At Piedmont Athens Regional, we treat the patient – not just the disease. Because cancer treatment involves more than medical care, free programs such as yoga, cooking demos, expressive art class, and counseling are available to anyone affected by cancer at any phase in his or her journey. The Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support at Piedmont Athens Regional serves anyone regardless of where they received treatment.

I love being a part of Cancer Support at Piedmont Athens.

Tails From the Crate - A story by Amiko

What You Need to Know About Breast MRI

And more, inside!

For more information about the Loran Smith Center programs or to register for a class, please call 706.475.4900 or email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org.

This newsletter is made possible by the Thomas J. & Sara Cooney Endowment.
Joel's Journal

Joel Siebentritt, Manager, Cancer Support Services

I had a dear friend who lived her entire life with the deep scars of polio infection. Orthopedic shoes, braces and modifications to her lifestyle helped her overcome the disease, though its impact on her life was always undeniably visible. At the time she grew up in Athens, a vaccine was not available. Polio vaccines were introduced between 1955 and 1962 (the year of my birth), a period in which polio infections in the United States declined dramatically, from 35,000 cases per year to only 160 cases in 1961. The vaccination campaign and the vaccines themselves were not perfect, but they resulted in the complete eradication of this crippling disease across most of the world. When polio cases occur today, they affect only the unvaccinated.

We are seeing a similar reality in our battle against COVID-19. Across the country cases are rising. Piedmont Athens Regional is surging again with very sick COVID patients, virtually all of whom chose not to get vaccinated. I say "chose" because the vaccine is readily available, and it is free. There are only a handful of medical situations for which the vaccine is not recommended. In almost every case, the risk of becoming infected with COVID, spreading the disease to others, being hospitalized and dying of COVID-19 is far greater than the personal risk of getting the vaccine.

The mark of a truly great society is the willingness of every citizen to make personal sacrifices for the good of all. Our military personnel do this every day. Are you willing to place your personal choice aside for a greater good? I urge you to get vaccinated*. To do so is the right action for your family, your community, your local hospital, our nation.

Thanks for reading the newsletter! Cancer support services are here for you in person and online to help you understand a new diagnosis, manage treatment or live fully through survivorship.

In all things, be well.
Joel

*Talk with your doctor if you have questions about the vaccine, or if you are concerned about how it may affect you.

Welcome, Jennifer!

Jennifer, a lifelong resident of Georgia, is the newest member of our team at the Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support. She will be sharing the Department Assistant position with Alexia.

Jennifer has spent many years working in health care as well as spending fourteen years with the Oconee County School System. Throughout her career, she has worked with all ages ranging from the very young to older adults. Before joining us, Jennifer assisted with meal preparation and service in a facility that served a population ranging from independent living, assisted living, memory care and hospice care. She is the mother of two sons and grandmother of four. Jennifer enjoys reading, caring for her houseplant collection, cooking with her grandchildren and visiting Georgia State Parks.

For more information about the LSCCS programs or to register for a class, please call 706.475.4900 or email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org.
We Need Pillows and Drain Pouches!

The Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support needs your help making mastectomy pillows and drain pouches that we put into our surgery patients’ gift bags. If you have time, please consider helping us by making these items. We will supply the instructions!

If you are interested, please call us at 706.475.4900.

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Tails From the Crate

A story by Amiko

The staff here at the center thought that it was time for me to write an article for the newsletter. They asked for my reflections on this last year. Since I don’t have opposable thumbs, I dictated, and Mom wrote.

Mom asked what my favorite things were this year. I have lots of favorites, but I really like my walks at lunch with Joel, and I really like going into the hospital to visit with the staff. They’ve been working so hard this last year, and they really need a break. They are so much fun and always happy to see me. They even get down on the floor and play with me. I know what they really need are cuddles, so I give them my puppy eyes!

I’ve been all over the hospital visiting a lot of the units, and I get to meet lots of people when we’re walking down the halls too. I was even interviewed by a person inside a rolling computer during a certification survey. I was nervous (and I could tell that mom was scared), but I did good and the surveyor even said she wished she was there to meet me in person!

I’ve started seeing more people come into the center too—I love when people come to visit! Sometimes Mom gets mad and says I’m too loud. She just needs to understand that I talk loud so that everyone can hear me.

Mom put in a garden this year, I’ve been watching over the blueberries trying to keep the bunny away. Really, I want to catch the bunny, but Mom says I’m too slow. I’m working on getting faster.

I hope I get to see you at The Center soon!
In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness month, I wanted to explore breast MRI in more depth. Breast MRI is more frequently being used to detect breast cancer, and yet when it is used, and with what patients, can be confusing to healthcare consumers. To provide clarity, I asked our talented group of Piedmont Breast Health Center radiologists what women (and men) need to know about this technology.

