



# 2013 pathways

Cancer Services Network  
providing gifts of hope



## A Mother's Love Gina Barron & Logan Fenwick

BY JAN WOODWARD

Gina Barron had almost come to her rope's end when she discovered Cancer Services Network, and what a discovery it turned out to be. Gina's son Logan Fenwick had been diagnosed with Neurofibromatosis type I, a genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow on the nerves. These tumors can be benign or they can be cancerous. There is no cure but treatment helps control the symptoms.

"When the news is thrown at you that your child has cancer, your life really changes," said Gina. "I didn't hear anything else but the word cancer," she admitted. "When I began to research the disease, also known as 'Elephant Man Disease,' I knew I needed to get some help." She returned to Abilene following one of Logan's subsequent hospitalizations and began calling everyone and everyplace she could think of to find answers and get some direction. Each place would confess they couldn't help because of this or they didn't have that and they would give her another number to call, only to get the same response. "Finally I called CSN and talked with Nancy (Executive Director) who said 'Come on in; we can help.' That was such a big blessing," recounts Gina.

Logan, now 14 years old, was first diagnosed with the disease seven years ago but was in remission for several years. Now the cancer has spread to his brain and he has a tumor pressing on his optic nerve. He is partially blind. The disease also causes multiple other health issues. He has been receiving chemotherapy treatment for several years and that has left him very frail and weak. Gina now takes Logan to Dallas three times a week for the chemo. Locally there is no facility devoted specifically to pediatric cancer patients and they make frequent trips to Dallas, Fort Worth, Lubbock or Houston. A recent MRI has shown that the tumors are growing more. The future is unclear.

Understandably, her son's condition takes a toll on the family – financially and emotionally. Gina had to quit her job with a home health agency to be able to have the time to care for Logan. She was a single parent for the



first six years of his disease and she has another son, 17 years old. Though recently remarried, there is no other extended family in Abilene and sometimes Gina says she feels very "alone" with the burdens of the disease. A CSN social worker was able to refer Gina for counseling and support groups to aid in dealing with the emotional stress she experiences.

In addition to the emotional and social support, CSN has helped the family financially. Even though Logan's father has his son on an insurance policy, there are still many, many other expenses and CSN has been able to help with the weekly travel expenses, provide resources for hotel assistance, help with medical supplies (bandages, wipes, incontinence supplies), give some prescription assistance and provide emergency funds.

Gina says that through CSN she feels like she's "gained another family." She heaps on praises by saying "It's not enough that they help financially, it's the people there and the friendships I've made with them. It helps me to talk and they sit and listen and answer my questions and I know they'll help me with anything they can."

# Yanell Rieder of Casa Authentique and CSN Celebrate the 10th Annual Fashions for the Cure

Much preparation went into bringing the wonderful evening of fashion, food, and fun to over 700 in attendance at the 10th Annual Fashions for the Cure (FFTC) Style Show and Silent Auction on October 1, 2013. A stunning rotation of thirty models of all ages, shapes and sizes hit the runway for CSN as Casa Authentique showcased several collections to raise funds to support the programs and services of Cancer Services Network. Suzanne Starr served as mistress of ceremonies.

The FFTC event committee, a group of well-connected women from the Abilene community, began planning months ahead to ensure a beautiful night to benefit local cancer patients. Because of maximum capacity crowds in the conference center in previous years, the event was held in the main hall of the Abilene Civic Center this year. Betty Chambers, Decorating Committee Chair, assisted by Shea Woodard-Hall and Pat Fite, transformed the large open space to add ambiance and elegance to the venue. All the preparations and hard work paid off and their vision came to fruition as a multitude of volunteers helped the evening unfold.

The FFTC ambassadors committee, chaired by Lin Thompson, a cancer survivor, gave of their time to promote the event and help with pre-event ticket sales. Marci Cole,

silent auction chair, worked tirelessly for months gathering donated items from local businesses for the silent auction. The raffle committee, chaired by Jeri Skaggs, helped boost the proceeds of the fashion show by selling raffle tickets.

Tim Rice McClarty, CSN board chair, welcomed those in attendance and gave an overview of how Cancer Services Network makes a real difference in the lives of those battling cancer. In the traditional finale, those in the audience who have been diagnosed with cancer were asked to come up on the stage. A teary-eyed audience gave a standing ovation in celebration of the recognized cancer survivors.

