VBCF Welcomes New Executive Director - Katy Sawyer, MPA

VBCF's Board of Directors is excited to announce that Katy Sawyer has joined our team as Executive Director.

Katy Sawyer, MPA has served as the interim executive director and the director of physician leadership training for the Medical Society of Virginia Foundation since 2006. Ms. Sawyer established the Claude Moore Physician Leadership Institute, an institute alumni program focused on health reform, and customized leadership training for health system employed physicians, training more than 250 Virginia physicians in these programs.

Previously, Ms. Sawyer managed fund development activities for the Virginia Mentoring Partnership and the Virginia Community Healthcare Association. She handled federal and private foundation grant proposal writing and reporting and oversaw individual and corporate fundraising efforts by the organizations. She also served as a senior program officer at the Virginia Health Care Foundation for more than four years, providing oversight to health care safety net provider grantees throughout the state.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of Virginia, and a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in non-profit management from Virginia Commonwealth University. Ms. Sawyer is a 2010-11 graduate of the Partnership for Nonprofit Excellence’s Emerging Nonprofit Leaders Program.

She enjoys travel, most recently driving across country with her husband and nine year old daughter to spend time in Telluride, CO; Arches National Park, UT; Grand Canyon North Rim, AZ; and Yellowstone National Park, WY.

Katy can be reached at 800-345-8223 or katy@vbcf.org.

Please join us in welcoming Katy to VBCF.
Each new year brings with it change, some intentional, and some unexpected. This is true of the dawn of 2012 at VBCF. Our expected changes were my becoming President; the addition of new board members, Debbie Hayes, Susan Siegel, and Eunice Fenwick; and the departure of dear VBCF friends Kathy Funk, CJ George, Rita Handley, and Lynn Holly. What was unexpected is that we would yet again be in search of an Executive Director (E.D.).

VBCF has never been an organization that stands still in the face of change and true to our spirit we are moving ahead. The E.D. search committee, comprised of current and former board members, past presidents and executive directors, has been hard at work defining the qualities that they believe the new E.D. needs to possess to take VBCF securely into the future. There have been weeks of evening meetings as the applicants were narrowed into finalists. The mantra of the search committee has been “We have to get this right.”

I am writing this the evening following our Staff and Board Retreat. The goals of the retreat were to define our vision and our identity, “What makes us different?”, and to develop a strategic plan for our future. We spent the day examining where we have been, where we are now, and where we are headed. There were many small group exercises where we all agreed on common themes. Throughout the day I was continually struck by the amount of intelligence, commitment, and passion shown by each of the attendees. There was a synergy and energy that was palpable and it was wonderful to be able to both witness it and experience it firsthand.

Communication, both internal and external, along with social media was a major focus. Have you been to our website lately?? If not please click on www.vbcf.org to look at our incredible new website. Lisa Boudreaux has done a fantastic job redesigning the website, thank you Lisa! The Board and staff felt strongly that another major priority is chapter support and development. VBCF would not be in existence without our chapters and volunteers and we need to make sure that we support each and every one of you. Increasing media presence and fundraising were also identified and we have activated the Marketing/Fundraising committee and are actively recruiting members.

I would like to take a moment to specifically thank the dedicated VBCF staff Lisa, Jaime, Vernal, and Jennie. They have stayed the course through many changes in the past few years and continue to be our best asset! VBCF also needs to send a huge Thank You to Gay Rudis. She once again answered the call to serve as interim E.D. She is the only person in VBCF history to have served as Vice President, President, and interim E.D. twice! Her commitment to the organization is legendary and she leaves big shoes to fill.

Well, there you have it, the State of VBCF letter. I am excited, yet humbled to be assuming the Presidency of this great organization. We are poised to Go to the next level and your Board of Directors and staff are committed to taking you there. I look forward to meeting you at Chapter meetings and events across the state.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments about VBCF. I can be reached via email at president@vbcf.org or call the office at 800-345-8223 and leave a message.
State Lobby Day  Written by Gay Rudis, Immediate Past President

Thursday, February 9, 2012, was Breast Cancer Lobby Day at the Virginia General Assembly. VBCF coordinated the state-wide effort. In attendance were representatives from the American Cancer Society, Nueva Vida, Sisters Network, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and VBCF.

Among our priorities were continued funding of the Every Woman’s Life (EWL) program, maintaining mandated benefits for cancer, and support for SB450, which would reduce co-pays for oral chemotherapy drugs.

Of particular importance to us is the EWL Program. VBCF fought to bring the program to Virginia. Administered by the Virginia Department of Health, the EWL program provides free or low cost screening for breast and cervical cancer. If a woman is diagnosed with cancer through this program, she is enrolled in the state Medicaid program to cover her treatment costs. The program truly helps save the lives of women in Virginia. As Medicaid is funded by both the state and federal governments, VBCF advocates at both levels to preserve these funds.

