



# weSPARK

CANCER SUPPORT CENTER

SUPPORT + PREVENTION + ACCEPTANCE + RECOVERY + KNOWLEDGE

WINTER 2018

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1



## Words from weSPARK

Here at weSPARK, I never know where my inspiration is going to come from on a given day. Interacting with our guests, I hear personal stories and their life experiences and this fuels my passion and purpose. We'll celebrate our 17th anniversary this March! In 2017, we saw a 39% increase in the number of new guests served and the number of people attending workshops has more than doubled. It's wonderful to have these tangible markers of what we've accomplished. And yet, I still hear the voice of my friend and our founder, Wendie Jo Sperber saying, "Come on. We can do more, we can serve more people."

appeal to everyone. Laughter is so essential that we've worked it into one of our signature events. Look for an invitation to our Comedy Night later this year and join us in the fun. We hope to see you there!

Every day guests come into my office to say thank you for the services at weSPARK. In return, I need to thank each of you who supports weSPARK. Your time, funding and belief in our mission makes all of this possible. Thank you!

I look forward to seeing you all in 2018! Enjoy reading some of the highlights from the past year.

With love and gratitude,

Nancy Allen  
Executive Director

Looking ahead, we have new and expanded programming. We have an exciting fundraising calendar ahead with something to

## Inside...

- Words from weSPARK.....1
- The weSPARK Experience.....1
- May Contain Nuts! A Night of Comedy Honoring the Legendary Tommy Chong.....2
- Jazz and the Cinema at the Catalina Jazz Club.....2
- Jason Alexander's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament.....2
- Cut the Extra Sugars.....3
- 8<sup>th</sup> Annual 10K/5K weRUN/weWALK.....3
- Thank You to Our Generous Supporters.....4
- weSPARK Guests & Testimonials.....6
- Meet weSPARK's Yoga Instructor Erica Rey.....6
- weSPARK by the Numbers.....7

## The weSPARK Experience



Healing. Comfortable. Safe. Loving. These are some of the words that guests use on a regular basis to describe weSPARK Cancer Support Center. And that's music to our ears. The homelike environment and welcoming staff are the first point of contact. From the first intake to the support groups, classes and workshops, our goal is to have every guest benefit from our wrap around model of care.

community as guests make their journey through cancer treatment and healing. "The support I received from the Spanish classes, workshops and support groups at weSPARK have given me a community to rely on and helped me heal," says Rosa V., one of our Spanish speaking guests. Support groups are one part of this program that serves much of our community. Led by licensed

"The support and guidance I received from others in my groups helped to make even the most difficult days manageable," Willow W. says in describing her experience with our support groups. Trisha S. puts it this way, "From the brilliant practitioners to the loving staff, to the warriors disguised as guests, I find myself stronger each day."



clinicians, the support groups offer the chance for guests to share their stories and connect with others who have walked a similar path, whether as a cancer patient or caregiver.

For anyone who has a diagnosis, has been through treatment or fills the role of a caregiver, friend or family member, we welcome you to explore the services at weSPARK and join our community of healing.

## OUR MISSION

weSPARK Cancer Support Center is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for cancer patients, survivors and their loved ones by providing free healing and therapeutic services tailored to alleviate the physical and emotional side effects of a cancer diagnosis.

weSPARK's model of care is called Navigating Health through Wellness<sup>SM</sup> (read more on page 6). This program offers a unique individualized treatment approach that also emphasizes

*Are you interested in the FREE services that weSPARK offers? Contact our office today to book your brief intake appointment with one of our clinicians. Find out more today! Call 818-906-3022.*

