

The Mercury News

MercuryNews.com

Opinion: Vote for progress against cancer in midterm elections

By Doug Ulman
Special to the Mercury News

Posted: 10/11/2010 12:01:00 AM PDT

Cancer doesn't care if you "do everything right." It doesn't discriminate between wealthy or wanting, old or young. It can hit you at the peak of your career, in the prime of your life.

Just ask San Jose survivor Jere Carpentier. She's beaten cancer twice and is now battling it again. She learned of her first diagnosis in 1997 at the age of 47, on her lunch break from her high-powered Silicon Valley job, cell phone in hand, high heels on her busy feet. As she says, she was "financially and physically fit" and not willing to let Hodgkins disease slow her down. She endured chemotherapy, and then radiation, all without telling her co-workers or boss. She beat Hodgkins disease.

Six years later she went in for a routine doctor's exam and was diagnosed with lymphoma. She beat that too. After overcoming her second cancer, Jere vowed to "do everything right." She rested and ate well. She began helping other cancer patients deal with their diagnoses.

But in 2009 Jere, at 59, was diagnosed with colon cancer. She's still battling the disease.

Like all cancer survivors Jere understands the battle against cancer doesn't take place in a lab. It is fought by our families, friends, colleagues and neighbors. Jere endured her first battle with cancer

privately, but now she's an advocate (a "loud and proud" one she'll tell you). When she's not fighting her own battle, Jere tells her story to other patients and has argued before the California Assembly

and the U.S. Congress for better, easier and more affordable access to lifesaving drugs.

Jere says Livestrong helped her learn about surviving cancer and provided her with the opportunity to give back. In a Breakaway from Cancer testimonial, Jere said, "Survivors are invaluable." Livestrong and our founder Lance Armstrong understand, and live, this message.

But cancer patients need more than words of encouragement. Approximately 157,000 Californians will receive a cancer diagnosis this year. Throughout America, 12 million people live with cancer and its consequences. Relatively few have access to programs to help restart their lives after a cancer fight even though the effects of the disease can linger for a lifetime.

As election season kicks into high gear, let's hold our candidates accountable. What are they going to do to combat the world's leading cause of death? A study released in August by Livestrong and the American Cancer Society shows that in 2008, the economic impact of premature death and disability from cancer worldwide was \$895 billion, the single largest drain on the economy of any cause of death. This figure doesn't include the direct costs of medical care -- just lost lives and lost productivity. In the U.S. alone, cancer costs 1.73 percent of GDP.

What are candidates' plans to make sure working families don't face a double disaster -- cancer followed by financial ruin? Will they work to get more resources to the people facing the fight of their lives?

Advertisement



We focus on automating Marriott® Hotels' global invoice process. So they don't have to.

Learn more at RealBusiness.com

Ready For Real Business **xerox**

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

The Mercury News

MercuryNews.com

Cancer may not care if an individual does everything right, but cancer survivors do. This November, hold your lawmaker accountable. Supporting families affected by cancer is a national priority that deserves to be championed by the people we send to Washington.

Advertisement



We focus on automating Marriott® Hotels' global invoice process. So they don't have to.

Learn more at RealBusiness.com

Ready For Real Business **xerox** 

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™