It always amazes me that so few of our Virginia Delegates are aware of this program. As a team leader, I visited eleven delegate offices and only two knew about the program and what it does. Two of my appointments were with new delegates for the 2012 session, but the others were seasoned legislators. Other team leaders encountered the same situation during their visits. A major part of our agenda was, and will continue to be, educating the delegates and their staff.

If you would like more information on the EWL program visit the Department of Health’s website at www.vah-health.org/ewl or contact them at 1-866-EWL-4YOU (1-866-395-4968) or Free_screens@vdh.virginia.gov.
2012 National Legislative Priorities

Priority #1: Accelerating the End of Breast Cancer Act – H.R. 3067. On September 20, 2010, NBCC launched Breast Cancer Deadline 2020®, a call to action for policymakers, researchers, breast cancer advocates and other stakeholders to end the disease by January 1, 2020. The Accelerating the End of Breast Cancer Act, which has been introduced in the House, provides a strategic approach to address questions NBCC has identified as vital to end the disease; identify barriers which hamper progress; and set forth a mission-oriented, transparent and focused process to help overcome these barriers and meet the goal of Breast Cancer Deadline 2020®.

Priority #2: Access to Quality Care for All. For many years now, NBCC has made access to quality health care for all a top priority. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act passed last year represents a significant step forward towards this goal and provides many important protections for breast cancer survivors. Repealing or invalidating this law would have many direct consequences for breast cancer survivors.

Priority #3: FY 2013 $150 Million for Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program. As a result of NBCC’s grassroots advocacy, the DOD BCRP was created in 1992 to eradicate breast cancer by funding innovative, high-impact research through a partnership of scientists and consumers. NBCC seeks continued level funding for this successful program.

Priority #4: Support for Medicaid Breast & Cervical Cancer Treatment Program. Congress enacted the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act in 2000 after years of NBCC grassroots lobbying and influence. NBCC remains committed to ensuring all women and men screened and diagnosed with breast cancer through federal screening programs have access to the treatment they need.

PRIORITY #5: Ensuring the Participation of Educated Patient Advocates in all Levels of Health Care Decision Making. NBCC continues to work to ensure that educated patient advocates have a seat at the table in all levels of health care decision making that affects their lives.

Volunteer Opportunity!

Volunteer Opportunity! Pink Ribbon Campaign: Each year VBCF distributes thousands of pink ribbons to raise awareness of breast cancer. Last year VBCF distributed 89,000 pink ribbons statewide. This year our goal is to distribute 100,000 ribbons across the Commonwealth. Each pink ribbon is attached to an information card that contains basic breast health information.

We need volunteers to assist us with attaching the pink ribbons to the information cards and placing them in packages of 100 for distribution. The ribbons are already cut and pinned. Please contact jaime@vbcf.org or 800-345-8223 if you are interested in volunteering.

We Need You!

Sign up today for National Lobby Day on Tuesday, May 8 in Washington, D.C. VBCF will charter a bus from Hampton Roads to Yorktown to Richmond to Washington, D.C. where advocates will break into teams to visit our Representatives and Senators and lobby for important national legislative issues related to breast cancer. If there is enough interest transportation will also be coordinated from the Blue Ridge area. Last year VBCF brought close to 100 advocates to Washington for National Lobby Day, and this year we're aiming to bring even more! Your participation matters! Visit www.vbcf.org or call 800-345-8223 to register.

Like us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/virginiabreastcancerfoundation
Late relapse (recurrence), resistance, metastasis, combination therapies, clinical trial development, management of the axilla, neoadjuvant therapy and clinical relevance were the major themes of the 2011 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

Personalization of breast cancer treatment mandates that we perform clinical trials based on the molecular subtypes. Large-scale clinical trials have traditionally involved thousands of women without regard to many of the subtypes. FDA drug approval has been based on large clinical trials with positive outcomes. While negative clinical trials did not demonstrate overall positive results many of the trials demonstrated positive findings in designated subsets. An example of this is the AZURE trial. The overall outcome did not show benefit for all women, however it did show that clearly postmenopausal women did have a risk reduction of 31% for both recurrence and death with the addition of Zolindronate (anti-osteoporosis drug). This has implications not only for clinical trial design, but drug approval as well.