# May Contain Nuts! A Night of Comedy Honoring the Legendary Tommy Chong



**Tommy Chong receiving The Heart of weSPARK Award from Cheech Marin**  
Photo credit: David Sobel



**Billy Gardell & Wendy Liebman**

Cheech Marin and Lou Adler presented the legendary Tommy Chong with the Heart of weSPARK Award at our annual *'May Contain Nuts! A Night of Comedy'* show! We had a stellar cast of comedians, which included Alonzo Bodden, Billy Gardell, Cristela Alonzo, Wendy Liebman, Peter Berman and Eric Schwartz! A special thank you to Producer Charlene Sperber, our Event Committee, Wendy Liebman, Alonzo Bodden and Board Member Mark Walberg for their commitment to weSPARK. Thank you to our sponsors Charlene Sperber, Ellice Sperber & Dale Van Fossen, Michelle Sperber, Lilly Pearl Foundation, SUPERCUTS, CBS, California Bank & Trust, Allan Dietrich, Sharlene & Glenn Miyagishima, Jay Moriarty, Terry Takeda, Catherine Curry-Williams & Scott Williams, Wells Fargo and our other generous sponsors who made this event a success. We are so grateful to all our guests, donors and volunteers! 🌈



**Shelby Chong, Tommy Chong and Charlene Sperber**  
Photo credit: David Sobel



**L to R: Lou Adler, Alonzo Bodden, Tommy Chong, Billy Gardell, Cheech Marin & Cristela Alonzo**  
Photo credit: Michael Schwartz

## Jazz and the Cinema at the Catalina Jazz Club



**L to R: Steve Tyrell, Jeff Goldblum, Sandra Booker, Ed Begley Jr., Susan Anton and Tamir Hendelman**  
Photo Credit: Robert Le



**L - Actor & Jazz Enthusiast Jeff Goldblum**  
Photo Credit: David Sobel

It was a night to remember on Sunday, July 30th at the Catalina Jazz Club for our 'Jazz and the Cinema' event to celebrate classic cinema soundtracks to jazz and raise funds in support of weSPARK programs. The outstanding line-up included jazz enthusiast and actor Jeff Goldblum, Grammy Award-winning vocalist Steve Tyrell, actress Susan Anton and Sandra Booker and her 5tet Band. Thank you to our sponsors Sharlene & Glenn Miyagishima, Kam & Jim Morris, The Bolkin-Helene Family, DLT Tooling Systems, Inc., V. Donovan Field, Zina & Steve Glodney, and Catherine Curry-Williams & Scott Williams. 🌈



**L to R: Robert & Sandra Cooper, Bruce Warner, V. Donovan Field, Casey & Jim Wheatman**  
Photo Credit: David Sobel

## Jason Alexander's 15th Annual Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament

It was a FULL HOUSE at our 15th Annual Jason Alexander Celebrity Poker Tournament! We could not have done this event without our event chairs Jason Alexander, Arthur Toretzky and Jay Moriarty as they set the tone for a fun and successful tournament! Thank you to our sponsors City National Bank, Gendler & Kelly, Sharlene and Glenn Miyagishima, The Bolkin-Helene Family, Dukes Wealth Management, Scott Williams and Catherine Curry-Williams, Arthur Toretzky, Matt and Maryanne Siegel, Magical GSH, Elaine Donley/Assisted Home Care and 10 Deuce Clothing! A special shout-out to our dedicated Event Committee and volunteers. Don't miss our next event on Sunday, March 25th (see page 8 for more info)! 🌈



**Co-chairs Jay Moriarty & Arthur Toretzky pose with Jason Alexander & Nancy Allen**  
Photo Credit: Johanna Siegmann



**weSPARK Board and Jason Alexander**  
Photo Credit: Johanna Siegmann



**Scott Lafette V & Sharon his good luck charm**  
Photo Credit: Johanna Siegmann

# Cut the Extra Sugars

By Cancer Treatment Centers of America®



What's the connection between sugar and cancer? Carolyn Lammersfeld, Vice President of Integrative Therapies at Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA) talks about possible outcomes associated with obesity. That's because excess sugars are not just empty calories; they also contribute to weight gain, which may in turn lead to obesity. With obesity linked to 13 types of cancer, watching your waistline is important for your health, not just your wardrobe.

"The main focus should be on lifestyle factors. Obesity links to poorer outcomes and a higher chance of recurrence if someone is diagnosed with cancer," says Lammersfeld, "I suggest people follow the same diet that we recommend to our patients—an anti-inflammatory diet that is mainly plant-based."

