

MONMOUTH

health & life

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THE
CUTEST?
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NEW YEAR RE-BOOT

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◀ Ribbon Cutting: From left: Bill Arnold, chief operating officer, Monmouth Medical Center; Frank J. Vozos, M.D., FACS, president and chief executive officer, Monmouth Medical Center; David Sharon, M.D., medical director of the Leon Hess Cancer Center at Monmouth Medical Center; donors Scott and Warren Diamond; and Tara Kelly, vice president, Monmouth Medical Center Foundation.

MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER CELEBRATES DEDICATION OF THE CHERYL L. DIAMOND CANCER CARE PAVILION

STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS recently joined representatives from Monmouth Medical Center for a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Cheryl L. Diamond Cancer Care Pavilion at Monmouth Medical Center Leon Hess Cancer Center.

The Cheryl L. Diamond Cancer Care Pavilion was funded by a \$2.5 million donation from local philanthropists Warren Diamond and his son, Scott. Residents of Rumson, Warren and Scott Diamond donated the funds in memory of their late wife and mother Cheryl L. Diamond, who passed away in 2001 after a courageous seven-year battle with breast cancer.

“The new Cheryl L. Diamond Cancer Care Pavilion connects all our cancer services under one roof, centralizing comprehensive care, sustaining world-class protocols close to home and making it a more pleasant experience for our patient and their families,” said Frank J. Vozos, M.D., FACS, President and Chief Executive Officer, Monmouth Medical Center. “Cancer care at Monmouth Medical Center rivals any facility in the area, with more than 48,000 patient visits a year. These patients entrust their cancer care to our highly qualified team of specialists who provide compassionate care and emotional support.”

Within the Cancer Center, patients have access to the Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center, recognized as one of the leading breast centers in the country and New Jersey’s only Certified Quality Comprehensive Breast Center of Excellence. The Center also offers a number of same-day brain surgery options, with the region’s first Gamma Knife (one of only 200 worldwide), a non-invasive brain surgery tool used to treat conditions previously considered inaccessible or inoperable.

“The Cheryl L. Diamond Pavilion enables us to physically connect all our services, offering a welcoming gateway to the expanded Leon Hess Cancer Center and making it easier than ever for patients to access our comprehensive cancer services,” said David Sharon, M.D., Medical Director of the Leon Hess Cancer Center at Monmouth Medical Center.

“Our work to expand cancer care at Monmouth is a reality,” said Tara Kelly, Vice President of the Monmouth Medical Center Foundation. “We are here to recognize the generosity of the Diamond family and to share with you what we feel is distinct about cancer care at Monmouth Medical Center.”

The Leon Hess Cancer Center at Monmouth Medical Center offers a vast array of cancer care—from its radiation oncology services, which are accredited by the American College of Radiology, to an Oncology Clinical Research Program as part of the Penn Cancer Network, to its comprehensive support services. Monmouth Medical Center’s recent partnership with Cancer Support Community—the first hospital-based program in New Jersey—enables cancer patients and their families to obtain free education, support services, resources, referrals and more.





▲ Gregory Stephanides

WALL MAN BEATS THE ODDS BY OVERCOMING DEADLY PANCREATIC CANCER

WHEN GREGORY STEPHANIDES was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer four years ago, he knew the odds were against him: the disease is one of the deadliest types of malignancies. But following surgery and six months of chemotherapy, the 54-year-old Wall, resident is now back to the extremely active lifestyle he'd previously enjoyed.

"I'm lucky," says Greg, a professional tennis instructor and accomplished golfer. "Pancreatic cancer is normally a death sentence." Greg fought hard against his illness, but he also credits outstanding medical care, including a complex operation by a top surgeon. That was followed by chemotherapy and ongoing care from Monmouth Medical Center oncologist Seth Cohen, M.D.

With Dr. Cohen, "it was like having a friend who was in my corner, who was also my doctor," says Greg, "He said we'd beat this." As it happened, the two had met before – when Dr. Cohen successfully treated Greg's wife Jacqueline for breast cancer about five years prior. "I said, 'You're batting 100 percent with our family,'" Greg recalls. Even so, Dr. Cohen advised the couple to meet with other oncologists "just to make sure I was comfortable," says Greg.

After consulting with several doctors at renowned cancer centers, "I chose Dr. Cohen over everyone," Greg recounts, "based on how well he did with my wife and how personal his approach is. He's strong but caring."

