Maritza Cordero, LCPC; and Carolyn Utech, LCSW**. Kaveh and Carolyn each run a Wellness Group for people living with cancer and Maritza runs a Family Group. Welcome and thank you!

- * **Noogienights**, a weekly arts and crafts workshop for kids, debuted in January. Volunteer Beth Metke assists the children in creating projects like Pinwheel Sailboats and Dinosaur Doorknob Decorations while their parents participate in groups and lectures.

- * Thank you to the **National Association of Catering Executives** for the successful benefit held on Tuesday, April 17. The event culminated a year of NACE's expertise in making the club look festive for the holidays. We look forward to working with you in the future.

- * On the program side, thanks go out to... **The Second City** for providing improvisation workshops for adults, teens and children... **Ho Tran, MD**, for teaching Chi Kung... and **Andrew Whelan**, Second City moderator and performer, for facilitating writing workshops.

- * In honor of **Volunteer Appreciation Month**, Gilda's Club Chicago's fantastic volunteers enjoyed a Fajita Fiesta on Friday, April 27. Thank you to all our volunteers – your time and talent is much appreciated every day at the Club!

- * We wish **Sarah Nevin**, our MSW intern, the best of luck as she completes her field placement here at Gilda's Club Chicago. Sarah proved to be a valuable asset to program staff, members and volunteers, freely sharing her enthusiasm and compassion for others.

Volunteers Needed – Website Committee

Gilda's Club Chicago is interested in improving and expanding our website. We are looking for volunteers with web design and/or database management experience. We also need volunteers to input data into the current site monthly. If you, or your company, are interested, please contact Jill Dellert, Volunteer Coordinator, at Gilda's Club.

Benefactors Needed

We welcome corporate or individual benefactors interested in sponsoring our website and/or helping us improve our computer and technology capabilities. Please contact LauraJane Hyde, Executive Director, for further information.

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Mission Statement
 The mission of Gilda's Club Chicago is to provide a meeting place where people with cancer and their families and friends can join with others to build social and emotional support as a supplement to medical care. Free of charge, Gilda's Club Chicago offers support and networking groups, lectures, workshops, and social events in a conveniently located, homelike setting.

Living with cancer?
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