



St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness

TEALTALK

2024

What's Inside:

SLOCA Welcomes New Board President

Welcome New Board Members

Celebrating SLOCA

Spirit of Giving

Research Recipient Addressing Ovarian Cancer Resistance

Together in Teal

SLOCA in the Community

Tee off in Teal

Ready to ROC and Roll

Toasting in Teal Brunch

The Power of Love

Volunteer Spotlight

Mark Your Calendars!

SLOCA Welcomes New Board President

Thank You Jannet

SLOCA staff and supporters want to express their deep gratitude to former Board President, **Jannet Dieckgraefe**. Jannet became involved with SLOCA almost 13 years ago after her diagnosis and surgery for ovarian cancer. The first event she assisted with was the spring Gala and she has volunteered and supported numerous events throughout the years. She has served on the Board for almost 12 years, with five of those years as Board President. During her tenure, she enjoyed working with many wonderful SLOCA members who are all on the same mission. She says, "everyone steps up to help, making all the projects easier."

SLOCA happily welcomes **Sandi Tolliver** as the new President of the Board of Directors. Sandi became involved with SLOCA when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2004. Her oncology nurse, Nancy Larsen (former Board President), mentioned SLOCA when she was undergoing treatment. Sandi started volunteering soon after completing treatment and has shared her story to spread awareness. After years of volunteering, she was approached to join the Board. She served as a dedicated Board member for many years and will now bring that dedication to serving as Board President. Sandi also brings her communication and marketing expertise to this new role. She wants to support the Board members "wherever I can help, however I can help."

Thank you, Jannet, and Sandi, for your commitment and dedication to the mission of SLOCA.



Jannet Dieckgraefe, former Board President, with new Board President, Sandi Tolliver

Follow Us On Social Media!



Welcome New Board Members

SLOCA welcomed two new board members in 2023: **Dr. Shannon Grabosch** and **Joan Gummels**.

Dr. Shannon Grabosch is a gynecologic oncologist who walks beside women from the time of their diagnosis throughout their treatment course. She says that “each relationship has been such a gift for me.” As a board member, she is dedicated to educating the community about the availability of genetic testing, optimizing ways to support patients starting their cancer journey, and working with survivors of all ages.

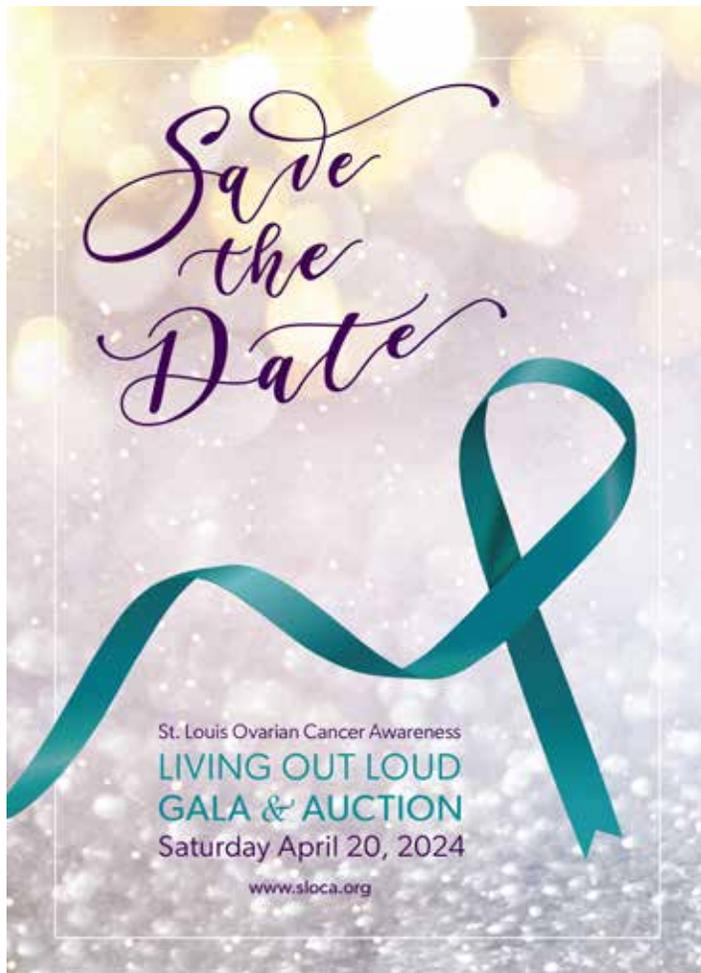
Joan Gummels is a seven-year ovarian cancer survivor with a background as a legislative and governmental policy attorney. She has been involved at both the state and national level to help raise awareness and funding. As a board member, her goals are to “increase awareness among young women, including high school students, and to increase public funding for research and education.”



