



Hope Lodge Worcester

# Hope Lodge News

Worcester, Massachusetts

Winter 2008

*A home away from home for families facing cancer*

## Annual Fashion Show Supports Hope Lodge Worcester

Hope filled the air at the 2007 Looks for Hope fashion show and live auction held October 10 at the Crowne Plaza Worcester. The festive event broke attendance and fundraising records with over 400 people from the greater Worcester community and more than \$33,500 raised for Hope Lodge Worcester. Bay State Savings Bank served as the presenting sponsor for the evening. Other sponsors included florist Herbert E. Berg, Marsh Kemp Insurance, Sears Outlet in Shrewsbury, WCTR –TV3/Charter Communications; and the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*.

The evening began with boutique shopping, showcasing local vendors. Susan Wornick, from WCVB Channel 5 in Boston, along with longtime event organizer Audrey Kurlan-Marcy, hosted the dinner program and live auction, entertaining all with their humor. Guests enjoyed dinner as they bid on items including an overnight Vermont getaway, a state-of-the-art wine cooler,



Block 5 co-owner Mike Covino presents a check for \$5,000 from the B5K road race to fashion show organizer Audrey Kurlan-Marcy.

an autographed Red Sox baseball, and a Mohegan Sun dinner and overnight stay. A raffle yielded big prizes including a Charter Communications gift certificate and an overnight stay with dinner at the Crowne Plaza. The night also featured a question-and-answer session with Dario C. Altieri, MD, director of the UMass Memorial Cancer Center and chair of Cancer Biology, and Joyce Kuhlwik of WBZ-TV4 in Boston. Joyce, a three-time cancer survivor, shared her cancer journey and asked Dr. Altieri questions about cancer research and the

progress being made. The audience members then had the chance to ask their own questions of Dr. Altieri.

The Looks for Hope fashion show rounded out the evening, as notable members of the Worcester community modeled fashions from Ike's Den Inc. in Shrewsbury and the Men's Warehouse at the Solomon Pond Mall. Eileen Grosse, owner of Ike's Den, supplied the women's fashions and runway commentary for the fourth year.

"Being a part of Looks for Hope allows me to give back to the community and actually see the positive effects," said Eileen. "Being a four-time cancer survivor myself, I wholeheartedly believe in the Hope Lodge's mission."

Guests left feeling good about supporting such an important cause and informed about how the Hope Lodge has become a beacon of hope for cancer patients and their caregivers. For information on the next Looks for Hope fashion show to be held on Tuesday, October 7, 2008, please contact Deb Aharonian.



Eileen Grosse with her daughter, Ayla, a model in the Looks for Hope fashion show.

## Local Hockey Team Supports the Hope Lodge



Thomas Greiss of the Worcester Sharks

The Worcester Sharks AHL team celebrated National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October by hosting a "Pink at the Rink" event, with proceeds from tickets and specially designed pink puck sales benefiting the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge Worcester. At the October 21 Sharks game, attendees received pink roses to commemorate breast cancer survivors. A special slide show was shown, highlighting breast cancer facts, with pictures of breast cancer survivors from the community. The hockey game began with Hope Lodge night manager Dave McGrath participating in the official puck drop.

Worcester Sharks goaltender Thomas Greiss promoted breast cancer awareness throughout October and November by wearing a pink mask at all games. At the end of November, Greiss's pink mask was auctioned off for \$5,000 through an online auction on [www.nhl.com](http://www.nhl.com). All proceeds from the pink mask auction were donated to the Hope Lodge Worcester.

## Calendar of Events

June 13–14, 2008 – Relay For Life® of Worcester – Join teams in raising funds for cancer research and education, while celebrating the hope of a cancer-free world. To join the Hope Lodge team, or for more information, please contact the Lodge.

October 7, 2008 – Looks for Hope fashion show – Enjoy an evening of fashion, dining, and shopping at the Crowne Plaza Worcester, while raising money for the Hope Lodge Worcester. For more info on this annual fundraiser, call the Lodge at 508.792.2985.

## Hope Lodge Adds Two New Staff Members

Hope Lodge Worcester welcomes administrative assistant Jackie Kane and overnight manager Dave McGrath. Both are cancer survivors who are committed to making a difference in other cancer patients' lives. Jackie, a breast cancer survivor, was ready to transition her background in the manufacturing industry to something personally rewarding, and her job at Hope Lodge fits the bill. Dave was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor at the age of 18, recovered after six months of chemotherapy. With his new job, Dave has found "the opportunity to use my gift of survival to help people going through something similar to what I went through."

