

ACTIONS

FALL 2012 | ISSUE 23 CONGRESSIONAL FAMILIES CANCER PREVENTION PROGRAM | OF THE PREVENT CANCER FOUNDATION



CONGRESSIONAL FAMILIES
CANCER PREVENTION PROGRAM
OF THE PREVENT CANCER FOUNDATION

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It's a Family Affair: 20th Annual Action for Cancer Awareness Awards

The doors of the Cannon Caucus Room opened into a sea of green (our signature color) on September 20th, as the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program held its 20th Annual Action for Cancer Awareness Awards Luncheon.



Award Presenters and Honorees (left to right): Debbie Dingell, Jennifer Griffin, Ellen Noghès, Marie Royce, Barbara Grassley, Marcelle Leahy, Paula Zahn, Barbara Morris-Lent, Cecile Tauzin, Marty Hinojosa, Dara Torres



Past and Present Congressional Families Executive Directors: Linda Bachus, Lisa McGovern (current), Tamra Bentsen

through the often poignant program. It began when **Barbara Grassley** of Iowa (a previous award recipient who this year celebrates 25 years of being cancer free) presented the **Congressional Families Leadership Award** to her dear friend **Marcelle Leahy**, while husband **Senator Patrick Leahy** looked on.

A former nurse and melanoma survivor, Marcelle now advocates for skin cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment, both in her home state of Vermont and across the nation. After she spoke of her own journey from diagnosis through treatment and beyond, many guests

Members of Congress and their spouses from both sides of the aisle – and both sides of the Capitol – joined advocates, supporters and leaders in the cancer community to pay tribute to five inspiring women.

Prevent Cancer Foundation President **Carolyn “Bo” Aldigé** and **Lisa McGovern**, the program’s Executive Director (and spouse of **Representative Jim McGovern**), opened the program by highlighting how special it was to be coming together for the 20th luncheon to renew our commitment to stopping cancer before it starts. **Paula Zahn**, known to all through her many years on television, expertly shepherded us

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Dear Friends and Congressional Family Members, **WHO DO YOU PREVENT CANCER FOR?**

That was the question we asked participants at the Prevent Cancer Foundation's Fourth Annual 5k Walk/Run, held on September 30th at Nationals Park. Their answers, which can be seen on the Prevent Cancer Foundation's Facebook page, ranged from 'my dog' to 'my future self' to 'all of mankind'. Everyone had their own reason to prevent cancer, but most responses shared a common theme: family. It was a perfect fit for the family centered event. More than 400 men, women and children attended, many with a dog or two in tow, to participate in the fun-filled morning designed to help people stop cancer before it starts.



After completing their daily dose of exercise – something we should all do to reduce our risk of diseases like cancer – guests were invited to tour the Prevent Cancer Super Colon, receive a complimentary oral cancer screening, and visit the Walgreen's flu shot table. These services were amidst an atmosphere dominated by fun: music and food, corn hole tosses, hula hoop stations, giant Jenga and trips to the Nationals dugout and batting cages to hit a few balls. Perhaps best of all, the event raised about \$112,000 for life-saving cancer research and community outreach programs.

Also in September, the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program held our 20th Awards Luncheon. More than seventy spouses and Members turned out to renew their commitment to fighting this disease.

We are busy planning for future events – some in the DC area and others by webinar – to reach more of you in your home districts. Please feel free to share your ideas with me at lisa.mcGovern@preventcancer.org.

Wishing you a healthy holiday season,

Lisa McGovern, Executive Director

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 preventcancer

BE SELF AWARE

AND BE YOUR OWN BEST ADVOCATE

By Suzie Dicks



For 27 years Bo Aldigé, President and Founder of the Prevent Cancer Foundation, has advocated that “prevention and early detection are the most effective safeguards against cancer.” With what we know right now, we could prevent more than 60% of cancer cases and more than 50% of cancer deaths. Through research grants and outreach to communities nationwide, the Foundation has focused on the message of prevention and early detection through education, awareness and lifestyle changes.



In 1991, the Prevent Cancer Foundation and the Congressional Club began a partnership to spread the prevention message through Congressional spouses who have a special reach into their home communities. **Doris Matsui**, then President of the Congressional Club, now a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, jumped at the idea and the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program was born. Today the program consists of spouses of Members of the House, Senate, Cabinet, Supreme Court and Diplomatic Corps who share an interest in advancing cancer prevention through research, outreach and education.

A few years ago, the program's Executive Director **Lisa McGovern** encouraged my participation in the Environmental Protection Agency's SunWise Program, a cross curricular school program that teaches children about the sun's power and how to protect themselves. Although my home state of Washington is not known for clear skies, the melanoma rate is high – with an estimated 2,140 new cases expected to be diagnosed in 2012 and 230 estimated deaths. Who knew the sun could so effectively get through those clouds? The statistics bear out

the need for preventive measures even on overcast days. We spread that message in elementary schools in Tacoma, Washington using the brightly colored and engaging SunWise kits. Parents and teachers were educated along with the students. Little did I know that what I learned would soon be instrumental in my own life.

