

GLENDALE NEWS

Z19 FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2009

No resources spurs woman to start myeloma network

Linda Kaplan of Kaplan Communications provided this information.

When Jack Kavanagh was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the bone-marrow plasma cells, his wife, Barbara, searched for information and treatment.



Barbara Kavanagh

To her surprise, there was little support for myeloma patients. After years of frustration, she decided to create the Arizona Myeloma Network to make sure others would not have to struggle as she and her husband had. AzMN provides education, awareness and advocacy for multiple myeloma patients and their families.

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About Hon Kachina

The Hon Kachina Council is a group of business and professional people, affiliated with St. Luke's Health Initiatives, who promote and support community volunteerism. The Hon Kachina Volunteer Awards is celebrating its 33rd year of recognizing service and increasing public awareness on the importance of volunteering.

The Hon Kachina Council will present the Hon Kachina Awards at a black-tie optional dinner 6:30 p.m. Sept. 26 at the Camelback Inn, 5402 E. Lincoln Drive, Scottsdale. Tickets may be purchased by contacting Pam Betz 480-905-1578 or betzco@cox.net.

View a slide show of the award winners as glendale.azcentral.com

Myeloma advocate lauded

Glendale woman's network support group earns her a Hon Kachina Volunteer Award.

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For the development of this non-profit and her years of commitment to volunteering, Kavanagh has been chosen as a recipient of the 2009 Hon Kachina Volunteer Award. She is one of nine people who will be honored on Sept. 26.

Starting a non-profit wasn't new to Kavanagh. In the earlier years, her husband's work demanded a tremendous amount of relocating, and she found herself living in two states and five countries over a 10-year period. As a way of meeting people and finding resources for her husband in each community, she either joined an existing volunteer program or started one. These include fundraising for the Sargent Cancer Care for Children in London and a program to train Turkish nurses to work with parents of children with cancer at the Ankara Children's Cancer Unit. For the past 17 years, she has been a full-time caregiver to her husband while continuing to help others. Volunteering has given her enough experience to author three handbooks on volunteerism.

Today, she serves on many committees and boards, but as founder and president of AzMN, she puts much of her energy into promoting its mission of bringing together scientists, businesses, cancer specialists and health-care providers to develop new research and improve the quality of life for cancer patients. In 2008, because of an increased demand for similar cancer-education programs and services, especially among Native Americans, AzMN expanded its focus to other forms of the disease, including breast cancer.

AzMN received grants from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Arizona Department of Health Services Cancer Control Program this year to implement the "women-to-women" breast cancer education program to train Navajo women to help one another. A Cancer Awareness and Advocacy conference was held on the reservation in July.

Kavanagh jokingly describes herself as a gerbil on a little wheel running as fast as she can.

She adds, "Even though volunteering seems to monopolize my life, I get so much back."