One way to cut back on sugars, according to Lammersfeld, is by following the **SLASH** plan:

**Stay in for meals:** Gain control by cooking at home and packing lunch and snacks.

**Look at labels:** Identify the difference between naturally occurring and added sugars on nutrition labels.

**Alternate sugar sources:** Use or make your own condiments and sauces without added sugar.

**Sweeten yourself:** Buy unsweetened products and sweeten them yourself to use less of any alternative sweetener.

**Hydrate:** Rethink what you are drinking and choose water more often.

"There are lots of healthy ways to feed your sweet tooth than by adding sugar to your diet," Lammersfeld says. "Fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants that can be important to protecting cells from the kind of damage that can lead to cancer and other diseases."

"It's all about making smarter choices and, when you do indulge in a sweet treat, just do it in moderation," Lammersfeld says. 🌈

Read the expanded article at <http://ctcaho.pe/2F7Jcno>



Winning the fight against cancer, every day.®

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Our MC, Leyna Nguyen from KCAL/CBS News kicks off our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Run/Walk!  
Photo Credit: Johanna Siegmann

## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual 10K/5K weRUN/weWALK



L to R: Hillary Nadworny, Marlene McGuirt, Rachele Carson & Nancy Allen

Our annual Run/Walk was back this year with over 450 runners, walkers and supporters joining us for this exciting event at CBS Studio Center. Participants ran and walked past iconic sound stages of current television and movie productions. KCAL 9/CBS television news anchor Leyna Nguyen was our Master of Ceremonies and helped kick off the race.

Thank you to our sponsors the Bolkin-Helene Family, Shire, our partner District 4 Council-member David E. Ryu, LA Parent, 97.1 AMP Radio, The World Famous KROQ, 94.7 The WAVE, K-EARTH 101 and 93.1 Jack-FM. We could not have done it without all of our fantastic fundraising teams: Sharlene Miyagishima (#1 along with her brother, Terry Takeda's match challenge!), Tammy Billik, Steve Glodney and Team Mann, Gelon, Glodney, Gumerove, Yee LLP, The Mighty McStiles, Arthur Toretzky, Team Tongson LVUSD, Lynnanne Zager, Steven Wolfe, Claudia DeCea, Jane Stephan and our other peer-to-peer fundraisers who rocked it this year! 🌈



weSPARK Board Member Sharlene Miyagishima and her team were our top fundraisers this year.



weSPARK Board Member Steve Glodney and his fundraising team

# Thank You to our generous supporters in 2017!

We are grateful to have so many wonderful donors willing to contribute to weSPARK. You enable us to offer innovative and life-enhancing services every year, and it is thanks to you that we can offer them all free of charge.

🔥 indicates a donor who is also a Torchbearer; a big-hearted individual who commits to giving a one-time or annually recurring gift of \$250 or more to weSPARK.

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## WHO WE ARE

weSPARK Cancer Support Center is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for cancer patients in all stages of treatment, as well as their families and friends. weSPARK is staffed with experienced and licensed practitioners whose services are specifically tailored to alleviate the physical and emotional side effects of a cancer diagnosis. These healing programs provide comfort, strength, and support and are all **free of charge**.

## WHAT WE DO

weSPARK offers over 100 FREE services each month delivered by expert facilitators to empower our guests with tools to navigate their cancer experience. Our approach to healing is summarized by our acronym SPARK (Support, Prevention, Acceptance, Recovery, and Knowledge) and our **Navigating Health Through Wellness<sup>SM</sup>** model of care. Using this approach, the weSPARK treatment team works collaboratively to provide comprehensive wrap-around services. This ensures that each guest is offered the benefits of working individually with a licensed clinician, an oncology-nurse navigator, an oncology nutritionist and a variety of healing providers. As always, all services are completely free of charge to all our guests.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

- Facilitated by a licensed clinician
- Held in a comfortable, homelike setting for 90 minutes
- Groups provide a safe space for patients, survivors and their loved ones to connect and share stories with others who are navigating a cancer diagnosis
- We provide specific groups for caregivers, children, teens, men, and en Español!

## INDIVIDUAL HEALING THERAPIES

- Individual appointments are made for our guests to work one-on-one with specialized practitioners.
- Healing therapies include Reiki, Qi Gong, Reflexology, Hypnotherapy and Acupuncture.