Recently, Lisa and I attended an event together and I had a chance to highlight how my focus on cancer became much more personal. My work with the Prevent Cancer Foundation has fostered in me an acute awareness relative to all kinds of cancer, but especially skin cancer. Being a light skinned red head and having burned easily as a child, I recognized that I was at an increased risk for the disease. During my annual visit to the dermatologist, I was seeing a new doctor and pointed out a rather recent, round, slightly raised mole on my leg. This new mole did not meet the ABCD danger signs of melanoma. It was a solid brown color, perfectly rounded and slightly less than 6mm. However it had appeared suddenly and was slightly raised. I expressed my concern and the doctor, to his credit, took me seriously saying he was quite sure it was non-cancerous, but due to my concern he would do a biopsy. The biopsy confirmed early detection of melanoma! Within days they had removed the mole. The healing went well and the margins remain clear.

This experience highlighted to me that we are our own best advocates when it comes to early detection and prevention. I am very lucky to have been exposed early on to the important work of Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program and the Prevent Cancer Foundation. They provide lifesaving information not only for my family, but for families in my home state of Washington and to communities nationwide. A special thanks to Bo Aldigé and Lisa McGovern for the work that they do as we continue to take steps toward stopping cancer before it starts.



Congressional Club Members (left to right):
Carolina Reyes, Cecile Tauzin, Barbara Morris-Lent,
Julie Reichert, Vicki Miller, Lydia de La Vina de Foley



Jennifer Griffin and family with Debbie Dingell



Alicia Leahy Jackson, Marcelle and Senator Patrick Leahy



Diplomatic Spouses Cecile Jørgensen Strømme (Norway),
Jovana Kirm (Slovenia), Shamin Jawad (Afghanistan),
Ellen Noghès (Monaco), Sally Oren (Israel), Christine Sager
(Switzerland)

20th Annual Awards Luncheon Cont. from page 1

reported making an immediate note to schedule their annual skin check. Marcelle's story serves as a reminder that no one knows your body better than you; if your healthcare provider dismisses your concerns, be persistent and seek a second opinion if necessary.

The second **Congressional Families Leadership Award** was presented to **Barbara Morris-Lent** of New York by long-time friend **Cecile Tauzin** of Louisiana (spouse of former **Representative Billy Tauzin**). Barbara has been an active member of the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program since its inception in 1991; her ideas, vision, and dedication have all played an integral role in the development and success of the program. All who know Barbara know of her high-level professional skills, which she generously has directed to this mission. For the past few years, the fight became personal when her beloved husband, former New York **Representative Norm Lent**, battled cancer until his death in June. Barbara has inspired us all with her devotion as a caregiver as well as a member of our program.

Debbie Dingell of Michigan, spouse of **Representative John Dingell**, then took the podium to introduce Fox News Channel's national security correspondent **Jennifer Griffin**. Jennifer, who was presented with the 2012 **Distinguished Service in Journalism Award**, is a Triple Negative Breast Cancer survivor who has publically shared her battle with this disease – through her blog, on television and elsewhere – to educate and help others. Jennifer fought cancer while covering two wars and raising three young children. Her husband, daughters, and grandparents were in the audience to celebrate Jennifer on this happy occasion, just as they had been there on more difficult days. We were reminded that a cancer diagnosis profoundly impacts family, every step of the way.

That theme continued as **Marty Hinojosa** introduced the recipient of the **Excellence in Cancer Awareness Award**, five-time Olympian **Dara Torres**. Dara became a colorectal cancer advocate when her father was diagnosed with the disease that ultimately claimed his life. Her work with the Prevent Cancer Foundation and other organizations has helped raise awareness and funds for colorectal cancer screenings and treatments. Dara, who exemplifies healthy living, urged luncheon attendees to take all the preventive measures possible, including being mindful of diet, fitness, screenings, and family health history in order to reduce the risk of cancer.

The final award presented was one of Special Recognition to **Ellen Noghès**, wife of **Ambassador H.E. Gilles Noghès** of Monaco. Congressional Families' Executive Council Member **Marie Royce** presented Ellen with the award. As the first diplomatic liaison to the Congressional Families Program, Ellen has used her knowledge and charm to create strong ties between the Program and the diplomatic spouse community. At each of her diplomatic postings, Ellen – a three-time cancer survivor – brought together others in the diplomatic community whose lives have been touched by cancer to provide support and strength. Over the years Ellen has worked hard to create a community of cancer survivors and advocates, regardless of where in the world she was living.

Thank you to those who attended the 20th Annual Action for Cancer Awareness Awards Luncheon and for being a part of this very special afternoon. Guests left with a gift bag containing green pashmina shawls; special green stone and pearl earrings designed by Allison Priebe Brooks (Queen Bee) to symbolize that small changes over time have a big impact; grace shower gel from philosophy, and Dove dark chocolates, compliments of Mars, Inc. We hope to see you all in September 2013 to honor a new roster of deserving awardees.

A Congressional Family Takes on Melanoma

Given that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime, it is quite possible that you or someone you love will be touched by the disease.



