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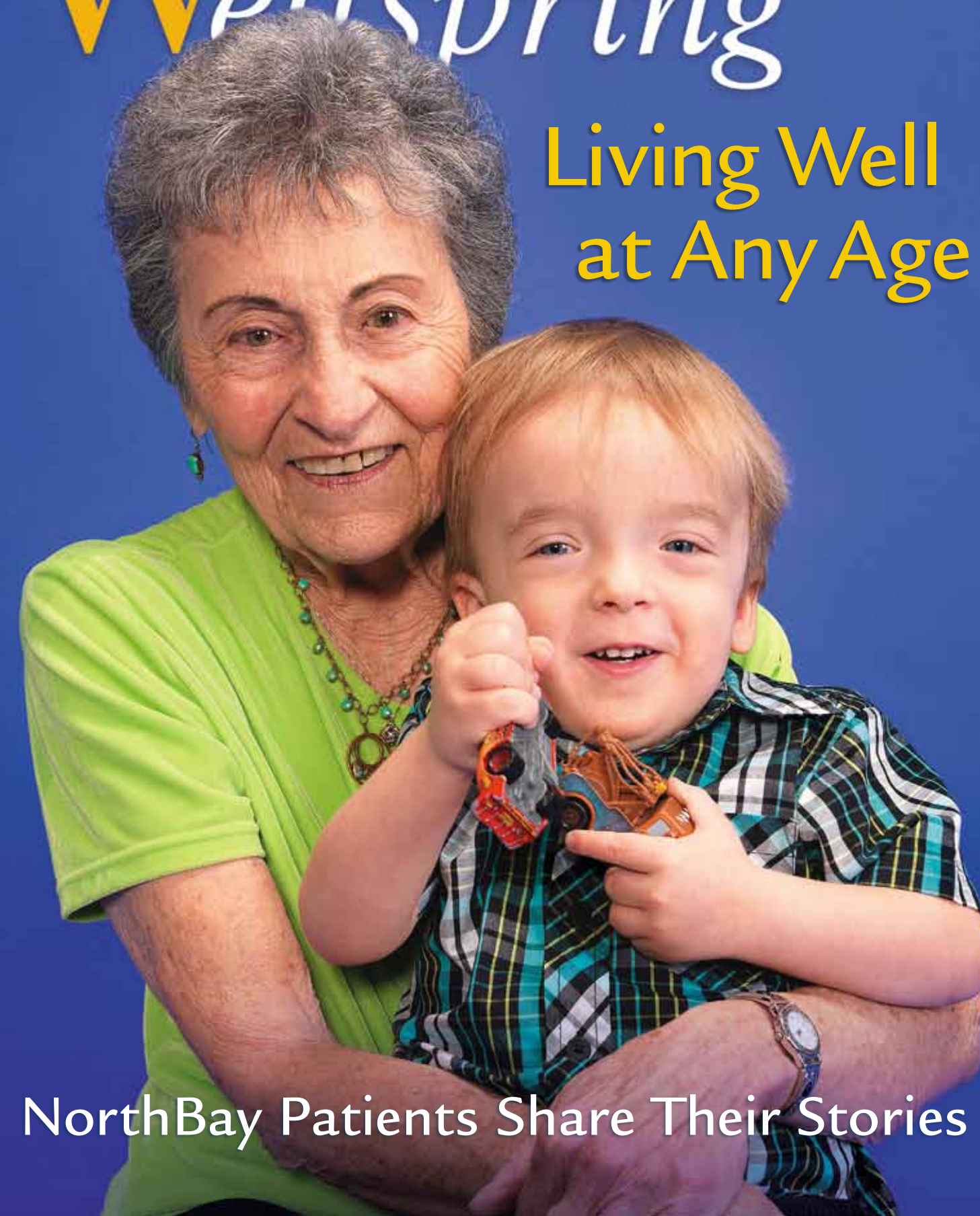
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Wellspring

Living Well at Any Age



NorthBay Patients Share Their Stories

A Benefit for
NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement

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HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

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Black tie optional
(denim discouraged)
Must be 21 or
older to attend



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George Mary adopts a lifelong cardiac fitness routine.



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It took the cover of *Wellspring* magazine to inspire a 100-plus-pound weight loss for Vacaville resident Bill Abeling, but now he's the picture of health.



On the Cover: Living Well at Any Age Patients Share Stories

Stories of good health and success abound in this issue of *Wellspring*, from our youngest patient featured (Victor Wanberg, age 3) sitting on the lap of his pediatrician, Dr. Matthew Heeren, to our most senior of patients (Jane Garcia, age 86), standing with her physician, Dr. Stephen Newman. Cover photo by Henry Khoo.

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Good Health is a Blessing at Any Age

Whether you're 3 or 86, good health is a valuable commodity. Just ask the patients you'll find on the pages in this edition of *Wellspring*, which puts the focus on living well at any age.

For some, it's a matter of healthy diet and exercise. For others, it means serious surgery and recovery. And still others will face a lifetime of challenges, but seem to have the ingredients for success. We hope you'll find their stories inspiring.

If you're facing challenges, remember that NorthBay Healthcare is here to help, no matter where you fall in the continuum of care.

If it's an emergency, we're there. Suffer a stroke or a major heart attack? We've got programs in place at hospitals in Vacaville and Fairfield.

Need to schedule a surgery or just visit a doctor? Well, look no further than the NorthBay Center for Primary Care. It has two medical offices in Vacaville and two in Fairfield, and offers nearly two dozen physicians who specialize in everything from pediatrics to geriatrics and everything in between.

Whether you need help with pain, diabetes management, joint replacement or cancer treatment, NorthBay is right here in your community, ready to help, no matter how old you are. ☒

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It was through determination and hard work that Ennis Sandle of Dixon managed to return to the sport he loves—basketball. He made the varsity team in November, 2011, despite a torn ACL, which left him on the bench for nearly two years.



3 Stretching Resources

Vacaville resident Jane Garcia has found that yoga is a wonderful way to build strength and balance.



12 Friendship After Loss

As they worked through their grief, Anne Donato and Mary Turner became fast friends, and now even vacation together.

Wellspring is published quarterly by NorthBay Healthcare, Solano County's locally based nonprofit health care organization.

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“2012 promises to be a challenging year. The economics of health care reflect the economics of America in general.”

Gary Passama

President and
Chief Executive Officer

Straight from the Heart

The new year's first edition of *Wellspring* comes from the heart.

Inside you will find some inspiring—and heartwarming—stories of Solano residents who, with a little help from our healthcare professionals, have overcome obstacles and learned to live well, regardless of their age.

February is Heart Month, and it gives us an opportunity to showcase our Emergency Department and our advanced cardiac care services. NorthBay Medical Center has been designated Solano County's first and only STEMI Receiving Center—or “heart attack hospital.” First responders answering a call from someone who may be having a heart attack will bring the patient to our Fairfield ER. Life-saving procedures begin, in consultation with our emergency physicians, before the patient reaches the hospital. You can find details about our STEMI Receiving Center on Page 19.

This month, our Center for Women's Health will host a variety of fun and educational events centered on heart care. In addition to our popular Heart to Heart Luncheon, we welcome two authors to speak locally, one who specializes in heart-pounding mysteries, and another on the heart-healthy benefits of wine. And, we are partnering with the local Slow Food movement to host a cooking demonstration.

While we are locally focused as we deliver our mission of compassionate care, advanced medicine, close to home, we also must keep a watchful eye on the political machine in Washington. If you read my blogs on NorthBay.org, you know that I'm worried about the future of local health care in the face of still more Medicare and Medi-Cal cuts. While our government promises health care for all, I fear we will see healthcare rationing based on insurance coverage.

Looking ahead, 2012 promises to be a challenging year. The economics of health care reflect the economics of America in general. These are extraordinary times. Fortunately, I am surrounded by extraordinary professionals who rise above the fray to keep our patients first. ☒

Gary J. Passama



LIVING WELL AT ANY AGE



Jane Garcia

Dr. Stephen Newman

Balancing Benefits

With its emphasis on slow stretches and increased flexibility, it's no wonder that many doctors recommend yoga to their patients.

Dr. Stephen Newman of NorthBay's Center for Primary Care goes a step further and practices what he preaches. An avid yoga enthusiast, he has taken classes and practices his skills at least twice a week.

Among the benefits, he cites: increased flexibility, reduction of stress, improved balance, increased strength, toned muscles and fewer injuries.

Yoga Key to Her Flexibility

For years, Dr. Stephen Newman had been hounding Jane Garcia to give yoga a try. A yoga enthusiast himself, he knew it could offer his patient more flexibility and mobility as she aged.

But it wasn't until her daughter Terri accompanied her to a doctor's appointment that Jane finally got the extra push she needed. When they left the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville, they headed directly to Vacaville's McBride Senior Center, where Terri promptly signed them both up for weekly classes.

Now Jane is a fixture every Monday morning. And at 86, she's more flexible than many seniors her age. “She's amazing,” admits yoga instructor Judy Jordan. “She goes through postures like a 20-year-old!”

Jane admits that she's pretty lucky when it comes to health issues. Her primary medications are cholesterol pills, calcium and some eye drops.

“Jane's a great example of what yoga can do for you.”

