



Advocate Biographies

LaRisha Baker

Grassroots Action Committee Member



(LaRisha is pictured here with Senator Merkley, her sister Marsha on the left, and her sister Michell on the right)

My name is LaRisha Baker; I am the second of four daughters to Steve and Christy Baker. On June 10, 2008 I lost my father Steve Baker to colorectal cancer. He was diagnosed at stage IV and fought for 10 months before going home. This is my second year attending Call-on-Congress. During my stay last year I had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people and hear many stories of triumph

and loss. Not only did I meet many wonderful people, I learned a great deal and came home with a new sense of empowerment. I was truly inspired, and returned home with my sisters with a seed to plant. In July of 2009 my sisters and I formed a non-profit organization, the "Steve Baker Colorectal Cancer Alliance (SBCCA)." We focus on community advocacy, education and awareness. I am returning to Call-on-Congress 2010 to re-connect with those I met last year, meet new friends, get educated and continue the fight against colorectal cancer. I truly believe together and as individuals, we call all make a difference.

Marsha Baker

Hello, my name is Marsha Baker and I am from Portland, OR. This will be my second time attending Call-on Congress; my father died in June 2008 and my two sisters and I traveled to D.C. in March 2009. We attended the first time in hopes of finding a voice to continue to fight for our Daddy and we found the experience to be very empowering and it helped us find our focus. We have since started our own non-profit organization to raise awareness within our community. I am again attending Call-on Congress this year to continue to encourage Congress to support funding for colorectal cancer screenings and research. I'm also looking forward to seeing the many new friends I made last year and having a good time at the conference.

Michell Baker

My name is Michell Baker from Portland, OR. My Dad Steve Baker passed away from Colon Cancer on June 10, 2008. This will be my 2nd Call-on Congress. I'm ready to go back to Capitol Hill to continue to be a voice for my Dad and to prevent this from happening to other families.



And the one thing that most people don't know about me is; that I'm a fantastic "Theme Party" coordinator/decorator!!

Jennifer Bretsch
First Time Attendee



My name is Jennifer Bretsch and I had the great honor of supporting my dear friend Shawn Felty as a caregiver while he battled colon cancer with tremendous courage and grace. He was diagnosed with stage IV disease in December 2007 and passed away in December 2009 at the age of 39. This is my first time attending Call-on Congress. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to share Shawn's story and carry forward his efforts to raise awareness about the intersection of Crohn's Disease and colorectal cancer. I didn't need to travel far from home to be here....I live in Alexandria, VA and work in Washington, DC. My interest in participating in Call-on Congress is both personal *and* professional. For years I have worked on preventive health and health care issues at the national level and I look forward to being the change I wish to see in the world. Although I am in my 30's, most people don't know that I am looking forward to my first colonoscopy when I turn 50!

Barbara Cappel

Is the co-founder of Strides For Life (now known as the Strides For Life Colon Cancer Foundation). An organization she founded to honor her son Dylan who passed away from colorectal cancer when he was 23. Barbara lives in Manhattan Beach, California.

Jeffrey Chou
First Time Attendee



See bio in speaker section.



Gordon Cole



Gordon Cole, 60, is a commercial real estate appraiser in Greensboro, NC. Following his diagnosis of stage IV colorectal cancer in August 2003 and subsequent radiation, chemotherapy, two liver resections, colon resection, RFA, two lung resections, a clinical trial, and continuing chemo, along with a prostate cancer diagnosis in late '06, Gordon has been active in promoting cancer awareness and cancer research efforts. He has spoken at various group functions such as the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center's Board of Overseers, several support groups and screening seminars, and was a panelist at Colon Cancer Alliance's (CCA) annual conference. He is a member of the Board of Directors of C3.

