

Dear Friends:

Thank you for being part of our grassroots network of support for people facing breast or gynecologic cancer concerns on the North Coast. 2015 was a year of growth for the Breast and GYN Health Project thanks to support from a few generous grants. Individual donations and local fundraising efforts helped sustain our core services for clients.

Over the last year, BGHP implemented a California Breast Cancer Research Program pilot study, done in collaboration with Humboldt State University's California Center for Rural Policy, to look at Humboldt County's persistent high breast cancer mortality rate. We also worked to sustain our Eel River Valley Outreach Center. You will see more information about these projects in this report.

Grant support improved our client services and community health education programs. A Smullin Foundation grant enabled BGHP to expand the Client Services Director role to full-time. Lisa Petterson, RN, was hired for this role, as Mary Meengs, MD, shifted to part-time Medical Consultant. The increase in staff support helped bolster our patient navigation services and improve access to professional RN and MD consultations. Community health education efforts continued to be aided by a grant from the National Breast Cancer Foundation, which enabled BGHP to hire Women's Health Nurse Practitioner, Madelin Amir, RN, as Breast Health Navigator. In this role, Madelin helps women navigate access to basic women's health care and provides advocacy all the way through a breast cancer journey.

2015 saw our Board of Directors and Staff turning their attention to a new three-year strategic plan. This effort identified the following 3 priorities: (1) Improving access for clients seeking support and information as they face breast or gynecologic cancer concerns (including a focus on the outreach center in Fortuna, the recruitment/training of warmline volunteers, and improved publicity/marketing of the Project); (2) Preparing for BGHP's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2017; and (3) Ensuring fiscal sustainability.

BGHP continued to be the beneficiary of many grassroots fundraising endeavors, and had tremendous support from local businesses, individual donors, and volunteers. The annual Fall Concert especially benefitted from the contributions of Dr. Elisabeth Harrington, who once again served as its Music Director, and who inspired the Heartbeat Chorale for its fifth annual performance. The 2015 concert also honored Dr. Luther Cobb for first envisioning this event, and for continuing 15 years of volunteerism on its behalf.

We hope that this annual report shines a light on the community support that is central to BGHP. Our services remain free of charge to anyone facing a breast or gynecologic cancer concern, thanks to the generosity and heart of our local donors and volunteers.

With our sincere thanks and gratitude,  
Suzanne Pasztor, Board President 2015

Rose Gale-Zoellick, Executive Director



### **Board of Directors 2015**

From back left to right: Steve Engle (Treasurer), Chris Martinek (Vice President), Suzanne Pasztor (President), Kathie Hamilton Gentry, Paula Fredrickson, and Lorey Keele. Front row from left to right: Pamela Floyd, Laura McEwen, and Melinda Wilson. Not pictured: Kate S. Green and Elizabeth Wardell (Secretary)

### **Staff 2015**

Madelin Amir, NP and Kelley Devlin-Lake, RN; Brenda Elvine-Kreis, MS; Rose Gale-Zoellick, MSW, MPH; Beth Gaughan; Bojan Ingle; Lisa Petterson, RN; Isabelle Robles, RN; Barb Sage, and Rebecca Zettler, RN. Mary Meengs, MD and Julie Ohnemus, MD, Medical Consultants.

## Client Services

410 Clients  
Assisted

151 New  
Clients

6,139 Client  
Contacts

580 people in  
attendance at  
support groups

## New Clients

BGHP continues to help people at every stage of the cancer journey. Here's a look at new clients' status when they first contacted BGHP:

- 48% of new clients were newly diagnosed with breast cancer
- 13% of new clients were diagnosed with gynecologic cancer
- 31% of new clients had breast cancer concerns
- 8% of new clients had a gynecologic or other cancer concerns.

## Services

Warmline volunteers remain the front line of support for our clients. They provide peer support and compassionate listening, as many are cancer survivors themselves. Warmliners and staff made 6,139 follow-up contacts in 2015 to ensure clients got support and the information they needed as they travelled their respective cancer journeys.

Staff received training from UCSF on the decision support model used at their cancer center. Trained nurses and physicians at BGHP offer consultation plan services to help clients explore their values, questions, and concerns prior to treatment decisions. These consultations take about two hours and a 1-page plan is faxed to the oncologists prior to the client's medical visit.

Isabelle Robles, RN, was hired as a part-time Latina Breast Health Navigator. She helped Latina clients get mammograms. She also accompanied women going through breast cancer treatment to some of their appointments or arranged Promotores to accompany them. She witnessed the significant unmet need for Latinas in our community.

Since 1997, BGHP has supported 2,553 individuals as clients. We continue to be a resource for providers and other community members. Other services included: Patient navigation, lending library, financial assistance referrals, compassionate listening, medical record binders, "breast nest" of breast prostheses and wigs, ChemoKits, and more.

