Cindi Davis is a survivor. She survived the terrible day when she found a lump in her breast, and three stress-filled days of imaging, scans, and biopsies that led to a diagnosis of breast cancer. She survived five months of chemo, a double mastectomy, reconstruction surgery, and 28 rounds of radiation treatments.

Cindi has been cancer free for over two years... but each day is now about thriving.

“The first year after treatment was over, I’d alternate between, ‘Wow! I got through it!’ and ‘Oh my goodness, I had cancer!’ When I looked back on what my body had gone through during treatment, I decided I needed to slow down and concentrate on taking better care of myself—which meant paying attention to weight, nutrition, exercise, and relaxation,” Cindi says.

“But chemo side effects with my nails kept me out of the gym because of the risk of infection. Then, the longer I was out, the harder it became to go back. I really struggled with body image and didn’t have the confidence to work out the way I had in the past.”

Virginia Hospital Center understands that it’s difficult to bounce back from a life-threatening illness. That’s why they launched a comprehensive Cancer Survivorship program that offers health and wellness classes like the 8-week Breast Cancer Survivors Exercise Program that Cindi recently participated in with seven other survivors.

“I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but it was clear I’d made the right choice once the group got together,” Cindi says. “Our class was a pilot group put together by Jess Pike, an exercise physiologist at Virginia Hospital Center. We participated in a progressive weight training program twice a week for 8 weeks.”
“I gained strength, flexibility, and body confidence. In addition to the exercise, the program included individual consultations with Cynthia Choi, a nutritionist at VHC, and support from Julie Pierce, my nurse navigator at VHC. It’s a great program that restored my confidence and enthusiasm to resume a ‘normal’ exercise routine, and has inspired me to begin the process of becoming a certified personal trainer for cancer patients/survivors.”

Giving back to other survivors is one of the ways Cindi can express her gratitude to donors who support Virginia Hospital Center and the Cancer Survivorship Program, and to the many medical professionals who helped her through her diagnosis and treatment and brought her to a new, healthy place in life.

“

When I encountered challenges during my treatment, the radiation oncology techs and nurses were there to encourage and push me through the treatment protocol,” Cindi says. “I will never forget Dr. Robert Hong, the Chief of Radiation Oncology. . . he gave me ‘tough love’ when I wanted to quit my treatments early; he simply wouldn’t let me do it.”

“Virginia Hospital Center is one of the places that makes Arlington special,” Cindi says. “It’s a community hospital that supports patients beyond their medical needs. The community and Cancer Resource Center classes are amazing. Those programs and the on-site presence of the Teal Center massage therapy services continue to bring me back for ongoing support and recovery.”

In addition, the JB-LF is helping to fund two new positions in Virginia Hospital Center’s Outpatient Clinic, a nurse and nurse practitioner. Our nurses will expand Clinic hours and add capacity for telemedicine visits for low-income expectant mothers. “This pilot program will enable our patients to access care through any phone or computer,” explains Michelle Altman, RN, MSN, MBA, Patient Care Director for the Outpatient Clinic. For expectant moms with high-risk pregnancies, the telemedicine program means that careful monitoring and expert advice are as convenient and simple as downloading an app. “Our goal is to help our vulnerable patients have a healthy pregnancy by removing barriers to care,” says Michelle, and “we are thrilled that the JB-LF is partnering with us on this innovative program.”

$83,500 for pediatric care for infants

$58,000 to fund case management for obstetric patients in the Outpatient Clinic

$25,000 to fund part of a nurse practitioner for obstetric patients in the telehealth program

$5,000 for transportation to the Outpatient Clinic for low-income expectant moms

$1,000 to provide a safe place for newborns in need to sleep

$172,500 TOTAL

PARTNERS IN COMPASSION: VIRGINIA HOSPITAL CENTER AND THE JENNIFER BUSH-LAWSON FOUNDATION

Virginia Hospital Center and the Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation (JB-LF) have partnered for more than three years to support healthcare for the most vulnerable members of our community — low-income and uninsured expectant mothers and their children. Proceeds from the 2016 Jennifer Bush-Lawson 5K and Family Fun Day have been put immediately to work to support newborn care provided at the Hospital’s Arlington Pediatric Center (APC) and staffing for an innovative telemedicine program designed to provide enhanced healthcare access for low-income expectant moms with high-risk or complex pregnancies.

“We are grateful for the JB-LF’s ongoing support of well-child medical care for our newborn patients,” says Dr. Tatiana Zenzano, Medical Director of Virginia Hospital Center’s Arlington Pediatric Center. “Babies have seven pediatric visits in their first year of life to assess the baby’s development and well-being, administer vaccinations, and educate parents about their baby’s care. Providing access to these vital services is at the heart of APC’s mission.”

$3,000 to fund telehealth program

$2,000 to support the Outpatient Clinic

Q: When should you start to worry about fall allergies?

Dr. Bailey: “When symptoms linger longer than the 7–10 days we normally see for a cold and when symptoms seem to repeat themselves over and over again in the fall, you may be suffering from allergies. Claritin and Allegra-D are over-the-counter antihistamines that can help dry up mucus secretions. But some people have different types of ‘indoor’ allergies, such as dust mites, which require different measures to reduce symptoms.”

Q: Are there complications if I do nothing to treat my allergies?

Dr. Bailey: “The most common complication we see is a sinus infection. Also, when allergy symptoms including itchy, watery eyes and sometimes rub and scratch so hard that they can cause corneal abrasion. And asthma can be triggered by inhaled allergens.”

Q: What exactly can an allergist do for me?

Dr. Bailey: “We evaluate what you’re allergic to so you can take the minimal amount of medication and fine-tune your health because allergies can trigger asthma, sinus infection, hives, and itchy eyes and skin. When medicine isn’t enough or when a patient can’t take or has taken them long-term, another option is immunotherapy. I highly recommend this for patients with severe or persistent allergies, or allergic asthma. We use immunotherapy to train the body’s immune system to stop reacting to allergens. This can provide long-term or even permanent relief from allergies.”

FALL ALLERGIES — YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Sally Bailey, MD, is an allergy immunologist with Virginia Hospital Center. She knows that many people in our community suffer from allergies—particularly in the fall. But as Dr. Bailey explains, there’s no benefit to waiting for symptoms to become unbearable. Act NOW . . .