Jackie can be reached at 508.792.2985, x0 or jacqueline.kane@cancer.org. Dave can be reached at 508.792.2985, x166 or david.mcgrath@cancer.org.



Jackie and Dave look forward to giving back to the community through their new positions with the Hope Lodge.



Students from the College of Holy Cross donate their time by spending Thursday nights with the guests of Hope Lodge Worcester.

## From the Desk of Debra Aharonian Hope Lodge Manager

*"Once you choose hope, anything's possible" - Christopher Reeve*

Dear Friends,

As winter chills the air, our guests are warm and cozy inside due to the continued assistance of the Worcester community throughout the year. What warms our hearts most is the hope and invaluable support that each guest leaves with after a stay at the Hope Lodge. As the quote above reminds us, when there is hope, the impossible becomes possible!

In 2007, we celebrated a reunion weekend with old and new friends, participated in the Relay For Life of Worcester, staged a successful fashion show fundraiser; and topped off the year with our annual holiday open house. Thanks to community donations, we are making great strides toward filling our oil tank for the winter season. We are blessed with such amazing volunteers who work tirelessly with our staff to ensure that guests are cared for in every way.

I want to thank our Hope Lodge staff for their hard work and dedication. Many thanks to our community partners – such as Block 5 for the delicious Monday night meals they provide to our guests and the AstraZeneca employees who spent a volunteer night cleaning our storage space and washing windows. We also thank Rotmans for their donation of furniture to update our guest room, as well as the Worcester Sharks for their generous support of the Lodge and our guests. The spirit of volunteerism and philanthropy can truly be seen through these organizations! As we welcome new and returning guests in 2008, remember, hope is everywhere!

Warmest regards,  
Deb

## Young Donors Give Back

Thirteen year-old Alex Elkins of Worcester, Mass., and eight-year-old Alex McCall of Norwell, Mass., are two of the Society's youngest donors. Alex Elkins was inspired by his bar mitzvah to donate baskets filled with gifts to Hope Lodge. Guests were delighted with the goodies that included specialty candy, gourmet foods; and toys. Motivated by a television program about volunteering, Alex McCall decided to organize a book drive at his school. By asking fellow students to donate books, he soon had generous contributions in hand. On July 11, Alex personally delivered three boxes of the books to the Hope Lodge Worcester. He plans to eventually donate the remainder to the American Cancer Society for the AstraZeneca Hope Lodge Center in Boston.



Alex Elkins and Alex McCall have made donations to guests staying at Hope Lodge.

## Holiday Open House Raises Awareness

Hope for the Holidays, the Hope Lodge Worcester's annual open house, rang in the holiday season on Tuesday, December 11. Seasonal decorations adorned the Victorian house, while members of the Worcester community were treated to holiday music by two volunteer piano players, Allan Kurlan and Paul McGrath; festive foods; and a special tour of the Hope Lodge. Baked goods and holiday trinkets were available for sale, with proceeds benefiting the Hope Lodge and helping to defray the costs of the winter heating bill.

Dedicated volunteers Deb Foley and Nancy Coughlin planned this year's Hope for the Holidays for the second consecutive year. A longtime friend and supporter, Nancy has worked with the Hope Lodge for more than 10 years. Deb forged her relationship with the Hope Lodge several years ago after Nancy recruited her help.

One of the goals for this year's event was to create a model guest room for attendees to tour. The volunteer duo updated and decorated a guest room, aided by donations from Rotmans furniture store. With backgrounds in floristry and interior design, Deb and Nancy were well equipped for the job. "We really enjoyed working on the room," said Deb. "We wanted to give people a sense of what it is like for cancer patients and their families staying at the Lodge."

As the open house came to a close, it was clear that the Hope Lodge tour and model room were the highlight of the evening. Hope Lodge Director Deb Aharonian felt that this year's event was a great way to increase awareness of the Hope Lodge in the Worcester area.

"Hope for the Holidays gives us the chance to let others know how we serve cancer patients and their caregivers from all over the United States," said Deb Aharonian. "It is a wonderful way to honor the holidays and also meet our community neighbors."



Nancy Coughlin and Deb Foley planned the annual holiday open house and helped decorate the Lodge for the occasion.