## Special Funds Provided Direct Financial Support to Clients

Grant funds enabled BGHP to pass along financial support to clients this year. The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) funds helped 51 women with transportation to cancer treatments locally and out of the area. Mary Scott Angel Fund helped twelve women with food assistance, transportation, post-mastectomy garments, and other support. The Integrative Wellness Fund enabled four women to receive integrative therapy sessions to help with cancer-related symptoms, side effects, and to enhance healing.

## Support Groups

Group support is still a cornerstone of BGHP's services. Our Support Groups are: Advanced Disease Support Group, Arcata Breast Cancer Support Group, Amazon Writers, Fortuna Breast Cancer Support Group, Gynecologic Cancer Support Group, and Young Women's Group. Volunteer, Heidi Bourne, started a Mindfulness Meditation group for clients. A newly formed monthly peer-led Lymphoma and Leukemia Cancer Support Group meets at BGHP.

## Education and Information

**Eel River Valley Outreach Center:** This year a cadre of six volunteers staffed the small satellite site in Fortuna, the Eel River Valley Outreach Center. The site provides support 3-4 hours per week. It is located at the Fortuna office of Visiting Angels (also our support group location). McLean Foundation awarded grant funding to support the Center.



*Some of the Eel River Valley Volunteers at a training.*

In Arcata, client services staff and warmliners continued to provide clients compassionate support and the latest information about local services and evidence-based studies in a variety of ways. Felicia Oldfather, one of BGHP's dedicated warmliners, shared this thought *"Having had cancer myself, I feel I can help others get through it. It is a part of my healing, not forgetting what happened to me, but incorporating it into my life. When you have cancer it's good to be able to talk to others who have been there too."*

**Electronic Library and Information Specialist Support:** BGHP has been compiling an electronic library of information on the newest breast cancer related research studies related to our work and posting them on our e-library site [www.FYHealth.net](http://www.FYHealth.net) since 2007.

### **California Breast Cancer Research Program Grant:**

Brenda Elvine-Kreis, MS, and Amy Uyeki of California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) are Co-Principal Investigators of the Rural Breast Cancer Survival Study. Brenda is also BGHP's Client Services Coordinator. She and grant assistant, Bojan Ingle, are focused on the community-based participatory research aspect of the 18 month pilot study from the California Breast Cancer Research Program. The research grant was awarded in 2014 to the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) at Humboldt State University and the Breast and GYN Health Project (BGHP) by the California Breast Cancer Research Program to implement a pilot study research grant regarding Humboldt County's persistent high death rate from breast cancer.

In 2015, the primary focus of the pilot study was to complete the data analysis of 21 years of statewide California Cancer Registry data of women diagnosed with breast cancer. The study was the first of its kind to compare Humboldt County's data to rural and urban areas based on population density. Dr. Ellen Mahoney was a consulting investigator on this research study.

In Spring 2016, the Rural Breast Cancer Survival Study will report on study findings analyzing differences between breast cancer death rates in Humboldt County and the rest of state, and factors associated with higher death rates from breast cancer over the past 20 years. The hope is that the results will provide the foundation for a future grant which may inform an outreach plan to support those women at highest risk of death from breast cancer.

## Community Education

16,751  
outreach  
contacts  
this year.



Madelin Amir, RN Breast Health Navigator  
& Bojan Ingle, Outreach Volunteer

7 Native  
American  
Outreach events

7  
Group  
Presentations

Attended  
80  
Outreach  
Events

31 Health Fairs  
and Festivals

## National Breast Cancer Foundation Grant funds Breast Health Navigation and Outreach

*“I would not have gone through breast cancer treatment if it had not been for you. Because you arranged transportation for me and I knew the person would be arriving to pick me up, I got myself prepared to go to surgery.”* Quote from a woman the breast health navigator supported.

In July, BGHP was awarded a continuation grant for breast cancer early detection and RN breast health navigation from the National Breast Cancer Foundation of Frisco, Texas. The grant helps underserved and uninsured women access breast health screenings and navigate the medical system for diagnosis and treatment. Our focus has been to support Native American women, Latina women, and low income women in our area.