Gordon advocates on Capitol Hill for legislative changes benefitting cancer research and has lobbied for NCCS. He works individually with newly diagnosed patients in the Greensboro area and with CCA's Buddy Program. He has participated in several blood studies for research at Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Gordon has written an information flier for newly diagnosed patients, based on his experience, which is now being used at several cancer centers and support programs. Gordon participates in survivor contacts and mentoring, and is the NC ambassador of CCA's Voices program. He is on the Golfers Against Cancer Board of Directors, a partner in the North Carolina Comprehensive Cancer Program, and participates in the Survivorship and Prevention Workgroups and Carolina Well (an LAF affiliate), and is involved in outreach for cancer screening and education in underserved areas in NC.

Verna Cox

Verna Cox, 60 year old 2 time stage 3 colon cancer survivor from Philadelphia, PA. Third time attending Call-On-Congress. I'm the outreach coordinator for the Delaware Valley Chapter of Colon Cancer Alliance. I'm back attending because we still haven't reached our goal of having a Colorectal Cancer prevention, early detection and treatment act passed into law.



Liz Dennis

Grassroots Action Committee Member



Liz Dennis is a colorectal cancer survivor from Tempe, Arizona. She serves on the 2009-2010 Grassroots Action Committee (GAC), and like all the GAC members helped to plan and organize the Call-on Congress.

Steven Depp

I live north of New York City with my wife of 43 years and I am a stage IV colon cancer patient. Diagnosed initially in 2003, I am currently stable after undergoing a hemicolectomy, two rounds of chemo, and two RFAs for a liver met. I have attended Call on Congress twice before and continue to attend to help establish screening programs which will reach a much higher percentage of the population.

Most people don't know that I never graduated from high school.

Dave Dixon

First Time Attendee

I'm a colorectal cancer survivor out of treatment for 16years. I was diagnosed November 1994. I received 8 weeks of chemo (5FU) and radiation. First surgery had successful reconnect but I developed a pelvic infection within a week and had to have emergency surgery to try to save the remaining colon. I had to carry 2 stomas for a year and my catheter as well to help the colon recover from the infection. The following surgeries (2) corrected the the problem and I received a permanent colostomy. I developed a secondary perineal fistula that was quite severe and had 3 more surgeries to correct that. All and all, I consider myself very lucky to have survived as several of my friends were not as lucky. I support this organization because it provides much needed education and support for those who need it most. Most people don't know that I served in the Submarine Force, US Atlantic Fleet, during the Viet Nam conflict.



Ronald Doornink

First Time Attendee

Fourteen years ago, I lost my dear sister, Josien Doornink then only 40 years old, to colon cancer. Incredibly, her husband, Ton Jurriens, did not get screened despite having a family history of colon cancer (as in both of his parents died of colon cancer). He died of the same disease five years ago, at the age of 55. Tragically, they left behind two young children who should not have to carry such a heavy burden this early in their lives. After wrapping up a career in the corporate world, I am now looking to devote more of my time in support of causes that have a special meaning to me. The fight against colon cancer ranks at the top of the list. I am originally from the Netherlands (hence the unusual names above). I have lived in the U.S. since 1978 and currently reside in Manhattan Beach California. First time Call-on Congress attendee.

Brenda Elsagher



See bio in speaker section.

Jesus Esquivel

First Time Attendee

My name is Jesus Esquivel. I am a cancer surgeon that has a particular interest in advanced colorectal cancer that has spread all over the abdomen (known as peritoneal carcinomatosis). This is my first time at the Call-on Congress events. I am attending this meeting to raise awareness of this condition and to be able to discuss the current treatment options.



Tom Foeller

First Time Attendee



My name is Tom Foeller, I'm 63, and from Portland, Oregon. When I was 59 I had some minor bowell issues but was largely asymptomatic, thought old age was setting in, and asked my doctor to check for colorectal cancer. A subsequent colonoscopy in February 2006 identified stage III rectal cancer, then I underwent 1 radiation and 2 chemo regimens, plus 2 surgeries. I also participated in a NSABP research study R-04 to determine the effectiveness of taking Xelota (Capecitabine) orally rather than the standard chemo delivery method of a pic and pump. I am currently cancer free and one of my missions in life is to spread the word on the value of early colorectal screening. Several of my acquaintances have since been found with pre-cancerous polyps. I believe C3 is a very effective organization and have been hoping for some time to join

them and other advocates for an important call on congress to elicit additional support. As a result of my experiences I had to retire early and have become an advocate for health care reform. As a lucky survivor thus far I am currently having the time of my life; working on a number of local, state and national issues; plus pursuing dreams I have no right to expect! I seriously thought about writing a book, or at least an article, about bathroom design since I've spent so much time in them over the last 4 years.