—Dr. Stephen Newman

But a few years ago, she was plagued with neck and back pain.

Yoga has made a huge improvement in her quality of life, she says. She walks up to two hours a day, does her own yard work and can perform such yoga moves as “Downward Dog Pose” and “Plank Pose.”

At a recent checkup, Terri told Dr. Newman of her mother's abilities and he couldn't believe it. “She can really do the plank?” he asked incredulously. “You bet I can,” replied a spunky Jane.

Then he made her prove it, taking her to a conference room and clearing the floor. Sure enough, she could. Now he brags about her to his other patients. Jane can't believe that, when told. “Oh, that Dr. Newman is a stinker,” she chuckles.

“The benefits are tremendous,” says Dr. Newman. “There's strength, balance, range of motion and body connections. Of course, sometimes you have to really push yourself to take it to your limit.”

The over-50 class at the senior center has a mix of participants, although Jane is probably the oldest, says instructor Judy. Cost is \$21 a month for classes on Mondays or Thursdays, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Signups are taken at McBride Senior Center between 9 a.m. and noon Monday through Friday.

“We really focus on strength and flexibility,” Judy says. “Jane's a great example of what yoga can do for you.”

“She does better than me,” says Terri, noting that her mother never complains. “You don't have to be young to be active,” says Jane. “People are doing more and more these days. I couldn't do much when I started, but now I can do most of the moves.” ☒

Off the Disabled List, Back on the Court

Bob Blakewell (left), a NorthBay physical therapist, puts Dixon High School basketball player Ennis Sandle through the paces during rehab at the Millennium Sports Club in Vacaville.

It was the third quarter on a Tuesday night—Dec. 22, 2009—and Dixon High shooting guard Ennis Sandle remembers making a bad pass, swatting it out of a Vacaville High player's hands, and then falling.

Dixon High's junior varsity Rams were victorious, but Ennis lost that season and the next. He had hyper-extended his knee and had to be carried back to the bench.

His mother, Jennifer Sandle, sitting in the stands, didn't realize how bad the injury was at first. "After the game, she tried to get me to walk on it, to do lunges," Ennis remembers with a grimace. "I said, 'Mom, I can't even walk on it!'"

Days later, an x-ray confirmed he hadn't broken anything, but his knee was swollen to the size of a small melon. Jennifer, an ER support specialist for NorthBay Healthcare, wasn't content to send him off to therapy; she wanted to know just what was wrong, so she asked his doctor, Matthew Heeren, M.D., at NorthBay Healthcare's Center for Primary Care in Vacaville.

He promptly ordered an MRI, which confirmed the Sandles' worst fears: a torn anterior cruciate ligament, or ACL, as it is commonly called. Athletes are the most susceptible, as the ACL helps players as they pivot and lunge.

Because Ennis was still growing, his surgeon, Dr. Andrew Brooks, advised against having surgery right away. "There's concern about damaging growth plates," explains Dr. Brooks. "We don't always have the luxury of waiting until someone is mature

"Hard work is the key to a successful recovery, even though progress can be slow at times."

—Bob Blakewell, Physical Therapist

enough for the surgery, but in Ennis' case, we did." Despite the injury, Ennis managed to attend every game his sophomore year and support his team from the bench.

He was finally cleared for surgery in September 2010, and spent the next year regaining his strength and skills. He only missed two days of school, although he was in pain and on crutches for months. He had to wear a leg brace much of that time, which limited mobility for his 5-foot-11 frame.

"Ennis is a unique guy," remembers Dr. Brooks. "He had a great support system at home, which makes a big difference. And he's extremely intelligent, highly motivated and understood the importance of hard work. He did what I asked him to do, and probably more."

In the gym at Dixon Fitness, Ennis stuck to upper body workouts with his trainer Chris McCoy, and in therapy, he pushed to gain strength and flexibility in his knee.

Bob Blakewell, a NorthBay physical therapist, worked with Ennis two to three times a week after his surgery and was impressed with his tenacious, focused approach. "He was really an inspiration to all our other patients," says Bob. "He worked so hard, never complained and was focused on playing basketball again. His good work ethic rubbed

off on a couple of other young surgical patients we had at the time." Hard work, says Bob, is the key to a successful recovery. "Ennis understood that, even though progress was slow at times."

His goal this past fall was simple: To make Dixon High's varsity basketball team. Of course with a new coach in town, Ennis wasn't sure what to expect. He felt strong, and he was ready to work hard, but he didn't know if Coach Samuel Harrison would have any hesitation putting him on the team.

In November, he got the good news: He would play varsity. "Ennis was ready to do whatever it took to be a complete player and help the team win," says Coach Harrison. "The conditioning he did prior to tryouts really helped. He's a great kid, with a great GPA." In fact, despite his hardships, Ennis, now 17, has maintained a 4.0 GPA.

Dr. Heeren, who has been Ennis' doctor for years, says the news didn't surprise him. "I've always admired his work ethic and determination," he says. "I have no doubt he'll succeed with any path he pursues."

So what will be his field of study when it's time for college? "Definitely medicine," says Ennis. "Maybe pharmacy, or maybe even orthopaedics." After all, he points out, with his experience he could well prepare a patient for knee surgery. ✂

Surgeon Andrew Brooks, M.D., is pleased that through hard work and exercise, his patient Ennis Sandle was able to regain his strength and flexibility after surgery to repair a torn anterior cruciate ligament.



JUST THE FACTS ACL Injuries

An injury to the ACL, or anterior cruciate ligament, is one of the most common knee injuries, says orthopaedic surgeon Andrew Brooks, M.D., who notes that 90 percent of these type of injuries occur during sporting events.

Dr. Brooks recommends athletes stretch prior to working out and focus on strengthening muscles in their legs to help avoid potential tears.

He notes that while such injuries are common in male-dominated football and basketball, female athletes are actually more at risk for an ACL tear.

The ACL can be injured in several ways:

- Changing direction rapidly.
- Stopping suddenly.
- Slowing down while running.
- Landing from a jump incorrectly.
- Direct contact or collision, such as a football tackle.

The surgery to repair an ACL tear is complicated, can take more than two hours to perform and involves more than 100 steps. "And every step is vital," says Dr. Brooks.



Diabetes Diagnosis

"I felt I had a near-death experience and I became driven to improve my health."

— Corey Bodiford

A family vacation to Disneyland wasn't a trip to the happiest place on earth for Corey Bodiford, 36, of Fairfield. In the days before the trip, on the drive to Southern California and at the Magic Kingdom, he felt sick and was getting sicker.

"I was extremely thirsty and had been drinking huge amounts of liquids," he says. "I just could not quench my thirst. Then my vision started getting blurry. The drive was torture. No, it was not a fun trip, it was a struggle."

As soon as he got home, he went to see his doctor, Douglas Freeman, M.D., a family practitioner at NorthBay Center for Primary Care in Fairfield. Lab tests revealed dangerously elevated blood sugar levels.

"My blood sugar was over 500 and Dr. Freeman told me to head to the emergency room immediately," Corey recalls. It took four days in the hospital for his system to settle and to get a diagnosis: Type II diabetes, so dangerously out of control that it required him to start taking insulin immediately.

During his hospitalization, Corey realized a serious life change was in order. "I felt I had a near-death experience and I became driven to improve my health."

Dr. Freeman referred him to Endocrinologist Deborah Murray, M.D., of the NorthBay Center for Endocrinology and Diabetes. Corey worked with Dr. Murray and Collette DaCruz, certified diabetes educator, who taught him

how to control his blood sugar, and the importance of exercise and diet.

"Before my diagnosis I would eat whatever and whenever," he says. "Now I eat lots of lean meats and veggies and few carbohydrates, and I exercise every day."

In the year since his diagnosis, he has lost about 40 pounds, and his other numbers are remarkable, as well.

"He has seen his hemoglobin A1C go from 12.5 percent to 5.8 percent and his average blood glucose drop from more than 300 mg/dl to less than 100," Collette says. He is no longer on insulin.

"It is seeing people like Corey succeed that makes my job so rewarding. His amazing lifestyle efforts allowed him to reduce his insulin slowly and then stop entirely," says Dr. Murray.

Corey's lifestyle change followed him to work where, ironically, he is surrounded by food all day. His job in Nutrition Services at NorthBay Medical Center has him preparing patient meals and also filling the vending machines. "It's a temptation, definitely, but I see food differently now," he says.

His family is delighted with his resolve, he reports. "This is life and death. I've never felt as good in my whole life as I do now." ❧

Coveted Accreditation Awarded to NorthBay

The NorthBay Center for Endocrinology and Diabetes has again passed the rigorous annual review process to be accredited by the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE). The Center is one of only 16 programs accredited by AADE in California and one of two programs that is accredited by both the AADE and the American Diabetes Association in California.

The center, at 1010 Nut Tree Road in Vacaville, was first certified in 2008 by the ADA and in 2009 by the AADE. Call (707) 624-7999 for information.

Trick was Replacing Trick Knee

For Jeanette Graves, knee replacement surgery was nothing short of a miracle. "My husband pushed me into NorthBay VacaValley Hospital in a wheelchair and three days later I walked out, holding his hand," says the Vacaville resident. "It was a miracle."

