

Learn about support for young cancer survivors and read our new Perspectives column on the back!



## UPCOMING GOLD GATHERING

### Living with Neuropathy

**Friday, February 8**  
**4:30–6:00 p.m.**

Dinner, presentation and discussion with Peter Argenta, MD

Gynecologic oncologist Dr. Peter Argenta will talk about the challenges of living with neuropathy, treatment options and new research.

717 Delaware Building  
Room 105  
717 Delaware Street SE  
Minneapolis, MN, 55414

Parking at the Oak Street Ramp will be validated.

Please RSVP to  
[goldMN@umn.edu](mailto:goldMN@umn.edu)  
by January 31.

## Connecting in the New Year

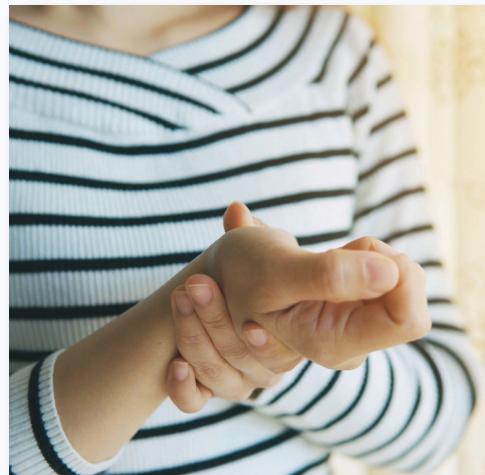
Happy New Year!

Join us for our first GOLD Gathering of the year on Friday, February 8th, covering neuropathy, a nerve condition that can affect your hands and feet resulting in numbness, weakness and pain. As many of you have noted, it can be a common side effect during and after chemotherapy.

Dr. Peter Argenta will be hosting the discussion about neuropathy. Not only has he been a practicing gynecologic oncologist for a number of years but he also focuses his research on trying to improve neuropathy symptoms.

Due to scheduling constraints, we will have the event from 4:30-6:00 p.m. but we understand that many people work, so please come whenever you can. We plan to socialize and eat during the first portion and then get into the presentation and Q&A afterward.

In this newsletter, we are offering a new feature called *Perspectives*, highlighting GOLD participants' own



stories. In our next newsletter, we plan to share some of the results from the GOLD study. Research data from this study recently helped us get grant funding to look at factors relating to fatigue and other symptoms following treatment. I am thankful for your participation in this study. Together we are working to improve the lives of women diagnosed with cancer.

Be well,

Rachel Vogel, Ph.D.  
Principal Investigator



# Support for Younger Survivors

## MOCA Young Survivor Network

The Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MOCA) defines young survivors as those women dealing with a gynecologic cancer diagnosis before menopause. They invite you to join the group to explore issues unique to young survivors of *all types* of gynecologic cancers.

Young survivors range in age from late teens to mid-40s, but there is no age requirement to join the group. The group plans events and activities throughout the year. MOCA also has a network of Young Survivor Mentors who can provide support and information over the phone.



Young survivors of ovarian and gynecologic cancers can also connect online through a private Facebook group. Contact the group administrator to answer a few questions before admission to this

online Facebook group.

For more information about Young Survivor Network, visit <https://mnovarian.org/offering-support/> or call MOCA at 612-822-0500.

## PERSPECTIVES

### Becoming a Thriver

On my first follow up after completing my 6 rounds of chemo and 3 rounds of brachytherapy my oncologist said, “You are done. Everything looks good. Go live your life.”

Nine months earlier I had received a diagnosis of endometrial cancer. When the initial shock wore off, I decided that I was going to try to be as positive as possible, to see myself as a person with a future, and to have a positive outlook. I told myself that after my total hysterectomy I would be fine. I would take the time off from teaching my first graders for the surgery and recovery and then go back to teaching and it would all be good. It would be fine.

While the surgery did go well with no complications, not everything

was fine. The pathology came back with a very low staging, but there was a caveat: there was 5% of a type of ovarian cancer and my oncologist wanted me to do chemo and brachytherapy as my “insurance policy” that the 5% would not develop into another cancer. This was not the fine I was expecting.

So I had to adjust my expectations of what would be happening, of what fine would look like for me over the next months. The support I had from my spouse, family and friends was a great blessing. I told people that I did not see myself as a cancer survivor, I was a cancer thriver. I kept telling myself that I really would be fine, just not right away. I tried to be present for each day and not get too upset when

my body threw off the scheduled chemo days. I went back to teaching to give my life a feeling of normalcy. I let people help me. A friend paid for a person to regularly clean my house. People brought us food I didn’t prepare. When I had to start teaching part time because of the fatigue, I had to convince myself that the rest of the afternoons of my life would not be spent napping on the couch. I prayed a lot and I had a lot of people praying for me. I knew it would take some time, but that I really was going to be fine.

So now here I am almost three years later living my life. Everything still looks good. I am fine. I am still thriving.

—Cynthia, GOLD participant