Malia Frey

First Time Attendee

I am the Promotions Director/Lead Writer for the Colon Cancer Coalition and Get Your Rear in Gear website. Through my work with the Coalition, I have attended countless events, met many courageous cancer survivors, and have been inspired by fearless colon cancer patients. The message that each of them shares is the importance of getting screened. At this, my first Call on Congress, I hope to deliver this message to the legislators who can make screening programs more accessible to the many under and un-insured Americans whose lives may be saved with this simple procedure. One fact that people don't know about me: The origin of my middle name: Psyche.



Rose Hausmann
First Time Attendee



Hi, I'm Rose Hausmann from Sayreville NJ. I was diagnosed with Stage III Colon Cancer in November 2005 at age 42. After a colon resection and 6 months of chemotherapy, there was no evidence of disease. Nine months later I had a metastasis in my ovaries followed by more surgery and 6 more months of chemotherapy. All was well for almost 2 years. That was until I experienced another recurrence in July 2009 in my cervix and pelvis. After surgery I was informed the cancer had an excellent chance of recurring and chemo will not cure it. Because of the unusual spread of the colon cancer to my

female organs, I received radiation in hopes it would respond to it, as do some female related cancers. I completed my treatments in Dec.09 and remain hopeful!!

Initially, I went to the hospital after experiencing constipation for a couple weeks -the pain it finally caused was EXCRUCIATING! The Doctor sent me home with assurance I was only constipated. I was told to double the amount of enemas I'd been taking. When that proved futile and the excruciating pain persisted, I returned to the Emergency Room doubled over in pain. After an X-Ray (of all things)I was reassured by yet another Dr. that I was only constipated. Know that I complained of excruciating pain and having no bowel movement in two weeks. My husband and I were not aware that my situation should have prompted a CT scan or colonoscopy!! But what did I know at the time?! After continual pain and no relief I called my Dr.'s office and explained my situation, they told me he had no room in his schedule. In desperation and with tears in my eyes from the relentless pain, I drove to his office. The receptionist reluctantly agreed to call a GI Dr. when I begged for someone to look through my body. A subsequent colonoscopy revealed the tumor which blocked my colon.

Obviously there is a need to educate people to include doctors about the seriousness of this # 2 cancer killer and the need to detect it early; sparing no measures.

Secondly, because I have been very active, working out and running 5 miles per day at the time of diagnosis, I want people to know, this cancer does not discriminate against those who pride themselves to be fit.

Finally, I am blessed to still be here 4 years + after my initial diagnosis due to the wonderful support from doctors and treatments that have carried me this far; not to mention my loving friends and family that propel me through each day. As long as God allows, I want to be a voice for those who did not get my good fortune.

One thing most people don't know about me is that I ride a unicycle.



Eric Hausmann
First Time Attendee



My name is Eric I am here with my wife Rose. She has Stage IV Colon Cancer. I am here to support her and plan on spending the rest of my life with her.

Sharon Hibay



I am a healthcare administrator who is very interested in increasing colorectal cancer awareness, the need for improved screening and providing support and impact to decreasing death and disability from this disease. Although my primary focus is the patients of Northern Philadelphia, I'd like to have greater understanding of the state and federal support for improving screening, especially related to health disparities for certain populations and cultures.

Patti Hollenback

Patti resides in Aston, Pennsylvania. She is a repeat Call-on Congress attendee.

