

Barnett-Searing National Cancer Foundation



2023 Annual Report

LEGACY AND HISTORY



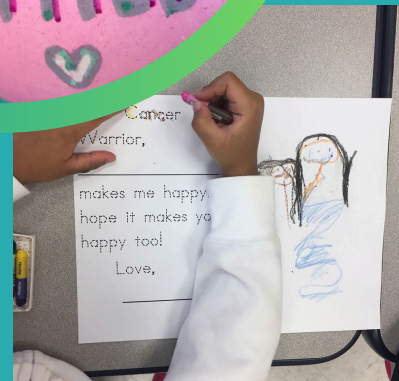
Established in 2001, the Barnett-Searing National Cancer Foundation was founded on the shared experiences of John Searing and Kevin Barnett. John's sister, Jenny Searing (top left), diagnosed with ovarian sarcoma, died at the young age of 26, while Mary Barnett (top right) passed away due to uterine sarcoma at 55. Driven by a deep commitment to honor their memories and aid families in similar situations, John and Kevin joined forces to establish the Foundation. BSNCF stands as a pillar of hope for women battling cancer and their loved ones.

As we look ahead to 2024 and beyond, we will continue to count on our generous volunteers and supporters to help us bring joy and comfort to cancer patients. Discover how you can further our mission by visiting www.bsncf.org.

BSNCF logo

The leaves represent the various meaningful projects that the Foundation has executed through the years. The butterfly is symbolic of the legacy of Mary and Jenny. Vibrant hues of blues and greens were chosen to demonstrate hope. The roots of the tree are grounded and steadfast like the strong leaders of our Foundation, firmly supporting its branches.





\$22,530

Donations made in loving memory of Doug Cilento, John Searing's cousin. This generous support will help fund our Smile Kits program.

15

Thrivers Award Nominations in 2023. Friends and family members from across the US have shared their loved ones' cancer journeys with the BSNCF team.

4,830

The total number of care packages that have been gifted to courageous cancer heroes since the inception of the Smile Kits program.

1,000+

Cards of encouragement created by volunteers, students, and other survivors. Special shout-out to Congregation Sha're Shalom, GRF CPAs Advisors, Girls on Top of the World, and Jennifer and Abby.

SMILE KITS



“Thanks SO much for thinking of me. Saturday was my ickiest post-treatment day so far, but your Smile Kit literally made me smile. It has a lovely fleece blanket, some cozy aloe socks, lip balm, several handmade cards, and a wonderful famous world cities coloring book and pencils that reminded me that better days will (hopefully) be ahead. You made my day!”

-Smile Kit Recipient

As part of our mission to offer unexpected acts of kindness, Barnett-Searing National Cancer Foundation gifts care packages to female cancer patients. These Smile Kits are thoughtfully curated with items to provide comfort and joy, including cards of encouragement created by volunteers and other survivors.

Women from all 50 states have received a Smile Kit!



Nominate a cancer hero to receive a kit at www.bsncf.org.



Your donations make the Smile Kits program possible.



In 2024, we are expanding the Smile Kits to bring even more joy and comfort!



SPOTLIGHT ON LEE'S FRIENDS

Since 2006, the Barnett-Searing National Cancer Foundation has proudly supported Lee's Friends, a cancer organization based in Norfolk, Virginia. Together, we share a common goal: to provide care and support to women with cancer.

Lee's Friends was founded in memory of Lee Harkins, a courageous young woman who battled cancer until her passing in 1978. Recognizing the necessity for a support network for individuals and families facing similar challenges, Lee's mother, Emily, established the organization to honor Lee's legacy and to continue the invaluable support that was received during Lee's treatment.

Today, Lee's Friends continues to provide personalized help, along with essential emotional and practical support, to cancer patients and their families. This support is crucial as they navigate the challenging journey of cancer diagnosis and treatment. Learn more at www.leesfriends.org.



“The generosity of the Barnett-Searing National Cancer Foundation literally kept food on the table, kept a roof over patient’s heads, kept the electricity on and even helped with final expenses. The need for this support continues to be great in our community. Your gift does remarkable work in our community and truly makes a direct impact in the lives of cancer patients.”

- Becky Ruffin, Assistant Director of Lee's Friends





2023 BSNCF
Smile Awards

Bunny Kohn
Volunteer of the Year

Kelly Russo
Thriller of the Year

The Douglas Cilento Cancer Fund
In Remembrance

Loudoun County High School
Youth Inspire Award

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: BUNNY KOHN

Meet Bunny Kohn, The 2023 BSNCF Volunteer of the Year! “Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.” Bunny is all heart!

