

Dear Readers:

We are extremely sorry for any inconvenience we may have caused by cancelling our May 20<sup>th</sup> Picnic. We are very pleased to invite you to join us on Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> in our beautiful, 'cool' indoor/outdoor Picnic area (The VENU) at Grayhawk for our 'Indoor Picnic Outreach Event.' If you already paid for your tickets, you don't need new ones, but if you had not yet bought your tickets, or need more tickets, please make your reservations by calling or emailing us.

Cordially, Barbara

## COME TO OUR 'AIR CONDITIONED' INDOOR PICNIC OUTREACH EVENT!

June 10<sup>th</sup> – 12 noon to 3 p.m.

A reminder that our 1st 2006 event will be the upcoming *Indoor Picnic Outreach Event*. It will be held on Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at The VENU at Grayhawk, 19777 N. 76<sup>th</sup> Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85255 from 12 noon to 3 p.m.

Please join us for a FUN-filled day with friends and family. There will be lots of great FUN, food, beer, wine, soda, and raffle and auction prizes. Tickets are \$10 per person, children under 12 free. Come and bring friends, family, neighbors.

Please contact Lyman Smith 480.296.4486 or Barbara Kavanagh 623.388.6837 for further details. Reservations are required. Thanks to our volunteers and, there is still time for you to help out too!

### Directions to 'Indoor Picnic Event'

Take Exit 34 off Loop 101 (Scottsdale Road) and proceed North to 1st. traffic light. Turn right onto E. Thompson Peak Pky. and proceed East to North 76th Street. Turn right onto No. 76th Street and proceed South to "The VENU" second entrance on the left (East) side of North 76th Street. Parking is only allowed in spaces marked "Great Room Parking" or on North 76th Street. The distance from Loop 101, Exit 34 to The VENU" is approximately 1.7 miles.

### New Website

The OFFICIAL Arizona Myeloma Network website is up and running at [www.arizonamyelomanetwork.org](http://www.arizonamyelomanetwork.org). News and other items of interest will be posted and updated regularly, so bookmark this site as a favorite, and return there often!

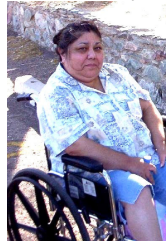
### A Family's Myeloma Story

In preparing to publish our May/June *AzMN Newsletter*, we had to decide how to handle a 2,000 word story we received from a very special volunteer family who recently joined our AzMN organization. We felt that the story, written by the four Gomez family members, was too important not to be told in its entirety. So...we decided to publish mom Joanne Gomez's side of the story in this issue and we will publish dad Albert's, son Michael's and daughter Priscilla's side of the story in next month's issue of our *AzMN Newsletter*.

#### "Mom's Side of the Story: by Joanne Gomez

I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma November 1, 2003. I don't remember too much after that. I do remember when I first started getting sick. My husband was out to sea as he was in the Navy back then. It was just me and my kids. I remember months and months of pain and my children suffering along with me. Mike, my son missed many days of work taking me back and forth to doctors and the emergency. My daughter Priscilla struggled with bathing me, getting me dressed, feeding me etc. By then my body was shutting down to where I was immobile. Anyway, after months and months of being misdiagnosed and struggling alone dad was finally home. This was supposed to be a happy time, as he was retiring. We were finally going to be a whole family once again. And we had many hopes and dreams for our future together.

After a lengthy and tedious effort to disengage me from the military hospital he somehow found a doctor out in town that finally helped. That's all I remember in the beginning. I know I was hospitalized for months. After coming home I remember pain, drugs, not being able to eat, sleep or walk. And most humiliating of all, I had to wear diapers and have someone bathe me.



My sister and my mom came up from Texas to visit. Thank you to my sister for helping Priscilla change diapers and bathing me. Thank you Lisa for phoning and checking on me everyday. The support you gave me and the concern you all showed for me meant more than you will ever know.

A few weeks after coming home, Albert retired from military service, but missed out on his retirement ceremony due to my illness. As a result, he did not get the flag, awards and recognitions that were due him. Unfortunately, no one cared enough to come and present him with them either. A few weeks after that I remember my brother and sister-in-law coming to help us move to Arizona in order for me to receive a bone marrow transplant. Thank you Connie, Frank and girls for caring and for doing all that you did for us. Also, I thank you for my beautiful walker...I'd be lost without it. Moving here, I just don't remember much either. To this day, I think I'm still in denial. I say to myself, "I have cancer." But it just won't register in my head. We don't talk about it very often and when we do it's not for long. Like I tell all of my family, life goes on before, during and after.

I have good days and bad, but we manage to laugh everyday. We dance, sing, play games, and watch movies. We are there for each other and love each other so much it hurts. We don't have much else, but love keeps us going. Thank you to Albert for sticking with me through this and for taking over a lot of what I used to do, like managing our home, paying our bills, making and keeping appointments, doing errands, and so on. I'm sure there are husbands out there who would not be so accepting, given the same situation.

Thank you my son Mike for being there from the beginning and for being there for your sister and for me. I know how hard it's been for you. When Albert is not able to do things, Mike is there in Albert's place. He helps us pay for my medications, takes me to the doctor and lab. He pays for the bills that we can't. He buys groceries and many other things. Since Priscilla doesn't work since she is my main caregiver, Mike buys her clothes and shoes when he is able to. He takes her shopping and once in a while, a night out at the movies. Thank you Mike for all that you do. You know that from the first day I saw your beautiful face you've been my special little hero.