When Greg opted to forgo radiation treatment, Dr. Cohen accepted that decision. "He's very good at listening and allowing that flexibility," says Greg. "He knows when to push and when to dial it back. But he's very strict about protocol." Once Greg had recovered from his surgery, Dr. Cohen put him on two chemotherapy drugs—a pill and an intravenous infusion. Monmouth's infusion center staff even accommodated Greg's objection to having a chemo port implanted in his chest—a standard technique that simplifies the infusion process. "I didn't want another surgery [to place the port]," he remembers. "They were good with me; I have tough veins, and they put up with giving me chemo through a vein in my arm."

"It's the nicest staff I've ever been involved with at a hospital," Greg continues. "They treat everyone like family; they're phenomenal."

When no cancer could be detected after six months of chemo, Greg was able to stop receiving the treatment. Since that time, he's resumed teaching tennis at the Atlantic Club in Manasquan and golfing on the weekends. He's also opened a frozen yogurt shop – OMG! Yogurt in nearby Sea Girt. Meanwhile, Dr. Cohen continues to monitor Greg and check his blood work every six to eight months. And Greg focuses on enjoying each day to its fullest.

"I don't worry about the future or about what I did in the past," he says. "I think that's how Dr. Cohen is; he treats patients in the moment, like 'We're now in this moment, let's get through this.'"



◀ James Craparo and his daughter Kathleen meet with oncology clinical navigator Anne Ferreira, the Coordinator of Monmouth's Operation Bling program, which provides gifts of free jewelry to cancer patients.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE BUOYS LYMPHOMA PATIENT AND HIS FAMILY

RED BANK RESIDENT FACES DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT AND RECOVERY WITH UNFAILINGLY POSITIVE OUTLOOK

THE DALAI LAMA said that in order to carry a positive action we must develop a positive vision. At the Leon Hess Cancer Center, these words are embodied by patient James Craparo, a 63-year-old retiree from Red Bank who for five months battled lymphoma with inpatient infusions of chemotherapy for five straight days every two weeks and an unflinchingly positive attitude about his ability to beat his cancer.

"I did push-ups every day in my hospital room, and walked – even when I felt very weak I forced myself to walk," he said. "I would meditate each day and listen to uplifting music. My son James really supported me in this, and provided me with inspirational books such as *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and Norman Vincent Peal's "The

Power of Positive Thinking."

"This made me feel like I was in control, and that this cancer was not beating me," he adds. "I never got sick while on chemo and had a great appetite and actually gained weight." And for Craparo, the inspiration and positive vibes were shared with everyone he interacted with throughout his treatment, including his family and hospital staff. A father, grandfather and great-grandfather, he said he nicknamed his tumor Freddie to try and take the fear out of his cancer.

"It became a joke for us," he said, adding that his 10-year-old grandson, little Dave, who was really struggling with his illness, drew him a picture of what Freddie looked like —noting the cartoon character resembled a

deformed Sponge Bob. "It was all about humor for the kids — to help them to not be afraid."

According to his daughter Kathleen, the approach also helped the adult family members cope with his illness. "Stage IV non-Hodgkins lymphoma is so scary — we all were afraid — but his attitude really helped us," she said. Craparo, a retired worker with the Star-ledger who previously worked as a barber, said today he looks back on his cancer as a gift.

"It was life changing and brought my family closer together," he said. His last chemo treatment was completed on July 11. On that day, he received a visit from Anne Ferreira, Monmouth Medical Center Oncology Clinical Navigator and Coordinator of Operation Bling, which provides gifts of free jewelry to cancer patients. Upon completion of their treatment, Anne surprises Leon Hess Cancer Center patients with a case full of Bling options to congratulate them and discuss their survivorship plan. Woman may choose from a host of rings, earrings, pendants and bracelets, while men select from watches, key rings and money clips. Currently, Operation Bling works with 11 hospitals in New Jersey, including Monmouth Medical Center. And for Craparo, the gift giving was reciprocal.

"My wife Carol, who was my biggest supporter, kept a detailed list of every nurse who cared for me, and brought in gifts for each of them because we were so pleased with the care here," he said.

Now that his treatment is complete, Craparo plans to continue to give to the Leon Hess Cancer Center, according to oncology social worker Joan Hogan. She notes that on a recent follow-up visit, he spoke to her about becoming a peer leader to help newly diagnosed cancer patients cope with their illness.



◀ Stacey Spahn-Amato enjoying a special moment with her son, Robert.



IS YOUR BUNDLE OF JOY CAUSING OVERWHELMING ANXIETY? POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION COULD BE TO BLAME

STACEY SPAHN-AMATO is a self-proclaimed “Type A” – a meticulously organized, in-control, plan-ahead kind of woman. However, when she had her first baby in 2013 at age 38, she found herself in the most “out-of-control” situation of her life. The Union Beach resident and high school cosmetology teacher went through a series of traumatic events that put her over the edge. “Every aspect of my life collided; it was the perfect storm,” she said.

