Dana Young-Melnick has a beautiful backyard with a view of a pond, where she’s lived for the past 20 years. She’s spent a lot of time out here observing the wildlife, including the many cranes that walk quietly through the grass. “They are calm, simple creatures. You walk right up to them and can take their picture. They don’t jump or get bothered,” she described. Perhaps this is one reason that she connected with the origami cranes in the Arts In Medicine Studio.

When she first came to Moffitt in September 2017, Dana had been diagnosed with stage IV ovarian cancer. She quickly got familiar with the cancer center, meeting with her social worker, participating in mindfulness classes and attending a Patient and Family Orientation.

Continues on page 3
UPCOMING EVENTS

April – May

ARTS IN MEDICINE STUDIO | 813-745-8407 Open Arts Studio: relax, create, express, discover and share inspiration
MCC – Every Mon. – Fri., 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., Arts Studio, 3rd floor, elevator B
MKC – Every Mon. – Fri., 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Patient and Family Center, 1st floor, by Publix Pharmacy

GENTLE RESTORATIVE YOGA | 813-745-6052
Hope Lodge – Every Wed. and Thur., 3 – 4 p.m., 1st floor
MRC – Every Tue. 12 – 1 p.m., Yoga Room

MEDITATION/RELAXATION CLASSES | 813-745-6052
MCC – Every Wed., 12:15 – 1 p.m., Day Room, 5th floor, use elevator C

MEET THE EXPERT SERIES | 813-745-4710 Cancer experts share information on various topics
MCC – Every Mon. – Fri., 10 – 10:30 a.m., Patient Library & Welcome Center, 2nd floor, elevator B
MKC – Thursdays, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Patient and Family Center, 1st floor, by Publix Pharmacy

**April**

TUE., APRIL 2, 9 | Stage IV Metastatic Breast Cancer Support Group, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Need RSVP to Chris Healy, 813-745-7269 or Christine.Healy@Moffitt.org

TUE., APRIL 2 | General Breast Cancer Support Group, 6 – 7 p.m.
MKC Patient and Family Center, 813-745-8407.

FRI., APRIL 5 | Telephone Support Group for Caregivers of Brain Cancer/Brain Metastases Individuals, 2 – 3 p.m.
Need RSVP to Andrea Dombrowski, 813-745-7267 or Andrea.Dombrowski@Moffitt.org

WED., APRIL 10 | Tools To Quit, free quit smoking class and free nicotine patches, 2 – 4 p.m.
MCC, Owl’s Den Meeting Room, 1st floor, 813-745-8811 or TobaccoTreatment@Moffitt.org

SAT., APRIL 13 | Families First, 8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
MCC, Need RSVP, 813-745-8407.

THUR., APRIL 11, 18 AND 25 | Coffee Connection, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
MCC, Owl’s Den Meeting Room, 1st floor, (around the corner from Blood Draw)

WED., APRIL 17 | Pancreatic Cancer Support Group, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Need RSVP to Kim Murphy, 813-745-1342 or Kim.Murphy@Moffitt.org

THUR., APRIL 18 | Acupuncture for Stress Reduction in Group Setting, 9 – 10:20 a.m.
MRC Yoga Room, Free (accepts donations up to $5.00), 760-710-7836

**MAY**

FRI., MAY 3 | Telephone Support Group for Caregivers of Brain Cancer/Brain Metastases Individuals, 2 – 3 p.m.
Need RSVP to Andrea Dombrowski, 813-745-7267 or Andrea.Dombrowski@Moffitt.org.

TUE., MAY 7 | General Breast Cancer Support Group, 6 – 7 p.m.
MKC Patient and Family Center, 813-745-8407.

WED., MAY 8 | Tools To Quit, free quit smoking class and free nicotine patches, 2 – 4 p.m.
MCC, Owl’s Den Meeting Room, 1st floor, 813-745-8811 or TobaccoTreatment@Moffitt.org

THUR., MAY 9, 16 AND 23 | Coffee Connection, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
MCC, Owl’s Den Meeting Room, 1st floor, (around the corner from Blood Draw)

THUR., MAY 16 | Acupuncture for Stress Reduction in Group Setting, 9 – 10:20 a.m.
MRC Yoga Room, Free (accepts donations up to $5.00), 760-710-7836

ABBREVIATIONS

AYA – ADOLESCENT & YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM
MCB – MOFFITT CLINIC BUILDING
MCC – MOFFITT CANCER CENTER, USF MAGNOLIA DRIVE
MKC – MCKINLEY OUTPATIENT CENTER
MRC – MOFFITT RESEARCH CENTER
Hope Takes Flight

Continued from page 1

It was at this orientation that she first learned of the Arts In Medicine program. Having grown up in New York and studied for the Broadway stage, Dana was interested in this creative outlet and made a visit to the studio. She was immediately greeted by Carol Shore, one of the Artists-in-Residence, who worked with her on an art practice. “Carol was such a comfort. She gave me some art to make and take home. It gave me something to think about,” she said. Dana continued going to the studio to work on different art practices and make new things. “It gave me food for thought about what I was feeling and what was happening to me,” she explained.