Dr. Shannon Grabosch



Joan Gummels



Celebrate and support the work of SLOCA, dedicated to impacting ovarian cancer survivorship by promoting awareness of early warning signs, funding ovarian cancer research, and supporting survivors.

The evening will be sure to inspire with our Survivor Speaker, **Louise O’Farrell**, and the return of KSDK’s **Rene Knott** as auctioneer and emcee. Help us toast our Teal Spirit Award recipient, **Melanie Clark**, and end the evening with laughter with a performance from nationally recognized comedian, **Greg Warren**.

You won’t want to miss this, get your tickets today, available now at sloca.org!

Saturday, April 20 | 5:30 pm – 10:00 pm
Meadowbrook Country Club
200 Meadowbrook Country Club Estates
Ballwin, MO 63011

Donate an auction item to support the event via our Amazon and Target Registries at sloca.org/gala

2023 Living Out Loud Gala & Auction

Celebrating SLOCA

SLOCA's annual Living Out Loud Gala and Auction was celebrated on Saturday, April 22, 2023, at Meadowbrook Country Club. This enchanting evening was attended by almost 300 participants who gathered to support the important work of SLOCA. They enjoyed countless culinary delights as well as lively tunes from the Red and Black Brass Band.

Rene Knott served as the emcee and auctioneer and expressed that the evening is about celebrating friendship, support, and survivorship as well as raising awareness. He reminded everyone attending the event that they have a role in making a difference. He hosted fund-a-need and the live auction which showcased numerous items including St. Louis Cardinals and Blues experiences as well as luxurious destination packages. Deb Hill-Jablonski and Jen Marks were co-chairs of the Gala and shared their personal stories. Deb is a survivor, board member, and mentor who highlighted the important work of SLOCA before, during, and after diagnosis. Jen lost her mother at a young age to ovarian cancer and understands the benefit of the programs and proactive education that SLOCA provides as well as the support they give to survivors and their families.

The Survivor Speaker for the evening was Joan Gummels, who is currently living with recurrent ovarian cancer. She likened ovarian cancer to a large, scary beast and stated that each year over 20,000 women in this country learn they are tethered to this beast. She spoke about running a marathon and her marathon rules for life – among these rules were to run your own race and to have a great time. She expressed that time matters and everyone needs to remember to “appreciate the small moments along the way that bring you joy.” She concluded by saying that SLOCA helps those battling ovarian cancer to find their feet again and remind them that they are not alone.

Jack, Sam, and Doug Nagel were the recipients of the 2023 Teal Spirit Award. The Nagel family are longtime supporters of SLOCA. They lost their beloved wife and mother, Denise Nagel, to ovarian cancer. In 2021, they started an annual golf tournament to raise money for SLOCA and keep her memory alive. They have hosted two golf tournaments and raised more than \$25,000 to date. The family was honored to receive this award and stated that they support SLOCA to try to “stop this disease from robbing the world of these beautiful women that should not have to go through that”.