Mammograms, ultrasounds and now MRIs are utilized in diagnosing breast pathology—I’d love to understand more about the similarities and differences between these various technologies.

Mammograms are created by compressing the breast and using X-rays to create a picture. These specialized, high-resolution images of the breast allow the radiologist to identify and interpret different types of abnormalities. Mammograms also allow the imager to assess the degree of breast density, which is the amount of fibrous and glandular tissue compared with the amount of fatty tissue in the breast. Dense breast tissue appears white, and fatty tissue appears black. This is important because of the “masking effect,” which means denser breast tissue can hide cancer. Ultrasound involves using a special probe that sends sound waves into the breast. As the waves pass through the breast, they are reflected back into the probe, which uses this information to create an image. Ultrasounds are most useful for looking at a specific location in the breast.

A breast MRI uses strong magnets to create an image. The patient lies face down on a special padded table, with her breasts positioned through openings in the table. The table is then slid into a large open tube that houses the magnets, and the magnets create images from different angles and generate cross-sectional pictures of the breast. Breast MRIs are useful for looking at the entire breast and can detect small abnormalities that may often not show up on a mammogram or ultrasound.

How do you determine when an MRI is needed/when to recommend it to a patient?

Certain types of breast cancer can blend in with normal tissue (particularly if a woman has very dense breast tissue) and as a result can be challenging to evaluate with a mammogram or an ultrasound. However, these cancers are often highlighted very
well with MRI. In this way, an MRI allows the breast imager and the surgeon to understand the extent of the cancer, which can have a significant impact on guiding surgical planning and medical treatment. If someone is diagnosed with breast cancer, breast MRI may be recommended to help measure the size of the cancer, to look for other areas of cancer in the breast, and to check the other breast. This would be recommended particularly in women who have dense tissue, are young or premenopausal, or have been diagnosed with a certain type of breast cancer.

**MRI is often recommended to women who are considered at high risk for developing breast cancer, as a screening tool (not diagnostic). Who is considered to be high risk, and when should they receive an MRI for this purpose?**

Lifetime risk for breast cancer is calculated based on a combination of personal and family history factors. These factors are entered into a model, which calculates your estimate lifetime risk for breast cancer. At our breast centers, we use the Tyrer-Cuzick v8 model. Average lifetime risk for breast cancer in the United States is 11%. Women who are at 15-19% lifetime risk for breast cancer are considered intermediate risk. Women who are at 20% or greater lifetime risk for breast cancer are considered high risk.

Current imaging guidelines indicate that women who are of high risk undergo annual screening MRI starting between the ages of 25-30. An important point to remember is that screening MRIs are used in conjunction with annual screening mammograms and are not a replacement.

**What else would you like women and men to understand about breast MRI?**

Breast MRI is a safe, non-invasive screening tool that is incredibly useful in the early detection of breast cancer. Breast MRIs are also a useful tool for evaluating the extent of disease in a patient with a diagnosis of breast cancer, or when problem-solving to better assess the breast when mammography and ultrasound do not provide clear answers. Sometimes, however, MRIs can be too sensitive and find spots in the breast that are not cancer. For this reason, we do not recommend screening MRI for everyone, only for patients who are of high risk. Our imaging team and breast center specialists are more than happy to help assess whether a breast MRI is right for you.

*Thank you so much to Drs. Daku Siewe and Allie Franklin for providing us with this helpful information!*
Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a maximum of 10 participants can attend our in-person programs. In order to keep you and us safe, we require that you RSVP for ALL programs.

**KNOWLEDGE**

**Hormone Therapy Class**
Facilitated by Sandy Pyle, BSN, RN, Oncology Nurse Navigator, this retreat is for women on hormone therapy for breast cancer (Tamoxifen, Arimidex, Aromasin or Femara). During this retreat, you will learn the science behind the treatment and discuss methods for managing side effects. Together, the group will enjoy a healthy lunch and have an introduction to yoga. RSVP required.
*September 22, 1 p.m.*

**Healing Grief Workshop**
Facilitated by Lauren Liverman, LCSW, this 9-week workshop is for those who have lost someone through death. The loss does not have to be a cancer-related death. Topics will include: understanding grief, remembering, accepting, stress management, anniversaries, memorialization, role changes and closure. Pre-registration is required.