In the studio, Dana also found the tree of origami healing cranes. According to Japanese tradition, the process of folding 1,000 origami cranes is said to grant the maker a wish, as the crane was an animal held in high regard and believed to live for 1,000 years. Folding a healing crane has become a very popular Arts In Medicine practice and patients are encouraged to write an intention on the inside, then hang the crane where they can look upon it 1,000 times to be reminded of this hope. The cranes have come to have a personal symbolism for Dana, as well. Observing the ones that pass through her yard, she takes notice, “They walk slowly, with thin legs that look like they might snap, but they don’t snap – they stay strong. Maybe that’s the way we feel when we become this ill, so delicate – not helpless, just so vulnerable.” Although the peaceful birds might appear fragile, she recognized their unwavering nature saying, “They don’t show fear, it’s like there’s a glow around them.” In this way, she found a connection with these tranquil creatures. “Maybe looking at the cranes made me feel the same way. I went in and did what I had to do. I would be calm and get the chemo.” Dana found her own ways to pass on this strength to others. “I go into the studio, pick up a crane from the tree and give them away to people that I think need healing,” she said.

Although Dana comes from a creative background, she encourages others to explore Arts In Medicine, regardless of their artistic ability. “This isn’t art to be good at; this is art to find some peace. It’s for you to express yourself. It’s your expression, it’s not right or wrong – it’s just how you see life or your life or your pain. Like yoga and mindfulness, it’s for people to use if they want to, a way to deal with this unbelievable experience you’re having when you have no control over what is happening to your body. So you have to find ways to express the anger and fear, the helplessness that you feel.” Hope Takes Flight: 20 Years of Arts In Medicine is the current exhibit in Moffitt’s Healing Arts Gallery and will be on display through June 2019. The exhibit features handmade paper and origami cranes created in the Arts In Medicine studio, highlighting the healing tradition of cranes here at Moffitt.

The Healing Arts Gallery is located on the 1st floor of Moffitt Cancer Center’s Magnolia Campus in the hallway outside of Radiation by the Blue Valet parking garage.

In addition to the gallery, the Arts In Medicine program offers the following services:
- Music and Art bedside visits
- Open Art Studio sessions
- Music sessions in the lobbies
- Music & Art à la Carte (every 3rd Wednesday of the month)
- Shibashi (every Tuesday)
- Various events throughout the year

All are welcome to experience the therapeutic benefits of creating art. Visit an Arts In Medicine studio at either the Magnolia Campus or the McKinley Campus. For more information, please call 813-745-8407.
Message from the Co-Chair

Shani Parkin, Co-Chair
Patient and Family Advisory Council

I am incredibly honored and excited to officially begin my two-year term as Co-Chair with Debbie Phillips, and our extremely talented Patient and Family Advisory Council members.

If you are a new patient or caregiver, you may be unsure of what questions to ask and while sitting in the waiting area, you’re gathering as much literature as you possibly can from the rack. “You’re not alone; I vividly recall entering the Magnolia building for the first time in January 2014, wearing the invisible “I’m new to cancer” sticker on my forehead. I was warmly welcomed to Moffitt by Margie Schwerdt, who, while giving directions, shared, “You know, you’ve already made the hardest and best decision by choosing Moffitt, you’re in very safe hands and they’ll take great care of you.”

During the appointment, my surgeon and team provided me with all the information that I needed. They recommended that before I leave, I take the opportunity to visit the Patient Library on the second floor to participate in the Patient and Family Orientation. The information was invaluable and well worth the 30-minute investment of my time. I encourage you to attend the orientation too – you won’t regret it!

I’d like to end this note by sharing a famous Walt Disney quote, which in my opinion perfectly describes Moffitt Cancer Center – “You can design, create and build the most wonderful place in the world, but it takes people to make the dream a reality.” Moffitt Cancer Center has multiple locations; however, without the incredibly passionate, talented and highly skilled professionals, administrators and volunteers, it would just be a building!