Twenty-eight years ago, Bunny Kohn served as a devoted nurse attending to Jenny Searing during her courageous battle with cancer. When Bunny learned about the BSNCF’s Smile Kit program, Bunny eagerly volunteered to contribute her "Tissues for Tears - Happy or Sad" packets. Crafted with affection, Bunny Kohn created these packets for her cancer patients as a gesture of support and comfort. Bunny saw the overwhelming emotions patients experienced during their treatment, but she also saw these packets as symbols of the joyful moments in life that are worth celebrating. We are immensely grateful to Bunny for sharing her sewing talent and for her dedication to the well-being of the women on their cancer journey.



Tissues for Tears - Happy or Sad
Your "Tissues for Tears - Happy or Sad" packet was created by Bunny Kohn. She started making these gifts many years ago for friends and family as a "little" something. When Bunny started taking care of chemotherapy patients, she decided to give them to patients on their first day of treatment which can be both scary and emotional. She understands that patients become tearful once they sit in that chair for... she wanted to use them as a



THRIVER OF THE YEAR: KELLY'S STORY

“My life changed after one annual routine mammogram.”

Meet BSNCF’s 2023 Thriver of the Year! Kelly Russo from Virginia Beach, Virginia is an endurance athlete who courageously faced and triumphed over breast cancer. She recounts her inspiring journey:

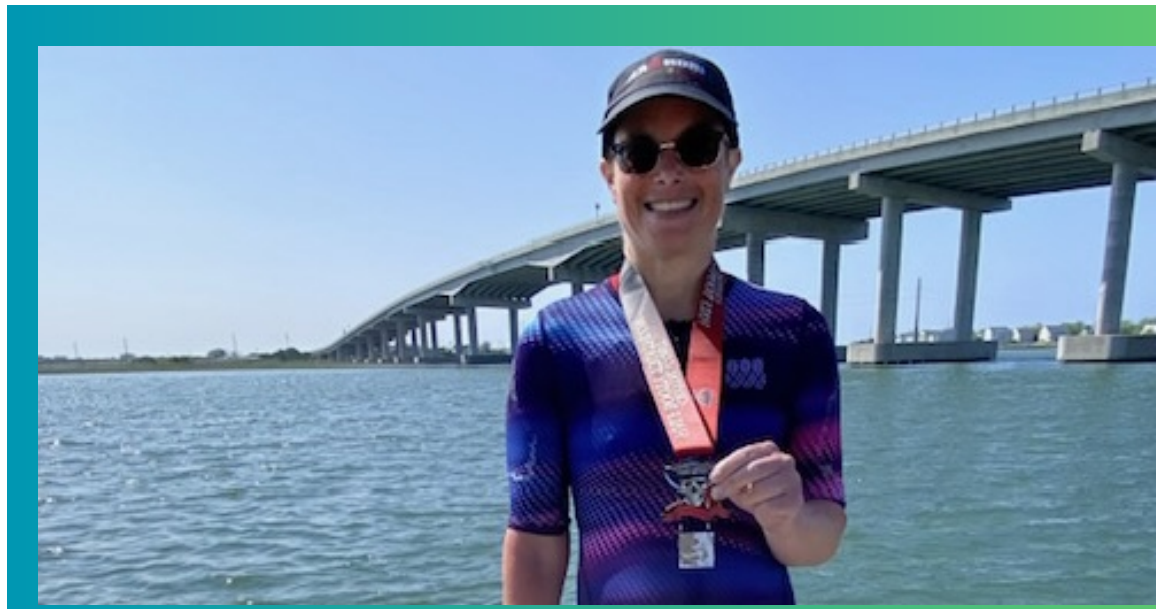
“I had been planning my routine annual mammogram, the kind you tend to postpone a few months after your last yearly check-up. To my astonishment, I received a call back informing me that the doctor had “noticed something” but couldn’t be sure due to dense breast tissue. Following an ultrasound and biopsy on June 5th-6th, a radiologist delivered the shocking news on June 12th: I had invasive carcinoma.

Tears streaming, I crumpled to the floor, all I could think of was finding the best doctor as quickly as possible. In just three weeks, I was scheduled to participate in an Ironman 70.3 race, with a full Ironman slated for September. Physically, I felt perfectly fine. This couldn’t be happening to me, and I was not about to let it stop me.

The very next day, I found myself in Dr. Jennifer Reed’s office, blurting out my plans for the Ironman events in three weeks and September. I needed to know how long I would be sidelined. After an MRI, another ultrasound, and a genetic test, my surgery was booked for July 5th, just three days after the 70.3 event. Fortunately, I was diagnosed with stage 1 breast cancer, and my genetic tests yielded positive results.

