If you ever have an opportunity to attend a State or National Lobby day on behalf of VBCF, I would strongly encourage you to go. As a breast cancer survivor and a new volunteer, I was invited to attend both days. I have to admit, I was quite intimidated by the idea but decided to go anyway. Not only did I have a great time, but I found the experience very rewarding on a number of levels.

Our group was taken by bus to both the State Capital and the United States Capital. Those attending State Lobby Day were representative of a combination of cancer organizations including VBCF, American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen and Sisters Network. Many were breast cancer survivors. Throughout the morning we visited staff of our state representatives encouraging their support to provide funding for services to assist Virginia residents who have been diagnosed with breast cancer but are not eligible for the treatment they need.

National Lobby Day differed in that it was a much longer day. Our 6:30 a.m. bus to Washington DC included staff and volunteers from VBCF, many of whom were breast cancer survivors, some still undergoing treatment. During this day, we attended previously scheduled appointments with our state senators and representatives. Our goal was to discuss the Accelerating the End of Breast Cancer Act (Senate Bill 865) and ask for their support in getting the Bill passed. My assigned group was privileged to meet with Senators Warner and Kaine. Each spent considerable time with us and showed a great deal of interest in discussing this issue. Senator Warner had signed on as co-sponsor to the Bill when it was introduced the night before. After the morning meetings our group met up with the other groups for lunch. Afterwards, some of us walked to the Capital to meet with Majority Leader Eric Cantor to discuss funding for breast cancer research and to ask for his support for the Accelerating the End of Breast Cancer Act. It was truly an exciting day although a long and tiring one.

If we want to eradicate breast cancer it is important for all of us to participate on lobby days. It is an opportunity to meet and support other survivors. In larger numbers we put a face to a disease that affects so many. When survivors and advocates unite we have a louder voice and are harder to ignore. Lobby Days are an opportunity to show our elected officials; the ones who make important decisions about our health; what breast cancer looks like. We are their mothers, daughters, and sisters, and by showing up in numbers, we are harder to ignore. I hope you will join me in the fight next year.

Victory in the Supreme Court! See page 5.
Time flies when you are having fun!

It is hard to believe that July is already here. I was shocked when a friend informed me last week that the holidays are less than 6 months away. As you will see, VBCF staff and volunteers have been very busy. We had a successful State and National Lobby Day which included meetings with House Majority Leader Eric Cantor and Senators Warner and Kaine. VBCF has a long-standing relationship with them, beginning when both Senators were Governors of the Commonwealth. Susan Siegel and Vernal Branch went to the Supreme Court Hearing in April regarding Myriad Genetics and patents on genetic material.

Spring is a time for many major fundraisers for VBCF. Aces for Awareness changed its format this year to include a fashion show that featured breast cancer survivors. The weather was perfect, the luncheon was great, and the fashions were fantastic. It was wonderful to see so many strong women both currently in treatment and thriving after treatment. The Peninsula Fashion show was a rousing success with our own Vernal Branch as a model.

The Ninth Annual Pink Ribbon Polo event was held on Father’s Day at the King Family Vineyards with VBCF and Every Woman’s Life sharing the proceeds. As VBCF has supported the Every Woman’s Life program for years, it was a wonderful opportunity to let everyone know about both organizations and our collaborative relationship. The crowd was estimated at around 2,000, and all had a great time.

I am frequently asked what VBCF does with the funds we raise. In addition to the newly diagnosed packets, educational materials, fans, pink ribbon campaign, Every Woman’s Life materials, support of Becky’s place at RAM, the Library project, and state and national lobby day, we have given out our first round of mini-grants for non-profit organizations. The purpose of this grant program is to provide funds for breast cancer health education for Virginians. We were very pleased with the number of applications that we received, and while we could not fund all of the applicants, we look forward to awarding more mini-grants in the future.

Thank you to Jackie Ford Condelli and Lisa DeFerrari - our newest contributors to the newsletter for sharing your experiences as representatives of VBCF to both Lobby Days and the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

In closing, it has been a busy 6 months for VBCF and I send my heartfelt thanks to the supporters, chapter members, volunteers, and VBCF staff. We continue to make a difference in the fight to educate, advocate, and eradicate breast cancer. Please do not hesitate to contact me at president@vbcf.org or call the office at 800-345-VBCF and leave a message.