## CREATIVE COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

- We provide a variety of programs and workshops that are designed to be both inspirational and informational.
- Our community based programming includes monthly potlucks, jewelry workshops, Reiki circles, drum circles and so much more!

*Are you interested in the FREE services that weSPARK offers? Contact our office today to book your brief intake appointment with one of our clinicians. weSPARK offers services to cancer patients, survivors and loved ones. Call 818-906-3022.* 🌈



## Words from weSPARK Guests

SUPPORT + PREVENTION + ACCEPTANCE + RECOVERY + KNOWLEDGE

"weSPARK helped me by providing many amazing healing modalities available to both myself and my wife. The **loving community at weSPARK** embraced us from day one." — *Justin Sandler*



"While undergoing treatment for breast cancer, weSPARK was like an **oasis of love, compassion and healing**. The therapists and support group facilitators helped to balance the physical and emotional pain that accompanies cancer treatment. Much to my surprise, this loving support became even more crucial to my well-being post treatment, when I found myself asking, "How do I move forward?" — *Jane Stephan*



"weSPARK has helped me deal with my cancer diagnosis by providing me with a safe place to deal with my emotions. The **Spanish Breathwork workshops help me deal with my stress** and the Spanish Walking Group motivates me to get outdoors and get my body moving again." — *Mirna Solorzano*



"weSPARK is amazing. Everyone from the guests to the staff are warm, generous, thoughtful and full of love. Attending the **Zentangle Drawing Workshop** really helped me distract myself from the stress of dealing with this illness. It was comforting to be around other people who shared similar experiences and focus on creating beautiful art together. I feel very grateful to have found this place." — *Caroline Vu* 🌈



## Meet Erica Rey, Yoga Instructor and Ayurvedic Wellness Counselor!

### What is your role at weSPARK Cancer Support Center?

I lead the Yoga en Español class offered on Tuesday mornings at 11am and offer workshops on Ayurveda, an Indian practice of herbal medicine and nutrition. Starting this year, I will be offering Ayurvedic lifestyle counseling to support with nutrition and daily routines for optimal health.

### What have you learned through your work with cancer patients, survivors and their loved ones?

I have learned that people are resilient, beautiful, kind and giving even through the toughest of times. My heart has expanded watching people reclaim their health. We all have so much to teach one another.

### As a Licensed Ayurvedic Wellness Counselor, you now offer individual sessions on the benefits of Ayurveda at weSPARK. What inspired you to provide this service?

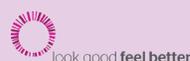
Ayurveda is a science and an art that empowers the practitioner to listen to one's self and to make nutritional, lifestyle and herbal choices that will support our natural balance. Unfortunately, getting to see an Ayurvedic practitioner can be expensive. I wanted to offer this service to the weSPARK community and I wanted it to be accessible, relatable and easy to apply to everyday life.

**Are you interested in an Ayurveda Counseling session? Contact our office today to set up your FREE appointment! Call 818-906-3022.** 🌈

## Look Good...Feel Better

Join us at weSPARK for a night of beauty and fun, plus a make-up kit provided by the American Cancer Society.

We meet on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every other month**



Registration is required. Please call (800) 227-2345



# weSPARK by the Numbers

SUPPORT + PREVENTION + ACCEPTANCE + RECOVERY + KNOWLEDGE

In 2017, weSPARK successfully met its programmatic and financial goals! We are thrilled to have increased retention and the participation of our wrap-around service model *Navigating Health Through Wellness*<sup>SM</sup>. weSPARK provided more than 11,000 individual services, which is a 24% increase from the prior year. We also saw a spike of 39.35% in new guest intakes from the prior year. This is due to individual referrals who have experienced our services, and an increase in building awareness in our community to establish strong and solid partnerships with major hospitals, cancer centers and community organizations throughout Los Angeles.

