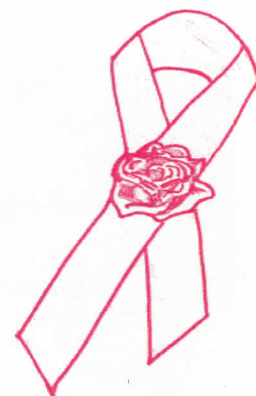


The Pink Ribbon Page



Summer 2004

Who was Ellen? Hugo's story

Over the past decade or so, the annual Ellen's Run, which raises money for cancer related causes, has become something of an institution on the East End of Long Island. And, from time to time, the question comes up: Who was Ellen?

Having been married to her for ten years, I can answer that question. Ellen Hermanson was an ordinary woman who became quietly extraordinary in adversity. She was ferociously smart, kind, very funny, and a little neurotic, but not all different from tens of thousands of other young women trying to make

their way in New York City.

At age 35, she gave birth to our daughter, Leora, now a lovely and formidable 15-year-old. As a freelance writer/editor, Ellen's focus during her pregnancy was making as much money as possible so she could take time off with the baby. She took on all the work she could -- magazine pieces, newsletters for brokerages, and brochures for banks and summer camps. And when Leora was born, Ellen threw herself wholly into motherhood. Those first few months were, I believe, the happiest of her life.

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Healing gems for sale

According to Christine Laureano, gemstones have the power to heal. She claims that like most components of the earth, gems have healing energy. For the last four years, Christine has been manufacturing all-natural lotions, creams and therapeutic blends using essential oils, oils that have been extracted from plants. She is a certified Aromatherapist and Reiki Master. Her products are sold under the Good Ground Botanicals name.

Inspired

More than nine years ago, Christine's loss of her oldest daughter inspired her to contribute her energy to healing work. Recently she felt a need to contribute to the fight against breast cancer when a friend was diagnosed with breast cancer. This friend's

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Jack Sweeney and Abby Roden pose with their boogie boards as the two play tirelessly at the Lambert Beach Resort in Tortola, British Virgin Islands.

Hugo's story

(Continued from page 1)

Then, when Leora was six months old, Ellen was diagnosed with breast cancer, and her prognosis was not good. Ellen was always an anxious sort, and her first reactions were all too human and, aside from a mother's concern for her child, not particularly heroic. As a journalist, her normal approach to uncertainty and the need for vital decisions was to research a subject and become an instant expert. This time, she was careful at first not to learn too much, terrified of what the statistics might imply.

She endured a mastectomy and eight months of very aggressive chemotherapy before emerging from treatment, drained, battered, and hairless, only to wonder what to do with her life. She knew she couldn't return to the writing and editing she had done before. Unsure how much time she might have, she insisted on truly meaningful work.

She became active in the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS), and eventually served on its board and edited its newsletter, *The Networker*. Unable to find the sort of spiritual support she would have liked, she became one of the founders of the Jewish Healing Center, and was the first editor of its newsletter, *The Outstretched Arm*. Later she became the first executive director of Judges and Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert, organizing the first of its annual symposia, which are now named in her memory. In the course of all this, she finally, inexorably, became a reluctant expert on cancer.

She had three good years before the cancer resurfaced, and then two more increasingly difficult and painful years, but she never stopped working as much as she could, and she never gave up the fight. Only a few months before she died, now barely able to walk, she delivered a memorable speech at the annual NCCS conference on the need for better pain management and received a standing ovation. I watched her become more and more selfless toward the end, giving freely of her shrinking time, her scarce energy, and her inexhaustible love. She was a quiet hero.

The world is full of quiet heroes, even silent ones: cancer patients and survivors, not to mention the loved ones who care for and sustain them. Most of them are not writers or political activists. They have no public face or voice, but their struggles are no less heroic for being silent and invisible.

It was for them, as well as in memory of Ellen, that the Ellen P. Hermanson Foundation was created. Spearheaded by the tireless efforts of Ellen's sisters, Julie Ratner and Emily Levin, a largely inexperienced group of dedicated

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2004 Events



The South Fork Breast Health Coalition meets at 6:30pm in Water Mill.

August 10th
September 28
October 19
December 14

Look Good, Feel Better Programs are held at the Hampton Bays Medical Atrium from 1:30-3:30.

August 10th
October 19th
December 14th

July 10 Bridgehampton Polo begins six consecutive Saturdays

August 14 Ellen's Run Cocktail Party
August 15 Ellen's Run (5K Run/Walk)

September 12 Race for the Cure
September 26 North Sea Firehouse Ladies Auxiliary Walk

October 5 Day of Renewal and Hope
October 12 Hope Classic Golf Tournament at Noyac Country Club
October 14-16 Saks "Key to the Cure"
October 16 Shelter Island 5K Run

*Check our website for additional events.
Dates subject to change.



Hugo's story

(Continued from page 3)

volunteers staged the first Ellen's Run a mere 16 months after Ellen's death. Since then, the foundation has given away more than a million dollars, focusing on three often neglected areas, all of which were important to Ellen: psychosocial support services for cancer patients and their families, early detection of breast cancer in medically underserved communities, and improving pain management, through both research and enhanced training for medical professionals.

Won't you join us this summer for the Ninth Annual Ellen's Run (Sunday, August 15, at 9 a.m., East Hampton High School) and the Seventh Annual Cocktail Party (Saturday, August 14, from 7 to 11 p.m.)? For more information, please call 631-907-1952 or visit www.ellensrun.org.

It's Polo time, again!

Bridgehampton polo is here, again. Activities under the tent promise to be fun and exciting. A new team will organize the events that will bring smiles to your face.

Games begin July 10th, and follow every Saturday for six consecutive weeks. Gates open at 3:00 pm, and the fun starts at 4:00 pm. The entry fee, which is donated to the South Fork Breast Health Coalition, is \$20 per car. The monies collected will be spent to expand and improve the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Program. Admission comes complete with entertainment and a guaranteed good time. Call (631) 726-8606 for details.



Dr. James Brady and Dr. Elinor Schoenfeld practice their knitting as a method of relaxation. Photo taken at the Day of Hope and Renewal.

Gems

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two sister are breast cancer survivors. Christine wanted to offer something that would make breast cancer patients and survivors feel good about themselves.

Jewels for healing

Christine designs semiprecious gemstone jewelry. She holds the shared belief that wearing gems can heal many ailments. The Breast Awareness and Ellen's Run bracelets and anklets are on display at Southampton Hospital's Breast Health Center. One-third of the sale price of the jewelry is donated to the Breast Health Center at Southampton Hospital.

You can also purchase the Christine's jewelry at Gem Energy Designs. You can contact Christine at (631) 728-7724 or e-mail her at www.ggbotanicals@aol.com.