Rochelle Joseph
First Time Attendee



I am a 10-year, stage 3 colon cancer survivor from Upper Marlboro, Maryland by way of Dallas, Texas. I was diagnosed in 1999 just after completing graduate school at the age of 26. After six (6) weeks of radiation and chemo, I underwent a



colectomy to remove my tumor and proceeded with seven (7) months of adjuvent therapy.

This is my first experience with the Call-on Congress, and I believe that awareness, education, and early screening and detection are paramount with a preventable disease like colon cancer. I am excited to contribute to C3's efforts to save lives.

Christine Kroll

Hello! I attended last year and had a wonderful time--that is, pretty nice considering I had just finished treatment. I was seated at the table with Pam and a bunch of other people from West Va and I felt a bit embarrassed because I haven't had the opportunity to travel there much less represent. It all worked out okay because I went to Senator Norton's office and met with the Legislative Aid. Also I hung out with a group of friendly advocates. My one regret was that I took my calling a bit too seriously since I was a newbie and still had some chemobrain. There were a few other health groups campaigning on the Hill that day; one group consisted of people in wheelchairs and I should have taken the time to talk with them as they had travelled from far away. My approach this year will be to not try so hard, to just enjoy other people's company and realize we are not out to change the world overnight but are just there to raise awareness. Also to accept when some people may not be willing to give us face time or laugh or give us the cold shoulder. Even though some people think I am a loser, I have great faith in God and myself that things will work out for me someday. PS-Will likely be attending only PM Session on Tuesday as I have class in the morning and its a real long day and I remember people getting stressed out in the afternoon.

Florence Kurttila

Grassroots Action Committee Member



I am an 8 1/2 year Colon Cancer Survivor from Citrus Heights, CA. I went through 26 weeks of chemotherapy. This will be my 4th Call on Congress. I am attending once again to "give back" and to help educate people on Colon Cancer awareness and to help as an advocate for those diagnosed and undergoing treatment with this disease. I also want to help those who are either uninsured, without insurance or non-insured know how to get access to care. That is why I advocate for all those who's lives have been touched by this. We can make a difference - an important

one.

I also was a caregiver for my husband, who passed away just a few months after a very aggressive bout with cancer of an unknown origin. I lost my brother to lung cancer at the same



time I was undergoing treatment for my colon cancer. God let me live for a reason and that is to help others. He's not done with me yet!!

Dave Larson

Grassroots Action Committee Member



I'm from Minnesota, the Land of 10,000 Lakes. This will be the 3rd Call-on-Congress I've participated in. Our two Senators are Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken. I helped on the Senate recount of votes as the 2008 election was extremely close. When the dust finally settled, Franken was declared the winner over Norm Coleman by about 260 or so votes. I forgot the actual number but it took 6 or 7 months to complete the process. Both of our Senators are very supportive of cancer, its prevention and C3's mission.

Carol, my spouse, is a colorectal cancer survivor. She has written 3 books related to cancer, her journey and that of other people's experiences with surviving. Her first book "When the Trip Changes..." has just been revised and re-printed in 2010. The book now includes a section on Support Groups and C3 is covered on page 141. From a personal stand point, I'm married; Carol and I have three adult children. I am also involved on a part-time basis at the Guthrie Theater and with volunteer activities at the Walker Art Center. Both of these Twin Cities organizations have worldwide recognition for excellence in the performing and visual arts.

Carol Larson



Eleven years ago I was diagnosed with colorectal cancer stage III. I spent the next year going through chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery. Had excellent care. Decided to write a book about it, "When The Trip Changes." I made analogies to our trip to Italy, because I thought both experiences needed lots of information, a good guide, and learning a new language.

Wrote three more books, and was one of C3's award winners for "Women who have Broken Boundaries."

This year, Get Your Rear In Gear sponsored a revision and update on my first book with an extra chapter on support groups (it includes one page on C3 with photos).



