

December 30, 2021

Dear Friends of The Lewin Fund,

As this challenging year draws to a close, we thank you for your continued support and generous donations. Wishing you and yours the happiest of holidays and good health and peace for the New Year.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we have maintained our support for women with gynecologic cancers. We were unable to have in-person indoor events, but we were able to connect with many of our loyal supporters by using virtual and outdoor opportunities.

We continue to adhere to our stated goals. This year, on the **educational front**, I hosted virtual presentations covering timely topics on health, wellness, and cancer prevention. Guest speakers highlighted the importance of nutrition, exercise, immune boosting activities, and the need to continue all health maintenance procedures. We educated the community about the signs and symptoms of cancer through virtual events and social media channels as global data tells us that less than half of women were aware of these signs and symptoms prior to their cancer diagnosis, and nearly half never attended a screening program (<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20190925/Global-survey-highlights-unmet-need-of-women-living-with-cancer.aspx>).

On the **research front**, our support for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute continues. Dana-Farber is an international leader in gynecologic oncology research (please see the attached article). As part of Dana-Farber's ambitious new campaign, we made a \$100,000 donation to support uterine carcinoma research under the direction of Joyce Liu, MD, MPH. This builds on our earlier \$50,000 gift to support uterine cancer research conducted by Panos Konstantinopoulos, MD, PhD. Both gifts were made in Mary Lou Ashford's memory. Uterine cancer is the most common gynecologic malignancy in the United States, with rising cases annually. However, this disease is woefully underfunded. We are proud to partner with the Ashford family to support vital research as well as raise needed awareness about this disease.

A study published in the *AARP Journal* (November 20, 2021), outlined progress made in diagnosing and treating different cancers from 1975 to 2013. Cancers with increased research funding included prostate, breast, bladder, lung, colorectal, and several other cancers. This report's most dramatic finding was the *decrease* in both funding and the five-year survival rate for uterine cancer. "The five-year survival rate has worsened since 1975; it receives the least research funding of any of the cancers discussed." The AARP finding confirmed previous findings from Northwestern University and emphasizes the need to continue supporting uterine cancer research.

On the **support front**, our partnership with the Woman to Woman Program at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City progresses with virtual meetings for their semiannual reunions, their Latina seminars, and other educational programs. We are excited to start and grow support for young women with ovarian cancer seeking both treatment and assistance with fertility-preserving medical options. We are one of the few organizations helping in this area. One can only imagine dealing with cancer treatment at a young age and the strong desire to have a child.

The Transportation Fund was needed this past year more than ever. When the pandemic started, many organizations cut support for cancer patients traveling to their medical and chemotherapy appointments. We stepped in to fill gaps this created and increased funding of our Transportation Fund. The risks for cancer patients on public transportation, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, were great, and this increased funding allowed vulnerable patients to get to their appointments safely.

Virtual programs for our underserved Latina women continued with partnerships at Mount Sinai Hospital, the Cancer Support Community, LatinaShare, and Gilda's Club.

We have made real differences in the lives of countless women and their families through these programs.

As in the past, no board member receives compensation for their time and expertise. Our commitment to supporting women with gynecologic cancers provides us with the utmost satisfaction.

We would like to extend a very special thank you to Danielle Tikijian, Andrea Sheridan, and our friends at both Bergen County Technical Schools and Bergen Community College who spearheaded our successful Second Annual Walk for Women's Cancers as well as a local clothing drive. Both events exceeded our expectations and helped raise over \$50,000 as well as heighten awareness about women's cancers and cancer prevention. We are currently vetting letters of intent with our scientific advisors regarding ovarian cancer research as the focus of these funds.

Please take note of our Third Annual Walk for Women's Cancers scheduled for October 2, 2022 (<https://runsignup.com/Race/NJ/Paramus/WalkforWomensCancers>). Stay tuned for more information on upcoming events as well, including a Spring Fashion Show.

In 2022, we will support the above-mentioned programs and expand our funding for ovarian cancer research. We will continue outreach and financial support for women and their underserved families.

With best personal regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharyn N. Lewin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "L".

**SHARYN N. LEWIN, MD**

**PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**