

Ovarian Cancer Alliance of San Diego works to inform women

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Ford

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“If only we can save one woman’s life, it is all worth it,” has become the motto of the dedicated volunteer team of ovarian cancer survivors in the “Survivors Teaching Students®” (STS) Program of the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance, facilitated here in San Diego by the Ovarian Cancer Alliance (OCA) of San Diego. As ovarian cancer is the most lethal gynecologic cancer and there is no screening test for the early detection of ovarian cancer, the goal of the STS Program is to increase the awareness of the symptoms and risk factors for the early detection of ovarian cancer. The STS Program was first implemented by Peg Ford, Co-Founder of OCA of San Diego, for third year medical students at UCSD School of Medicine and successfully expanded the program to currently eleven schools of nursing throughout the county.



Recently, Barbara Horton, facilitator, and her team of presenters were greeted with the following testimonial shared by Donna Balsam, RN, BSN, MSN-c at their scheduled presentation to Kaplan School of Nursing. One of Ms. Balsam’s student from her NURS 210 Maternity Nursing Class, shared the following testimonial after attending the STS presentation in October of last year:

“My Aunt had been complaining about various discomforts for a few weeks, but brushed it off as nothing major. I had been talking with her on and off, seeing how she was feeling and if her complaints were worse or getting better. She had scheduled an appointment for the following week with her primary care doctor. In the mean time I attended the presentation from the women from the Ovarian Cancer Alliance who came to speak to our class.

As each survivor spoke about their story and the symptoms they experienced I couldn’t stop thinking about my Aunt. Everything they said fit what she was experiencing exactly. It was like they were telling her story. That mixed with the other symptoms that were discussed made me go straight to her house after class. I told her everything I had learned from the presentation and told her that I really felt she should bring it up to her doctor, and she did.

After a few doctors’ appointments and scans they found that she did have ovarian cancer and had developed a pretty large tumor. She had surgery to remove as much of the tumor as possible, they were successful! They got just about all of it. After her recovery from surgery the doctor recommended that she have chemotherapy to ensure they got it all, better safe than sorry. I am happy to say that she completed her chemotherapy and has received the best news any person with cancer can hear, it’s gone. The doctors attribute the success of her treatment to the fact it was discovered early. I thank God that the women from the Ovarian Cancer Alliance came to speak to my class that day, it saved a life.”

From the first presentation to UCSD School of Medicine in December of 2008 through 2013, OCA of San Diego has

helped to educate the medical community through making 100 STS presentations to over 2, 660 third year medical students (UCSD), nursing students, practicing medical physicians and healthcare providers throughout San Diego County.

In 2013, OCA of San Diego launched an innovative community outreach program for civic groups and organizations “**HEAR**: If I Only Knew Then What I Know Now” with the goal to reach and empower women to be informed about the importance of early detection of ovarian cancer. Ovarian Cancer, once called the silent killer’ is no longer as there are symptoms and there are risk factors. For further information about OCA of San Diego’s programs and to schedule a presentation, please check [their website](#).