

Two Gifts Focus on Supporting

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erminal illness is a wrenching experience, devastating not only to the patient but to family, loved ones, friends, and even caregivers.

And while research continues to evolve on newer and better methods of diagnosing and treating the terminally ill, there has not been a significant focus on preparing providers or conducting research on how to support patients and their loved ones as they face the end of life.

Penn Nursing is taking the lead with specialized programs to prepare students to achieve better patient outcomes and to provide greater comfort at the end of life. And faculty research is developing new knowledge and interventions that are furthering those efforts.

Now, two donors whose lives have both been deeply affected by personal loss, have stepped in to allow Penn to remain focused on this issue. While there are many differences between the two, they share one remarkable insight in common—both are acutely aware of the unique personal issues faced by terminally ill patients and their loved ones.

Metacancer Foundation Gift Focuses on Fostering Research

In 2007, the Metacancer Foundation, headed up by Michael Lundblad C'95, generously established the Elizabeth Anne Prostic Memorial Research Award to support research conducted by graduate students on the psychosocial interaction between patients, their families and caregivers dealing with a cancer that has metastasized, regardless of where it originated in the body.

Elizabeth Prostic C'96, Michael Lundblad's wife, was a vibrant, energetic 31-year-old law student, and former political staffer in Washington D.C. who had given birth to their daughter just four months prior to being diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer that had already spread to other areas of her body.

Prior to his wife's illness, Mr. Lundblad was a PhD candidate in English and a Fellow of Brown College at the University of Virginia. He is currently a Postdoctoral Faculty Fellow in Humanities at Syracuse University, affiliated with the Department of English. It was the couple's connection to their alma mater that prompted

him to establish the award at Penn, rather than any other institution.

Deeply moved by the emotional experiences that he and his wife went through as they learned that her disease would be terminal, he founded the Metacancer Foundation as a web site (www.metacancer.org) where others faced with the same devastating issues might find a wealth of resources to raise their spirits and determination to live out their final days with hope, with meaning and with dignity.

"I wanted metastatic cancer patients to know that they can take control of how they choose to live with this kind of diagnosis and focus on the positive things you want to do with the time you have left," Mr. Lundblad explains.

The Metacancer Foundation is a new, young organization that is energetic, eager to expand, and yet very specifically focused on this one issue—the psychosocial and emotional realities faced by anyone living with metastatic cancer—so as not to be a redundant group with the same mission as the

A memorial research award has been established at Penn for Elizabeth (Lizzie) Prostic C'96, pictured here with newborn daughter in 2004.



the Terminally Ill

American Cancer Society, the Lance Armstrong Foundation or others. The newly established Prostatic Research Award at Penn Nursing, Mr. Lundblad believes, is a very directed way to ensure that more young researchers will focus on developing new science in this understudied area.

Greenberg Fellowship to Support More Researchers in Palliative Care

David Kotok is a graduate of Penn's Wharton School who holds two Masters degrees in Organizational Dynamics and Philosophy, also earned here at Penn. As a co-founder of Cumberland Advisors, he is a highly successful investment analyst whose articles have appeared in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal and who appears regularly on CNN, CNBC and Bloomberg Television.

In 2006, Mr. Kotok generously established the Suzanne Nye Greenberg Memorial Endowed Fellowship in Palliative Care at Penn Nursing as a lasting memorial to his business and life partner Suzy Greenberg who also lost a gallant battle with cancer some years ago.

Suzy was also a Penn graduate, an enthusiastic school supporter and an active volunteer at the University who served on the Trustees' Council of Penn Women. And like Elizabeth Prostic, she too was a vital, active woman with a wide variety of outside interests who showed remarkable courage in the face of adversity.

Mr. Kotok's gift in Suzy's name and memory is intended for Penn Nursing graduate students working in palliative care for a broad range of life-threatening illnesses from cancer and dementia to heart failure, AIDS and others.

"For six years we had been looking for a suitable memorial to Suzy," Mr. Kotok relates. "And we just felt that there was a real lack of high-quality research being done. There were too few young nurse researchers working in this specialized area on these peculiar and special needs of patients and their families in terminal situations like we went through."

Mr. Kotok was attracted to Penn not only because of his and Suzy's lifelong affiliations with the University but also because the School of Nursing emphasizes evidence-based research and the translation of that research into practice.



David Kotok W'65, G'01 created a fellowship at Penn Nursing in memory of his partner, Suzanne Greenberg CW'68.

Both donors hope their gifts will attract more nurses and researchers to this challenging area and ultimately provide much-needed support for patients, families and caregivers.

Others may contribute to this effort through the Suzanne Nye Greenberg Memorial Fellowship or the Elizabeth Anne Prostic Memorial Research Fund by contacting the Office of Development and Alumni Relations at (215) 898-4841. ❖

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