Meg Shrader, President
VBCF Mourns the Loss of Rolandus “Duke” Garner

VBCF mourns the passing of Rolandus “Duke” Garner. Duke worked as a truck driver and a security guard for Portsmouth Public Schools.

In May 2005, Duke developed a breast infection due to medication he was on for a pituitary brain tumor. Mammograms and an ultrasound showed a mass in both breasts, and he had a bilateral mastectomy in July 2005. Duke, who was also the president of the Thunder and Lightning Motorcycle Club, had gotten involved in VBCF’s Hampton Roads Chapter through their “Rolling for Life” motorcycle ride.

He became very active with the chapter and was heavily involved with the planning of the motorcycle ride as well as the chapter’s annual Victory Walk in October. He also shared his story at speaking engagements and tabling events. Duke will be remembered for all of his hard work, contributions, donations and especially his passion for the cause of breast cancer.

Captions: Photo 1 - VBCF advocates attend State Lobby Day at the Virginia General Assembly. Photo 2 - VBCF is introduced at the Virginia General Assembly. Photo 3 - VBCF volunteers pose with Senator Mark Warner. Photo 4 - Senator Tim Kaine meets with VBCF advocates. Photo 5 - A little rain can’t keep our volunteers away! Photo 6 - VBCF volunteers meet with House Majority Leader Eric Cantor.
Hold Your Breath, Spare Your Heart

The University of Virginia Health System is empowering women with an easy and painless way to spare the heart damage associated with radiation for breast cancer. The technique, known as voluntary deep inspiratory breath hold (DIBH), requires that patients take and hold a deep breath for up to 20 seconds, allowing their care providers to target radiation to exactly where it is needed while avoiding cardiac tissue.

“With this technique, we have a more effective and lower cost way to spare the heart, and we get two things. We get separation of the heart from the chest wall and we also get immobility, which we love in radiation. We don’t want people moving. So it keeps our target still in a patient-friendly way and it also moves the heart out of the way,” said UVA radiation oncologist Monica Morris, MD.

UVA’s technique has been demonstrated, in papers published in peer-reviewed journals, to reduce the radiation exposure to the heart significantly, even beyond the use of more expensive approaches, while still producing outcomes as successful as the traditional treatment approach. Other attempts at using breathing regulation to spare the heart, such as active breathing control (ABC), require a mouthpiece that forcibly controls breathing; with UVA’s technique, the patient is in control.

“Patients really love it because they’re participating in their treatment and care,” Morris said.

Patients are given electronic goggles that show them a virtual gauge tracking their breath holding. By watching the visual feedback, patients can ensure they’re holding their breath appropriately. If the patient moves out of position, the radiation beam automatically turns off.

“The patient’s care team, meanwhile, uses advanced imaging to view inside the body on not just one but two planes, creating a three-dimensional depiction. This allows for an extremely precise approach to administering the radiation, allowing the team to avoid having the radiation beam pass through the heart.” said UVA medical physicist Krishni Wijesooriya, PhD.

“The imaging for positional accuracy, the procedure of voluntary deep inspiratory breath hold and patient cooperation via visual bio feedback – having them play a role – those three components together are what make our program successful,” Wijesooriya said.

Learn more: http://uvahealth.com/about/news-room/archives/protecting-the-heart-a-better-way-to-treat-breast-cancer

VBCF Awards First Educational Mini-Grants!

The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation was excited to pilot our first mini-grant program for non-profit organizations in March 2013! The purpose of this grant program is to provide funds for breast cancer health education for Virginians. The grant funding period is May 1 through October 31, 2013.