First, her grandmother passed away that August. Then, in September, Stacey was put on bed rest during her last month of pregnancy due to hypertension. She underwent an emergency C-section



at 36 weeks and gave birth to a baby boy, Robert – the one light amid all the change. That same week, Stacey and her husband Matthew made the tough decision to have their 16-year-old dog euthanized after suffering a stroke. A few weeks later, when Robert was just 20 days old, Stacey and Matthew were forced to evacuate their home due to Superstorm Sandy and temporarily moved in with relatives. Add to this, her husband changed jobs.

While staying at her aunt's home, Robert became ill and was later diagnosed with severe reflux and milk soy protein intolerance (MSPI)—a temporary inability to digest the proteins found in cow's milk and soy products. Once the couple and their new baby were able to return home, Stacey felt guilty that her home was spared and so many others were destroyed. Stacey's parents stayed with them for a while to help out but when they returned to Florida, Stacey fell apart.

"I was home alone with this little being screaming at me and looking at me all day long. Sleep deprivation and other stressors put me over the edge. I cried out of control about 15 times a day. I didn't want to spend time with my son. I was afraid to be alone with him and terrified to be without him at the same time. Every day, I counted the minutes until my husband would come home from work," said Stacey.

During Robert's second well-baby visit, the pediatrician tested Stacey for postpartum depression (PPD). Stacey had experienced anxiety issues in the past, so she knew something was wrong, saying, "I didn't feel right. My emotions became so intense and it soon became clear to me that I had no control. I didn't think I could be a mom and didn't want to do it anymore."

Stacey was referred to Monmouth Medical Center's Postpartum Support Group, led by Lisa Tremayne, RN, CCE, who serves as coordinator of Monmouth's Perinatal Mood Disorders Follow-up Program. "Lisa is amazing – she's on call 24-7 to help you through the most difficult times. I don't think there's anyone who understands PPD as well as

she does," said Stacey. "Throughout this process I learned how to reflect and look at myself and understand my actions and feelings better and that it's okay to be out of control at times."

"I wouldn't be standing here today without Lisa and the support group—they were absolutely lifesaving. You're in a room of people who truly understand, and you feel like you're not alone. They are behind you and encourage you every step of the way," said Stacey, who attended weekly support group sessions for eight months until she returned to work full time.

Stacey still maintains contact with many of the women she met in her support group and through the private Facebook page set up by Lisa. She continues to see a therapist and is on medication but recognizes that the struggles she faced can affect other women and should be taken seriously, saying, "The minute something feels wrong, ask for help. PPD is curable and treatable—there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

Stacey's experience is a common one. The American Psychological Association estimates that up to 16 percent of postpartum women will

experience PPD. Because of Stacey's and other mothers' experiences through the PPD support group, Monmouth Medical Center realized the need for a formalized program to help women with PPD. Psychiatrist Chandrika Nadipurum, M.D. was recently brought on board to lead The Center for Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorders at Monmouth Medical Center.

"Women who have suffered postpartum mood and anxiety disorder symptoms in silence can now get the help they need at our Center," said Dr. Nadipurum.

"New mothers don't have to suffer with postpartum depression alone. We're here to help and to make them feel better so they can enjoy being a mom," said Anita Smith, LCSW, LCADC, psychiatric social worker at Monmouth Medical Center.

Lisa says, "Our goal is to raise awareness and education about PPD and make sure that all OB and pediatrician offices have evidence-based information so that all moms get the same information from their doctors showing this is the most common complication of childbirth. There's no shame and no stigma to come forward and ask for help."

MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER'S CENTER FOR POSTPARTUM MOOD AND ANXIETY DISORDERS offers treatment by certified postpartum mood and anxiety disorders treatment specialists.

We offer highly specialized continuity of care and can address the postpartum spectrum of mood disorders directly from the delivery room or following discharge. While in the hospital and after you return home, the center offers a menu of services for new parents, including:

- In-person and online support groups for new moms and babies
- Prescribing and monitoring medication
- Individual and couples counseling
- Family therapy for new dads

The Center for Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorders at Monmouth Medical Center addresses the mental and emotional needs of pregnant and postpartum women and their families, helping ease the transition from pregnancy to parenthood.

Depression and anxiety during pregnancy and postpartum are very treatable. The earlier the treatment and intervention, the less risk of onset or relapse of postpartum difficulties.

The Center for Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorders at Monmouth Medical Center is located at 75 North Bath Avenue, Long Branch, NJ. To learn more or to schedule an appointment, call 732-923-6500, option 4.

