



# In Touch

SUMMER 2003

## *Making a Difference throughout the Community*

With 17 clinics, 47 physicians and more than 400 staff members, RMCC uses its large pool of people and resources to benefit communities throughout Colorado. While this newsletter focuses on RMCC's volunteer efforts, it would be impossible to touch on the numerous contributions that are made throughout the year – the volume is staggering.

RMCC's volunteer efforts encompass a wide range of areas. Each year, RMCC teams with other organizations in the Denver area to offer preventive skin cancer and prostate cancer screenings.

RMCC also supports, both financially and through the donation of our time, numerous organizations and programs, including The Diana Fish Foundation, Day of Caring, Relay for Life, Look Good... Feel Better, Race for the Cure, and the Colorado Cancer Coalition.

Internally, RMCC holds weekly support groups that are open to all cancer patients. These groups provide patients with an outlet to share their experiences with others who can relate to them and offer encouragement and hope. This fall, RMCC will sponsor a clinical trials fair to help patients better understand research and their options.

RMCC also celebrates National Cancer Survivors' Day each year. This year, Jessica Tidball, administrative assistant, orchestrated the completion of 2,100 survivor kits. Originally started as a community service project for her daughter, the project grew and Jessica enlisted help from her mother, who sewed most of the bags, to family, friends and co-workers who helped cut the patterns and stuff the bags.

Throughout the year, the RMCC Foundation assists families in monetary need. The Foundation raises the money through their yearly fundraiser, the Spirit Sprint. Numerous staff, physicians, patients and families are involved in making the run a success.

For Dr. Susan Freeman, participating in the fourth annual Spirit Sprint was a family affair. Her son, Ethan, came up with the Run's new name, Spirit Sprint. And Dr. Freeman secured most of the corporate sponsorships. Next year, she plans to tap into more local businesses for additional sponsorships.

It is evident that RMCC, its physicians and staff are actively involved to better the communities in which we live.

## *A Letter from The Executive Director*

In this issue of *In Touch*, we celebrate volunteerism and the wonderful individuals who donate their time and talents to benefit people with cancer. Within RMCC, there are two types of people who volunteer: patients and their friends or families who volunteer in our offices and for various events like the fourth annual Spirit Sprint and RMCC physicians and employees who spend their time away from work engaged in various community activities. In the following pages, you will read about the many ways that individuals associated with RMCC volunteer – their stories will touch you. I am proud to now be serving as the executive director of an organization such as RMCC that embodies genuine caring and compassion for others.

For those of you who volunteer, take a moment to recognize your contributions. Without your efforts, many important tasks would go undone and fewer individuals would receive support in their time of need. Also, take a moment to rejoice that even in a time of war and economic uncertainty, many people continue to volunteer so that others may benefit. Please join with me in sincere appreciation for the efforts of RMCC volunteers.

Sincerely,



Tina Wilson, executive director

---

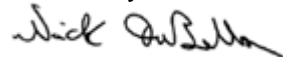
## *A Letter from The President*

Summer has arrived. While it is a time to slow-down, relax and enjoy family and friends, here at Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers, it is also a time to pitch-in -- volunteering to help those in our communities. Throughout our 10 year history, volunteering has always been a very important part of who we are.

While the physicians and staff at RMCC are generous with their time and resources throughout the year, it is in the summer when activities are in full-swing. From donating time, space and resources to skin and prostate cancer screenings to raising money for cancer research by participating in Relay for Life and organizing and sponsoring the fourth annual Spirit Sprint, to benefit the RMCC Foundation, it all makes a difference.

I applaud you for your efforts and encourage each of you to find a place for volunteerism in your life. To quote John Wesley, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."

Sincerely,



Nicholas DiBella, M.D.

## *Dana McCroskey, PA – C, MMS*

In her former life, Dana McCroskey was a fitness instructor for nearly 18 years. So when this fitness instructor turned physician assistant was asked to chair the yearly run to benefit the RMCC Foundation (the fourth annual Spirit Sprint, it was a natural fit.

Dana had always been interested in a career in the medical field. So when her children were in middle school, she went back to school and trained to be a physicians assistant. She has practiced at the Aurora RMCC clinic for nearly three years. This is the first year she has been involved with the race.

“I’ve always been very concerned about fitness,” Dana explained. “While it’s important for everyone to be as healthy and fit as possible, it is especially important for those fighting cancer.”