Thank you my beautiful daughter Priscilla for being there from the beginning...I know it's been the hardest on you. I hate that you quit school and gave up your dream of being a special education teacher to help me through all the many struggles and, in getting me back to living a life again. I know it wasn't easy helping me to bathe, change my diapers and all the other and many hardships my illness put you through. Thank you for still being here for me and taking over a lot of what I used to do...cooking, cleaning and continuing to help me in my daily struggles.

Thank you to all three of you for all the special little things you do for me...like taking turns massaging my back, brushing my hair, tucking me in at night and making sure I take my naps and the many other things you do for me.

Thank you dad for the funny little songs you sing to me every night. They mean more than you'll ever know. (Sorry I told that you sing to me, but I think it's cute and it means more to me than I can ever express in words.) I'm sorry if my being sick has let any of you down. I will continue to be there for you all as much as I can and as long as I can. Thank you too, Barbara, Lyman and your AzMN committee members and volunteers for accepting us into your lives and your mission to help others. If ever and whenever you all need help with anything, personal or otherwise you can count on us.

Thank you so much,

Joanne

## AZ Copper Card to Provide Cheap Drugs - May 14, 2006

Read Anne Winter's discussion with AZ Republic political reporter Chip Scutari on Gov. Janet Napolitano's expanded Copper Card discount-prescription-drug card program. Anne Winter is Gov. Napolitano's health care advisor. The following link will take you to the AZ Republic article:

[www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0514drugcardQampA0514.html](http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0514drugcardQampA0514.html)

## Coming Up

Our 1st 2006 fundraiser event will be our **2nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament**, currently planned for October 5th 2006, a Thursday, at the **Raven Golf Club at Verrado** in Buckeye, Arizona.

## "Challenges and Rewards:

## Volunteering for Cancer Workshop"

9:30 – 12:00 noon

Friday, June 16th, 2006 at The Wellness Community of Central Arizona

360 East Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004

(Note: The workshop will be held in the building immediately to the left of, and behind the main Wellness Community building.)

Volunteers truly **'Make the Difference'** for most nonprofit organizations, especially for cancer programs that are often the life-line for both patients and their families. Developing volunteer leaders can be **'Profitable'** for the charity, as well as, **'Rewarding'** for the volunteer.

Barbara B. Kavanagh, M.S.W., Founder and President of the **Arizona Myeloma Network (AzMN)** will share valuable information based on 35 years of experience in both developing programs and volunteering. Barbara is author of **"Training Volunteers for the New Millennium,"** and an international trainer and consultant to non-profits. Volunteers and program directors will learn practical techniques to make volunteering more satisfying and successful. And, most important, bring greater benefits to cancer patients and their families.

There will also be an opportunity after the workshop to **'network'** and learn more about volunteer opportunities and resources in the Greater Phoenix community.

For more information and to sign up, for this **FREE** program at TWCCA, please contact:

Barbara Kavanagh (AzMN),

Tel. 623.388.6837,

[azmyelomanetwork@cox.net](mailto:azmyelomanetwork@cox.net)

Lynn Brysacz (TWCCA),

Tel. 602.712.1006, [lbrysacz@twccaz.org](mailto:lbrysacz@twccaz.org)

Articles from our readers are welcome and should focus on information directed towards Multiple Myeloma. They should be informative, and contain non-commercial, non-partisan, non-sectarian points of view. Articles are limited to 175 words or less (1 column-1/3 page) and will be published free of charge. No more than two Articles will be published in any single issue. The editors reserve the right to edit and shorten text as necessary; they also reserve the right to refuse article text or advertising in accordance with AzMN by-laws. Articles are due no later than the end of the first week of each month. Please send all written inquiries to:


Arizona Myeloma Network  
20280 N. 59th Avenue  
Suite 115 #448

Glendale, AZ 85308

[AzMyelomaNetwork@cox.net](mailto:AzMyelomaNetwork@cox.net)

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Kevin Kluts  
Vice President, Worldwide Sales North America

20400 N. 29th Ave. • Phoenix, AZ 85027 USA  
Tel. 623.780.6840  
Fax 623.780.6256 • Cell 602.570.7835  
[Kevin.kluts@bestwestern.com](mailto:Kevin.kluts@bestwestern.com)  
Reservations: 1.800.WESTERN or  
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Karen A. Donahue, P.T.  
[azospit@aol.com](mailto:azospit@aol.com)


1988 N. 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave. 4616 N. 51<sup>st</sup> Ave., Suite 106  
Glendale, AZ 85308 Phoenix, AZ 85031  
(602) 547-1961 (623) 846-0992  
Fax (602) 547-1189 Fax (623) 846-0041  
Billing: (602) 547-1961



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4242 N. Golf Dr. • Buckeye, AZ 85396  
Main 623.388.3000  
Fax 623.388.3030 Direct 623.388.3003  
[dfoss@intrawest.com](mailto:dfoss@intrawest.com)  
[www.ravenatverrado.com](http://www.ravenatverrado.com)



Starbucks Coffee Company  
20249 N. 67th Ave.  
Suite #B  
Glendale, Arizona 85308

623/362-9288

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