Non-profit organizations from across the state applied for funds to provide breast health education. VBCF awarded five mini-grants for a total of more than $3,300 in this funding period. 2013 grantees are:

- **Sisters Network Central VA, Inc.** to assist them in conducting the National African American Breast Cancer Ten City Conference Tour in Richmond.
- **CrossOver Healthcare Ministry** to support their Breast Health Initiative program.
- **Daughter Connection of Hampton Roads, Inc.** for their work in the Hampton Roads area for Minority Breast Health Awareness.
- **Nueva Vida, Inc.** for its Access to Care for Latinas at Risk or with a breast cancer diagnosis in Richmond, VA.
- **Northern Neck Free Health Clinic** to expand the breast health information at their Well-Woman Clinics.

Congratulations to these organizations! Grantees expect to serve 1,450 Virginians in 6 months. VBCF looks forward to helping these and many other non-profits provide breast cancer health education to Virginians through our new mini-grant program!

“Like” us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/virginiabreastcancerfoundation

You may qualify for a free mammogram and pap test through the Every Woman’s Life Program.

866-EWL-4YOU

Call to see if you qualify!
Updates from the 2012 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium by Lisa DeFerrari

The San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium (SABCS) is held every year in December and draws an audience of more than 7,000 physicians, cancer researchers, and advocates. SABCS is known for announcements of new advances in breast cancer research and clinicians often attend to update their knowledge of breast cancer treatment. With this background in mind, I looked forward to attending the event for the first time in December 2012.

During daily general sessions, attendees learn about the latest findings in clinical application, including results from clinical trials of breast cancer drugs. In special sessions throughout the event, researchers discuss their progress in looking at specific questions related to the understanding of breast cancer at the basic science level. For advocates, there are also the excellent “Hot Topics” sessions each evening, hosted by the Alamo Breast Cancer Foundation. These sessions offer a panel of oncologists and scientists who provide an overview in laymen’s terms of key presentations from the day and answer questions from the advocates. In this article, I’ll highlight a few of the major research findings that were presented this year and share some of my impressions as an advocate.

HER2-positive breast cancer - One of the most interesting developments in 2012 was the report of preliminary Phase II clinical trial results of T-DM1/targeted therapy trastuzumab emtansine. T-DM1 works by combining trastuzumab (Herceptin) with a chemotherapy agent in a single drug. This combination drug blocks signals for cancer cell growth while releasing a chemotherapy agent directly into the cancer cell, attacking the cancer in two ways and sparing the patient systemic chemotherapy side effects. While early results are promising, more time will determine whether this new drug is superior.

Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) - Increasingly coming to be understood as not a single disease but rather a category of breast cancer that encompasses numerous subtypes. Scientists have identified three genes—p53, PTEN and PIK3CA—that are the genes most frequently mutated in TNBC. Further, researchers have identified at least six subtypes of TNBC based on the molecular profiles of tumor cells, and they believe more will be identified in the future. Phase II clinical trials of targeted therapies for some of the subtypes are currently underway.

Estrogen Receptor-Positive Primary Breast Cancer – Phase II clinical trial of a new drug “PD 0332991” that blocks cell cycle progression and proliferation. In the trial, PD 0332991 was tested on 200 patients with advanced estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer and was given in combination with an existing drug, letrozole (Femara) and compared to treatment with letrozole alone. The study found that disease progression was three times slower for those patients receiving the new drug and letrozole, compared with those receiving letrozole alone, and the drug was found to be well-tolerated. A large, phase III study is planned.

ATLAS (Adjuvant Tamoxifen – Longer Against Shorter) Study – Reporting that ten years of adjuvant treatment with tamoxifen reduced the risk of recurrence and death for women with estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer compared with the current standard of five years of tamoxifen. Risk of death from breast cancer in years five to 14 after diagnosis was 12.2% for those taking tamoxifen for 10 years, compared with 15% for those stopping after five years. There was a slight increase in the risk for endometrial cancer with the longer treatment.

Tumor Dormancy and Recurrence - What works to inhibit progression of overt metastatic disease may not work in micrometastatic disease.

Supreme Court Victory!

On June 13, 2013, the Supreme Court outlawed human gene patents. The Justices ruled unanimously in favor to strike down corporate patents on the human “breast cancer” genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2—and those on all human genes. This is a tremendous win for women’s and the nation’s health!