This year’s race will be held on July 12 at City Park in Denver. As the chairwoman of the race, Dana oversees its ten committees made up of nearly 30 volunteers. According to Dana, this year’s race will look a little different then those in past years. First of all, there was a contest to pick a new name for the race. Dr. Susan Freeman’s son, Ethan, came up with the winning name – Spirit Sprint. The race will be very family friendly with games and activities for the kids. Participants in this year’s race are encouraged to get pledges and several local and national companies are also donating funds.

“Our original goal was to raise \$30,000 and we have already surpassed that,” Dana explained. “This puts us in a position to help more people through the Foundation than we had hoped. Our volunteers have done a superb job organizing everything and reaching our goals.”

For more information and to register for the race, please visit the race Web site at [www.spiritsprint.org](http://www.spiritsprint.org).

---

## *Patient Profile: Robert and Terri Erb*

Colorado Springs RMCC patients Robert and Terri Erb have endured more hardships in the last few years than most couples face in a lifetime. But through it all their spirit has remained strong and the community has benefited greatly from their involvement.

The Erbs have been involved in the Teller County Relay for Life for the past four years. This year, Robert is chairing the Relay with a goal to raise \$35,000.

The Erbs first became involved with the Relay because Terri was a breast cancer survivor. Diagnosed at the age of 36, Terri has been cancer free for eight years but has had to go through ten reconstructive surgeries as a result of the cancer.

Five years her junior, Robert, who has no history of cancer in his family, was also

diagnosed at the age of 36, in March of 2001, with Hodgkins lymphoma. Robert went through several rounds of chemotherapy and 27 radiation treatments. In December of 2002 his cancer reappeared and he underwent a stem cell transplant in March of 2003.

Robert's recovery from his stem cell transplant has progressed more quickly than is typical so Robert, Terri and their children are hopeful that he will fully recover. Robert and Terri are the parents of two twin boys, ages three and a half, who they adopted on their second birthdays. They had been the boys' foster parents.

"It is definitely hard," said Robert. "But we just take one day at a time."

Robert is hoping that 15 teams participate in this year's Teller County Relay for Life. Because of the Hayman fire, Teller County did not hold a Relay last year.

"We are well on our way to a successful relay," explained Robert. "The RMCC Denver transplant nurses sent two checks. I was touched by their thoughtfulness. We are striving to do everything we can to reach our goal of \$35,000 for this year's Relay."

---

### *Patient Profile: Mary Beth L'Abbe*

Diagnosed with cancer in 1993, Mary Beth has received treatment at Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers for nearly ten years. And during that time she has given countless hours back to all of us by using her artistic talent and giving of her time to benefit those around her.

As a founding board member of the RMCC Foundation, Mary Beth served on the board for three years as the vice president of special promotions. Her husband also helped get the Foundation off the ground by serving as the treasurer for a short time.



In addition to her role with the Foundation, Mary Beth has volunteered her graphic design services to RMCC for more than five years. For the past several years, she has designed RMCC's holiday cards and she is currently helping with the fourth annual Spirit Sprint to benefit the RMCC Foundation. She designed the logo and the t-shirts and assists on the appreciation/promotional committees.

"I enjoy helping out RMCC because I believe in the cause," Mary Beth explained. "I adore RMCC's staff and physicians. They've never made me feel like just a patient."

For Mary Beth, it is natural to "help out" various organizations. She's been doing it for years. While RMCC is currently where she volunteers her time, she's been involved with the Gathering Place, for homeless women and children, and with ArtReach, a program to bring arts to the community.

In addition to all her volunteer work, Mary Beth operated her own graphic design firm,

Fisher L'ABBE, Inc. for more than 10 years. She is currently working in fine arts and sculpture.

“Dealing with a severe illness has taught me not to sweat the small stuff,” Mary Beth explained. “It’s almost like a cloud was lifted and I learned to appreciate life’s small things. I feel very fortunate.”