**MOVEMENT**

**T’ai Chi Chih**
T’ai chi chih is a moving meditation that improves fitness of mind and body. It is easy to learn and can be done by people of all ages and ability levels.
*Tuesdays at 11 a.m.*

**Yoga for Peace, Hope and Recovery**
Learn a combination of movements and poses, breathing techniques and deep relaxation. Yoga can help reduce stress and anxiety, combat depression, improve sleep and minimize side effects of treatment.
*Thursdays at noon*

**PEACE**

**Healing Touch and Reiki**
Individual sessions that focus on the energy system of the body to promote relaxation, reduce stress and minimize side effects.
*By appointment only*

**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (Online)**
Facilitated by Mike Healy, Ed.D.
Learn ways to reduce stress, lessen physical and emotional pain and cope better with everyday demands. Call Mike at 706.248.8918 for more information.
*Second Friday at 5:30 p.m.*

**Oncology Massage**
Massage is available to cancer patients, survivors and caregivers. A licensed and oncology-trained massage therapist offers four sessions weekly.
*Wednesdays by appointment only*

**SUPPORT**

**Breast Cancer Support Groups**
Facilitated by Sandy Pyle, RN, BSN, Oncology Nurse Navigator, this group is for women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer to share information, resources and experiences.
*Second Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m.*

**Facing Cancer with Love and Laughter General Support and Education Group**
This group is open to any cancer patient, their family or cancer caregiver. *Third Wednesday of every month at noon*

**Grief Support**
Individual and group support for grieving children, adolescents and adults.

**Gynecologic Cancer Support Group**
Facilitated by Sandy Pyle, RN, BSN, Oncology Nurse Navigator, this group is for women with a diagnosis of any gynecologic cancer.
*Second Tuesday of every month at 1 p.m.*

**Healing Grief Workshop**
Facilitated by Lauren Liverman, LCSW, this 9-week workshop is for those who have lost someone through death. The loss does not have to be a cancer-related death. Topics will include: understanding grief, remembering, accepting, stress management, anniversaries, memorialization, role changes and closure. Pre-registration is required.

**Illness Adjustment Counseling**
Individual sessions to address issues such as stress, anxiety, treatment decisions and family communication.

**Prostate Cancer Support Group**
Facilitated by Joel Siebentritt, LCSW, this is a confidential setting for the prostate cancer patient to discuss prostate cancer treatment, side effects and survivorship.
*First Thursday of every month at 7 p.m.*

**SUSTENANCE**

**Nutrition Counseling and Side Effect Management**
Individual sessions by appointment.
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<td><strong>Reminder:</strong> Tai Chi Chih will now take place every Tuesday at 11 a.m.!</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong> Yoga, 12 noon</td>
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<td><strong>19</strong> Tai Chi Chih, 11 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>20</strong> Hormone Therapy Class, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Ghostly Halloween Goody Bags, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.</td>
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For more information about the LSCCS programs or to register for a class, please call 706.475.4900 or email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org.
Cancer and Sexuality

A NARRATIVE EXPRESSIVE ARTS WORKSHOP

EXPLORE HOW YOUR CANCER JOURNEY HAS AFFECTED
YOUR SEXUALITY THROUGH ART

THIS IS A BRAVE, OPEN AND AFFIRMING SPACE FOR WOMEN
TO TALK ABOUT SEX AND ASK QUESTIONS. ZERO ART
EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED.

FOUR SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER
1-3 PM
AT THE LORAN SMITH CENTER FOR
CANCER SUPPORT

CALL 706-475-4900. SPOTS ARE LIMITED
Hormone Therapy Class

If you’re a breast cancer patient who is interested in increasing your understanding of hormone therapy treatment and learning new ways to manage the experience and side effects of taking SERM’s and/or AI’s sign up for September’s Hormone Therapy Class! The class will be facilitated by Sandy Pyle, RN on September 22nd at 1 p.m. Call us to RSVP!!
Thank you to our donors!

To make a donation to the Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support and help continue to make these programs possible, checks can be made out to the Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support or go to piedmont.org/locations/piedmont-athens/foundation

LORAN SMITH CENTER
Jeanine Collins
Kristina Schultz Tanner
Larry Petroff
Alumni Hall Stores
Carolyn Adkins
Georgia M. Scott
Christopher H. Jones
Catharine Murray Estate
Harriet Canfield

GIFT OF TRIBUTE
James J. Hazouri
In memory of Donna Jones
John Lybrand
In memory of Donna Jones
Miranda McLaren
In memory of Donna Jones

LYMPHEDEMA THERAPY
Harriet Canfield

IN THEIR SHOES
Melanie Clancey
Kevin Gohman
Margaret D. Head
Scott Collins
Jim and Ellen Day
Julie Miller

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE FUND
University Cancer & Blood Center LLC
For more information about the LSCCS programs or to register for a class, please call 706. 475.4900 or email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org.

Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support
1199 Prince Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30606

“Hope and encouragement through support and information”