

## Congratulations

"I've known and admired Janet since we first worked together on behalf of Soviet Jews back in the early 1970s, and through the years her caring, compassion and determination has shined through in every activity, project and program she's undertaken. As a breast cancer survivor, she successfully overcame one of the biggest challenges any human being could ever face. From that experience, she forged the determination to make a positive difference in the lives of others facing similar struggles of their own. I am very proud to help mark the First Anniversary of "Hurdle Jumpers," the organization she has founded and dedicated to this effort. Warmest congratulations on reaching this milestone, Janet, from one of your biggest fans."

— ZEV YAROSLAVSKY, Member,  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

## Special Thanks

to newsletter hurdler, Craig Horning.

## HURDLE JUMPERS

SOARING OVER THE OBSTACLES OF CANCER TREATMENT™

A tax exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3)

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## HURDLE JUMPERS

SOARING OVER THE OBSTACLES OF CANCER TREATMENT™

HURDLEJUMPERS.ORG

# On Track

ANNIVERSARY EDITION - SPRING 2007

## Clearing The One-Year Hurdle

For me, it's the memory of being bald. It's the memory of my hands peeling. It's the memory of my nails turning colors and getting ridges. It's the memory of my skin being dry and flaky. It's the memory of the mental fogginess, or 'chemo-brain.' And even in the chemo-brain fog, I knew I wanted to help others when I recovered from all the treatments," says Janet Halbert, Hurdle Jumpers founder, recalling just some of the side effects of her cancer treatments. Diagnosed in November of 2004, she



Post-chemo, Janet Halbert  
with hair sprouts, 2005

was told by her surgeon Dr. Marjorie Fine that "something good would come from all of this." Janet, shaken from the fear and uncertainty that come with a cancer diagnosis, thought that perhaps the good doctor had sniffed a little too much operating room ether. But fast forward to 2007, and Dr. Fine's words seem prophetic: in February of this year, Hurdle Jumpers marked its first year of existence. Founded as a response to Janet's experiences, Hurdle Jumpers provides free comfort kits to help cancer patients ease the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation. "They're going to have some kind of dry skin condition; they may have some sort of mouth condition; they're definitely going to have some gastro-intestinal upset, whether its diarrhea or constipation, or not being able to digest or keep food down; because chemotherapy treatment affects fast growing cells," explains Janet.

Friends and health care professionals suggested many things to help ease these and other side effects. But it took a great deal of time and energy; energy that Janet didn't have to track down the recommended items. This started her thinking: Wouldn't it be wonderful if everything a cancer patient might need came organized in a kit? Thus was born the idea for Hurdle Jumpers.

Coming from a family with a tradition of giving back, the idea of helping others was a natural for Janet. "I conceived of a kit similar to those given by hospitals to women after childbirth or to cataract patients after surgery; a free, affirming, practical kit with resources and information about what cancer patients should expect. The kit would be filled with tips and items I found useful; everything from toothpaste to a humor book."

Janet started by taking inventory of the items she had used and contacting the product manufacturers. Her first success came with the maker of the special toothbrush she had been using, who offered to send 50 units. "It was the beginning of a chain of success," recalls Janet. "Every time I'd contact a new company I'd say, 'Please join these other companies in contributing to our efforts.'



Dr. Marjorie Fine, member of Hurdle Jumpers  
Board of Health Care Advisors with Janet Halbert



Team of volunteers in the warehouse

And when the next company chipped in, I'd add its name to the list." Janet was delighted that almost all of the companies she contacted were eager to help. "It was fun and very gratifying."

As momentum for Hurdle Jumpers grew, friends volunteered to help. One volunteered to do all of the legal work to establish a public charity. Another volunteered to do the website. Yet another offered to do some writing and editing. Others designed the Hurdle Jumpers logo, helped with graphic design, and the business plan. People volunteered to be on the Board of Directors. "It started looking like more than just an idea, certainly more than a garage band," laughs Janet.

All along the way, Janet sought advice and input from people in the medical profession. "Because of my business background, I asked 3 questions: 'Would it have impact? Was it scalable? Was it sustainable?'" And I kept getting a lot of positive feedback."

Still others stepped in and provided the vital seed capital (see "Why I Did It" - page 3) to get the venture off the ground. Their faith and generosity served as additional validation. "These sophisticated business owners each believed in the idea and my passion strongly enough to write a check." This seed capital allowed Hurdle Jumpers to buy the non-donated items for the kits, and to them Hurdle Jumpers owes special thanks.

