2010 was a year of positive change for The Wellness Community Valley/Ventura. Serving more than 2,800 individuals through 15,373 visits representing more than 22,606 hours of service, TWC V/V expanded the offerings at its main location in Westlake Village and in its Chatsworth location. TWC V/V continued providing service to Community Memorial Hospital’s Cancer Resource Center and also entered into a partnership with St. John’s Cancer Center in Oxnard to expand the cancer support services offered in Oxnard and Camarillo. More than 1,247 NEW PARTICIPANTS benefited from our services, which complement conventional treatment, enhance recovery and improve quality of life for people with cancer. All of our services are FREE OF CHARGE to people with cancer and their loved ones. The following programs and services were provided in 2010:

15 WEEKLY SUPPORT GROUPS
(Totaling 709 sessions)
Support groups for cancer patients and family members are facilitated by professional therapists who specialize in psychosocial oncology issues.

8 MONTHLY NETWORKING GROUPS
(Totaling 81 sessions)
Networking groups are designed for people with similar experiences, including breast cancer, prostate cancer, brain tumors, and gynecological/ovarian cancer. These groups are facilitated by professional therapists, registered nurses and peers who specialize in psychosocial oncology issues.

9 WEEKLY MIND/BODY/EXERCISE CLASSES
(Totaling 614 sessions)
Mind/body classes such as yoga, Tai Chi Chih and Qigong aid in stress reduction, enable people with cancer to gain strength and stamina and promote a sense of well-being. All classes are led by experienced practitioners who have worked extensively with cancer survivors.

44 EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS
Workshops are conducted by experts on a variety of topics such as nutrition, treatment advances and complementary therapies.

SPANISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS
(Totaling 223 sessions)
These services include the target underserved, monolingual Spanish-speaking participants with any type of cancer, and are facilitated by bilingual, culturally-fluent therapists. Programs offered include support groups, mind/body programs, social activities, peer support, one-to-one outreach to patients in oncology clinics, and annual Latina Women’s Conference.

80 KIDS CIRCLE MEETINGS
Weekly groups and special activities are held for children who have a parent or grandparent with cancer, enabling children to cope with the experience of a parent going through treatment and recovery. These activities are facilitated by professional therapists who specialize in psychosocial oncology and family issues.

116 SOCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS AND FAMILIES
A variety of social activities are held throughout the year to foster community and mutual support for people with cancer and their loved ones. Examples are: National Cancer Survivors Day, Daniel’s Day of Magic and other community events.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT
(Totaling 1,699 contacts)
This Individual support includes intake interviews, informal counseling, one-to-one outreach to cancer patients, orientation and referrals.

Pictured above: Liane Ingalla, a two-year survivor of breast cancer, with her family, all Wellness Community participants. The entire family found hope and support at The Wellness Community Valley/Ventura. Photo by Ginny Rickey
After 15 years of fighting cancer, Helen Gateka-Anderson focuses only on her blessings. “Cancer is a life-changing experience,” says Helen. “It helps you grow and treasure each and every day.”

Just a few years after losing her husband to lung cancer, Helen was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. She attended a support group at The Wellness Community for several years, and thirteen years later married her husband Richard, who had lost his wife to breast cancer.

One year after marrying Richard, Helen was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and started going to The Wellness Community again. For the past five years she has been a source of inspiration and hope to her fellow support group members. “The Wellness Community has been a vibrant source of strength, support, and encouragement. That’s the place to go if you want to get better. The people in my support group are all tremendous survivors,” says Helen.

The Wellness Community is not the only organization to benefit from Helen’s inspirational outlook. Thirty-six years ago Helen founded Bethany Christian School in Thousand Oaks and is a past principal and preschool director. With Helen’s leadership and dedication the school grew from three preschool classes to a full elementary school with 300 students and 42 staff members.

“Helen is an exceptional, one-of-a-kind spiritual leader and friend,” says Shirley Hacklemann, principal of Bethany Christian School. “The proof of her amazing impact is seen in the hundreds of students and parents who keep in touch with her from the earliest days of the school.”

Helen stays busy spending time with her husband Richard and hosting a weekly Bible study. She also visits the school every Tuesday for the Families in Prayer meetings, takes a watercolor class at The Wellness Community, gardens, visits and encourages friends at a nursing home, and swims.

Helen is constantly encouraged by the support of her family and friends. “I have so many people praying for me, and I thank God continually for his blessings.”
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