SLOCA would like to acknowledge and thank all the sponsors as well as the generous supporters who attended the event and helped raise an impressive \$240,000. **Don't miss out on the 2024 Living Out Loud Gala & Auction. This is SLOCA's largest fundraising event of the year. Meadowbrook Country Club will host this event again on April 20th, 2024. We welcome all supporters of SLOCA to get involved by attending, donating, and volunteering. For more information, visit the SLOCA website or contact Susan Robben.**



Spirit of Giving

Mary Ellen McCullen loved her family and loved to have fun. She became involved with SLOCA when her niece, Sue, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Sue's sister, Beth, was diagnosed shortly thereafter. Mary Ellen was devastated by both Sue and Beth's ovarian cancer diagnosis and became a strong supporter of SLOCA to try to help make a difference. She attended the Gala each year and even won the coveted wine raffle one year. Sue lost her courageous battle in 2009 but her sister, Beth, and Aunt Mary Ellen continued to support SLOCA financially and through their volunteer efforts. Mary Ellen passed away February 15, 2022. In her obituary, she requested donations be made to SLOCA and she also left a generous estate gift to SLOCA. Mary Ellen was "larger than life and the most generous person I've ever met," according to her niece Beth Hudson.

Her charitable legacy estate gift will allow SLOCA to continue the important mission of spreading awareness, raising funds, and supporting patients and their families affected by ovarian cancer.



Mary Ellen McCullen with her niece Dianne Winn

Research Recipient Addressing Ovarian Cancer Resistance

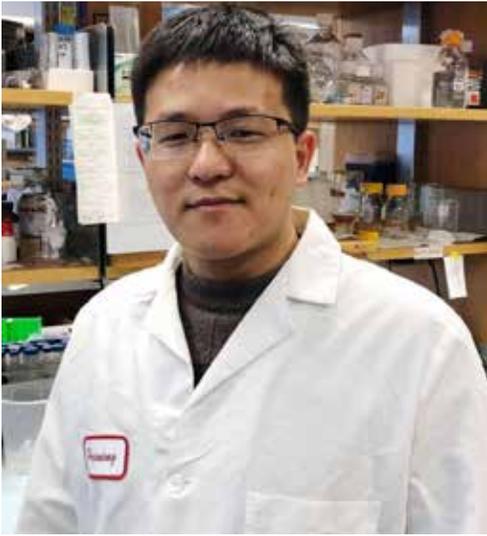
Dr. Xu is the 2022-23 Award Recipient of the St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness and Caring Together Research Grant for Ovarian Cancer from the Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC).

Ovarian cancer, especially in certain cases, presents significant challenges caused by resistance to standard chemotherapy. Haineng Xu, PhD, a research assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, is spearheading research aiming to address these challenges.

Dr. Xu's journey to a career in cancer research is deeply rooted in a personal connection to the cause. "I was drawn to the

medical field as I witnessed the impact of deadly cancer disease on family members, relatives and neighbors," he explained. From studying the cancer microenvironment at UPenn Radiation Oncology in 2014 to investigating drug resistance in gynecologic cancers in 2017, Dr. Xu continues to demonstrate immense dedication to advancing treatment options that will positively impact those affected by these devastating diseases.

A passion for scientific discovery drives Dr. Xu to tackle occurrences such as acquired drug resistance – a hurdle in modern cancer research. His ongoing studies employ a novel method that will identify opportunities for potentially overcoming resistance with innovative druggable targets for



Dr. Haineng Xu

the development of novel therapies; simultaneously, Dr. Xu is exploring different combinations of inhibitors, or cancer growth blockers, to overcome resistance for overexpressing ovarian cancers.

The support from the FWC SLOCA/Caring Together grant has been pivotal in advancing Dr. Xu's cutting-edge work. "The FWC St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness and Caring Together Research Grant for Ovarian Cancer makes it possible for us to continue our research," said Dr. Xu. This funding, awarded to Dr. Xu in 2022, has facilitated the establishment of a platform for resistant ovarian cancers, potentially streamlining the evaluation of drug efficacy in the future.

Gynecologic cancers exhibit diverse genetic alterations, and Dr. Xu's research centralizes treatments that address these incidences. "It is very exciting to move the discovery from lab to clinic to benefit patients," said Dr. Xu. Through his research, he maintains optimistic expectations for the future of gynecologic cancer research and, ultimately, improved patient outcomes.