## Hope Lodge Volunteer Spotlight: John Oliva

John Oliva is the epitome of reliability. For nearly 10 years, he has spent most Fridays driving guests from the Hope Lodge in Worcester to their treatments in Boston. And, according to John, he "wouldn't want to spend Fridays any other way."

A former Worcester middle school teacher, John spent 35 years serving the public for the greater good. It only seemed fitting, then, that he would follow a similar path upon retirement.

"Many years ago, my wife was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, and, luckily, she survived," John said. Fueled by gratitude and a desire to give back, he decided to become a driver for Hope Lodge.

"One of the many benefits of the job is meeting people from all walks of life," John explained. "I feel so fortunate to get to know these amazing



John Oliva at Hope Lodge before giving a guest a ride to treatment.

people, and to learn about their different cultures and beliefs."

John keeps in touch with several former guests, including one special boy who visited Hope Lodge five years

ago. Now 12 years old and living in Florida, he has invited John and John's wife to visit him and his family several times. The offer has been gladly accepted.

"It's difficult...oftentimes, you just get to know someone, and then he or she leaves. Although the ultimate goal is that they return home, sometimes it is hard to say goodbye," John said. "That is why it is so gratifying to be able to sustain these friendships throughout the years."

John readily admits that he has learned many things during his tenure as a volunteer driver; and being a lifelong educator, the irony of the teacher becoming the student is not lost on him. "Life is one big learning experience," John sums up. And, luckily for the Hope Lodge's guests, John is as good a student as he was a teacher.



## AstraZeneca Hope Lodge On track to open later this year

About 70 American Cancer Society volunteer leaders and supporters of the AstraZeneca Hope Lodge Center in Boston signed the center beam and watched as it was hoisted into place on September 26, marking a critical milestone in the internal construction of the 48,000-square-foot facility. Located at 125 South Huntington Avenue in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston, close to the city's major medical institutions, the new Hope Lodge will provide free lodging, support services, and community outreach to more than 1,500 cancer outpatients and family members each year. It is expected to begin accepting guests this fall. In order to provide a healthier environment for guests, the American Cancer Society is committed to pursuing a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold-level certification for the AstraZeneca Hope Lodge Center. This new "green" building will utilize sustainable products from the region, and all water and electrical fixtures have been selected for their high energy efficiency value. An additional \$5 million is needed to complete the \$27 million project. For more details and photos, visit [www.cancer.org/hopelodgeboston](http://www.cancer.org/hopelodgeboston).

## Another Way to Give

Roberta Duvarney believes in the Hope Lodge mission. Ever since her mother, a nonsmoker, was diagnosed with lung cancer, she knew she wanted to support a place that would provide a comfortable experience for cancer patients and their family members. "While my mother was undergoing treatment at the hospital, I slept on chairs every night in her room because I did not want to leave her alone," Roberta remembered. It was during this time, and later, as she accompanied several friends to

their treatments, that she decided to "do something so people can be close to their families while they are going through this difficult time."

Roberta, a breast cancer survivor herself, worked with Thelma Rusack, an American Cancer Society planned giving officer, to leave a legacy by naming the Society in her will. Most of the proceeds from her estate will be donated to the American Cancer Society, with a significant portion supporting the Hope Lodge Worcester and the Hope Lodge Boston.

"By supporting the American Cancer Society through planned gifting, I will be giving back to my community even when I have passed," said Roberta. "Just knowing I can make one person's journey with cancer a little easier makes me feel good."



Roberta Duvarney, (right), assisted Planned Giving Officer Thelma Rusack (left), passing out brochures at Making Strides Against Breast Cancer® in Boston.

## Hope Lodge Wish List

Volunteers are needed, especially Road to Recovery<sup>SM</sup> drivers. Please consider spending just one day a week driving guests to and from their lifesaving treatments in Worcester and Boston, or spend a few hours on the weekend driving guests to the grocery store, the bank, and on local errands. For more information on the Road to Recovery program, contact Debra Aharonian at 508.792.2985 x1.

The Lodge is in need of the following items:

- Gift cards to Target, Wal-Mart, CVS, and Walgreens
- Gift cards to Worcester area restaurants and local grocery stores
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Laundry detergent
- Postage stamps
- Coffee (regular), hot cocoa, and soups
- Donations to Peterson Oil Co.

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