



weSPARK

CANCER
SUPPORT
CENTER

WINTER 2015 VOLUME 13 ISSUE 1



Words from weSPARK

weSPARK has always focused on ways to make a real, discernible difference in the lives of those who have been affected by cancer. Thanks to the generous contributions from all of our supporters, 2014 was a fantastic year of expansions and improvements. We are offering more support services, including those in key areas of need like Spanish-language support groups, grief groups, and programs for kids and teens. We are working tirelessly to improve our online presence by updating our website and offering online programming so those who are unable to make it to the weSPARK offices can still be part of our community. And if you've driven by our offices recently, you may have noticed



that our front entrance got a bit of a facelift! We are thrilled to share all of our new & improved services with you into 2015 and beyond. Thank you for making it all possible!

Nancy Allen, Executive Director

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OUR MISSION

weSPARK is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for cancer patients, their families, and friends. weSPARK provides, free of charge, multiple services designed to heal the mind, body and spirit of all those whose lives have been affected by cancer. 818.906.3022 • www.wespark.org

The SPARKles: Together, They Shine

How do you even begin to process the loss of a spouse to cancer? For the "SPARKles" (the self-titled name of one of weSPARK's grief support groups), meeting and bonding with each other has helped them fill the void in their lives. "We may not have a lot in common, but no one gets me like these girls," said Joyce B. "What I was looking for was community," added Coco L., "but you guys [the SPARKles] are my family now." The SPARKles have been meeting for over a year, and they all agree that the group has given them a sense of freedom - the freedom to accept their feelings no matter what they are, and the courage to say them out loud. "We give unconditional support to each other," said Klara F., "we feel one hundred percent - no, one thousand percent supported by each other."



"We may not have a lot in common, but no one gets me like these girls"

All of these women agree that their husbands' passing was the hardest and deepest loss they have ever felt. To the rest of the world, the sharpness of their grief is unfathomable, and these women may feel like a burden to others as they struggle to process their new normal. But within the group there is no pressure to be "over it" - they have full permission to

be open and honest, and they are welcomed to express their thoughts and feelings. "It's nice to know there's not something wrong with me for not being further along," said Coco L. Through the help and support of the group and Suzanne Shayne, MFT, the group's facilitator, the pain starts to diminish and many are able to find hope and to laugh again.

When asked to describe weSPARK, all of the SPARKles agreed that it was a place of compassion and community, and a place that they feel loved and supported. "I'm not into groups, but this is more than just a support group - these are my friends," said

Susan L. A common refrain from Suzanne is "a broken heart is an opportunity for an open heart." The women in the SPARKles are clear proof that there is hope even in the darkest times. Klara F. exclaimed, for anyone considering coming to weSPARK, "run, don't walk!!"

Interested in joining one of weSPARK's support groups? Call or email today: 818-906-3022 / carlin@weSPARK.org

Pictured (L-R, top): Coco L., Shelley E., Susan L., Klara F.; (L-R, bottom): Suzanne Shayne MFT, Joyce B.; not pictured: Adele B., Pilar T., Barbara H., Barbara J.



The National In-Choir provided musical cheer for all our guests!



Handcrafted ceramics donated by the Village Arts Project were on sale at our Fundraising Bazaar



Board Member Anita Rich (R) and friend



Sadie G., of the "wee"SPARK Children's Group gets her turn with Santa

weSPARK Holiday Party

What do weSPARK guests, supporters, staff, celebrities, and Santa have in common? They all came out to the weSPARK Annual Holiday Party on December 11! A fun and festive time was had as everyone enjoyed a hearty meal, delicious desserts, and wonderful entertainment by the Spinning Dreidel, the National In-Choir, and yes, the jolly old elf himself, Santa Claus. A big Thank You to everyone who made a purchase at our Fundraising Bazaar which featured lovely handmade ceramics, jewelry, pashminas, and some memorable weSPARK gear from years past. We are glad so many of you could join us for such a fabulous evening!



Michelle Berenson, a weSPARK guest, enjoys the festivities with her daughter



Joel Vendette, Carla Patterson, and facilitator Diane Hubner



Nancy Allen (Executive Director), Leslie Ann Warren, and Catherine Carlin share in the holiday fun!



Rosa V. shows off her fresh manicure & makeup!