I proudly donned my Ironman finisher t-shirt and medal from the IM 70.3 Happy Valley race on the way to and from my surgery. Although it took a few weeks to recover, I resumed some light training within days, went for a run just a week later, and received clearance to swim again after two weeks. Recognizing that I had missed out on significant training weekends, I made the decision to switch to Ironman Arizona in November 2023. Just six weeks after my surgery, I completed a three-mile open-water swim race!

Cancer has presented its challenges, and radiation has been demanding. Yet, I have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from family, friends, and the incredible athletic community in the 757 area. When I crossed the finish line at Ironman Arizona on November 19, 2023, I did so as a proud cancer survivor!”



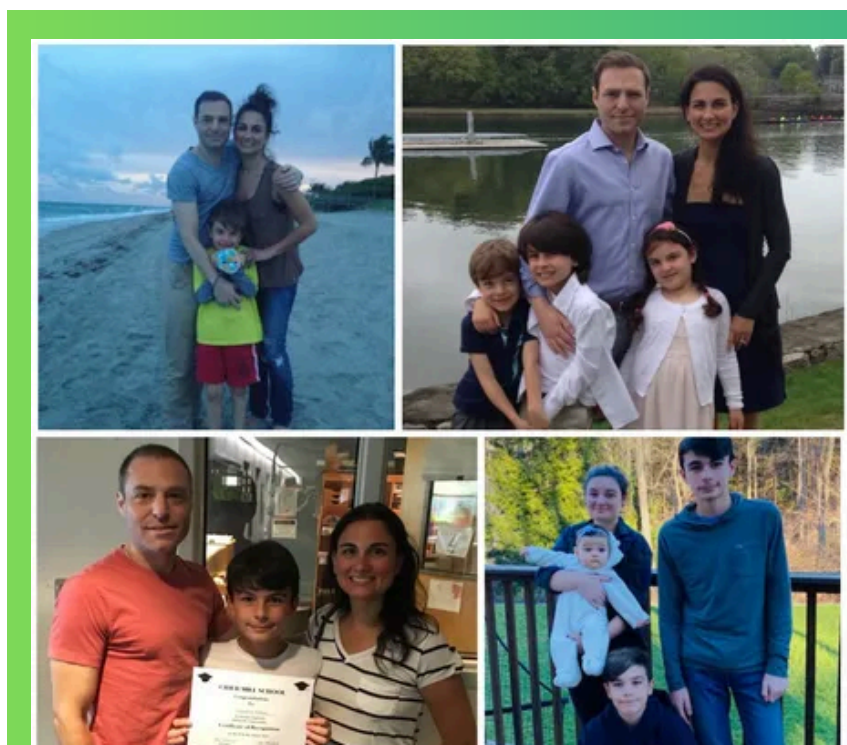
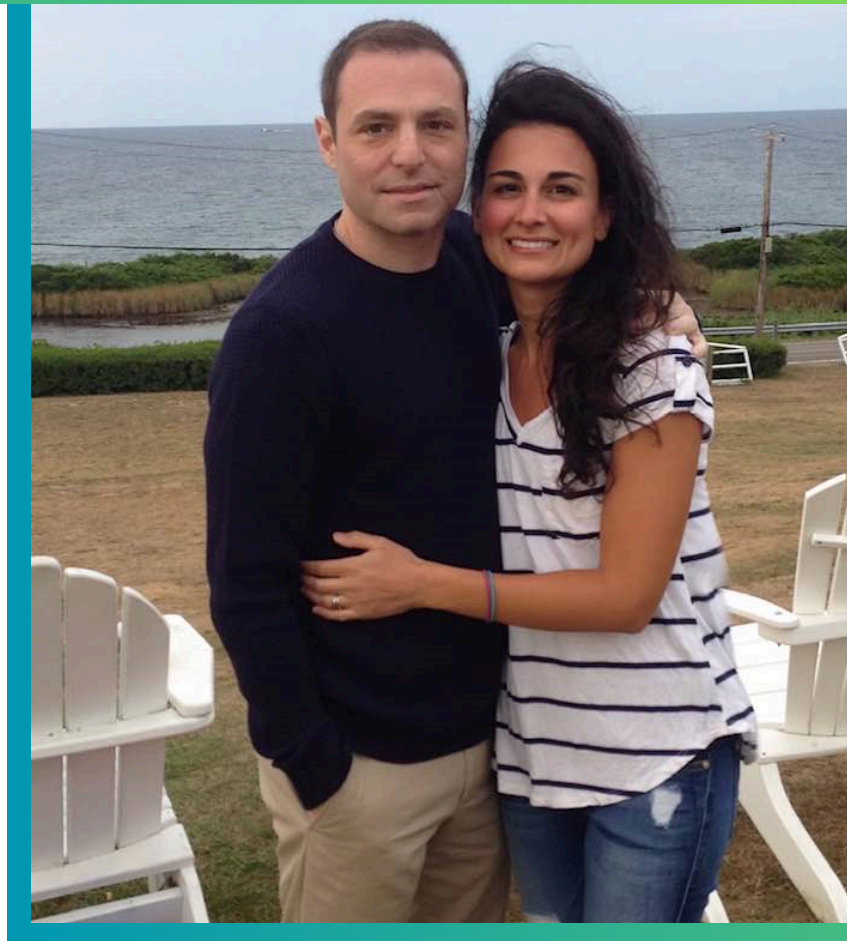
IN REMEMBRANCE: THE DOUGLAS CILENTO CANCER FUND