Together in Teal

Through our various initiatives SLOCA has seen the financial burden that can accompany women diagnosed with ovarian cancer. To help these women in need, SLOCA has developed the Together in Teal Patient Need Fund. The goal of the Together in Teal Fund is to provide financial assistance to ovarian cancer patients so that these patients can focus on the most important thing - healing.

To be eligible, patients must demonstrate financial need and be currently undergoing, or have recently completed, ovarian cancer treatment in St. Louis within the past six months. SLOCA defines "treatment" as chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, and clinical trials. When a woman qualifies for our fund SLOCA will provide financial assistance to cover expenses such as health insurance premiums, rent or mortgage, insurance, utilities, transportation costs, telephone payments and other household necessities. A recent Together in Teal recipient had this to say, "The assistance that I received was such a blessing. It meant that I was able to put my attention on getting well, instead of worrying about bills."

Partnering with our local hospital social workers has helped us spread the word about the Together in Teal program. One of these social workers we work closely with had this to say "When our clients receive a diagnosis of ovarian cancer, there

"The assistance that I received was such a blessing..."

are often many emotions and fears running through their minds. SLOCA's Together in Teal Patient Need Fund provides comfort by removing some of the financial burden of cancer treatment. Whether the client receives help with housing or utilities to make funds available for medical costs or receives assistance in buying a wig for a sense of normalcy during chemotherapy, this fund has helped tremendously in the lives of our clients. The Together in Teal Fund removes additional stressors so that our clients can focus on their treatment and recovery."

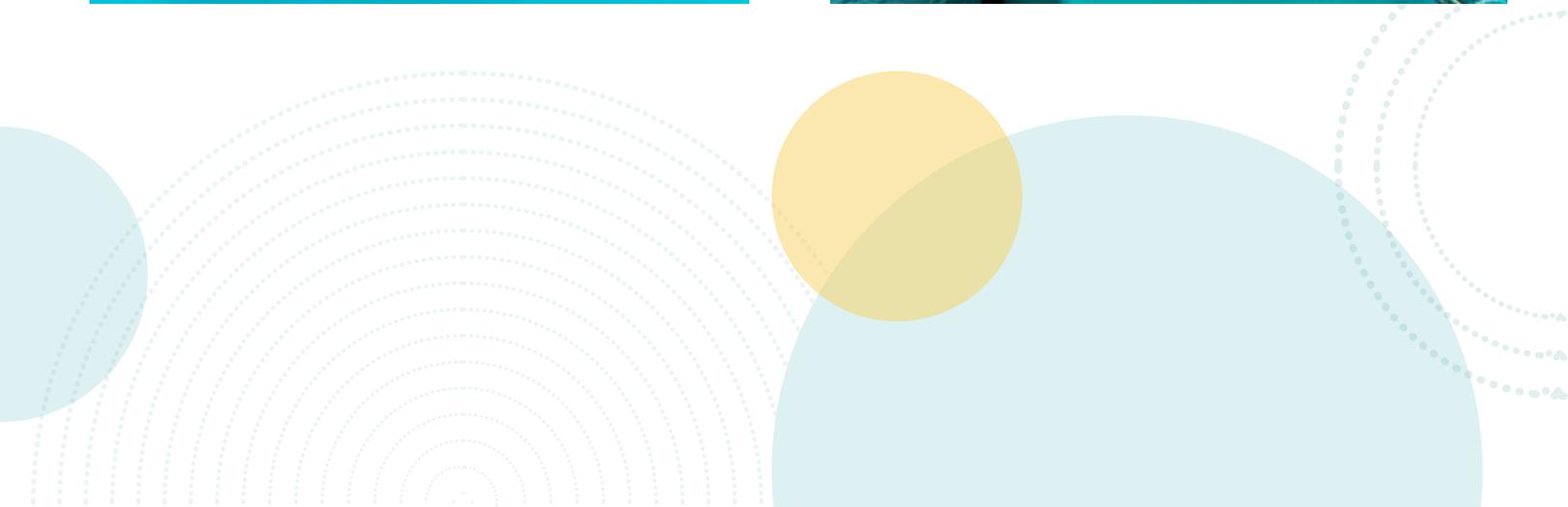
If you are interested in learning more about the Together in Teal Patient Need Fund or applying, visit sloca.org or call us at 314-966-7562.

