

DTC Gala Committee Meeting Review
November 6, 2007 – at the home of Stephanie Ercegovic, Westport, CT

In attendance: Betsy Baird, Joann Bilyard, Richard Bortolot, Maureen David, Jacques Dickinson, Stephanie Ercegovic, Sue Frankenbach, Marie Green, Wendy Long, Martha Luther, Michelle Mills, Maureen Moreau, Karen Reichbind, Arlene Schwartz

Our thanks to Stephanie for hosting a productive meeting, and serving a delicious dinner!

Awareness and Fundraising

Jacques and Stephanie reported on their very positive meeting with Lynnette Gannon of Minuteman Press in early October. She is very enthusiastic about supporting DTC. She asked for regular press releases or articles to keep the topic and issues out in front of readers.

In a late October meeting with Tom Rutherford, this request was made and he agreed to provide us with a series of articles over a five-six month period. Jacques asked Joann Bilyard to be the point person for putting these articles into suitable form for publication.

Stephanie discussed how we need to keep the work and progress at Yale out in front of people, and use as many media opportunities as possible – including other hospital newsletters, radio, television etc. Sue noted that the Yale Cancer Center organizes a weekly radio program called Cancer Answers* broadcast on WNPR (CT Public Radio) Sundays at 6PM. Dr. Rutherford was recently the guest, and he spoke about the current research as well as the clinical program of DTC. Dr. Mor was a guest in May.

Jacques shared a lovely note from the Bilmeyer family who held their second annual golf tournament in honor of their parents who both passed away from cancer. Half of this year's proceeds (\$3,675) were donated to DTC.

Jacques distributed sample copies of the new DTC brochure. Tom Rutherford has approved it. It will be finalized shortly, and be available for doctors' offices, included in the annual appeal letter, sent to prospective committee members, etc. The Gala Committee members can distribute these where there may be interest – spas, gyms, clothing stores etc.

Martha Luther discussed the ongoing validation of the new blood test. LabCorp is conducting the validation in several countries, and it will be two to three years before the test is released. She explained that patients used to have to travel directly to Yale for the test; now other non-Yale affiliated physicians can offer the test if certain criteria are met. DTC patients still have more direct access to this test and the results from Dr. Gil Mor's lab.

Sue mentioned the Annual Appeal letter that will be mailed shortly to DTC donors who have not given yet in 2007. The new brochure will be included, and the date for the 2008 Gala will be noted on the material. Dr. Rutherford agreed an annual appeal in 2007 was a good idea, and approved the letter being sent.

Gala Details

Stephanie reviewed the Gala basics – cocktails and silent auction will be held up in the President's Room and adjacent foyer. Dinner and dancing will be in Commons. It was suggested and agreed that the podium for speakers be established in the middle of one of the long walls instead of at the end of Commons – guests at the 2006 Gala who were seated near the rear could not hear or see very well.

The quality and type of food was briefly discussed – while there were mixed reviews about the 2006 dinner, all agreed that the focus of the evening should be on the DTC mission and not high culinary expectations.

There was a consensus to have appropriate music during dinner. Sue will continue to investigate Yale student musical groups for the event (but only instrumental, not vocal). Marie Green has given Dr. Rutherford the CD from Pat Doran, and will give it to Sue shortly. There were various opinions about the quality of Pat Dorn and Eight to the Bar – each will be considered as well as others. David Reichbind and Andy Rubenoff will be consulted for their suggestions and opinions. All agreed hiring trained dancers to get the dancing jump-started was a good idea.

The seating will include round tables interspersed with existing rectangular tables. It is very costly to remove all the existing rectangular tables (need to be taken off-site).

The scale of the silent auction was discussed at length. It was agreed that Sue will provide a report of the most popular items from 2006 to help guide the committee in their solicitations. Ideally 40-50 high ticket items will be offered.

Jacques discussed using EBay (MissionFish) or similar web-based auction sites such as Charity Buzz to offer the silent auction items and/or items we wouldn't necessarily want in the silent auction, but the proceeds could be donated to DTC. Auctions of anything donated could be ongoing and not tied to the Gala or the silent auction that night. Jacques suggested a "Spring Cleaning" effort to get folks to donate items for web-auction.

Jacques offered to spearhead the invitation and poster design and asked Joann Bilyard to help him. Sue will provide a time-time and list of printed material needed.

There was lots of discussion about patient outreach. It was suggested that a letter inviting former patients to be part of our efforts be sent with the new DTC brochure.

Stephanie wrapped up the meeting by encouraging the committee to change the game on how we raise money – to seek more sponsorship and be less dependence on ticket sales for Gala. To do this we need to raise awareness of program – Everyone's antennas need to be up for opportunities!

Still to do

- Review silent auction – type of items/numbers
- Get sample menus for gala – schedule tasting
- Get design schematics from Andy Rubenoff
- Get CDs or visit possible swing band performances – get suggestions from Andy Rubenoff
- EBay spring cleaning effort
- Establish time-line and list of to-dos

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, January 8, 2008 in New Haven. Details will be sent later.

*The Yale Cancer Center website has all of the broadcasts available to listen to or to print – organized by date or topic – go to the link for News and Information and then the link for Cancer Answers.