Just in time for the holidays, weSPARK partnered with one of our favorite organizations, The Beauty Bus Foundation, for our annual pop-up salon. The Beauty Bus Foundation delivers dignity, hope and respite to chronically or terminally ill

men, women and children and their caregivers through pampering products and beauty and grooming services. The Beauty Bus Foundation brought a group of their wonderful volunteers and all of their beauty supplies to provide complimentary services to our

guests. They provided 35 facials, manicures, make up applications, and hair and wig styling to our cancer patients and their caregivers. Everyone left with a smile on their face and a spring in their step. Thank you so much to the Beauty Bus Foundation for a wonderful day, and we are so thankful for our partnership!



Maggie L. is getting ready for her close-up!



Nothing relaxes you like a facial!

YOU keep the spark alive at weSPARK...



The Torchbearers is for big-hearted individuals who wish to give an annually recurring gift to weSPARK Cancer Support Center for annually recurring needs. To become a Torchbearer, please visit our website: www.wespark.org

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🔥 denotes a donor who is also a Torchbearer, which means they are big-hearted individuals who commit to giving an *annually recurring* gift of \$250 or more to weSPARK.

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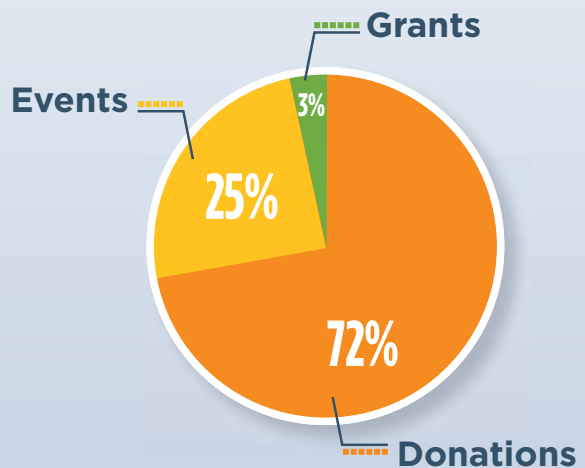
Financial Year in Review



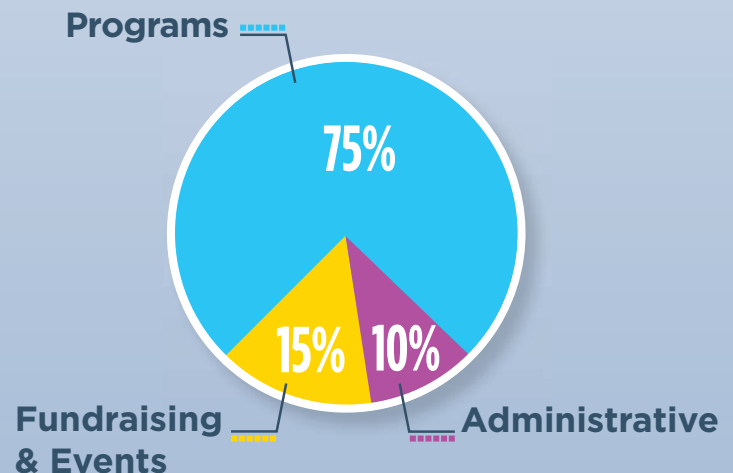
weSPARK is dedicated to growing and supporting our vital services in the community. Three-quarters of our expenses went directly to programs in 2014, and we are committed to increasing that percentage to 85%. This focus on programming ensures that we can provide as many opportunities as possible for those affected by cancer to enrich their minds, bodies, and spirits.

weSPARK is the beneficiary of a few wonderful grants, and our fabulous and fun events make up a minor portion of our income, but, as you can see, weSPARK really would not be where we are today without the generous ongoing support of our donors. It's because of you that our doors are open and we served over 2,000 adults and children who needed us in 2014. Thanks to your donations, weSPARK can expand, grow, and thrive. We can continue to offer a diverse range of services that are vital to help those impacted by cancer during one of the most difficult, life-altering experiences anyone can go through. weSPARK is there for those who need us, but YOU, our supporters, are there for weSPARK. Thank you!

2014-2015 FISCAL YEAR-END INCOME



ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES



Fiscal Year ended 1/31/2015



For Every Dollar You Donate:

- 75¢ goes to fund all of our programs
- 15¢ covers fundraising costs
- 10¢ covers management and general expenses

And we are committed to increasing the program allotment to 85%

Look Good...Feel Better

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

We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in Sherman Oaks.



Space is limited, must call to sign up. Call Carlin at (818) 906-3022



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Horario: Cada Viernes a las 11:00 a.m.



Si usted está interesado o gusta más información por favor comuníquese con Susana Stewart, Trabajadora Social o Elaine Ruiz, Coordinadora de Ayuda Comunitaria al número (818) 906-3022



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