What is less likely is that you and your parent or child will be diagnosed within days of each other, but **Representative Brian Bilbray** (Calif.) and daughter **Briana** are proof that unlikely does not mean impossible. In the spring of 2011, Briana was diagnosed with melanoma, the most extreme form of skin cancer; only two weeks later, Representative Bilbray was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma, another form

of the disease. The father-daughter duo never envisioned becoming advocates for the prevention and early detection of skin cancer, but they have selflessly shared their own stories to help educate others.

Melanoma is the second-most common cancer found in people ages 15 to 29. Briana falls into this group, having received her stage III melanoma diagnosis at only 24 and relapsing twice after undergoing chemotherapy over a year ago. She has dedicated herself to raising awareness about melanoma, especially in young people, and has garnered much-deserved praise for the strength and grace she exudes in her interviews. Briana has recently taken her advocacy efforts a step further by appearing in a very candid public service announcement with her father in which they both discuss how lifestyle choices can play a large role in your health. For those who have not yet seen this moving piece, we encourage you to view it on Youtube.

Representative Bilbray has been part of this education and awareness campaign, from both the perspective of a skin cancer survivor and a parent of a melanoma patient. The Congressman is uniquely able to understand the impact that policy and legislation can have on skin cancer research and prevention efforts. He and **Representative Carolyn Maloney** (NY) have joined together in a bipartisan effort to introduce the Melanoma Research Act of 2012 to support skin cancer research conducted by the National Institutes of Health. The legislation is funded by taxes from indoor tanning services.



BEHIND THE SCENES:

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE FILMING OF THE PREVENT CANCER FOUNDATION NAB PSA

The Prevent Cancer Foundation has once again collaborated with the National Association of Broadcasters to produce a new public service announcement (PSA). Replacing the skin cancer prevention spot previously offered as one of eight topics will be a "What do YOU do to Prevent Cancer" PSA.

I had the pleasure of participating in all stages of the process, from concept and script development through filming, which took place outside of **Politics and Prose** bookstore in D.C.

In each off-election year, the National Association of Broadcasters invites members of Congress and their families to tape professionally-produced public service announcements (PSAs) on issues of concern to their local communities.

Each participant is invited to record two 30-second PSAs from eight topics, including the Prevent Cancer Foundation's cancer prevention PSA.

NAB's production team will be on Capitol Hill throughout the month of May 2013 to record members of Congress, Congressional Spouses and their children. A script and teleprompter will be provided, along with professional make-up. Once edited, NAB will release the PSAs to radio and television broadcasters in Congressional Members' home districts/states for airing from June through December 15, 2013.

Nearly 200 participants joined NAB to tape over 650 PSAs during the 2011 campaign. Since its inception in 1985, the Congressional PSA program has allowed participants an opportunity to speak directly to their home districts and states on a number of important social issues. Last year the TV PSAs alone aired over 53,000 times. — Lisa McGovern

CONGRESSIONAL FAMILIES MISSION AND HISTORY

The Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program is a nonpartisan outreach effort of congressional families who have joined forces to spread the message of early detection of preventable cancers. Specifically, we focus on raising awareness to prevent breast, cervical, colon, lung, oral, prostate, skin and testicular cancers.

The program was founded in 1991 by the Congressional Club in partnership with the Prevent Cancer Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to preventing cancer through scientific research and education.

Our advisory board consists of more than 140 spouses of Members of Congress, the Administration and the Supreme Court. Advisory board members receive copies of our newsletters, are invited to luncheon seminars, and are kept abreast of news and initiatives related to healthy living and cancer prevention. We encourage our advisory board members to engage in activities in their home states, nationwide, and internationally and we support them in those efforts.

To join the Congressional Families' advisory board please fax, mail or email the following information to the address below: your name, congressional district, preferred phone number, fax number and email address.

**Early detection saves lives.
Please join us.**



Editor Lisa McGovern
Assistant Editor Meghan Keane

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Are you receiving Lisa's emails with invitations to special events? Please contact her at lisa.mcgovern@preventcancer.org or call her at 703-519-2113.



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THANK YOU FOR REACHING OUT ON THE OP-EDS

Thanks to everyone who requested statistics for the men's health and breast cancer awareness op-eds. In honor of Men's Health Month, our June op-ed was titled *"Taking Care of the Men in Your Life"*, and it seems that many of you were interested in doing just that! Women are often the ones that encourage their men to make health a priority – and many times are the ones making the doctors appointments. But we can't forget to take care of ourselves, and October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month op-ed gave us the chance to remind others of that as well. This disease continues to touch too many women. We see a lot of pink in October, but we need to remember what it signifies – there is still a great need for continuing breast cancer education. Thank you for being a part of that effort.

Judy Benishek, Michigan

Dana Collins Neugebauer, Texas

Vera Davis, Illinois

Debbie DeMint, South Carolina

Barbara Grassley, Iowa

Marty Hinojosa, Texas

Margaret Hunter, California

Tina Ercole LoBiondo, New Jersey

Vicki Miller, Florida

Congressman Pete Olson, Texas

Elizabeth Roskam, Illinois

Christine Schilling, Illinois