For more information about the Patient and Family Orientation, please see the back cover of this PARTNERS, call 813-745-4710 or visit Moffitt.org/Orientation.

Patient and Family Support Groups

The following support groups are offered at Moffitt Cancer Center.

To learn more about any of the support groups offered, including times and locations, please call the Social Work Office at 813-745-8407.

**Family and Friends Support Group**
Support group for family members, friends and caregivers of cancer patients. Meets every Tuesday, 1 – 2 p.m., Magnolia campus, 5th floor of the hospital, room 5140 A. Use elevator C.

**Cancer Support Group**
Support group for patients with any cancer diagnosis. Meets every Tuesday, 1 – 2 p.m., Magnolia campus, 5th floor lounge of the hospital. Use elevator C.

**Metastatic Breast Cancer Support Group**
Support group for patients with stage IV metastatic breast cancer. Meets weekly for six week sessions throughout the year, from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., McKinley campus. For information call 813-745-8407.

**Breast Cancer Connection**
Support group for all patients with breast cancer meets the first Tuesday of every month, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the McKinley campus, Gruden Huddle Room, 1st floor.

**Families First**
A bi-monthly therapeutic program offered on Saturdays for patients who are parents and their children (ages 5 - 18).

**Finding Balance with Cancer**
*Finding Balance with Cancer* is a four-week stress reduction program jointly offered by the Integrative Medicine Program and Social Work. Patients and caregivers learn meditation through group discussion, guided practice and CDs for home use.
Young adults battling cancer now have a place to explore age-specific resources and events in a private virtual setting. The AYA Cancer Connect website provides information and support for adolescents and young adults (AYA), patients ages 15-39, and their families. The comprehensive tool includes many aspects of the AYA journey from making peer connections to finding resources and events. AYA patients are not alone in their journey and this site provides places to find support groups and one-on-one connection opportunities through discussion boards and social media outlets that can assist young adult patients to connect with others who have similar experiences. The resources include financial and legal help, fertility, support, videos, podcasts, and clinical trial information. Young adult patients and survivors can also provide their input through the contact tab to provide additional resources that they may find helpful. AYA Cancer Connect brings together existing resources in all different areas of an AYA patient’s journey and puts them in one accessible location. Visit www.AYACancerConnect.com to learn more.

Moffitt’s AYA Program assists patients ages 15-39. To be in the know for all AYA events, please visit Moffitt.org/AYA, email AYA@Moffitt.org or call 813-745-4736.
Virtual Visit

Nancy Gay, APR, Moffitt Strategic Communication

Moffitt has included virtual technologies as a part of its 10-years strategic plan and will continue to explore ways to help patients with this new platform.

Moffitt is expanding its telemedicine service to include virtual visits with surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and advanced practitioners.

That means eligible, established patients can interact with a member of their care team through face-to-face video appointments using Moffitt’s Virtual Visit app online or via a mobile device. Virtual visits are available for the following types of appointments:

• Select Global Surgery Follow Up
• Select Global Radiation Oncology Follow Up
• Select Evaluation and Maintenance Follow Up

Providers have the ability to schedule virtual visits after surgery or for surveillance follow-up appointments with patients whom they have an established relationship.

Sachin Apte, MD, began offering virtual visits to select patients a year ago. “I like the convenience for the patient,” he says. “Many of our Moffitt patients either travel from a distance or travel itself can be challenging due to their physical condition, job, child care, etc. Cancer treatment can be very stressful and disruptive to the lives of our patients and families. For some, transportation itself can be very disruptive. Anything we can do to help alleviate those issues, even to a small degree, is a win.”

Telemedicine also allows for more flexibility in scheduling since the physician can schedule a virtual visit on a nonclinical day. That means patients can make appointments on a day that fits best with their schedule.

However, Apte cautions that the virtual visits aren’t for everyone. He says there are times when it is necessary to have a physical exam or an important conversation in person. Also, patients need to have access to a smartphone or a device with a camera, and some patients may not have the technology available.

“I enjoyed the virtual visit and really feel I received all the information I was looking for. At this stage of my treatment plan, I think this was a great option as it saved me an eight hour round trip drive.”

Patient of Dr. Mishra

For his patients that use the virtual visit, Apte says the response has been overwhelmingly positive. He says his patients find the technology easy to navigate and they appreciate the convenience and quality of the visits.

