

# ABC

## AFTER BREAST CANCER SUPPORT NETWORK

Established by Karen Christensen in 1990

*There is strength in a group that is greater than each of its members*

**FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019**

Affiliate of the Mohawk Valley Health System, Utica, NY

### Note:

All ABC meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held at Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) Center for Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Services (CRCCS), Community Room, located at 1650 Champlin Avenue Utica.

### Calendar:

#### Saturday, February 9, 2019, 11 a.m.

Our guest speaker for February is Sister Maureen Den. Her topic will be, "Attending to my spirit, I'm the person I've been waiting for." Sister Maureen was the former chaplain at MVHS for 30 years and is currently a volunteer at the MVHS Cancer Center. She has spoken previously at our ABC meetings.

#### Saturday, March 9, 2019, 11 a.m.

Dr. Alicia DeTraglia, MD will present on breast cancer treatments from a medical oncology perspective. Dr. DeTraglia is board certified in Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology and Hematology.

She received her undergraduate degree from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, and her medical degree from Albany Medical College in New York. She completed residency and fellowship training at The University of Massachusetts.

### Reminder:

The ABC Newsletter and meeting notice is a bimonthly publication sent electronically. Please make sure that we have your email by emailing us at [cancerinfo@mvhealthsystem.org](mailto:cancerinfo@mvhealthsystem.org) if you have not been receiving newsletters. The newsletter can always be viewed at [mvhealthsystem.org/abc](http://mvhealthsystem.org/abc). If you do not have an email address, please call 315-624-5764 and we will be happy to accommodate you.

### Phone Numbers:

#### Breast Care Center

315-624-5764

Chelsea Hammont, PA-C

Christopher Max, MD

John Sperling, MD

Mark Williams, MD

#### Holly Burline, Nurse Navigator

315-624-5319

#### Alexandra Battista, Oncology Social Worker

315-624-5241

#### Marie Smith, Clinical Trials Coordinator

315-624-5705

#### The Imaging Center

315-624-5510

#### The American Cancer Society 24/7 service

1-800-227-2345

The After Breast Cancer support network, created by women who have had breast cancer, is in its 27th year. The group is dedicated to providing education, information and emotional support to women and men who are facing biopsy, surgery or recovery from breast cancer. Monthly meetings focus on positive measures to return normalcy to the chaos that cancer presents in our lives. Meetings are free and open to the public. To receive the email version of the newsletter contact [cancerinfo@mvhealthsystem.org](mailto:cancerinfo@mvhealthsystem.org) or call 315-624-5764.

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## Self-Care and the New Year

Many survivors find their cancer diagnosis as a turning point in the way they approach their health and self-care. Self-care is an active choice an individual makes to engage in the activities that are required to gain or maintain an optimal level of overall physical, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual health. Self-care is, in essence, taking time to ensure that you are being cared for by you.

Every January, millions of people begin the new year by making resolutions to accomplish personal goals or, in some way, improve their lives. The new year is a time for renewal, change and an occasion to redirect ourselves. It is also an opportunity to focus on replenishing ourselves and prioritizing our physical and emotional health. While practicing self-care may initially seem overwhelming, take small steps. Try focusing on one idea from the list below and consistently implement it until it becomes routine, then select another idea to try. These small changes can have a big impact on overall physical health and well-being:

- Do something that you enjoy without feeling guilty. Is there something you have loved doing for most of your life? Take some time, even one hour, to do what you love or to do something you have always wanted to try.
- Cultivate your relationships. Studies have demonstrated that people with strong support networks have improved ability to cope with stressful situations, reduced levels of emotional distress and better health outcomes. Take time to reach out to family members, have lunch with a friend or reconnect with someone you haven't talked to in a while.
- Learn and use stress-reduction techniques. Techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, guided imagery, yoga, Tai Chi and progressive muscle relaxation are useful tools in promoting relaxation and emotional well-being.
- Set aside time for yourself each day. Finding even just a few minutes each day to allow your mind to rest can help to reduce anxiety and lower stress levels. Use this time to do things to help you unwind such as taking a walk, meditating, journaling or reading.
- Say no. We all feel obligated to say yes to invitations and social events that we don't necessarily want to participate in, even when our schedules are overflowing and we are feeling overwhelmed. Practice saying no to invitations that you don't really want to accept.
- Find safe and effective ways to stay active. Exercise is essential to cancer treatment recovery. Start out slowly with a health routine that makes sense for your body and your schedule. Even small changes such as taking the stairs, parking farther away from your destination, and taking short walks can help you work your way up to a more intense workout routine.
- Eat a balanced diet. Eating nourishing foods during and after treatment can help you to feel better and stay stronger. If you have questions about your specific nutritional needs, speak with your doctor.
- Get enough sleep. Sleep is very important for emotional and physical health.

- Alexandra Battista, Oncology Social Worker, Cancer Program, Faxton Campus