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P. O. Box 642600  
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## The One-Year Hurdle (continued)



Initial seed capital donors:  
(L) Marc Bishara, Joe Sinay, Elise Sinay Spilker,  
Hurdle Jumpers' founder,  
Janet Halbert, Clara Martin, Bret Martin

Soon the donated products started arriving. They filled Janet's entry hall, then the second bedroom, living and dining rooms, and the guest bathroom. "They were everywhere," she recalls. And then there was the call from Steve Gable, nationwide distribution manager at Novartis Consumer Health (see "Tribute" - Page 2). "Steve said he was sitting with the warehouse inventory and then asked me what I needed," Janet remembers. "They sent eight pallets of short shelf-life items. I had to get warehouse space because I certainly didn't have a pallet jack nor a forklift at my condo!" Janet had already enlisted her nephews to help move heavy boxes around, but now, with the help of family and friends, entire teams of student volunteers were organized.

As Hurdle Jumpers enters its second year, the organization plans to increase awareness of its mission in the medical community by distributing more kits. "This year I'd like to be able to distribute 2,000 kits," says Janet. Future plans include the creation of new kits to address kids of various age groups, as well as pre- and post surgery kits. And Janet's long-range vision is to create a coupon program so that undeserved people can go into any pharmacy or drugstore and receive a full-sized unit of every product in the Hurdle Jumpers kit. But that dream lies in the future for now. "I realize I have to take one hurdle at a time," she smiles. "Right now, we're focused on our chemo and radiation kits."

Why do people respond so positively to the idea of the Hurdle Jumpers kits? Janet has her own ideas on that subject. "I think it's because so many peoples' lives are affected by cancer; they either have a friend, a family member, or a co-worker who is having a cancer experience. The statistics are one in three Americans. And these kits are a very direct, very hands-on way of helping someone."

Janet continues to be inspired by the response her kits have generated. "I've done

so many volunteer projects in my life, but this is by far the most gratifying. I feel like I'm helping each cancer patient know they're not alone and that someone else has been on this journey. It's probably the most important volunteer work I've ever done."



Chemo Care Kit Tote

## What's Up Doc?

"Congratulations on the comprehensive and well thought out chemo care kits. From the packaging to the contents, your kits will be very helpful to patients."

– David Chan, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Revlon/UCLA Breast Center



(L) Mary Byrne, RN, Janet Halbert, David Chan, MD,  
Aaron Willis, DPT, member of HJ  
Health Care Advisory Board

"From my 20 years of experience in the practice of oncology, I know that the items contained in your kits are not routinely provided by oncology offices."

– Herman Kattlove, MD, MPH, Retired Medical Editor, American Cancer Society

"Patients Grateful", says oncology nurse Mary Byrne: "I want to tell you how touched our patients have been by your kindness. Several patients have been close to tears when I've shared with them the story behind the chemo care kits. They are truly grateful for your thoughtfulness and effort. The kits have been flying out of our office as well. The nursing staff thinks they are great. What a wonderful idea from a wonderful and caring person. Congratulations on being able to make your idea a reality, and best of luck for continued success."

– Mary Byrne, RN, MS, FNP,  
AOCN, Cancer Care Associates,  
Redondo Beach, CA

## Tribute: Steve Gable Unfailing Generosity



Steve Gable at his  
retirement party, 2006

One of the challenges in founding Hurdle Jumpers was obtaining over-the-counter products for our kits. "As many charities do, we rely on the generosity and kindness of donor companies," recalls founder Janet Halbert. One of the most generous people with whom Janet interacted was Steve Gable, nationwide distribution manager from Novartis Consumer Health. Janet originally contacted Novartis in an attempt to obtain Gas-X for her first 50 kits. A 33-year veteran of the consumer health industry, Steve first spearheaded a program to give away short shelf-life products to charities; products which otherwise would have simply been destroyed. To help execute this plan, he initiated an internship for Penn State students studying logistics analysis and supply chain management. This hands-on practical experience for the students was a big help to Steve in his mission of helping others around the world.

Janet vividly remembers the day Steve called her from his Novartis office, saying "I'm sitting here with the nationwide warehouse inventory. What do you need?" Janet asked what products, aside from Gas-X, were available and could help cancer patients. He read from a list of items and Janet picked items already cleared with Hurdle Jumpers' medical advisors. After the call eight pallets of short-shelf life products arrived. But besides the donated items, Steve had also provided something else of immense value to Hurdle Jumpers: "Because of Steve I have a relationship with the donations team at Novartis Consumer Health," explains Janet.