There was a pervasive call for mandating that tissue blocks be collected in future drug trials in order for us to really move forward. The POETIC study in the United Kingdom is a neo-adjuvant (treatment prior to surgery) trial in which women that are postmenopausal with estrogen receptor positive breast cancers are given an aromatase inhibitor for 2 weeks prior to surgery. The study is measuring changes in Ki67 (cell growth) levels in the hopes of developing a short term molecular marker as well as a marker that may help select patients needing chemotherapy that may also be used as a predictor of long term outcomes. The neo-adjuvant strategy will be particularly useful in molecular subtypes that occur less frequently (Triple Negative and HER2/neu + breast cancers).

Dr. Eric Winer gave a plenary session discussing endocrine therapy. A main topic was late recurrence and development of resistance to endocrine therapy. One clinical variable may be the degree of estrogen receptor positivity (strong versus weak positive) as well as the subtype. Luminal A breast cancers have a better prognosis than Luminal B cancers and most HER2/neu positive tumors are less sensitive to endocrine therapy. The concept of primary de novo endocrine resistance in those women that recur within 5 years versus secondary acquired resistance in those women that recur after 5 years was also discussed. The subject of tumor dormancy was also discussed. At the end of the session Dr. Winer highlighted the need for large cohort clinical trials that include tissue samples so that we can begin to understand late recurrence and secondary resistance to endocrine therapy.

There was a plenary session on the surgical management of the axilla. Dr. Smith from Massachusetts General gave the overview of how we have progressed from removal of all of the lymph nodes to sentinel lymph node biopsies. The question is this: do patients with early stage breast cancer undergoing breast conserving surgery with a positive sentinel lymph node that will be having radiation therapy really need to have an axillary node dissection? The 20011 Trial reported that there was no difference in overall or disease free survival without an axillary dissection, but that there was an increased risk of lymphedema. Dr. Smith cautioned that the 20011 trial results could not be applied to all breast cancers and listed specific instances where an axillary lymph node dissection is still the standard of care. This is a discussion that patients should have with their physician prior to surgery.

The final major theme was in the area of clinical relevance with regards to molecular markers and clinical trial results. Technological advances are allowing scientists to be able to identify and measure many different molecular substances. The problem is that, while we are able to measure them, sometimes we are not sure of what the impact is or if it can be translated into something that will be relevant in the clinic. The same discussion was applied to clinical trial results. This again highlights the need for tissue samples in conjunction with novel clinical trials so that we can begin to evaluate these measurements and trial results making them relevant to clinical practice.

VBCF is Awarding $5,000 to a Deserving Breast Cancer Advocate!

The Karin Decker Noss Scholarship is provided to fund training for the selected participant in medical research and legislative advocacy to carry on the work that Karin began. This scholarship program aims to encourage increased knowledge and education related to breast cancer resulting in stronger breast cancer advocacy and more involvement in VBCF’s breast cancer advocacy program.

A $5,000 award will be available to the recipient for a 24 month period. The funds may be used for expenses, such as travel, lodging, meals, and registration fees for approved conferences and educational courses. Applications and more information may be found online at www.vbcf.org. If you would like to receive an application form by mail or fax please call VBCF at 800-345-8223. The deadline for applications is Friday, March 30, 2012.
Eunice Fenwick
Eunice is a breast cancer survivor and long-time member of VBCF’s Peninsula Chapter. She is an annual committee chair for the chapter’s fashion show as well as their golf tournament. She has also served as chapter president for five years, and was recently elected to once again provide leadership to the chapter. A prolific volunteer, over the years Eunice has volunteered for a multitude of organizations in addition to VBCF, including the Heritage Humane Society and Avalon, an organization for abused women and children. She is currently volunteering with multiple organizations but says her heart is currently with breast cancer and the Lackey Clinic, and that is where she focuses much of her time. Eunice also works as a Marriage Commissioner for the Virginia Court System.

Debbie Hayes
Debbie received her BA from Franklin College and her MS from Indiana University. She worked in public education for 22 years. When Debbie was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 33 she became actively involved with Y-Me Central Indiana. In 2000 Debbie and her husband, Jim, moved to Virginia. She joined the Y-ME National Capital Area Affiliate and served as a peer counselor and on the board of directors. In 2004 she was hired as Volunteer Coordinator for the affiliate office, and in 2010 she joined the Y-ME National staff as a Quality Coach. She is currently Volunteer Manager. Debbie has completed Project LEAD, Quality Care Project LEAD, and has attended the NBCC Annual Advocacy Conference. In 2010-2011 she was part of a partnership with Washington Cancer Institute to help newly diagnosed breast cancer patients.

Susan Siegel
Susan was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007. One of several family members to be diagnosed with breast cancer, Susan was found to be BRCA+. She is a Senior QA Analyst with vast experience as an educator and trainer. Susan has volunteered with VBCF for the past few years in various capacities, including attending National and State Lobby Days and NBCC’s Advocacy Conference, as well as serving on the Advocacy Committee and staffing literature tables. Besides volunteering for VBCF, she has also volunteered for the Center of Grieving Children in Portland, Maine, United Way, and currently volunteers with Cat Adoption and Rescue Efforts.