Graves is referring to her total knee replacement surgery, performed by orthopaedic surgeon Teodoro Nissen, M.D., at the Joint Replacement Program at VacaValley Hospital.

Graves, 55, says her knee problem began when she played high school basketball. Over the years, her "trick" knee got worse, and in 2010 it started to buckle on her. Soon she was limping from pain and avoiding family outings. "I became a recluse," she says. "My bad knee was ruining my quality of life. I avoided family gatherings and the hiking and fishing we all enjoyed."

Graves, a rehabilitation clinical support specialist at NorthBay Medical

Center, was familiar with health care. Still, the thought of anesthesia and her own surgery made her put off a decision on her knee.

"Just the thought of surgery made me nervous," Graves says. "But I finally realized I had to get this done. I gave in to the pressure from my family and agreed to find a way to get back on my feet."

Dr. Nissen recommended a total right knee replacement and asked if she would like to be his first patient at VacaValley Hospital. "Dr. Nissen said he had heard a lot of good things about the Joint Replacement Program and I was thrilled to have the surgery close to home," Graves adds.

Her next step was an appointment with Cynthia Giaquinto, manager of the Joint Replacement Program, to learn how the program worked and to tour the facility.

"As soon as I met Cyndy I knew I was in good hands," Graves remembers. "Getting a first-hand look at the program made all the difference. I felt totally prepared for what was ahead."

The Joint Replacement Program offers hip and knee replacement surgery with a two- to three-day hospital stay. The first day is surgery and the following days focus on getting the patient up and walking. A friend or family member serves as "coach" to help the patient and to learn about post-surgical care. When the patient goes home, he or she is visited by a home health nurse who helps with rehabilitation exercises until the patient is ready to attend outpatient rehabilitation.

Today, Jeanette is back hiking and enjoying the outdoors with her family. "It took me four months to return to normal," Graves says. "I highly recommend the program and I only wish I had done it sooner."

For a list of surgeons participating in the program, or for more information about the NorthBay Joint Replacement Program, call Cynthia Giaquinto at (707) 624-7600. ❧

"Getting a first-hand look at the program made the difference. I felt prepared."

— Jeanette Graves

Jeanette Graves and her daughter Kimberly Marie are once again enjoying family activities together.

A Second Opinion Leads to Second Chance at Life



Antoinette Montojo is happy to be back at work following a cancer diagnosis

Life was hanging in the balance just over a year ago for Antoinette Montojo. At summer's start she was an active, tennis-playing, working mother of three. By Labor Day, she was so sick she was nearly on her death bed.

Looking back, she can't believe how close she came. "It started with pain in my back," recalls the 54-year-old Fairfield resident. "At first I thought it was just the kind of pain that comes from getting older. But then it became more."

She was not eating well, became nauseous, started losing weight and getting bad headaches. Within two short months, she says, "I was really in a bad state."

Her primary care physician, Padma Dasari, M.D., ordered a CT scan and a biopsy, and the results indicated cancer. Getting the news "was a big blow," Antoinette says.

But, exactly what kind of cancer? While a pathologist in Sacramento offered a diagnosis of sarcoma, a kind of cancer that affects either bone, cartilage, fat, muscle or blood vessels, Antoinette's oncologist, James Long, M.D., of the NorthBay Cancer Center, believed it was something else.

"He thought it was lymphoma (cancer of the lymphatic system), and got a second opinion from doctors at Stanford," she explains.

"It took three weeks to get a definitive answer," Dr. Long recalls, and all the while Antoinette was getting sicker and sicker. When the second opinion came back as anaplastic t-cell lymphoma, a rare

form of the disease, he started her on chemotherapy that night.

"It was a different kind of chemotherapy treatment than what I would have received with a sarcoma diagnosis," Antoinette says.

She believes Dr. Long's depth of experience as a hematologist and familiarity with lymphomas saved her life.

"I am so glad he went by his knowledge of lymphoma and didn't go with the other diagnosis," she says. "I got a second chance at life."

"We are making good headway in general on treating lymphomas," Dr. Long says, "because we're developing targeted therapies that have less toxic effects and higher efficacies. We're getting better at it all the time. She has a good prognosis now and her kind of lymphoma has a 80 percent cure rate."

That makes Antoinette one of more than 628,000 Americans who are living with lymphoma, according to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. She's not only living, but thriving, she adds.

Since completing her chemotherapy treatments, she has been able to heal, gain strength, and even returned to her job in Patient Financial Services at NorthBay Healthcare.

Throughout her healing journey, she was able to lean on her husband and adult-age children for help. "You need someone with you during this time," she says. "It would be hard to do it on your own."

Her advice: don't be afraid to ask for help, because you will need it. "It takes a little humility. We, as women, are used to taking care of others. But you will need the help."

"Dr. Long told me I was close to dying," she recalls. "I thought it was all a bad dream. Now, I have a new outlook on life." She lets things that used to annoy her go by the wayside, and spending time with her family is a priority now. "Nothing else matters but my family, and my faith," she says. ☘



Co-workers, from left, Yolanda Hyatt, Tatiana Tolley and Georgia Waldon enjoy exercising at work

Up & Down Routine for Trim Trio

Masters of the Stairs

Every journey begins with a single step. For three NorthBay co-workers, that first step was taken in 2009 at the bottom of the stairs at NorthBay Medical Center. Two years later they're climbing 16 flights of stairs every workday and reaping the health benefits of regular exercise.

"We refer to the stairs as our Stair-master," says Georgia Waldon, 63, of Suisun. Georgia and her medical records co-workers Tatiana Tolley and Yolanda Hyatt use each work break to leave their desks and climb eight flights of stairs. And, they take a 30-minute walk at lunch.

Studies confirm that accumulating short bouts of stair-climbing activity throughout the day can reduce the cardiovascular risk factors in previously sedentary women. Climbing stairs tones muscle and increases the heart rate. Walking up stairs works multiple muscle groups and forces you to breathe deeply, which sends more oxygen to your blood.

It was Tatiana who introduced the group to stair climbing. "I climbed the

stairs at my previous jobs and it's an exercise that fits into your break time and gives you a good workout," says Tatiana, 42, of Walnut Creek. "We've all built up our endurance and we keep doing it because we like it, and it's much more fun to exercise as a group."

In addition to their daily exercise routine, they weigh themselves each Wednesday morning before work and report their results. "We don't share our actual weight, but knowing what it is helps keep us all on track," Georgia adds.

In addition to being an excellent aerobic exercise, climbing up stairs also helps to build lower body strength. It uses your body weight for resistance to work the large muscle groups, including hips, thighs, calves, hamstrings and glutes. Walking down the stairs works a different group of muscles, including your quadriceps (most of your thigh), and hip flexors.

"Stair climbing has helped me lose weight and gain strength in my legs," says Yolanda Hyatt, of Suisun. "We have very sedentary jobs, sitting in

front of a computer for 10-hour days. Getting up and exercising throughout the day helps me focus on my work. And, we motivate each other to get up and go." ☘

Nine Reasons to Take the Stairs

Climbing stairs on a daily basis has many health benefits.

- Tones your muscles
- Increases your heart rate
- Burns twice as many calories as walking
- Requires no special equipment
- Is faster than riding the elevator
- Builds the strength of your legs
- Builds the strength of your lungs
- Can help you exercise at work
- Is a great way to reduce stress

Talk to your doctor before beginning any exercise program, including stair climbing.

"You need someone with you during this time. It would be hard to do it on your own."

—Antoinette Montojo

Rehab Becomes Regime

Program Helps Patient Put His Heart into Workout



The exercise program helped George Mary build his strength and recover from surgery in a safe, monitored environment.

George Mary entered NorthBay Medical Center's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program following heart surgery. That was nine years ago, and he's never left. Today he's fitter than ever.

For George, cardiac rehab helped him return to a fitness regime that had stalled when he developed asthma at age 50. "I was a runner for 20 years, but I had to stop because I couldn't breathe," explains the 78-year-old retired Air Force dentist from Fairfield. As his lifestyle slowed down, so did his interest in health and fitness. It took a heart attack at age 69 to convince him that he needed to make some lifestyle changes.

NorthBay Medical Center didn't have its Heart & Vascular Center when George needed it, so he was sent to a hospital outside Solano County for a quadruple bypass. Following his surgery, he came to NorthBay Medical Center's Cardiac Rehabilitation department. The 12-week exercise program helped him build his strength and recover from surgery in a safe, monitored environment.

"Cardiac rehabilitation is a medically supervised program that helps improve the health and well-being of people who have heart problems," says Debbie Gordon, who has been manager of the cardiac rehabilitation program for more than 20 years. Each patient receives an individualized exercise routine that is carefully monitored by a cardiac rehab nurse.

In addition to building his strength and confidence, George has learned to control his asthma. "Exercise helps my lungs, because I've learned how to breathe," he says.

And, after completing the initial program in 2002, he decided to stay. "Without this program, I would be in bad shape, because I wouldn't do these exercises alone," he adds.

He says the program has psychological benefits as well. "You're surrounded by others who know what you've been through," he explains. "We give each other a lot of support and encouragement."

George has now developed a mitral valve problem that his cardiologist is keeping an eye on. While his condition is stable, it's another reason to keep exercising.