SLOCA in the Community

Each year SLOCA attends community events to spread awareness of the early warning signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer. For many we encounter this is their first opportunity to learn more about the disease – including the fact that the Pap test does not screen for ovarian cancer.

In 2023 we were excited to return to some of our favorite community events such as Rosé Day, St. Louis PrideFest, and the Leader Publications Senior Expos as well as explore new events such as the St. Louis Zoo Employee Health Fair.

If you are interested in volunteering for future events or are a part of an event or community group that would welcome a SLOCA booth, please reach out to us at info@sloca.org so we can learn more about participating!





Tee Off in Teal

3rd Annual Golf Tournament

The rain gave way to a beautiful day for the 3rd Annual Denise Nagel Memorial Golf Tournament. On Saturday July 15, 2023, the Forest Park golf course hosted 184 golfers for this event. The third time was a charm as this was the first year the event sold out all three courses. "It was a goal of ours and our community made it happen! Every year we gain new golfers, and it is so exciting to see the familiar faces year after year supporting our event." remarked Sam Nagel.

The morning started with a delicious breakfast and mimosa bar. Each golfer received a cute cooler and was able to purchase tickets for various raffle baskets. Contests included prizes for golfers closest to the pin and the straightest drive. The tournament was sponsored by Buildingstars and raised \$11,400 for SLOCA. Thanks to all the golfers, volunteers, and sponsors who helped make this event a success. Save the date for next year's golf tournament which will be held at Forest Park golf course on July 20th, 2024. In addition, the coordinators of the tournament are continually looking to add sponsorships so please reach out if you are interested.

Ready to ROC and Roll

17th Year and Counting

On a chilly morning in downtown St. Louis, the 17th annual Families Run for Ovarian Cancer ROC Star 5k and 1-Mile Run/Walk took place. Over 1,215 people participated in this family friendly event on October 8, including 85 virtual walkers and runners. Participants enjoyed coffee and donuts before the race along with Kona Ice, hot dogs, and beer afterwards. Fredbird and Louie cheered on walkers and runners who also enjoyed the bubble bus and roaming selfie stations. TKO DJs kept the music rolling and the National Anthem was beautifully performed by Katarra Parson. The Survivor Ceremony honored the amazing ovarian cancer survivors in attendance and those who have lost mothers, sisters, and friends. Members of the Jorgensen family, who founded the 5k run in October of 2006 when their mother was diagnosed, were in attendance and handed out roses to survivors. The event raised an impressive \$60,000. Thanks to the walkers and runners who made this event a success as well as the many volunteers who ensured the morning ran smoothly. SLOCA is grateful to our Teal Sponsors including GSK, Merck, and Team Aunt Debbie Still ROCs for their support of the event.

According to Kristen Jorgensen, the vision of FamiliesROC is to challenge participants to "test yourself, risk something, and discover more about who you are". Tune in online at SLOCA.org for more details and get ready to ROC and Roll in 2024. Amp it up and challenge yourself to participate in FamiliesROC by walking, running, or volunteering!



Raise a Glass: Toasting in Teal Brunch Celebration

The Palladium St. Louis hosted 140 survivors and their guests on Sunday, November 12. Butler's Pantry catered a delicious brunch and mimosa bar. Survivors and their guests enjoyed a decadent brunch buffet along with a Bloody Mary and Mimosa Bar and a themed photo booth. Attendees celebrated and raised a glass to other survivors, caregivers, and loved ones. According to survivor Dale Dallas, she felt completely alone when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 1989, but now with SLOCA she feels "embraced by love". The afternoon focused on celebrating survivors like Dale and highlighted the many volunteers that keep SLOCA going. According to Program Coordinator Robyn Hunter, "volunteers are the driving force of SLOCA". Numerous programs that raise awareness, fund research, and support survivors were spotlighted.