This is a huge benefit to patients and providers as it offers an increased level of convenience while providing the same level of care. Patients should note that instead of the typical copay, there is a flat fee charged for each virtual visit.

As a volunteer facilitator of the Patient and Family Orientation, I have the opportunity to meet with new patients and their caregivers during their first visit to Moffitt Cancer Center. While no two patients’ or their cancer diagnosis are exactly the same, the fear, uncertainty and doubt that most of us feel on that first visit is normal.

During a recent orientation, a patient shared that they wanted to help Moffitt in their mission to “contribute to the prevention and cure of cancer” and they were extremely interested in learning more about Total Cancer Care® (TCC). I was not at all surprised by their interest, as it is not uncommon for many patients or their caregivers to share their desire to become involved and help other patient’s during their cancer journey.

TCC is a research study that helps our researchers understand how cancer differs in every different diagnosis, and identify ways to potentially provide patients with individualized cancer treatments. By studying data from donated samples and medical histories, TCC researchers are answering questions and gaining a better understanding about treatment options for patients.

Keep in mind:

• There is no upfront cost.
• A TCC Coordinator will thoroughly review and answer your questions about the program.
• You can enroll and contribute information from your medical history, diet and lifestyle.
• You provide permission for TCC to use excess tissue from already scheduled surgery or procedures, and possibly blood from a routine blood draw or urine samples.
• At the end of your treatment, a lifetime of follow-up will occur to collect additional information.

To learn more about TCC or to sign up for the study, call 1-888-MOFFITT or log on to your MyMoffitt Patient Portal and click on the Total Cancer Care® Protocol link.

Shani Parkin, Co-Chair
Patient and Family Advisory Council

“Contribute, prevention and cure – those three words became a positive part of my mindset regarding cancer. When approached and informed of TCC I immediately seized the opportunity to join Moffitt in this fight.”

John Harrell
With each snip of the scissors, Bárbara Cruz watched another chunk of her stick-straight locks tumble to the floor of Moffitt Cancer Center’s Magnolias Salon. The resulting hairdo told her story in a glance: another cancer patient getting ready for chemotherapy and the often inevitable loss of hair. As tears welled up in Cruz's eyes that day, stylist Melissa Langston confidently predicted that she would be back in a year getting her first haircut.

Cruz first walked into the salon shortly after being diagnosed with a rare form of lymphoma, and she had a lot of questions. What was going to happen to her hair? Should she shave it all at once? Let it fall out? Buy a wig? She peppered Langston with questions and will never forget Langston's response: “You can either let this happen to you or you can take control.” At that moment, Cruz knew she had another member on her care team.

Cruz didn't want her image to change drastically if she could help it. Langston advised her to cut her hair shorter and pick out a wig now, so she could get used to it and stay one step ahead of chemotherapy's devastating effects. Cruz said this helped a lot when it came time to shave her head because she had a frame of reference. When her wig was too hot for Florida's tropical climate, she turned to scarves that Langston taught her to expertly tie on her head.

Langston knows these tips and tricks because she’s used them herself. Doctors diagnosed her with non-Hodgkin lymphoma at the age of 30. During treatment at Moffitt, she lost her hair and wore full wigs while undergoing chemotherapy. At the time she was a freelance makeup artist. Her job kept her busy, but she vowed one day she’d come back to Moffitt. Nearly 20 years later she accepted a position in the salon. It’s not just a job to her. She empowers women to have at least some control when it comes to cancer.

Cruz felt an instant connection with Langston, and would turn to her for advice throughout treatment. When her hair started growing back, she could feel the follicles like a million hot pinpricks on her head. The pain was worse at night when her head lay on a pillow. Langston’s advice: Sleep in a cap and use a satin pillowcase. Cruz said it did the trick and she was finally able to get a good night’s sleep.

Cruz expected to lose her hair with chemotherapy but wasn’t prepared for the changes in her skin. When that happened, Langston taught her some makeup application tricks for her face. This was bittersweet for Cruz because applying makeup is what ultimately led to her cancer diagnosis.

In 2016 she noticed her eyeliner would smudge on her upper eyelid. She thought it was simply a case of droopy eyelids now that she’d turned 50. She went to an eye doctor and then an ophthalmologist, who ran scans and MRI’s that showed inflammation in her tear glands. A pathologist discovered lymphoma cells...
in those glands. A bone marrow biopsy showed cancer everywhere, despite having no symptoms other than droopy eyelids. She underwent chemotherapy and then an autologous bone marrow transplant.