What does this victory mean for women who have, or might have, an inherited risk of breast cancer?

- More women will have access to potentially life-saving information about their hereditary risk of breast and other cancers;
- New, better, and cheaper genetic tests will become available;
- Women considering their options can get second opinions;
- No single company can monopolize all research, testing, and treatment for diseases and disorders with a genetic link.

While the Court ruled that genetic DNA is not patentable, the finding that complementary DNA (“cDNA”) may be patentable does not diminish the impact for patients. Laboratories can conduct genetic testing without using cDNA, meaning that any corporation can no longer hold a monopoly on the BRCA genes and all naturally occurring variations and mutations of these human genes.
Aces for Awareness

Over 180 women (and a few men!) gathered on Friday, May 3 for VBCF’s 4th Annual Aces for Awareness fundraising event. Participants enjoyed a fun morning of high energy tennis in a non-competitive environment at either ACAC Midlothian or Salisbury Country Club – all while perfecting their game with instruction from Richmond area tennis professionals. After tennis everyone gathered at Salisbury Country Club for a wonderful silent auction followed by a luncheon and our newest Aces addition – a fashion show! Local breast cancer survivors modeled the latest looks from Monkee’s of Richmond, NYFO & Sassy Bee. This year’s event raised over $24,000. Thanks to all who helped to make the 4th Annual Aces for Awareness a success!

Ways to Support VBCF

Pledge Your Celebrations

Support VBCF by Pledging your Celebration – whether it’s a birthday, anniversary, wedding or other special day. This year, ask your friends and family to make a donation to help eradicate breast cancer instead of a gift. It’s easy and fast to set up your personal page, visit www.vbcf.org/pledge-your-celebrations to get started.

Pink Ribbon License Plate

VBCF’s Pink Ribbon License plate is available for purchase from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Visit your local DMV or log on to www.dmv.state.va.us to order your plate today. VBCF receives $15 annually for every plate purchased or renewed.

Give your Time

VBCF is always looking for volunteers willing to lend a hand. Visit www.vbcf.org/volunteer to learn about our volunteer opportunities. We will be hosting a Volunteer Orientation on Tuesday, September 10 at 5:30 pm. The orientation will be held at VBCF’s state office in Richmond. Complete our online volunteer form to receive an invitation to our orientation.
and not all “micromets” are dangerous. Thus, researchers are studying the unique characteristics of dormant cells and the cellular pathways they are dependent on. They are looking at how to design clinical trials to attack tumor dormancy that may lead to eventual progression of disease. It is hoped that combination therapies targeting critical pathways could be effective in blocking progression.

Overall, it was very encouraging to see that scientists are making tremendous progress in breast cancer research and are gaining fascinating new insights into what drives its initiation and progression. These findings are expected to lead to increasingly more targeted and more personalized approaches to treating cancer. However, at this time, clinical application has not yet advanced very far towards this sought-after goal. This was evident in report-outs of clinical trials which tended to address such questions as whether there is benefit in extending treatment times for existing drugs that have been around a long time.

As an advocate, I came away with the following major takeaways from SABCS:
• the need to ensure appropriate levels of continued funding for basic research so these important early gains can be realized;
• the need to accelerate translation of promising basic research findings into new, more effective and less toxic treatments for patients; and,
• the importance of ongoing discussions of the most effective ways to design clinical trials for new therapies.

Peninsula Chapter Fashion Show

The Peninsula Chapter had a fantastic turnout for their 20th Annual Silent Auction, Luncheon and Fashion Show - raising over $12,000 to support VBCF’s programs. Thank you to all the volunteers and participants who make the day such a fun success!

Pink Ribbon Polo

Thank you to King Family Vineyards and the many generous sponsors including Flow Audi, Manchester Capital, and Freestyle and volunteers for hosting and supporting the Pink Ribbon Polo Classic on Father’s Day. The event benefits VBCF and Charlottesville’s Every Woman’s Life programs. Approximately 2,000 attendees raised more than $40,000 this year.

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Updates from the 2012 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium
- Continued from page 5.

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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.