Carmeline Mattera spoke about the **Survivors Teaching Students** program. In this program, survivors share personal stories of diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship with students so they can learn about ovarian cancer. Carmeline shares her story with young minds and finds that the students are attentive and engaged. She says that "knowledge is power and the more we talk about it [ovarian cancer], the more power there is".

Janis Tournillon spoke about the **Woman-to-Woman Peer Support** program. This program pairs patients anytime from diagnosis through treatment with volunteer mentors. These mentors are trained in active listening and communication skills. SLOCA has trained 23 mentors to date. Janis was trained and provided support as a mentor and says that "when I had the opportunity to give back, I was thrilled."

Brittany Mazjun spoke about the **Ambassador Program and Sister Boxes**. Sister boxes are given to newly diagnosed patients which is usually a patient's first introduction to SLOCA. These boxes are filled with care items to help brighten a patient's day and be a "ray of sunshine and a ray of hope," according

to Brittany. Ambassadors also express SLOCA's gratitude to doctors, nurses, and other staff who provide crucial treatment and support to patients.

Robyn Hunter spoke about the **Together in Teal Patient Need Fund**. This program provides annual financial assistance to patients who are currently undergoing treatment. Expenses that are covered include healthcare insurance premiums, rent, or mortgage payments, utility bills, transportation costs, and wigs. This assistance can relieve financial stress and allow patients to focus on healing.

Kim Carney and **Jen Marks** spoke about the annual **SLOCA Gala**. They are co-chairs for the upcoming 2024 Gala which will take place on Saturday, April 20 at Meadowbrook Country Club. There will be a performance by local comedian Greg Warren. This is SLOCA's largest fundraiser and sustains many of SLOCA's programs so please consider attending, volunteering, or donating.



The Power of Love: Couple Remembers Aunt



Love was in the air on September 23, 2023, as Shawn and Teresa Quinn tied the knot. They said their vows in front of 235 guests at a ceremony in Newport, Rhode Island with Aunt Sandy in mind. Shawn has a very close-knit family and his aunt, who was also his godmother, played a huge role in his life. Sandy Sullivan became involved with SLOCA after her ovarian cancer diagnosis.

She fully supported SLOCA's mission to foster awareness and attended countless events to help raise funds. She was even recognized for her many contributions at one of the Galas.

Unfortunately, Sandy lost her battle with ovarian cancer in October 2022. Shawn and Teresa decided that one way to honor her would be to continue her legacy of raising awareness and funding for ovarian cancer. In her honor, they asked guests at their wedding to make donations to SLOCA in lieu of wedding gifts. Thanks to their generosity and the example of Shawn's Aunt Sandy, numerous donations to SLOCA have been made on their behalf.

Volunteer Spotlight: Amy & Dorothy Cambron

Mary Cambron was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in early 2016. As a nurse, she wanted to do her part to advance treatment and was hopeful for advances in both earlier detection and improved outcomes. Both of her daughters, Amy, and Dorothy found that they had a genetic variant of the BRCA2 gene. According to Dorothy, "SLOCA gives me optimism that with further research and funding, we can have hope for the future." The Cambron family wanted to do their part to support SLOCA, so they formed a team to complete their first FamiliesROC that same year that their mother was diagnosed. They started assisting with the basket raffle and eventually took over as chairs. **Mary was an avid quilter and donated a quilt to the raffle each year, so they titled their team Mary's Quilt Club. The back of the team shirt contains a quote from the hospital wing where Mary had her first surgery which says, "Our lives are like quilts-bits and pieces, joy and sorrow, stitched together with love".**

Although Mary passed away in September 2022, Amy and Dorothy continue to participate in FamiliesROC to honor their mother's amazing legacy of generosity and kindness. According to Amy, FamiliesROC "does a great job honoring the survivors and family as well as memorializing those that have lost the fight". During their time as coordinators of the basket raffle, Amy and Dorothy have procured a remarkable 25 baskets and items each year. Their hard work and dedication help make FamiliesROC a success year after year.