It’s been two years since Cruz’s transplant. Though she’s been told her type of lymphoma is incurable and will come back eventually, she is in good spirits. Her hair is growing back curly, not straight, and she still consults Melissa on the best way to tame her “chemo curls.” She’s exercising, and she volunteers with Imerman Angels to share her experience with newly diagnosed patients. She also recently joined Moffitt’s Patient Family Advisory Council to help improve the patient experience for all patients. Cruz says the doctors treated her physical needs and Langston treated her emotional needs.

And, yes, one year after that dreaded pre-chemo hairdo, Cruz was back in Langston’s chair. As it turns out, the patient-turned-stylist has been right about a lot of things.

“Cruz credits Melissa Langston of Moffitt’s Magnolia salon for being an integral part of her care team.”
My dad was a 50-year colon cancer survivor. This is pretty unheard of for someone diagnosed in 1965 at the age of 29 when medical treatments were relatively rudimentary compared to what is available now. The cancer, unfortunately, returned in 2001 when he was 65 and eventually spread to his lungs and liver. For someone who had lived under cancer’s shadow for so long, he never became his diagnosis or identified as a survivor. He was just Warren.

In November 2015 it became clear further treatment was no longer an option and we needed to focus on quality of life. Dad entered hospice, my sister and I became his primary caregivers, and we were able to keep him at home for the next six weeks. These six weeks were filled with a lot of family, friends, food, and reminiscing. It was not without obstacles and issues to deal with, but those paled in comparison to the comfort and dignity we were able to provide. Dad passed away quietly in his sleep early in the morning on December 15, 2015, just a week before Christmas.

After dad left us, I worried if Christmas would always be darkened by his memory. The year before we had our first Christmas without our step-father (who also passed away due to cancer), which was difficult for our family. We now had a second loss to contend with. I worried that Christmas would go from being my favorite holiday to a trigger of sad memories of what used to be. I had heard other people talk about how they hated the holidays after the significant loss of a loved one.

For me, the day he died was the day I had to make a decision about how I would handle this for the rest of my life. I had written out all my Christmas cards, but I had not yet had a chance to mail them. My dad’s card...
was in the stack to be mailed, postage stamp affixed. I debated do I mail it, which could be viewed as senseless, or do I throw it away or put it away to keep. I made the decision to mail it. Dad might not be here, but the spirit and intent of this loving gesture still remained. If I stopped holding on to the joy and the love the holidays brought because of the fear of the pain of the loss, I would only be hurting myself and the memory of my dad.

The next year as the holidays approached and the first year without dad came to a close, I did not feel that sadness I worried I would feel. The excitement of the holidays came around as usual, but it was different. Instead of focusing on our normal traditions, we went in a new direction. My step-father had loved the Outer Banks of North Carolina, so we rented a beach house and spent a week there for Thanksgiving. We ate at his favorite restaurant and told funny memories, with frequent imitations of his Michigan accent.

I made a solid choice that I would not recognize the date of my father’s death. There was nothing to be gained by remembering that sad day, so I let it go. Instead, I focused on remembering my father’s spirit as Christmas approached. He loved taking people out to dinner, so I implemented a “Friendsmas” and took my friends to dinner at a local restaurant. At our annual candlelight Christmas Eve dinner, my family told funny stories of my dad and reminisced about Christmases before.

In the past, my sister and I always went over to my dad’s house first to open presents before having dinner with our extended family. We had a tradition of taking a shot of whiskey to help us cope with some of the unusual personalities we would face. My sister and I toasted our dad on Christmas and took that shot of whiskey.

I will not deny that there is not a tinge of sadness thinking about Christmas before and, “What used to be.” But, there is still that excitement of what is to come, seeing family, eating, and what lays under the tree. My dad might not physically be there, but his spirit presents itself at every turn, every laugh, ever memory. And that is what helps keep Christmas my favorite holiday.

To contact our Social Work department, please call 813-745-8407.
PATIENT AND FAMILY ORIENTATION

Learn how to:

CONNECT WITH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
PARTNER WITH YOUR CARE TEAM
FIND YOUR WAY AROUND MOFFITT

• 30-minute orientation
• Presented in English and Spanish
• Scheduled Monday – Friday,
  Call us! We’ll find a time that works for you.
• Walking tours on select days
• View online at MOFFITT.org/Orientation
• Receive a free messenger bag with Moffitt resources
  and organizational tools

For more information, please call 813-745-4710 or
email Orientation@Moffitt.org