Christine LeGrant



I am a survivor and past Call-on Congress participant. I live in Arlington VA. I am a physician assistant and former oncology nurse. I was diagnosed at age 51 with Stage III colon cancer at my first screening colonoscopy. This March 20 marks the fourth anniversary of my "all known tumor has been resected" declaration, followed by clear scans shortly after, and after, and after. I received six months of Folfox and twelve months of Avastin under a clinical trial. I am married and the mother of a 12 year old daughter. March 17 is my eighth wedding anniversary. My family means everything to me.

Suzanne Lindley



My name is Suzanne Lindley and I live in Canton, Texas. This is my third Call on Congress! I was diagnosed with Stage IV colon cancer in 1998. I have benefited from each chemo treatment as it has been developed plus I've had Sir-spheres, gamma knife, RFA, cyberknife, vertebroplasty, and participated in three clinical trials. My plan is to keep on keepin on for as long as possible and to in the very distant future enjoy grand-children, great-grandchildren, and rocking chair days with Ronnie :)

I am climbing the steps of Capitol Hill again to ensure that my children and their children experience a world without colon cancer.

It is Preventable, Treatable, and Beatable!!!

Mary McCanney

First Time Attendee

Mary is from Havertown, Pennsylvania and is attending her first Call-on Congress.



Anita Mitchell



Anita is a repeat Call-on Congress attendee. She is a colorectal cancer survivor, and currently lives in Seattle, Washington.

Arlene Murphy

Grassroots Action Committee Member



My name is Arlene Murphy. I live in Cincinnati, Ohio with my husband, Ed, who is also attending Call on Congress. I am a metastatic colon cancer patient, diagnosed originally in Sept. 2004, and am presently in treatment. I have had two surgeries and have been on many chemotherapies over the past five plus year. In July, 2009 I retired from my job of 25 years as a secretary for a local school district.

Ed Murphy



Hi, I am the caregiver/support person for my wife, Arlene, who has been battling colon cancer for 5+ years now. We are from southwest Ohio in Milford which is near Cincinnati. We both attended Call-on Congress last year and enjoyed it very much. We felt that it was a way that we could possibly "make a difference" in the colorectal cancer world. Thanks, Ed Murphy



Kate Murphy

See photo and bio in C3 staff section.

Mandy Nelson

My name is Mandy Nelson. I live in Saint Paul, MN where I have worked for 10 years as an RN in the St. Joseph's Hospital float pool. Obviously my job places me in contact with those dealing with cancers of all types and degrees -- patients dealing with the physical and emotional toll cancer and its treatment place on them; loved ones trying to find any way to be a source of support. But it was my best friend, Christine Niemi, who introduced me to the unfair realities associated with metastatic colon cancer. She also introduced me to C3, and I accompanied her to D.C. for the March 2009 C.O.C. for the first time. She passed away July 18, 2009 after nearly a 5-year battle with her cancer. My grandfather, Royce, is also a colon cancer survivor. Fortunately, his was caught early during a colonoscopy -- as it should be, if it has to be at all!

Erica Paul

First Time Attendee



My name is Erica Paul. I have lived in Reston, VA since 2004, but hail originally from Mid-Michigan. I was diagnosed with Stage IV Colon Cancer, metastatic to the liver and lungs in June of 2007 at age 26. Now, at age 28, I am still currently undergoing regular chemotherapy treatments, have had SIRT, and underwent surgery that included a liver resection at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. It is important to me as a young adult living with metastatic disease to increase awareness of the importance of screening regardless of age; as typically one would get screened starting at age 50. As someone who has limited treatment options, lack of research funding for colon cancer is another concern that needs to be addressed. One fact that fellow advocates do not know about me is I am an alumna of Delta Zeta Sorority.



Stan Plavin

First Time Attendee



Dr. Plavin is Vice Chair Person and Founding Board Member of PreventingColorectalCancer.org. He is also the President and Managing Partner, Ambulatory Anesthesia of Atlanta. He lives in Atlanta, Georgia and is bringing his 12-year old daughter Alexandra with him to meet with their Senators and Representative on Wednesday.