To thank the generous pool of sponsors, a kick-off party was held the night before the event at Casa Authentique. Food for both nights was provided by The Natural Food Center.

“We are proud to see how Fashions for the Cure has grown over the years and are thankful for all of the sponsors, the support of the CSN board and staff, the models, and the countless volunteers who gave and worked tirelessly to help with this event,” said Yanell Rieder.

The fashion show, along with the silent auction and raffle, netted a record-breaking \$99,000 for Cancer Services Network.



Photos by IN-Focus Digital

# Cool Runnings

Saturday, October 5 was a cool but comfortable day for the runners and walkers attending the 6th annual Run Together Fun Run. The run started and finished at Frontier Texas with the downtown course offering a nice change of scenery for those who regularly attend local runs. CSN supporters and active enthusiasts could choose between 5K timed or an untimed run, or a 1 mile route for those preferring a shorter distance to run, walk or waddle.

CSN staff, board members, volunteers, and the Abilene Runners Club arrived before daybreak to set up registration and timing for the early morning race. This family-friendly event drew all skill levels with runners and walkers of all ages, including parents with babies in strollers, young children and pets. There were teams participating in honor and support of those battling cancer, including Team Crew, Team Myra, Deb's Girls, and Team Rebecca, the team from St. John's Episcopal

School who had the most registered participants this year. Other teams included groups from Abilene Diagnostic Clinic, Hendrick Rehab, and Texas Oncology.



“We are just so grateful to our sponsors, volunteers, and participants who came together to support local cancer patients; 90 percent of every dollar raised goes directly to cancer patients and their families. The \$25,000 raised will directly impact the lives of local cancer patients in a big way”, said Katie Browning, Run Together event chair.

Kevin Skiles won the 5K timed race in the men's category with a time of 20:25. In the women's division, Bethany Williams took the win with a time of 22:36. The top runners in each age division received medals as awards. The *real* winners of the race are all the cancer patients being served by Cancer Services Network.



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Honeybees  
Mark Horn Enterprises, Inc.  
Sharon Kelley  
Nadell Mangum  
Amanda and Ryan McKee

Fred Ochs  
Connie Peacock  
Kayna Sherry  
Maria Tolentino  
Sharlyn Williams

## Friendraising

Cancer Services Network relies on the generous hearts and faithful support of the people living in the 19-county area we serve to provide funding for its programs and services for cancer patients. We offer special thanks to businesses, organizations, and individuals who hosted 3rd party events in support of Cancer Services Network during 2013:

**Wylie Varsity Cheerleaders**

**Baird ISD**

**No Problem Ranch Barbeque**

**Ride for A Cure hosted by the Harley Owners Group –  
West Texas Chapter/Ladies of Harley**

**Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas**

**Wylie Independent School District Lady Bulldogs  
supporters**

## Return Service Requested

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Please contact CSN  
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## Strength for the Journey

GOD has always provided, and we have been His hands, feet and heart for those that have been touched by a cancer diagnosis. Since our founding in 1998, we have been very successful in helping under-served patients with their financial, physical and emotional needs; however, God has placed a new mission on our Board of Directors' hearts. They decided it was time for us to provide an avenue for our client's spiritual support by developing a new program at CSN to address the spiritual needs of the cancer patients we serve.

A cancer diagnosis makes you contemplate your own mortality. Many cancer survivors acknowledge their personal relationship with God helped them through their hardship and they experienced a deeper prayer life and relationship with Him through their cancer journey. For others, having cancer can become a test of faith, creating resentment or anger towards God, plant seeds of doubt, or shake the foundation of their spiritual beliefs. Nonbelievers might reconsider their ideas about organized religion and might want to develop or renew a commitment to spiritual practices. It all comes down to meeting them at their point of need. As our spiritual program develops, we will be working with area churches to offer resources to assist our clients and their families by being a conduit for any spiritual support they might need.

Individuals and churches can help by praying for the cancer patients and families we serve, and letting us know about any ministries, outreach programs, Bible studies, healing services, grief counseling, support groups, and other resources you have available to feed their soul.