In 2023, The Douglas Cilento Cancer Fund was established to honor its namesake, Doug Cilento, John Searing's cousin, who bravely fought multiple cancer battles. Known for his magnetic and witty nature, Doug was intelligent, caring, loyal, and strong. He put his heart into everything he pursued and was deeply committed to supporting cancer-related causes. Following his passing on February 18th, 2023, his family set up a memorial fund through BSNCF, successfully raising over \$22,000.



“Doug was a lion. He was strong, courageous and a good provider. Eight years my junior, he looked up to me when we were younger. As an adult, he set the example, living a life that lit up the lives around him. I know I am better for having known him.”

- John Searing



TRISTA'S THRIVER STORY

“I just celebrated 21 years as a breast cancer survivor!”

“In 2002, I found a lump in my breast. Both of my grandmothers had breast cancer, so I was doing self-checks and found the lump. I was 31, so I thought there was no way it could be cancer, so I waited a few weeks to see if it would go away. It didn't. So I went to my doctor who referred me to a fabulous surgeon. What followed next was a barrage of appointments and surgeries.

I began chemo in January and lost all of my hair. That's devastating at any age! Did I mention devastating?! You don't realize how much your hair is your identity (and how much it keeps you warm) until you lose it. I got a wig and it was cute for a wig, but it wasn't the same. I had chemo every 3 weeks for 6 treatments. I had the most fabulous chemo nurse, Bunny (who would eventually become a friend)! Her kindness and positivity helped me through some rough patches. I finished chemo in May.

Radiation started in the summer after wait and body recovery time. I got 7 small tattoos where they mark you so they know where to align the radiation machines each time. I had 35 rounds of radiation – 5 days/week for 7 weeks. The last part of my treatment was taking Tamoxifen (a hormone suppressant) for 5 years.

I met my future husband, Matt, shortly after I finished all my treatments and barely had any hair. We got married on 7/7/07. We have a son, Grayson, who I think is a miracle after I had chemo and radiation!

In the last year, I have had some scares that led to further testing which lead to further testing which led to high anxiety-filled days and lots of sleepless nights waiting for results. The results eventually came back ok (thank God!), but after consideration, family discussion, and doctor consultation, I have decided to have a preventative double mastectomy with reconstruction.

My friends had a pink Happy Hour for me before my mastectomy. Everyone dressed in pink, we had pink cocktails and pink food, and there was lots of pink decor. I felt all the feels and all the love for sure.

On the last day at work before my mastectomy, my 2nd-grade students had a big surprise for me! I was in the hallway at the start of the day, ready to greet them, when I noticed one student wore a pink shirt that said “Mrs. Parks is our hero!” and had a graphic of a redheaded superhero (I'm a redhead). Then I noticed another of my students was wearing the same shirt. And then suddenly, I realized that ALL of my students were wearing this shirt! Some of my former students stopped by that morning and were wearing the shirts, too! Of course, tears were flowing from all the love!”



YOUTH INSPIRE AWARD: LOUDOUN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Guided by Board Member Jennifer Marden, students from Loudoun County High School collected and packed Smile Kits care packages designed for women facing the challenges of cancer. 2023 marked the sixth year of teamwork among NHS, FBLA, and Interact students. We take great pride in awarding the 2023 Youth Inspire Award to these remarkable students, in recognition of their exceptional accomplishments and their significant contributions to Barnett-Searing.



Our achievements so far have been impactful, but we are eager to accomplish even more. Through your support, we can both sustain and expand the meaningful work we do to bring joy and comfort to women with cancer. Your contribution plays a vital role in enabling us to carry out our mission and create a positive impact in the lives of the brave women we serve. Thank you for being a crucial part of our journey.

GET INVOLVED WITH BSNCF



Donate to fund Smile Kits
and other BSNCF programs



Volunteer to make cards or
start a fundraiser



Nominate a cancer hero for
a Smile Kit



Share your Thriver story



Address

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4094 Majestic Lane #101
Fairfax, VA 22033



Email Address

info@bsncf.org



Website

www.bsncf.org