"If my condition changes and I need to have the valve repaired, I want to be in the best condition I can be," he says. "And now the NorthBay Heart & Vascular Center will have everything I need."

"I kid the nurses that there's a high price for admission to this program," he chuckles. "You have to have a heart attack to get in!"

George attends cardiac rehab three days a week. On the other days, he walks at the mall.

"Now I'm in much better condition than before the heart attack," he adds. "I have no intention of stopping this program, ever!"

Cardiac Rehabilitation Manager Debbie Gordon, R.N., chats with George Mary as he maintains his heart healthy workouts.

Rocky the Recovery Dog, Doctor Team Up, Save the Day

Vacaville resident Peter Loos, 67, credits his vascular surgeon for saving his life, and a little dog named Rocky for helping him heal so quickly. Peter was battling cancer of the tongue when it was discovered that he had an abdominal aneurysm that presented a unique set of problems.

Dr. Seph Naficy, a cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon and member of NorthBay Health-care's Heart & Vascular team, realized that the aneurysm's dimensions, its extension into his pelvis, and significant calcification made it impossible to handle with less invasive endovascular tools.

"As much as the buzz is about shorter hospital stays, minimally invasive procedures, and approaches such as robotic surgery, at the end of the day you need to be well-versed in addressing the case in the best patient-tailored manner possible. In this case, it was a traditional old-fashioned approach: open surgery."

Some high-tech equipment did come into the picture. Dr. Naficy was able to use a "Cell-Saver," to give Peter a distinct advantage.

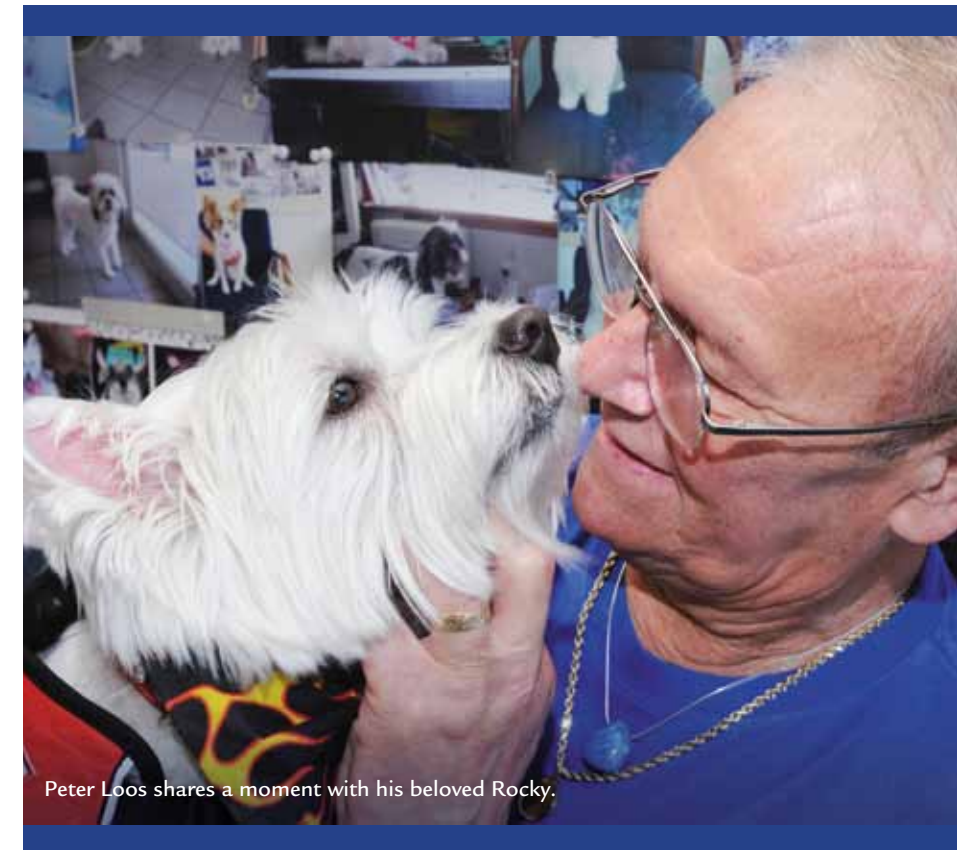
The Cell-Saver was donated to NorthBay Medical Center by Fairfield residents Frank and Liz Vezer in 2008, and is used frequently in open heart surgery.

"I knew the approach meant there would be a potential for blood loss. The Cell-Saver allows us to recirculate the patient's blood back into their system."

Assisted by Dr. Jeffrey Brooks, another vascular surgeon, Dr. Naficy was able to address the issues of the aneurysm, which occurs when the walls of a blood vessel balloon outward, creating weakness in the vessel wall. Peter's aneurysm was even more complicated, in that it involved a renal artery as well.

Naturally, an open surgery means a longer recovery, including time in the Intensive Care Unit, and that's where Rocky comes in.

Rocky belongs to Peter and his wife, Lilly Kraft. The couple moved to Vacaville five years ago, where she now operates a successful pet grooming business. "We're booked five weeks in advance," boasts a proud Peter, who assists



Peter Loos shares a moment with his beloved Rocky.

his wife by shampooing a pooch while she clips and trims.

And at the center of the canine carnival of activity, with fur flying and wild happy yipping is Rocky, the Recovery Dog.

Technically, he's a very smart, West Highland terrier, fluffy, white, and armed with a "therapy" license. That meant he was allowed to sit at the end of Peter's bed in NorthBay's ICU during his four days of recovery. "He only snarled at one or two of the nurses," chuckled Peter.

Life is vastly different now for Peter and Lilly since he's successfully tackled his health challenges. A former executive chef, he once weighed 360 pounds. Today he is a svelte 200 pounds, and walks Rocky every day for exercise.

He also eats healthier food and takes care of himself. "We have learned to appreciate the things we have," he says in his warm German accent. "We don't take anything for granted."

"The buzz is about shorter hospital stays, minimally invasive procedures, and approaches such as robotic surgery but you need to be well-versed in addressing the case in the best patient-tailored manner possible."

—Dr. Seph Naficy

Friendship After Loss

When Anne Donato lost her husband, Ruben, to a fast-moving cancer four years ago, she was overwhelmed with grief. “It was rough in the beginning,” says the 69-year-old Fairfield resident. “We were looking forward to traveling when I retired, but he just didn’t make it. I didn’t know where to turn, what to do, where to go.”

Her stepdaughter, hoping to help her cope with the grief, asked if she would consider becoming a foster mom to a litter of puppies. Anne admits she was reluctant to take on the responsibility at first, but soon realized “the puppies kept me occupied and gave me a purpose to get out of bed every morning.” Eventually she adopted another puppy, born a year to the day of Ruben’s death. She named him Ruben, with her stepdaughter’s permission.

Anne then took her healing process a step further by joining a support group run by NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement. While she came to the meetings to find support, she came away with much, much more: a whole new group of friends.

“There are about six of us who broke off from the group and started doing things together, like going out to dinner after the bereavement meetings.”

Not only did these six find comfort in their shared struggles, but comfort in shared interests.

Like Anne, Mary Turner, 73, had also experienced sudden loss with the death of both her mother and her husband. A short time later two of her beloved dogs passed away.

“It was a lot of loss for me,” explains the Vacaville resident. Mary was receiving individual grief counseling through NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement when she decided to give the group meetings a try. “That’s when I met Anne and her dog, Ruben. I’m a dog person, but he growled at me. The next meeting, I brought treats.”

“We have formed a bond,” Mary says of her friendship with Anne and others in their group. “We struggled to get through a dark tunnel and we’ve come out the other side. Now, we call on each other when we have a bad day, and also when we have good days.”

“We meet at a restaurant for Happy Hour,” Anne explains. “You can get an appetizer and a drink, and then you don’t have to eat alone. Plus, it gets you out of the house!” “And, we don’t have to explain what we’re thinking or feeling,” Mary adds.

In addition to meeting at area restaurants, the group rented a limousine and spent a day in San Francisco, and have organized other fun events. Mary and Anne have taken two cruises together, and are planning another trip to the Mediterranean this year. And, despite swearing she could never bear the idea of owning another dog, Mary did recently adopt an English Springer Spaniel—a special dog who was born with a cleft palate—and named him Tug, “because he pulled at my heartstrings.”

For those dealing with the loss of a loved one, both new-found friends have some advice. “It’s important to be open to new experiences and new people,” Mary says. “I’ve learned there is a life down the road,” Anne adds. “You can make another life for yourself. You can still have your old friends, and make new ones, too.”

Bereavement Groups Available

NorthBay Hospice and Bereavement offers a variety of bereavement support groups for children, teens, young adults and adults on a continuous basis. Services are available free of charge for anyone in our community who has experienced a death. For a schedule and more information, call (707) 646-3517.

Mary Turner, left, and Anne Donato with their dogs.

Picture Perfect Weight Loss...

For some, a picture is worth 1,000 words. For Bill Abeling, 51, of Vacaville, one photo is worth 100 pounds—the weight loss goal he set after seeing himself on the cover of *Wellspring* last summer. By the end of January, Bill had more than met his goal, logging an incredible 125-pound weight loss. He's now moved on to maintenance and toning and is enjoying life to the fullest.