Nancy Roach



Nancy has been involved with the colorectal cancer community since 1996 when her mother-in-law was diagnosed with rectal cancer, and was a co-founder of the Colon Cancer Alliance in 1999. She works with the gastrointestinal research community, government agencies, elected officials and corporations, always pushing on behalf of people touched by colorectal cancer. She is affiliated with the National Cancer Institute Clinical Trials Working Group GI Steering Committee and SPORE program, and serves on the editorial board of the American Association of Cancer Research's consumer magazine. She founded C3 in 2005 in order to provide focus, infrastructure and support to the growing colorectal cancer advocacy movement.



Cindy Robinson

First Time Attendee



I have been in Virginia since 1997. I was diagnosed with Stage 3 Colorectal cancer in May 2007, my one and only sibling was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer the following month. He died one year later. I had the most terrific, aggressive doctors that saved my life. I am not a competitive person at all, but I was very determined to win! Within 10 days of my diagnosis I started treatment. I did 6 weeks daily chemo and radiation, then underwent surgery which would include going in for the unknown ostomy. When I came out of surgery I thankfully only had an

ileostomy. Which meant reversal of this ostomy was an option at a later date. After 6 months of Folfox chemo every 10 days I was able to have my ileostomy reversed. I have been clean ever since. Life isn't the same since cancer. It would be a waste if I don't use the experience as an opportunity to make a change-not only in my life but hopefully in others. That is why I am here. I want my experience to make a difference in someone else's life. It could be a matter of life or death.

Michael Sapienza

First Time Attendee

My name is Michael Sapienza, Executive Director and Chairman of the Board of the Chris4Life Colon Cancer Foundation. Chris4Life was founded in memory of my mother Chris Sapienza who passed away from Stage IV colon cancer in May of 2009. I consider my mother to be a survivor for sure, and I'm very much looking forward to participating in C3's Call-on Congress.

Pamela Seijo

Grassroots Action Committee



I am Pam Seijo, Co-Chair of the Grassroots Action Committee and have been to Call-On Congress every year with C3 since 2005. I started doing advocacy work in 2004 and was hooked from knowing that I could make a difference and my voice counts. I was diagnosed with Stage III Rectal Cancer in August 2000 at the age of 39 when my colon ruptured. After my hospitalization for 16 days, I began my treatment of 5FU (24 hours a day/7 days a week) for 6 weeks along with leucovorin and 34 radiation treatments. At the end of treatment, my tumor did not shrink and my tumor was considered inoperable. It was considered inoperable because the tumor grew and had attached to my female organs. Then it was



considered aggressive Stage III/StageIV. However, I searched until I found a surgeon who agreed to attempt the surgery. After 8 hours in surgery with 3 different surgeons, the tumor was removed. After healing from surgery, I began 18 months of chemotherapy, Camptosar. When I finished that treatment in 16 months due to some complications I began Xeloda long term/low dose. I still am taking Xeloda and will continue to I hit ten years. I am attending Call on Congress because I want to make a difference so no family will ever have to go through what my family did. Also, the meeting of new friends and the renewal of old friends. One fact people may not know - I have a book published called "A Mirrored Image." A story about cancer and survival.

Doug Sharp
First Time Attendee



I am the chairman of the Tom O'Sullivan Memorial Golf Classic. Tom was a dear friend and died from colorectal cancer in June 2007. I asked Tom's wife after his death if I could start a benefit tournament to raise money to help fight the disease. She and the family gave me their blessing. In Sept 2008, we held our first event. During that first year of planning, we secured 501c3 designation as The O'Sullivan Family Foundation. To date we have raised over \$50K and donated \$35K to The University of Kansas Cancer Center, \$15K of which is in specific research on finding markers for the disease and \$20K for education and outreach in the community at large. I am from Prairie Village, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City. While I have never attended the C3 Call On Congress, I have participated in visits with Senators &

Representatives with my wife who is a longtime City Council member. I look forward to our meeting and advancing our foundations work through involvement in C3.