## WHERE EACH DOLLAR GOES



weSPARK is the beneficiary of a number of foundation grants, successful event fundraisers, along with support from our Torchbearers and individual donors. Approximately 78% of our overall expenses were allocated to Programs vs the industry standard of 65%; and approximately 7% of our overall expenses were allocated to Administrative vs the industry standard of 10%. It is thanks to you and your commitment to weSPARK that we can offer more services and programs to cancer patients, survivors and their loved ones all **FREE** of charge.

the  
**Torchbearers**  
living in wholeness...building hope for tomorrow

*Carry us into the future, and become a Torchbearer today!*

### GIVING LEVELS

the Blaze level	\$10,000 and up
the Flame level	\$5,000 - \$9,999
the Glow level	\$1,000 - \$4,999
the Spark level	\$500 - \$999
the Ignite level	\$250 - \$499

- Recognition on the 2018 Torchbearer Commemorative Plaque displayed at weSPARK
- Recognition on the 2018 Virtual Torchbearer Plaque on website

*"weSPARK was my oasis in my hour of darkness. Thank you!"*  
– Lynn S.

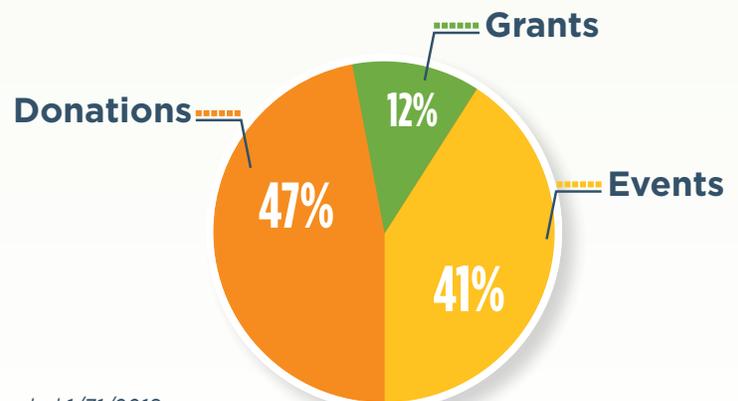
## PROGRAM GROWTH

- In 2017, we provided more than **11,000 services**. That's an **increase of 24%**
- We served **15% more guests** overall and saw a **40% increase** in new guests to the center.
- Support groups, classes and individual services **grew by 23%**
- The biggest jump came in the number of guests attending workshops – that number **jumped** right off the graph at **180%**



Fiscal Year ended 1/31/2018

## 2017-2018 FISCAL YEAR-END INCOME



To make a tax-deductible donation, please visit [weSPARK.org/donate](http://weSPARK.org/donate) - Thank you!



SUPPORT + PREVENTION + ACCEPTANCE + RECOVERY + KNOWLEDGE

13520 Ventura Blvd.  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

weSPARK Tax-Deductible  
ID: 95-4758462

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PERMIT NO. 1494

Jason Alexander's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Hold 'em



**POKER**  
**TOURNAMENT**

You're Invited...  
**MARCH 25, 2018**

Exciting prizes for top finishers!  
Trophy for winner!

\$125 Buy-in  
Get all the details at [weSPARK.org/poker](http://weSPARK.org/poker)

REGISTRATION STARTS AT 11:30AM  
CARDS IN AIR AT 1PM  
1001 W. Riverside Dr., Burbank  
PICKWICK ~ GARDENS ~

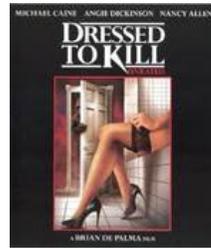
**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE!**  
Contact Marlene at [marlene@wespark.org](mailto:marlene@wespark.org) or 818-906-3022

Proceeds to benefit weSPARK Cancer Support Center

To Buy-In go to [weSPARK.org/poker](http://weSPARK.org/poker)



UPCOMING weSPARK EVENTS



**Dressed to Kill...  
Cancer**  
Movie Screening  
MAY 2018



**Cool Jazz on a  
Hot Summer Night**  
JULY 29, 2018



**May Contain Nuts!**  
Heart of weSPARK Award  
& Comedy Night  
OCTOBER 9, 2018

Questions on any of our events?  
Please contact Hillary Nadworny at [hillary@weSPARK.org](mailto:hillary@weSPARK.org) / (818)906-3022.