Bill and his family appeared on the magazine's cover with their physician, Nancy McAfee, M.D., of the NorthBay Center for Primary Care. The

story was about how Dr. McAfee treated their whole family. But, while they were the “picture of health,” Bill admits he put himself last when it came to health care.

“Dr. McAfee certainly tried her best to get me into her office,” Bill says. “She would send me lab slips noted ‘ninth reminder’ and still I put things off. And my wife Barbara, who's a nurse, did her share of nagging to no avail.”

But that changed when the father of three saw his image in *Wellspring*.

“I didn't like what I saw. Sometimes you have to hold up the mirror and look at yourself,” he says. “I was afraid to do that, but *Wellspring* made me look, and I had to say ‘enough is enough.’”

Study after study shows that men tend to avoid healthcare, fail to get routine checkups and even delay care for potentially serious conditions. Their reasons are varied, but range from a dislike of personal discussions to thinking that “feeling good” equals “healthy” and “no news is good news.” When men do

“This is part of a life-long transformation. I'm putting myself first, so I'll be here for my family for a long, long time.”

—Bill Abeling

visit a physician, it is often at the request of the women in their lives.

Despite his fear, Bill scheduled a checkup with Dr. McAfee and got his lab work done. “I expected the worst, but the news wasn't bad. I hadn't yet developed diabetes or any other problem related to obesity,” Bill says. And with Dr. McAfee's blessing, he began a determined effort to lose weight.

Bill started walking two miles in the morning and two miles at lunch. He walked in the evenings and started strength training. And he gave his diet an overhaul.

“I used food for energy, but I ate the wrong food,” Bill says. “Now, while I don't follow any certain diet plan, I eat in moderation—single portions with no second helpings. And, no glass of wine in the evenings, alcohol is out.”

Bill's weight had taken its toll on his feet, however. “I have high arches and prior to my weight loss they had collapsed under my weight,” he explains. “My feet could get very painful.”

Dr. McAfee referred Bill to Vacaville podiatrist Kevin Miller who created orthotic inserts for his shoes. With his feet improved, Bill hopes to begin running again.

Now that his clothes are falling off his 6'5" frame, he's amazed at his new-found energy and self-confidence.

“This is part of a lifelong transformation,” he says with pride. “I'm putting myself first, in a good way, so I'll be here for my family for a long, long time.”

“And if I can do it, anyone can. Excuses are excuses. You have to make the time and just do it. Anyone can, you just have to want it enough.”







And, he's even amazed his doctor. “Bill's success inspires me to keep pressing on—even if it seems that the patient is not listening. Something is sinking in,” she says. “I'm excited about his weight loss but even more so for his lifestyle changes.”



Bill Abeling had lost 87 pounds when he displayed his old jeans. He lost a total of 125 pounds.

The Benefits of Walking

Walking is such a simple exercise and yet it can have a powerful effect on your health. Fewer than 50 percent of adults do enough physical activity to gain any fitness benefits and as a result, inactivity is the second leading preventable cause of death, right behind tobacco use. Here's what walking can do for you:

-  **Walking is an aerobic activity** that burns calories and contributes to weight loss. Losing just 10 percent of your body weight reduces your risk of developing diabetes by 58 percent.
-  **Walking strengthens your heart**, helping reduce your risk of heart attack.
-  **Walking is good for your bones.** Women who walked about one mile each day have higher whole-body bone density than those who walked a shorter distance.
-  **Walking helps lift depression.** Studies show that walking for 30 minutes, three to five times a week, can reduce symptoms of depression.
-  **Walking improves fitness.** Walking just three times a week for 30 minutes can significantly increase cardio and respiratory fitness.
-  **Walking improves physical function**, helping prevent physical disability in older persons.



Bill Abeling and NorthBay Center for Primary Care Physician Nancy McAfee, M.D., display the cover of *Wellspring* that inspired Bill to get in shape and lose more than 100 pounds.

Despite Many Challenges, Victor is... The Boy Who Lived

“Sometimes the missing ingredient in a child’s health and well-being is simply love and patience.”

—Dr. Matthew Heeren

The odds were stacked heavily against a frail Victor Wanberg. He was born at a healthy 7.6 pounds, but two months later he was below his birth weight, with skin hanging on his fragile frame. When a doctor at UC Davis Medical Center examined him, she didn’t think he’d make it another hour, much less through the night. His issues were many, and complex:

- The cartilage in his nose never separated during his development, so for the first two months of his life, he couldn’t nurse, because he couldn’t breathe and eat at the same time.
- He had a hole in his heart.
- Like his birth mother and sister, he suffers from neurofibromatosis, or NF, a genetic disorder in which tumors grow on nerve endings.
- Because he wasn’t receiving proper nutrition, the soft spot on his head hadn’t closed, and his cerebellum extended beyond his cranium, creating even more vulnerability.

At 2 months old, he was diagnosed as a “failure to thrive” baby and was taken away from his family.

In the spring of 2009, after one month in the hospital, he was placed in foster care with Dottie Fair, who is legendary in Solano County when it comes to foster parenting. Dottie, who runs the Solano Community College Kinship Education Program, had already adopted five special needs children. She took Victor in and figured out ways, post surgery, to coax him to eat and keep food down.

And, just as important, she took him to PRIDE classes (for people interested in becoming foster and adoptive parents) she was teaching, where he met his adoptive mother, Tyffany Wanberg.

“At first, I was afraid of even touching Victor,” recalls Tyffany. “He was so small. His breathing sounded horrible. He had an apnea monitor on him, and he was difficult to feed.”

Dottie knew she couldn’t adopt another child. And the social workers wouldn’t let this child return to his birth family, because they would not be capable of caring for his many needs. So Dottie asked Tyffany to consider adopting him.

Tyffany was immediately interested, but knew the tougher sell would be her husband, Peter. She’d suggested adoption before, and the answer was always no.

But to her surprise, he said yes. “Well, let’s at least have you meet him first,” she remembers telling him.

At that first meeting, Victor couldn’t move by himself. He was up to 8 pounds, but eating was still difficult and keeping food down even more so. “He was so weak,” recalled Peter, “that if you lifted his arm, he couldn’t hold it up himself.” The first goal was merely to get him to hold his head up.

Victor enjoys time reading books with his parents, Tyffany and Peter Wanberg.



The couple knew there were many challenges ahead, but they decided to commit, visiting Victor three times a week, and later taking him on weekends. They even met his birth family, and promised to keep the lines of communication open, gaining their trust.

Nearly one year later, the adoption was official. Now at 3, you’d have a hard time connecting the lifeless baby to a very social Victor.

The baby who had to use a walker to take his first steps now strolls across the living room with purpose and zeal. He encounters new visitors with wide-eyed wonder, and immediately holds out his hand, ready to offer a tour of his toys. He giggles when dad reads him a book, or mom sneaks in a tickle.

He’s slowly developing verbal skills, although he can easily tell you what his favorite cartoon characters say.

His progress has been astounding. “Much later,” confides Tyffany, “his team of medical professionals told me they didn’t think he’d live through that first winter, but he proved them all wrong. I looked through his eyes and saw a brain that was working and a little person trying to get out, but was being restrained by his body.”

Although he will continue to face many health challenges, today he is thriving, confirms Dr. Matthew Heeren, a pediatrician at NortBay’s Center for Primary Care in Vacaville. “Victor has

been a boy who has had multiple difficult challenges since birth. What was once an obstacle, however, is now a mastered milestone,” he says. “His challenges will continue undoubtedly for his entire life, but I am confident he will continue to thrive.”

Some good news on the health front was offered last fall, during a meeting with Victor’s cardiologist. “He told me in January the hole in his heart had closed,” recalls Tyffany. “I said I thought that was impossible. Didn’t you tell me it would never close?”

His words still ring in her mind: “You never can predict what love can do.”

Dr. Heeren concurs. “Sometimes the missing ingredient in a child’s health and well-being is simply love and patience.

“Victor has been so fortunate to have had people like Dottie and now Tyffany and Peter in his life,” he says. “He has enriched our lives as well by reminding us about these pieces through his everyday smile.”

Victor patiently lets his pediatrician, Matthew Heeren, M.D., take a closer look at his ears, secure in knowing his parents Peter and Tyffany Wanberg are right there for him.

This photo shows Victor at about 7 months old, while he was still working hard to achieve a major developmental goal: to hold up his head. He worked on that and rolling over for a year before mastering those skills.



Diana Sullivan (left), director of the NorthBay Heart & Vascular Center service line, and Mary Hernandez, clinical practice manager for NorthBay's Emergency and Trauma Services, have teamed up to educate the public about the signs and symptoms of a heart attack.



Education is Focus for Chest Pain Center

Now that NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield is the preferred destination for patients suffering heart attacks in Solano County, Mary Hernandez, R.N., and Diana Sullivan, P.h.D., want to get the message out to the community. But that is only part of their mission.

The women, affiliated with NorthBay Medical Center's Chest Pain Center, are on a mission to educate the community about the signs and symptoms of a heart attack, and what to do if you or someone you're around is suffering from those symptoms.

To put it simply: Dial 9-1-1.

