

Dear Talula
A Screening and Q&A Series
with filmmaker and breast cancer survivor, Lori Benson

Description

Dear Talula is an autobiographical, short film that illustrates a young survivor's experience coping with a breast cancer diagnosis. At the age of 38, Lori Benson, with 14 month old daughter, Talula, in tow, is faced with a challenge she never imagined. Lori's emotional journey, throughout her entire ordeal, from surgery to post-operative treatment, is both courageous and inspiring. Since its initial release, the film has won numerous awards at various festivals including The Tribeca Film Festival (NYC) and was short-listed for an academy award last year.

During the months of October - December 2007, the *Dear Talula* Screening and Q&A Series will be presented, in a variety of healthcare services organizations in New York City including St. Vincent's Comprehensive Cancer Center and Morrisania Diagnostic & Treatment Center, Bronx, NY. In addition to screening the film and conducting a Q&A, Lori will demonstrate how to perform an effective self-breast exam. The Series will be presented free of charge.

Program Premiere: September 25, 2007 – 1pm-2pm – at St. Vincent's Comprehensive Cancer Center, 325 West 15th Street, New York, NY 10011. Please send an email to Melissa Marr if you'd like to attend: Melissa@thehealingproject.org.

The *Dear Talula* educational series offers its audience tangible, take-away value. The film offers a glimpse into the day-to-day experiences of a patient, illustrating family dynamics, coping skills and the overwhelming landscape of New York City's medical community. The Q&A with Lori Benson offers the current perspective and insight of a breast cancer survivor. Learning how to perform a self-breast exam is one of the most important tools a person can have, since early-detection can be the key to the effective management of a breast cancer diagnosis.

The Importance of this Program

Individuals who are coping with life changing illnesses are faced with enormous challenges. This holds true for the patients, the family members, the friends and the caregivers. Health education is not a mandatory requirement in most areas, certainly not the level of health education that would be required to adequately prepare someone for the reality of living with or battling disease. Further, no amount of health education can truly prepare individuals for their own personal psychological reaction at time of diagnosis, during treatment and in some cases, during recovery.

Excluding cancers of the skin, breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in women, accounting for nearly 1 in 3 cancers diagnosed. According to the National Cancer Institute, 180,510 new cases of breast cancer are expected to occur in 2007. There are 2.3 million breast cancer survivors living in the United States today.

According to the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, because of advances in the early detection and treatment of cancer, people are living many years after a diagnosis. As of January 2002, there were

approximately 10.1 million cancer survivors in the United States.¹ Today, approximately 65% of people diagnosed with cancer are expected to live at least 5 years after diagnosis.²

Patients and family members are looking for ways in which to gain immediate access to relevant health care information. They are also searching for new and better ways of coping with their diseases and by connecting with others who are facing similar challenges, they are doing just that.

For more information about *Dear Talula* and Lori Benson, please visit www.deartalula.com and www.artcatalyst.org.

¹ Ries LAG, Eisner MP, Kosary CL, Hankey BF, Miller BA, Clegg L, et al. (eds.) SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2002. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute; 2005. Available at http://seer.cancer.gov/csr/1975_2002/.

² Ries LAG, Eisner MP, Kosary CL, Hankey BF, Miller BA, Clegg L, et al. (eds.) SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2002. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute; 2005. Available at http://seer.cancer.gov/csr/1975_2002/.