---

### *Kudos*

- Dr. Nicholas DiBella was published in the March 2003 Clinical Lymphoma Journal. The article was entitled “Pegylated Liposomal as Single-Agent Treatment of Low-Grade Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma: A Phase II Multicenter Study.”
  - Dr. Sami Diab and Lisa Mullineaux, M.S., facilitated a discussion of “Hereditary Colon Cancer Syndromes” at Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers on Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - Earlier this summer, Dr. Dennis Carter spoke at the 39<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.
  - Kelly Mack, NP, presented a session on bioterrorism at the recent Oncology Nursing Society Conference held in Denver.
- 

### *Updates*

#### **Human Resources**

##### **Referral Reward Program Improved**

The referral reward program is designed to reward employees for recruiting qualified candidates for employment with RMCC. As of April 1, 2003, the rewards have increased. RMCC will pay you \$350 for a candidate who accepts a regular part-time position, working a minimum of 20 hours/week. You will receive \$50 at the onset of employment. The remaining \$300 will be paid when that candidate remains employed for four continuous months.

RMCC will pay you \$650 for a candidate who accepts a full-time position, working a minimum of 40 hours/week. You will be paid \$50 at the onset of employment. The remaining \$600 will be paid when that candidate remains employed for six continuous months. All RMCC employees are eligible; however, the immediate supervisor responsible for filling the position is ineligible for the referral reward program. Employees may not refer themselves or other RMCC employees. Referral rewards are subject to federal, state and FICA withholding.

Check the position postings often. Referrals of qualified candidates can pay off. Contact Carol Word (303) 930-7807 if you have further questions on this program.

## Community Events

- Look Good...Feel Better – In cooperation with the American Cancer Society, RMCC is hosting these events at all network locations in 2003.
- Skin Cancer Screenings – RMCC and ACS hosted three successful screenings in the Denver metro area. In Aurora, 34 individuals were screened and 21 were referred for follow-up. In Littleton, 73 individuals were screened and 39 were referred for follow-up. In Boulder, 173 individuals were screened and 125 were referred for follow-up.
- Day of Caring – RMCC was a sponsor of the Denver event on Saturday, May 3 that had more than 800 attendees. RMCC hosted 10 patients and had a display table at the event. RMCC physicians and nurses presented at the event.
- National Cancer Survivor's Day – Most RMCC clinics celebrated National Cancer Survivor's Day the week before or the week after Sunday, June 1. RMCC staff and volunteers cut, sewed and assembled more than 2,000 survivor kits that were distributed in clinics.
- Colorado Cancer Conference – RMCC is a sponsor of this statewide conference to be held on August 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in Denver. The conference will focus on quality of life and palliative care, prevention and intervention strategies, science and information, insurability, clinical skill building, health disparities and tobacco control. The intended audience is physicians, community outreach specialists, public health educators, nurses, social workers and other individuals and organizations with an interest in cancer prevention and control. For more information, visit <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/ccpc/cancerconference.html>.
- Clinical Trials Fair – RMCC will host this event on Saturday, September 27, 2003 at the Sheraton Four Points in Denver. The Clinical Trials Fair will open with a general session on the role of clinical trials in oncology care. Attendees will participate in sessions on specific diseases, and the event will end with a panel discussion featuring RMCC patients that have participated in a clinical trial. For more information, contact Erin Hought at [erin.hought@usoncology.com](mailto:erin.hought@usoncology.com) or (303) 930-7809.
- Light the Night – RMCC will sponsor five of these events that benefit The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Events will be held in Ft. Collins on September 13, Denver on September 18, Colorado Springs on September 19, Boulder on September 26 and Longmont on September 27, 2003.
- Prostate Cancer Screenings – RMCC is working with the American Cancer Society and the Prostate Cancer Education Council to host prostate cancer screenings in the Denver metro area. Screenings will be held the week of September 14<sup>th</sup> at the RMCC Longmont, Boulder and Midtown facilities. In addition screenings will take place at HealthONE facilities, Denver Health and the Auraria Health Center.

## Managed Care

A few changes in the payor arena include:

- The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is preparing to increase Medicare beneficiaries' premiums in 2004 by 12.4 percent to \$66 per month. This is its largest increase in 11 years.

- CMS is also saying that physician reimbursement will drop in 2004 by 4.2 percent.
- Community Health Plan of the Rockies (CHPR) wound down operations and closed on May 31, 2003.

New contracts:

- Anthem BCBS case rate contract for prostate seed implants.

We are currently working on a RMCC group contract with Colorado Access and Denver Health.

Nationally, all eyes are on Congress and what changes may be made to reimbursement for oncology drugs due to the Medicare prescription drug benefit that is currently being debated.