"There's nothing better you can do than call an ambulance, and get everything in motion," explains Diana Sullivan, director of the North-

Bay Heart & Vascular Center. "The ambulance crews can do a number of things to help you if you're in crisis. Just having a friend or spouse drive you won't do the trick. They can't drive and perform CPR at the same time."

In fact, paramedics can administer a 12-lead EKG, administer nitroglycerine, give you aspirin, morphine, oxygen or CPR.

That's the lesson in a short video that has been posted on www.NorthBay.org, which features a NorthBay Healthcare employee who had a close call.

Sylvia Spanos, a Vacaville resident, said her family has a history of heart disease and high blood pressure. "So when I felt light-headed, dizzy and nauseous, I didn't waste any time. I dialed 9-1-1."

"People have to recognize the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. And then they have to be willing to call 9-1-1."

—Mary Hernandez, R.N.

Sylvia recounts in the video how quickly the crew responded, made her comfortable, and loaded her on the ambulance.

She was lucky, she says. It wasn't a heart attack. But if she ever experiences the symptoms again, she won't hesitate.


"It's better to be safe than sorry, and it's far better to have an ambulance crew respond to your needs. I have no doubt I never would have received such fine medical care so quickly if I hadn't dialed 9-1-1."

Mary and Diana are using Sylvia's message to reach out. They are taking their message on the road, speaking to service clubs, community groups and senior home communities, hoping to spread the message that time is muscle, and that NorthBay is just an ambulance ride away if they need help. (To schedule a presentation, call 646-3293.)

NorthBay Medical Center launched its Heart & Vascular Center in 2009, and several months later became an official Chest Pain Center. It's designation as a STEMI Receiving Center means that it can receive the most serious cardiac cases. STEMI is a medical term, which stands for ST segment elevation myocardial infarction.

During a STEMI, one or more of the arteries that nourish the heart muscle is completely blocked by a blood clot and, as a result, the heart muscle being supplied by the affected artery begins to die.

As a heart attack center, NorthBay's emergency department will be able to quickly deploy specially trained teams of nurses, emergency physicians and cardiologists to clear the blocked artery before the damage to the heart muscle is irreversible. A team of cardiac surgeons is on call 24/7 to conduct emergency open-heart surgery if it is needed.

"First things first," says Mary, who is also the clinical practice manager for Emergency and Trauma Services. "People have to recognize the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. And then they have to be willing to call 9-1-1. Don't drive yourself—EMS providers know exactly what to do and how to help you." 

Heart-attack Hospital

NorthBay Medical Center has become Solano County's preferred hospital for treating patients suffering a severe heart attack.

The county's Emergency Medical Services Agency on Nov. 14 announced the Fairfield hospital would become its first designated STEMI Receiving Center. On Nov. 30, ambulance and first responders began transporting all heart attack patients to the Fairfield hospital for special care.

STEMI, or ST segment elevation myocardial infarction, is a severe cardiac event.

"Once again, NorthBay Healthcare has taken the lead in bringing another advanced, life-saving medical service to our citizens," said Deborah Sugiyama, president of NorthBay Healthcare Group. "No longer will patients have to go to hospitals outside the county for care when suffering a major heart attack."

"As is the case with trauma patients, time is critical in treating those exhibiting the symptoms of a major heart attack," noted Kathy Richerson, vice president and chief nursing officer. "Being closer to home, we can provide treatment sooner and thereby save lives."

"Through careful assessment of the application, coupled with the results of the on-site review, the survey team feels NorthBay Medical Center is committed to providing excellent STEMI care to the residents of Solano County," wrote Ted Selby, Emergency Medical Services Administrator for the county. "The care of patients suffering from STEMI involves strong teamwork and dedicated staff; NorthBay Medical Center has demonstrated both."

Selby added, "The application process and preparation required for an on-site review is rigorous and we would like to congratulate NorthBay for achieving this level of success."

The new designation is a natural extension of the NorthBay Heart & Vascular Center, which opened in 2009. The Fairfield hospital already was an accredited Chest Pain Center.

Hundreds of hours of training and new staff were added to achieve the new designation as a receiving center for heart attack patients.

The Fairfield hospital is the only civilian facility in Solano County that is a designated STEMI Receiving Center.





Trauma Team Thrives at Hectic Pace

Solano County's most highly developed trauma center, operating today in NorthBay Medical Center, is busier than ever expected, proof that this life-saving advanced medicine was overdue. The Fairfield hospital and its sister, VacaValley Hospital in Vacaville, have long treated patients with traumatic injuries, but NorthBay Medical Center was officially designated the county's first trauma center on Sept. 30, 2011. While initial studies projected one trauma patient per day, in the center's first 12 weeks of operation, it was averaging two per day.


"The need has been an important question for some time, but the larger than expected volume of patients being treated by us answers that question without a doubt," observed Dr. Pete Zopfi, NorthBay Trauma Center Medical Director. "Months of preparation with skills classes, advanced training and trauma drills translate into excellent care and outcomes for hundreds of local residents and visitors who would have previously required long-distance transport outside of Solano County."

In its quest to continually improve, and to ensure the best care for its patients, NorthBay will seek verification from the American College of Surgeons and its Committee on Trauma, the gold standard of trauma care. Founded in Chicago in 1913, the college has improved the quality of care by setting the highest standards for surgical education and practice. "You cannot be a world-class trauma program without the endorsement of the College of Surgeons," Dr. Zopfi observed.

Trends that have emerged in the center's first months of operation include:

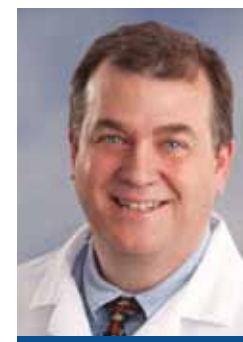
- The two top causes of trauma in Solano County are traffic collisions or crashes and falls;
- NorthBay Medical Center, because of its central location in Fairfield, finds it is serving 75 percent of the county's residents; and
- While the majority of patients treated live in Fairfield, Suisun and Vallejo, others reside beyond the county border, including Danville, Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Stockton and Stanford Ranch.

In addition to earning approval from the American College of Surgeons, the program leaders continue to pursue accreditation as a Level II trauma center, which would allow it to care for those with head trauma and neurological complications. As a Level III center, NorthBay Medical Center sends those patients—only a small fraction of the total volume—to trauma centers in Walnut Creek and Sacramento.

"Development of world-class trauma care never ceases," said Kathy Richerson, vice president and chief nursing officer, the architect of the program. "Training and education for physicians, nurses and staff is a constant rigor, an absolute requirement for us. And all the while, we are putting together the pieces for Level II, a higher echelon of care." 

Welcome New Physicians

Stephen Franzino, M.D., a sports medicine and orthopaedic specialist,



has opened a practice in Vacaville. He earned his medical degree at the University of Southern California School of Medicine. He completed his orthopaedic surgery internship and residency at Los Angeles County and USC Medical Center in Los Angeles. He completed an orthopaedic sports medicine and arthroscopy fellowship at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation. Dr. Franzino is board-certified in orthopaedic surgery.

Shahid Ur Rehman, M.D., has joined NorthBay Healthcare in Fairfield.



A neurologist, Dr. Rehman earned his medical degree from Allama Iqbal College in Lahore, Pakistan. He completed residencies in internal medicine at Jinnah Hospital Pakistan and Stony Brook Medical Center in New York. He completed a residency in neurology at UC Davis Medical Center. He was previously a staff neurologist at Napa State Hospital.

Paul McWhirter, M.D., a cardiologist/internist based in Concord, CA, has joined



the medical staff of NorthBay Medical Center, and serves as medical director, interventional cardiology. Dr. McWhirter earned his medical degree from Keck School of Medicine of USC. He completed his residency at Wilford Hall Medical Center and fellowships at the University of California San Francisco and Wilford Hall Medical Center. He is board-certified in internal and cardiovascular medicine.

 To learn more about NorthBay physicians, visit www.NorthBay.org.

Hospitals Earn Full Accreditation

NorthBay Healthcare has earned a full three-year accreditation from The Joint Commission, the world leader in evaluating the quality and safety of care provided in more than 19,000 healthcare organizations.



In October, Joint Commission surveyors conducted an extensive on-site review of NorthBay Medical Center, NorthBay VacaValley Hospital and NorthBay Health at Home & Hospice. The review team concluded that NorthBay Healthcare facilities meet the commission's high standards, regarded as the most rigorous in the industry.

The Joint Commission certification is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards. Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating healthcare organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value.

For further information, visit www.jointcommission.org.



Run for Good is April 7

Once again, NorthBay Healthcare and its partner, Western Health Advantage, will join forces to present the annual Run for Good in downtown Fairfield. This year, the run/walk is scheduled for Saturday, April 7.

Added to his year's Run for Good is a 10k race for experienced runners. In addition, a competitive 5k race and the traditional run/walk for those of all ages and all abilities will be conducted. Proceeds from the event benefit the Matt Garcia Youth Center in Fairfield.

You can sign up for Run for Good online at www.RFG5k.com.

Walk of Life

Even for Chairman of the Board



He calls it the “Walk of Life.” It’s a walking/talking test, a medical metric of sorts, that helps Dr. Seph Naficy, a NorthBay Heart & Vascular Center surgeon, determine whether his endovascular patients are ready to be released from the hospital.