Shortly after Steve released the items to Hurdle Jumpers he retired. But he continued to help Janet by lending his expertise on logistical subjects such as shipping, packaging, box sizes and types, and package weights. "The lasting piece of advice he left me with was, 'Don't forget the BRC,'" remembers Janet. "And in my naiveté I asked, 'What's a BRC?' And he responded, 'Business Reply Card!'"

Steve's advice was so invaluable that Janet asked him to join the Hurdle Jumpers Board of Advisors. "He said he didn't know if he had anything to offer. I told him that I

didn't know much about logistics, and that he could help us with that." Janet even enticed Steve by offering to fly him out to sunny Los Angeles during the cold New Jersey winter. Like so many others, Steve stepped up and said "yes".

## Unfailing Generosity (continued)

Janet see Hurdle Jumpers through, but she would dive head first as always. Within six months, Hurdle Jumpers was providing Chemo Care Kits to the few friends and family members of mine who were diagnosed with cancer.



Boxes were stacking up in Janet's 2nd  
bedroom when she received a call from  
Novartis Consumer Health

Unfortunately, Steve never got to make that trip. A few months after retiring, he was suddenly seriously ill and was hospitalized. "He called me from his hospital bed and apologized for not getting back to me. That's the kind of guy he was." Janet sent him a copy of *The Blue Day Book: A Lesson in Cheering Yourself Up*, which is contained in each Hurdle Jumpers kit. Steve's daughter, told Janet that she and Steve really enjoyed reading it. Sadly, after several weeks in the hospital, Steve passed away. However, the charitable program he began continues to benefit not only Hurdle Jumpers, but many other organizations to this day. "Steve was a visionary in his industry," recalls Janet. "His spirit will benefit thousands of people for many years to come."

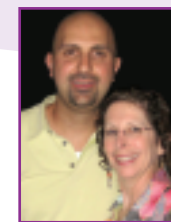
Thank you, Steve, for your unfailing generosity.

## Why I Did It!

I've known Janet for many years. My first experiences were strictly in a business capacity, and through that, we became trusted friends.

Throughout our professional relationship, I had only known Janet to be someone of passion and incredible character. When she found out about her illness in 2004, I recall her handling it with the same determination and will that she had handled everything else in her life.

Shortly after Janet bravely completed all treatments, we sat down as she began



Marc Bishara with  
HJ Founder, 2006

telling me her vision for Hurdle Jumpers. I am a big believer that good ideas are a dime a dozen, but without leadership and passion, most ideas remain just that.

As I listened, there was little doubt in my mind that not only would

Her energy has always been something to behold, and I am indebted to her for giving me the opportunity to be a part of something special.

In February the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Los Angeles announced a generous grant award to Hurdle Jumpers, ensuring the continuation of our mission to provide free comfort kits to cancer patients.

## Grant Announcement Jewish Community Foundation

In announcing the Jewish Community Foundation grant, Marvin Schotland, president and CEO of the Foundation noted that, "In today's society, we have all been touched by cancer. As such, we had a strong desire to help seed Hurdle Jumpers—a new and thoughtful cancer patient support initiative—by providing funding for 1,000 comfort kits. We are pleased to be partnering in such a worthy endeavor because Hurdle Jumpers will have a clear, direct and positive impact in the lives of cancer patients." For the entire grant press release check out the Newsroom on our website:

www.hurdlejumper.org  
More about the grant in the next newsletter.

"I'm proud to acknowledge Hurdle Jumpers' first anniversary; cancer touches all of us and this new non-profit directly helps the citizens of our city as well as patients across the U.S."

– WENDY GREUEL, Member,  
Los Angeles City Council

## Gratitude & Special Thanks

As we clear the one year hurdle, Hurdle Jumpers expresses gratitude and appreciation to those generous individuals who provided us with early, vital seed capital:

Marc Bishara – Venbrook Risk Services  
Chuck Hershson – Fidelity Mortgage Brokers  
Clara and Bret Martin  
John Notter – Trustee, Conrad Hilton Foundation  
Joe Sinay  
Elise Sinay Spilker



Two years later, a full head of hair for  
Founder, Janet Halbert

We could not have reached this milestone without you. Your generosity, confidence and faith in the Hurdle Jumpers mission inspire us to reach ever higher as we help patients soar over the obstacles of cancer treatment.

[Photo Credits: Bill Aron and Hurdle Jumpers]

Janet

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