### **RMCC Foundation**

The Fourth Annual Spirit Sprint to benefit the RMCC Foundation will be held on Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup> at City Park, Denver. This year's committee has done a great job of obtaining corporate sponsors. The event will include children's activities, a silent auction and more than 100 awards. Please see the Web site for further information at [www.spiritsprint.org](http://www.spiritsprint.org).

### ***News from the Field***

#### **AURORA**

In the past years, a family of foxes lived in the field next to the Aurora clinic. A family of coyotes has replaced the foxes. We are wondering where the foxes went.

Dr. DiBella has a new German Shepherd puppy, Rocky, who is keeping him up at night. Nursing supervisor Sandy Stubbendick's new Cock-a-poo puppy, Oreo, has dined at the Hotel Colorado. Tammy Robles, medical assistant, rescued a Cocker Spaniel, Sam, who was adopted by practice manager Nancy Beegle's family. Nurse Kym Birks-Cooper added a wild kitten, Kenya, to the "Cooper Zoo" of two cats and two dogs. Amelia Schachter, nurse, is awaiting her mare, Penny, to arrive from New Jersey.

Congratulations to all the June brides. On June 7, Kathy (Dare) Mannon, medical assistant, was married. On June 14, Sherea (Griggs) Holt, medical assistant was married and on June 21 scheduler Linda Fields' daughter, Elizabeth, was married.

Congratulations to Justin Rhodes, son of Sandra Rhodes, front office float, for being named to the District 5 Colorado all-star Baseball Team.

Welcome to new staff members Amelia Schachter, nurse; Billie McGee, receptionist;

Danielle Mork, switchboard; and Vanessa Marsh, medical records technician.

Recently, several Aurora staff members have changed jobs. New positions are as follows: Sandra Rhodes, front office float; Donna Singleton, charge entry; Robin Beam, patient financial counselor; and Roxanne Ownsabre, medical records technician.

## **COLORADO SPRINGS**

2003 has been an exciting year for us. Our “Strategies for Living Well with Cancer” series is a hit. The programs included in the series are The Healing Power of Music; Strength for Caring; Silk Scarves for Healing; Managing Treatment Related Fatigue; Improving the Chemotherapy Experience; and Living with Recurrence and/or Metastatic Cancer. These programs are presented monthly for RMCC patients and other cancer patients in our community.

Our fifth community lecture on May 6 featured Dr Matei; medical oncologist; Dr Dillon; surgeon, and Dr Ellis; dermatologist speaking on melanoma. Twenty-five community participants joined us for a light dinner and an informative evening.

Relay for Life was supported by our 12 member team (this included one patient) in May. Kudos to Jane De Smith, team captain, for staying all night in the freezing rain. The patient, who was a team member, also stayed all night with his family. What a trooper!! Other team members were: Shirley Greener, Tracy Bayless, Wanda Cunningham, Lilla Lombardi, Amy Wall, Kate Powell, Maryam Ellis, Mary Jo Lehman, Krisinda Magnus, and Amy Senger. The staff at RMCC in Colorado Springs was wonderful with donations to team members, supporting a bake sale, a fun raffle with items from local businesses, and helping to set up the dinner for the cancer survivors at the relay site. Our Colorado Springs team raised just over \$2,300. A big thank you to our great doctors in Colorado Springs for supporting the team.

To celebrate our two-year location anniversary and the physician practice anniversary, the doctors treated the staff to a barbecue lunch. Tables were set up outside to enjoy a perfect spring day and a relaxing lunch on May 12. In the afternoon, we loaded up the ice cream cart and treated staff and patients to an ice cream social on wheels.

Colorado Springs is partnering with Penrose Hospital, Memorial Hospital, Oncology Clinic and Community Health Center, and American Cancer Society for a Prostate Cancer Screening on Sat, Sept 20th.

## **ROSE**

Welcome to new staff members Judi Payne, clinic nursing supervisor; Donna Owens, scheduler; and Janina Rivera, medical assistant.

### *Questions or Comments*

How do you like the newsletter? Your feedback is important. We are always looking for story ideas, as well as suggestions, on how to make the newsletter better. If you have any ideas, suggestions, comments or questions, please contact Tiffanie Burnett at [tiffanie.burnett@usoncology.com](mailto:tiffanie.burnett@usoncology.com).