“With all the technological advances, patients are able to leave the hospital much sooner than ever before. But as a doctor, I have to be absolutely sure when the time is right,” said the vascular and cardiothoracic surgeon. “This is a measure I do myself that helps me confirm everything I see on the computer and hear from staff.”

And so, if a patient is in relatively good physical health prior to the surgery, and came through the procedure with flying colors, Dr. Naficy arranges to take a walk. He asks staff to make sure that all potential encumbrances are sequentially removed as appropriate during the course of the night: catheters, tubes, monitors lines, and anything that could make walking difficult. By the time Dr. Naficy arrives in the morning, the patient is prepared for a short hike.

Sometimes it’s a jaunt up and down a hallway, other times it’s a shuffle around the NorthBay Medical Center Intensive Care Unit.

“I have to see if they’re strong. I engage them in conversation to see if they seem confident and comfortable. It’s amazing how many clues you can pick up just watching them get out of bed,” he says. “Do they grimace in pain? Is their gait unsteady or measured? Do they appear to be struggling emotionally or physically?”

A recent “Walk of Life” involved a 76-year-old patient in good physical condition. He had an abdominal aneurysm that his primary doctor had been keeping an eye on for 10 years. An aneurysm occurs when the walls of a blood vessel—in this case, the aorta, the largest blood vessel in the body—balloon outward, creating a weakness in the vessel wall.

In the last year, the aneurysm’s rate of growth and size had dramatically increased, which meant surgery was necessary.

Dr. Naficy was able to repair the aneurysm “endovascularly,” meaning he repaired the aorta from inside the blood vessel without opening the abdomen, using a combination of wires, catheters, and stent grafts through the patient’s groin vessels.

He knew his patient was sharp—a retired engineer who thoroughly researched the procedure and read all the latest medical information he could get his hands on. He had lots of questions before the procedure.

What Dr. Naficy didn’t know was that his patient, Ben Huber, is chairman of the NorthBay Healthcare Corporate Board. “I did wonder why he was visited by our hospital group president after surgery. But I really didn’t treat him differently than any other patient,” Dr. Naficy recalled with a smile.


And that’s just how Mr. Huber wanted it. “Sometimes it’s good to go incognito,” he chuckled.

Ben didn’t ask for special treatment, he said, because he didn’t have to. He knew that special, compassionate treatment is NorthBay’s standard of care for every patient.

“I really believe our mission statement,” he said. “NorthBay is known for offering advanced medicine and compassionate care, close to home. That’s just what I got, and without any fanfare.”

He checked in at 6 a.m., had the procedure, was monitored by Dr. Anit Patel, nursing staff, and Dr. Naficy overnight, and checked out the next day at noon after completing Dr. Naficy’s “Walk of Life.”

During the past 30 years, Ben has served as a director of each of the NorthBay boards and was a member of the development council when the facility was known as Intercommunity Hospital. He has had five surgeries at NorthBay during that time, and witnessed wonderful care on each occasion.

“What pleased me so much about this situation was that I could get the care I wanted here locally. Thanks to the fact that we’ve developed a great heart and vascular program and introduced terrific surgeons to our facility, I was able to get just what I needed.” 

“We’ve developed a great heart and vascular program and introduced terrific surgeons to our facility so I was able to get just what I needed.”

— Ben Huber,
Chairman, NorthBay
Healthcare Corporate Board

NorthBay Healthcare Corporate Board Chair Ben Huber takes another walk with vascular and cardiothoracic surgeon Seph Naficy, M.D., in the hallway of the Intensive Care Unit at NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield.



Holiday Parties Bring Cheer

NorthBay Healthcare employees brought holiday cheer to 60 classrooms at Fairview Elementary School in Fairfield and Eugene Padan Elementary School in Vacaville in mid-December. Through its eighth annual Adopt-a-School Program, NorthBay chose one low-income school in each city to help through the holidays. NorthBay departments each select a classroom to “adopt,” and host the parties based on what each teacher has requested on a “wish list.”

Most classes ask for pizza parties or donuts, while gifts ranged from basic school supplies to computer printers and sweaters and gloves for students.

“This is a dream-come-true for these kids,” said Fairview Principal David Marianno. “Our students are cramming and learning like crazy and this is the only party they have all year. We really appreciate NorthBay’s support.”



He noted that in his 30-year career, he has never seen so many homeless kids coming to school cold and hungry. “The party brought tears to my eyes, but it was also very uplifting,” says Evelyn Silag, R.N., whose NorthBay Medical Center nursing unit sponsored Mary Kaduk’s third-grade class at Fairview Elementary School.

There was an extra gift for the Padan Elementary School stocking. NorthBay employees heard that the school needed to raise \$30,000 to send all of its sixth-graders to science camp. To help, NorthBay presented a check for \$2,000 to Padan Principal Sylvia Rodriguez, sixth-grade teacher Holly Wudel and Vacaville Unified School District Superintendent John Neiderkorn before a classroom of enthusiastic sixth-graders.

“This is so exciting,” said Holly, who is in charge of the fund-raising. “We’re working hard to raise the money so all our kids can go, and this is big!” ❄️



Genentech Brings Santa to ABC Party

The lobby of NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield became Santa’s workshop for an afternoon on Dec. 20, giving scores of local children a chance to visit with the jolly old elf, glue and color Christmas ornaments and decorations, play interactive games and pick out a toy.

It was all part of NorthBay Healthcare’s annual party for the families associated with the ABC (A Baby’s Coming) Clinic, which serves under-insured pregnant women in the area.

“I think our volunteers and employees get as much fun out of this as the kids do,” said a cheerful Diane Harris, director of the ABC Program, who wore her red reindeer antlers complete with jingle bells while shepherding children up to meet Santa. Her team of “holiday assistants” escorted the children through Santa’s workshop, helping them pick out a toy, donated by NorthBay Healthcare employees.

Once again, NorthBay Healthcare teamed up with Genentech to bring Santa Claus to the lobby for a special visit. Genentech also provided a plush teddy bear for every child, which it has done since the event began in 2002.

Another Season for Strike Out Cancer

Genentech-Vacaville and the Sacramento River Cats will team up again to help raise funds for the NorthBay Cancer Center.

Genentech’s Strike Out Cancer event will officially kick off on June 30, but the fund-raising will actually take place throughout the entire baseball season, according to Dolly Rivero-Mendieta, event coordinator for Genentech-Vacaville. The company agreed to again pitch in funds for every strike out thrown during River Cats home games at Raley Field.

Genentech-Vacaville and the Triple A baseball affiliate of the Oakland A’s collaborated during the 2011 baseball season, raising a total of \$64,200 for the NorthBay Cancer Center. Genentech employees also held two raffles, which raised another \$4,000.

This welcome donation was used to make patients more comfortable as they receive treatment, according to Janet Black, manager of the medical oncology and infusion center. Among the first items purchased was a sound system for the center’s waiting and procedure rooms, so that patients can listen to soothing music before and during their treatments. A blanket warmer, to comfort patients as they receive their infusions, has also been ordered, Black added.

Interested in attending the June 30 game? Contact the River Cats ticket office at www.rivercats.com.



DREAM of a LIFETIME In Their Final Days... Making Dreams Come True



Martha Villa (surrounded by her family, above) enjoyed the Mariachi music she loved all her life at a special Dream of a Lifetime party in Suisun.

NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement's Dream of a Lifetime continues to enchant and comfort our patients and their loved ones. Now in its fourth year, our program has granted the last wishes of 25 people.

From organizing simple family gatherings to helping a reunion of mother and son thousands of miles apart, to simple touches of luxury, our "Dream Makers" have offered magic and closure to the dying and helped create heirloom memories for those who survive them.

Here are some recent "dream-come-true" experiences from the program:

Martha's Mariachis

Life had never been easy for Vacaville resident Martha Villa. A single mother to five children, she had to make ends meet. Despite many hardships, it was always easy for her to be transported by music. Until she reached her 80s, it was easy to coax her onto the dance floor, particularly if Mariachi music was playing.

Dying at home while surrounded by children and hospice nurses, her family hoped to give her one last meeting with Mariachis.

Dream of a Lifetime organized a large family gathering at a restaurant in Suisun. While Martha, 83, arrived in a wheelchair and was put at the head of the table, a trio of traditionally dressed musicians sang the songs of love and longing she always treasured.

"The joy in her face said it all," said Dream Coordinator Veronica Wertz. "We were so happy we could make the music happen for her."

In the weeks before her death, Martha's memory faded, reported her daughter, Marti. But when shown photos from the concert of Mariachi music, she would smile and nod her head.

Limousine Lady

Nobody ever handed anything to Vacaville's Edith Shepherd, 71. Growing up in the south with impoverished grandparents, having several young children to support on her own and experiencing little joy in her life, she wasn't surprised when bad luck paid another visit to her in the form of terminal lung cancer.

But last fall she enjoyed a "Queen for a Day" experience because of Dream of a Lifetime. First came a day in the salon with Christina Rivera. "When Dream of a Lifetime asked if I could help, I didn't even have to think about it," the Nails and Noggins hairdresser said. "It made me feel great to do something."