Want to receive the **VBCF Connection**, our monthly e-newsletter?
Visit [www.vbcf.org](http://www.vbcf.org) to sign up!
Active Voice

Volunteer Spotlight: Wilhelmina Yancey

Wilhelmina (Willie) Yancey was born in Hopewell, Virginia. She attended West End Christian School. Upon graduation, Willie went to work for a plumbing and heating company where she met her husband, Charlie. Willie and Charlie were married in 1967 and have one son and two grandchildren. Willie was active for four years with the Thomas Dale Marching Band. She is also an active member of Harrowgate Baptist Church.

Willie has been employed with S.W. Funk Industrial Contractors, Inc. for 30 years. It is through S.W. Funk that she first became involved with VBCF. When Kathy Funk became lead organizer of VBCF’s Central Virginia Chapter’s October Breast Cancer Awareness Dinner, Willie stepped in to give her a hand. After working with Kathy on the dinner, she became an active member of the Central Virginia Chapter.

Although Willie is not a survivor, cancer has touched her life through the loss of her husband to colon cancer as well as various other members of his family. She has learned a lot about breast cancer through meetings and speakers, which she finds very interesting. Aside from her involvement in the October Breast Cancer Awareness Dinner, Willie is also the Central Virginia Chapter treasurer. She is grateful for the many wonderful ladies she has met through VBCF.

Blue Ridge Chapter

Plan a Girls Day Out at the Blue Ridge Chapter’s 6th Pink Ribbon Hi Tea on April 14! This year’s event will take place at 2:00pm at Memorial Baptist Church in Staunton. Tickets are just $15 for this typically sold out event. Contact BlueRidge@vbcf.org or 540-932-8223 for more information.

The chapter was recently the recipient of generous donations from two local groups. The Greater Augusta Association of Realtors donated $2,500 to the chapter as part of the proceeds of their Mystery Dinner Theater and Silent Auction at Barren Ridge Vineyards. The Staunton News Leader donated $2,500 to the chapter from proceeds of their ‘pink paper’ edition. Many thanks to those involved and all of our generous supporters!

Central VA Chapter

The Central Virginia Chapter’s annual Hospital Hospitality House (HHH) Cookie Walk the first Sunday in December was a tremendous success! Their biggest cookie walk yet, 237 bags of cookies were stuffed for the patients and clients of the non-profit HHH. Mark your calendars for this year’s cookie walk on December 2.

Peninsula Chapter

The Peninsula Chapter of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation will be presenting the Nineteenth Annual Luncheon & Fashion Show with Quilt Raffle and Silent Auction on Saturday, April 21, 2012. The festivities begin at 11:30am at the Omni, Newport News. Tickets are $30 and fashions will be by Dress Barn – Kiln Creek. The chapter is currently soliciting door prizes, silent auction items and table sponsorships. Tickets sell quickly! For tickets or more information call Eunice Fenwick at 757-253-2929 or 757-869-5510.

VBCF Library Outreach Program

VBCF donated $1,200 to five library systems in December 2011 as part of the VBCF Library Outreach Program. Public Libraries receiving funds were: Cumberland County, Franklin County, Lynchburg, Richmond County, and Southside Regional Library System.

Have a Kindle, Nook or other e-reader?

Franklin County Library used their grant from VBCF’s Library Outreach Program to purchase e-books on breast cancer.

Anyone in the state of Virginia may apply for a Franklin County Library card to check out the e-books. Contact the library at 540-483-3098 (Ext. 3) if you would like to sign up for a library card and PIN number to access the books.
Visit our website - www.vbcf.org!

Support VBCF!

Please fill out form(s) and return with your check to VBCF.

☐ Please contact me about becoming a VBCF Volunteer.

☐ Please send me information on planned giving.

☐ Supporter $50 ☐ Friend $100 ☐ Patron $250 ☐ Benefactor $500 ☐ Champion $1,000

☐ Other $ ____________

A contribution of $ ____________ is enclosed.

In Memory Of: ____________________________________________
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(If you would like an acknowledgement card sent, please include name and address of recipient.)

Name: ____________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________
City: __________________ State: ______ Zip Code: ___________

Phone: __________________ Fax: ____________________ e-mail: ___________

Spring 2012

This newsletter, published by the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, focuses on breast cancer issues and the activities of VBCF supporters. If you have any comments, please call 804-345-VBCF or write to: Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, 5004 Monument Avenue, Suite 102, Henrico, VA 23230.