Deborah Snyder
First Time Attendee

I live in Arlington, Virginia, and this is my first time attending Call-on Congress. I was diagnosed with colon cancer (stage 1) in late 2008, at the age of 41. I hope to help raise awareness that colorectal cancer can strike anyone, regardless of age or family history, and to fight for an end to this terrible disease.



Pat Steer

First Time Attendee



I'm from central New York. I've never been able to attend Call-on-Congress because until this year I was always either in treatment or recovering from surgery. I was diagnosed 6 years ago (2004) with stage IV rectal cancer - no family history, and weight loss/elevated liver enzymes were my only symptoms. I was 48, but my primary tumor was already poorly differentiated - meaning I'd had it, without symptoms, for several years. My liver tumors were inoperable until after 2 years of chemo treatments (including a year of HAI pump chemo.) I had a recurrence

in 2007 which resulted in my 3rd surgery, a modified pelvic exenteration with intraoperative radiation that left me with permanent left foot neuropathy. I have been NED/in remission twice - the first time for 21 months after my liver resection, & this time it's been 24 months (so far!) One fact most people in the cancer community don't know about me is that I've been a dog trainer for 30+ years. I train and show dogs in obedience, rally and agility, and continued to train and show my dogs throughout my treatments.

Jessica Tovar



My name is Jessica Tovar and I live in Los Angeles, CA.

This is my second year attending Call On Cancer. As a colorectal cancer survivor I saw an opportunity to share my story and put a face to colon cancer.

I was diagnosed with Stage IV colon cancer in 2003. Initially I treated the gastrointestinal symptoms with over the counter medications. But when I had found blood in my stool I knew that I needed to see a physician. After the exam, my primary care physician recommended a consult with a gastroenterologist. After hearing about my symptoms and an exam, he had recommended a colonoscopy. I never thought I would need a colonoscopy. After all I was only 41 years old with no other medical issues other than the gastrointestinal issues that brought me to the doctor in the first place. I thought that I had irritable bowel syndrome. Not cancer.

After a number of tests, I learned that it had metastasized through the colon wall, several lymph nodes and into my liver. My treatment included multiple abdominal surgeries and 12 cycles of chemotherapy. I am very happy to say that I have been cancer free for 6 years now.

Most people don't know that I turned down the opportunity to play Mickey Mouse at Walt



Disney World when I was sixteen. The thought of being in the Mickey costume with hordes of children coming towards me scared me so instead I became a Tour Guide.

Ayde Vogl

I am the Executive of Strides for Life Colon Cancer Foundation. Our mission is the prevention and early detection of colon cancer. We have funded close to 100 colonoscopies to date. I joined the foundation as a volunteer four years ago and took on a part-time position as the executive director when the duties became too much for the volunteer board of directors. I first became interested in the fight against colon cancer when my dear friends, Barbara and Larry Cappel, lost their beloved son, Dylan, to colon cancer at the age of 23. With the help of their friends and family they have worked hard to get people screened for colon cancer whether they can afford it or not.

James Waller

First Time Attendee

I am a practicing colorectal surgeon in Evansville, Indiana. I am actively involved in the screening, diagnosis, and treatment of patients with colon and rectal cancer. As a health care provider I have seen both the joy and satisfaction that comes with treatment and prevention, as well as the heartbreak and disappointment that comes with the disease...especially in those patients who go unscreened. Either because they are not informed, or worse, cannot afford the screening! With adequate funding for education, and adequate health insurance to provide screening, this is a preventable disease!

Krista Waller

First Time Attendee

I am Krista Waller. I have not attended a "Call on Congress" before, but very excited to have the opportunity to be here this year! I am a Colorectal Cancer Advocate in Evansville, IN. I volunteer for The Colon Club, a not-for-profit that raises awareness about colorectal cancer specifically for men & women under the age of 50. I oversee the Colossal Colon project, the 40 foot replica of the human colon that tours the United States, to raise awareness. I am here to do whatever I can to raise awareness, increase screening, and support anyone who has been diagnosed with this PREVENTABLE, treatable, beatable cancer! As a side note, my "love of the colon" is how I met my husband, who just so happens to be a Colorectal Surgeon! We are here together, as a team, to do all that we can!