Edith's son Tony wheeled his mother into the salon, and the transformation began. Then came the big visit to visit Red Hawk Casino in Placerville and Edith arrived in style. With the donation of a limo ride to get to her beloved slot machines, she was able to luxuriate with a sip of champagne (the first time she had ever tried it!) and sumptuous treats to snack on. "I'd never imagined anyone ever treating me this well," she said. "I felt like a celebrity."

From Shanghai with Love

When Fairfield's Roselia Rafol found out she was dying of cancer, she had one strong dream: to see her son and grandson. But she thought it would be impossible. The pair lived in Shanghai, and it would cost a fortune. Also, coordinating his trip could be a logistical nightmare.

The Dream of a Lifetime crew, knowing Roselia, 55, had just a few days left to live, made it happen. Working with Solano County donations, doctors who wrote special requests and even a member of Congress, Roselia's son Aron arrived with Franko, the 3-year-old grandson she had never seen.

After the family's reunion, Roselia slipped away. "She was so peaceful," said Aron. "I know she was happy she got to see us."

Roselia Rafol treasured the opportunity to visit with her son Aron, and to meet her 3-year-old grandson, Franko, who traveled from Shanghai.



Hair stylist Christina Rivera jumped at the chance to give Edith Shepherd a fancy fix for her Dream of a Lifetime. Edith's son Tony (inset) wheeled her in to the studio, and then joined her at Red Hawk Casino in Placerville.



DREAM of a LIFETIME

Edith Shepherd, Martha Villa, Roselia Rafol and their families were recent recipients of the NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement's Dream of a Lifetime program that grants wishes of the terminally ill. Begun in 2009, this is one of the few programs nationwide that fulfill the final dreams of adults.

To find out more about this special program and its rules and guidelines, call (707) 646-3575 or e-mail Veronica Wertz at VWertz@NorthBay.org.



Silver Celebration for 2012 Solano Wine & Food Jubilee

The 2012 Solano Wine & Food Jubilee will celebrate its 25th anniversary when the event returns to the Nut Tree Complex in Vacaville on April 27. In honor of this silver celebration, event organizers promise an array of enhance-

ments that should make the Wine & Food Jubilee—already Solano County's must-do social event of the year—an even hotter ticket.

The Solano Wine & Food Jubilee is the primary fund-raiser for the programs of NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement, and during the past 24 years the gala affair has raised more than \$2 million. These funds have enabled NorthBay to provide physical, emotional and spiritual care for the terminally ill, allowing these patients and their families to live their final days as peacefully and as comfortably as possible. NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement provides its services to all regardless of their ability to pay.

The Jubilee offers ticket-holders an opportunity to spend hours tasting an array of sweet and savory foods from the region's most notable restaurants and food merchants, paired with pourings from numerous top-flight wineries and breweries, as well as other beverages.

Among several new twists for the 25th anniversary affair is a major enhancement to the Jubilee raffle. This year it includes an opportunity to win a 2012 Electra Glide Ultra

Limited motorcycle in Vivid Black donated by Iron Steed Harley-Davidson (\$23,999 MSRP), and \$11,000 in additional cash prizes.


Making the raffle even more enticing is the “buy two, get the third free” offer. Tickets are \$50 each and can be purchased by calling (707) 646-3133.

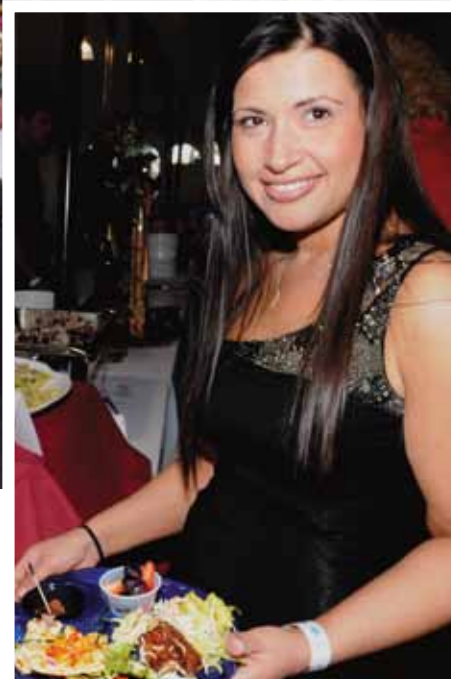
The donated motorcycle will be a featured part of a special “Poker Run” through Suisun Valley on April 21. For more information about this and other Jubilee-related activities, visit www.wineandfoodjubilee.org. There will also be dancing to the music of The Time Bandits, and a silent auction.

As in the past, the event will be held under an enormous tent, through a joint arrangement with Total Home & Garden Show. This year, the show will be held at the Nut Tree the weekend before the Jubilee, from April 20 to 22.

The Solano Wine & Food Jubilee's Presenting Sponsors for 2012 are Patt and Al Shaw, Freeman Family & Cosmetic Dentistry, Sacca Family Burger King Restaurants, Gold's Gym, Iron Steed Harley-Davidson and the Nut Tree.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available, and for a minimum of \$1,000 a sponsor can enjoy early entrance to the Jubilee, an invitation to a private reception at the event, hotel accommodations and limousine service, as well as an invitation to the exclusive Open That Bottle Night event on February 25.

The Solano Wine & Food Jubilee, a black tie-optional affair (denim discouraged), gets under way at the Nut Tree Complex beginning at 6:30 p.m. Tickets, for those ages 21 and over, must be purchased in advance and are \$75 each, or \$100 at the door, if still available. To purchase tickets, call (707) 646-3133 or visit www.wineandfoodjubilee.org. 



Community Health Education Classes

The Art of Breastfeeding • Learn the “how to's” of breastfeeding. This class addresses the health benefits for mom and baby, the role of the father, the working mom and more. Cost: \$15. Call (707) 646-4277.

Brothers & Sisters To Be • Prepare children ages 3–9 for the arrival of a new baby. Cost: \$10 per family. Call (707) 646-4277.

C-Section Preparation • Individual counseling available to women delivering at NorthBay Medical Center who may require a C-section. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-4277.

Labor of Love • A six-week prepared childbirth class for moms and dads or coaches; register in fourth month of pregnancy or earlier. Cost: \$75. Call (707) 646-4277.

Labor of Love in Review • One-session childbirth refresher course for moms and labor partners. Pre-requisite: previous attendance in a prepared childbirth education course. Cost: \$20. Call (707) 646-4277.

Prenatal Care • Expectant mothers learn important information about pregnancy. Topics include nutrition, exercise, fetal growth and development, “pregnancy do's and don'ts,” and much more. It is recommended this class be taken as early in pregnancy as possible. Cost: \$10. Call (707) 646-4277.

Newborn Care • Expectant parents are instructed on daily care, nutrition, safety and development for the first few months of life. One-session course. Cost: \$15. Call (707) 646-4277.

Maternity Orientation and Tour • A tour of the NorthBay Medical Center's maternity unit. Information about hospital registration, birth certificates, and available birthing options provided. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-4277.

Siblings' Birthing Preparation • Parents who are considering having children present during delivery can have one-on-one counseling. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-4277.

Breastfeeding Support Group • A postpartum support group for moms meets every Tuesday, 12:30 to 2 p.m., in Fairfield. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5024.

Help with Child Care • Are you looking for child care or help paying for it? Are you a child care provider in need of support? Call Solano Family & Children's Services at (707) 863-3950.

Caregivers' Support Group • For anyone involved in caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or a dementia-related illness. Meets second Wednesday of month, 7 pm to 9 pm at the Adult Day Center. Cost: Free. Call (707) 624-7971.

SAND (Support After Neonatal Death) • Friendship and understanding for parents experiencing grief for the loss of a pregnancy or infant. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5433.

Grief and Bereavement Support Groups • Two adult support groups meet on a weekly basis in Fairfield. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-3517.

Teen & Children's Bereavement Support Groups • NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement offers free bereavement support groups for teens, age 13 through 17, and children age 6 through 12 on an as-needed basis. Cost: Free. For a schedule and more information, call (707) 646-3575.

PEACE (Parent Education and Custody Effectiveness) • Create an effective parenting relationship between divorcing and separating parents. Endorsed by judicial and parenting advocates. Two 3-hour sessions on Saturdays. Cost: \$25. Call (707) 421-4155.

Look Good, Feel Better • A program to help women currently undergoing cancer treatment cope with appearance-related side effects of treatment. To register, call the American Cancer Society, (800) 227-2345. Cost: Free.

Labor of Love — One Day Class • A one-day prepared childbirth class for moms and dads or coaches. Will be held on Saturdays. Cost: \$75. Call (707) 646-4277.

Pulmonary Education Series • A three-session course that meets on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon at NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield. A new course begins each month. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5072 to enroll.



Kick the Butts • Stop smoking classes help adult smokers as well as smokeless users. Cost: Free. To register, call the Solano County Health Promotion and Education Bureau at (707) 784-8900 or (800) 287-7357.

Laugh Out Loud • A class on urinary incontinence. Do you control your bladder or does your bladder control you? Learn the latest treatment options, including pelvic floor exercises. Cost: Free. For class dates and to reserve your seat, call: (707) 646-4267

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We offer opportunities in:

- Allied Health
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- Management
- Nursing
- Service

For more information about us or our employment opportunities in Fairfield and Vacaville, visit www.northbayjobs.org. EOE

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