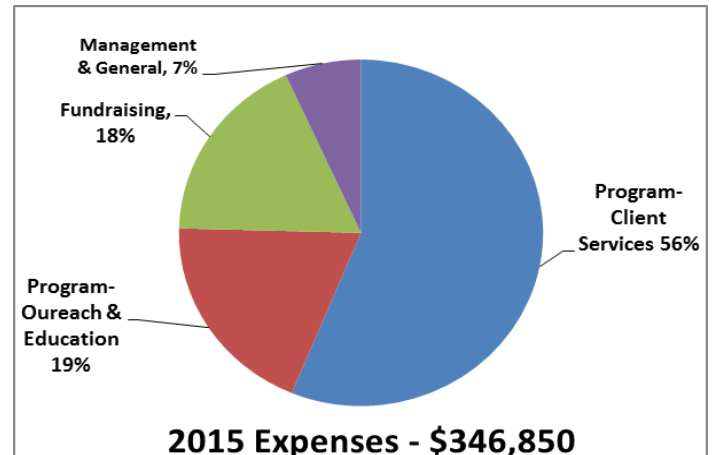
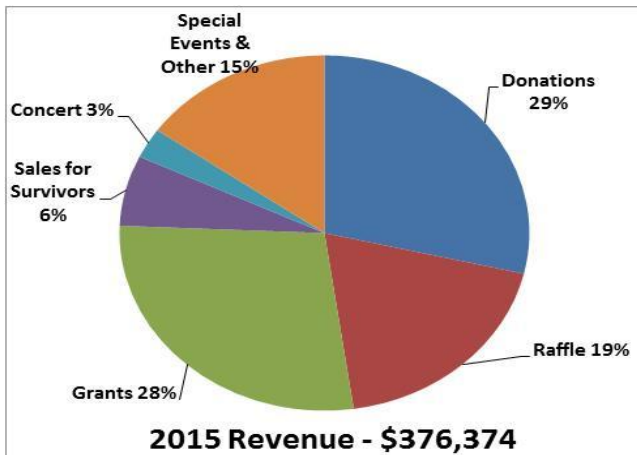
## Volunteers

Volunteers are the keystone for our successful grassroots organization.

- 173 active volunteers provided over 3,910 hours in roles from Warmliner to office clerical work, from outreach at health fairs to fundraising support. Many other volunteers supported one-time activities.
- Our monthly e-newsletter distribution grew to over 550 individuals. Each issue had a calendar of events and volunteer opportunities, appreciations for volunteers and donors.
- A new, updated website with a new web address is being planned. See [www.bghp.org](http://www.bghp.org)

## Fund Development

As a local, grassroots organization, BGHP continues to provide free services thanks to local community support and grants. This year we were fortunate to secure some additional grants which enhanced our client services. About 75% of our revenue came from local donations and events. About 25% of the organization’s funding came from the following grants: National Breast Cancer Foundation, Patricia D. and William B. Smullin Foundation, California Breast Cancer Research Program, McLean Foundation, NorCal Liability Insurance Foundation, Humboldt Redwood Company and Safeway Foundation.



We celebrated our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Concert with a special tribute to Dr. Luther Cobb. The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Vacation Raffle, with trips to Hawaii and Santa Fe, NM plus two local two-day get-aways was BGHP’s largest fundraiser, raising over \$79,000. We began a vehicle donation fundraising partnership with the Center for Car Donations.

Many groups in our community organized independent fundraisers to support BGHP in 2015, these are listed in the chart above as “Special Events”. Community fundraisers and partnerships included Arcata Artisans Arts! Arcata Wine Pours, Arcata High School Volleyball event, Baywood Women’s Golf Association’s benefit Golf Tournament; Buddy’s Towing’s Pink Tow Truck; Burnt Ranch School; City of Eureka’s Breast Cancer Awareness Month Party in Pink Zumbathon; Dae’s Jewelry sales at Kalos; Diane William’s Benefit Arts Alive! Art Show at Dalianes Travel; Eureka High School East Lab bake sales; Gallery Metier Art Show; Humboldt County Court House Benefit campaign; HSU Football; HUUF social action breakfast; Lemonade Day Girl Scout Donation; Living Styles’ Furniture special chair promotion; Lost Coast Glass’ Harvest Festival; Mad River Radio Group and local high schools’ “Punt, Pass & Pink” campaign; QuarterCraze at Fortuna’s River Lodge; Mad River Brewing Company and Redwood Curtain Brewery’s Pints for Non-Profits; Ray’s Food Place Register Donations during October; Rebecca Stauffer’s Art of Giving #2 Donations; Six River’s Running Club’s Atalanta’s Victory Walk and Run; Soroptimists International event donations; and Marla Joy’s 4th Annual Bayside Grange Zumbathon.

Over 200 local businesses continued to actively support BGHP through sponsorships of our Vacation Raffle, Fall Concert, Newsletters and/or participation in Sales for Survivors and our fourth annual On-line Auction: Baroni Designs’ special line of jewelry, Coast Central Credit Union, and Rays Food Place provided major corporate donations. Our 12<sup>th</sup> annual Sales for Survivors, in which businesses donate a percentage of sales for a day, included 57 businesses at 62 sites. The Bidding for Good on-line included many “HumboldtMade” members. The 4<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bidding for Good on-line auction raised about \$6,000 and promoted not only BGHP beyond Humboldt County, but provided a platform for local businesses to be promoted as well. We are forever grateful for the longstanding supporters of the work of the Breast and GYN Health Project.