Regan Weaver



My name is Regan Weaver, and I'm an advocate from Annapolis, MD. My job as Communication Coordinator for PreventingColorectalCancer.Org introduced me to Carlea and C3. I've fallen in love with the mission of the organization and am now participating in my second Call-On-Congress. I spend a lot of time doing community service in Annapolis and helping at-risk kids stay out of trouble. Ironically, three of the kids who I mentor have parents that died of colorectal cancer in their late 30s. It's become my

personal mission to spread the word about changes to screening guidelines (African Americans should be screened earlier than any other ethnic group), and to make the kids knowledgeable about the topic.

Susan Weiler

I'm Sue Weiler, from Yorktown Heights, NY. This is my third year attending the Call on Congress. I was caregiver to my husband who was discovered to have Stage IV colorectal cancer. He died 9 months after diagnosis at age 56.

Joann Weiss

First Time Attendee

My name is Joann Weis. I am 68 years old. I live in Brooklyn, right off the Coney Island Beach. I've never attended a Call-on Congress before. My dear friend Susan Weiler suggested (well really insisted!) that I attend this year. I was diagnosed with colon cancer in March of 2008. My friends had been after me for a long time to have a colonoscopy and I kept putting it off. But I started to get sick after taking cholesterol medicine – really sick. I made an appointment to have an endoscopy and colonoscopy. After stopping the medicine all my ails disappeared but I decided to keep the appointments for the tests. Thanks God I did. While undergoing the scans for the cancer a small “dot” was found on my adrenal gland that turned out to be a pheochromocytoma which is a “one in a million” tumor that regulates blood pressure. I had been on pressure medicine for years – anyway the bottom line is that if we hadn't discovered the tumor and prepared for it I'm told I never would have made it off the table. I had to have the tumor as well as the adrenal gland removed. The saving grace was that that tumor was not cancerous and eventually I would have run into major trouble if the tumor had not been detected. So the second in command at the New York City Police Department where I work said that the amazing thing about all of this is that I got cancer and it saved my life!! Also I do not take any medicine for blood pressure anymore!! And my pressure is 120-125 over 70-80. Not bad, right!!! Anyway that is my story. Just had my one year colonoscopy and I'm good to go for another year.



Tish Wilkins

First Time Attendee

My name is Tish Wilkins and I live in Fairfax, VA. I was a Pediatric Oncology RN for 13 years. I have been out for 5 years and currently working for Genzyme Genetics in the cancer diagnostic division. This is my first time attending Call-on Congress. Most people don't know that I am a cancer survivor- Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma (diagnosed in April 1995). I've lost many family members to cancer and 2 of them being diagnosed with colorectal cancer. I'm very passionate about what I do and I'm all about the patient!!

Joshua Wimberly



My name is Josh Wimberly and I am a rectal cancer patient/survivor. I attended the event last year and look forward to being present this time around. I am bringing my wife with me this year and we are both looking forward to meeting with our representatives and informing them about much needed legislation to address issues surrounding colorectal cancer. I was diagnosed in August 2007 at 30 years old and have undergone six surgeries in two years, addressed one metastasis, undergone radiation, and undergone four separate rounds of chemotherapy (the most

recent I finished at the end of December). I am very outspoken, so there is not much people do not know about me.

Kimberly Wimberly

First Time Attendee



I'm a Licensed Clinical Social Worker from Birmingham, AL. I work as a therapist at a community mental health center. As a social worker, I'm passionate about social justice issues including equal access to health care for all Americans. My husband Josh Wimberly is a rectal cancer survivor and attended the 2009 Call On Congress. This year, he will be attending for the second time and I will attend for the first time. I'm looking forward to returning to the DC area as Josh and I met there while doing our social work internships in 2004.