We are thankful for the support of Amy & Dorothy Cambron – if you have a group or organization interested in getting involved, please reach out to us at info@sloca.org.

Mark Your Calendars!



Living Out Loud Gala & Auction | April 20, 2024

Celebrate SLOCA and supporters at the annual Living Out Loud Gala & Auction. The Gala is SLOCA's largest fundraiser and supports our programs and initiatives. The evening will feature a silent and live auction, cocktail hour, a seated dinner, and a hilarious performance from nationally recognized comedian Greg Warren. We will also honor our Teal Spirit Award recipient, Melanie Clark, and hear an inspirational speech from our Survivor Speaker, Louise O'Farrell. Tickets are now available online at sloca.org.



Denise Nagel Memorial Golf Tournament | July 20, 2024

Tee off for the fourth annual Denise Nagel Memorial Golf Tournament! This scramble style event will be held at Forest Park Golf Course. Registration includes 18 holes of golf, a cart and a catered breakfast and lunch. All proceeds will benefit SLOCA. This event will sell out, register online now at sloca.org/golf.



SLOCA Night at Busch Stadium | September 6, 2024

Help us turn Busch Stadium teal at our 23rd annual Ovarian Cancer Awareness Night! Our St. Louis Cardinals will be taking on the Seattle Mariners. Grab your tickets – which include a hot dog and soda – and help us cheer on the home team. Survivors of ovarian cancer receive up to two free tickets to this event.



Teal Toes for SLOCA | September 17, 2024

Pamper yourself for a good cause at the 12th annual Teal Toes for SLOCA at Nail Pro in Des Peres. Attendees are encouraged to paint their toes teal to honor National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Raffles and treats are also provided, gather a group, and enjoy! Teal Toes is organized by friends and family of the late Shawn Blaes.



Families Run for Ovarian Cancer ROC Star 5k | October 13, 2024 – NEW LOCATION!

Register to ROC with us for a 5k run/ walk or a one-mile fun run! Join us at our new location in Tower Grove Park as more than 1,250 participants participate in the area's largest event devoted to raising ovarian cancer awareness. The event is family friendly and will include music, visits from Louie and Fredbird and of course the Bubble Bus. All funds raised support crucial ovarian cancer research and ongoing awareness programs locally. Registration will open on May 8, World Ovarian Cancer Day.



Toasting in Teal Survivor Celebration Brunch | November 10, 2024

Raise a glass for the 5th annual Toasting in Teal Survivors Celebration Brunch at the Hilton Frontenac on Sunday, November 10. Mingle with fellow survivors and caregivers and toast to the inspiring women in attendance. A complimentary brunch buffet will be served along with Bloody Mary and Mimosa bars.

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Night at Busch Stadium

Join us for our 23rd annual Ovarian Cancer Awareness Night at Busch Stadium as our Cardinals take on the Seattle Mariners on **Friday, September 6 at 7:15 pm.**

Tickets are available for \$30 each and include a voucher for a FREE jumbo hot dog and soda. Ovarian cancer survivors are eligible for up to two complimentary tickets to this event! **Register now** sloca.org/baseball





St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness

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314.966.7562

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Mission Statement

St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness is committed to impacting ovarian cancer survivorship by promoting awareness of early warning signs and standards of care, funding ovarian cancer research, and supporting survivors.



Send Donations

SLOCA is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization. Donations may be made at **www.sloca.org/donate** or by mailing a check to 12015 Manchester Road, Suite 130, Des Peres, MO 63131. Please note if the donation is in memory or in honor of someone.



Stay in Touch

We publish Teal Talk once a year and send e-mail blasts intermittently. We hope you'll share your e-mail address at **www.sloca.org/newsletters** so that we can stay in touch.

To be removed from the mailing list, e-mail newsletter@sloca.org

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