

TEALTALK

2026

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Special thanks to [Melanie Clark](#) for her support in writing TealTalk articles.

Let's ROC!

Families Run for Ovarian Cancer

The 19th annual Families ROC event took place on October 12 at Tower Grove Park, attracting more than 1,200 participants who arrived ready to rock and roll on a perfect fall morning. The energy was high as emcee Judi Diamond welcomed attendees to the event. During the opening ceremony, Dr. Mutch recognized SLOCA as a grassroots organization that has "improved the quality of life of numerous ovarian cancer patients." Kristen Jorgensen, co-founder of Families ROC, reflected on how meaningful it has been to witness the race's continued growth over the years. Before race start, ovarian cancer survivors were invited forward to be honored with yellow roses, generously donated by Mary Tuttle's Florals & Gifts, as a symbol of recognition, strength, and support.

Musician Katarra Parson set the tone for the event with a moving performance of the National Anthem, and with that, participants hit the ground running. Throughout the morning, attendees enjoyed a lively atmosphere filled with interactive booths, food trucks, and even the Bubble Bus. Community partners, including Walgreens and Fallon's Bar and Grill were on site with flu shots, face painting and drinks for 21+ ROC Stars. Hello Juice provided refreshing smoothie samples, Kona Ice served icy sweet treats, and Travelin' Tom's Coffee Truck fueled participants for the race ahead.



More than 1,200 ROC stars participated – walking or running – among them was Milton Schraier, age 99, who triumphantly walked the course alongside his daughter, 49-year survivor, Alene Becker.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, vendors, and participants, the event raised an impressive \$105,000 in support of SLOCA's mission. Mark your calendars—the 2026 Families ROC is scheduled for **Sunday, October 11**. Can't wait to ROC with you at the 20th annual event!

Follow Us On Social Media!



Living Out Loud Gala & Auction

Spectacular Support

SLOCA's annual Living Out Loud Gala and Auction was held on Saturday, April 26 at Meadowbrook Country Club. More than 250 supporters gathered for an evening of fun, friendship, and celebration honoring over 20 years of service to our community.

The evening began with remarks from Susan Robben, who shared her gratitude for SLOCA's mission, noting "survivors need other survivors." She thanked Beverly Kincaid for her efforts with the live auction and Jannet Dieckgraefe for hers with the silent auction. Monica Adams served as the emcee and auctioneer, guiding guests through the live auction and fund-a-need portions of the evening. Live auction items highlights included an Ultimate St. Louis Blues Experience, exciting New York and Las Vegas getaways, and of course Gus the golden retriever puppy. The silent auction featured more than 100 items and the evening's raffles included a vintage Louis Vuitton handbag and a wine raffle featuring more than 20 bottles.

The year's Teal Spirit Award recipients were Jennifer Ahmad and Laura Banks, a dynamic duo recognized for their volunteer leadership at the annual FamiliesROC event. Jennifer became involved with SLOCA following her sister's ovarian cancer diagnosis and has participated in the Gala, GO! St. Louis Marathon, and FamiliesROC to raise awareness and funds. Jennifer shared, "it is nice to be able to give back." Laura's commitment is rooted in honoring her mother, who battled the disease for 13 years. She organized "Team Cathy" to participate in the annual 5k and continues to volunteer to honor her mother's memory, saying, "I'm here because my mom can't be."

Survivor speaker Amy Hollyfield delivered an inspiring and deeply personal message. First diagnosed with ovarian cancer in September 2021, Amy experienced a recurrence in March 2024. Throughout her journey, she has leaned on the support of her mother, two daughters, and the joy and strength she finds in her grandson. Amy emphasized the importance of a strong care team and shared her gratitude for the support of her Cedarhurst

Senior Living work family. Now with no evidence of disease, she continues to give back by volunteering at health fairs and community events, while striving to "live every day to the fullest."

Thanks to the outstanding leadership of co-chairs Jen Marks and Kim Carney, the event was a tremendous success, raising an incredible \$250,000 in support of SLOCA's mission. SLOCA extends sincere thanks to all sponsors and to the generous supporters who made the evening possible.

Mark your calendars for the 2026 Living Out Loud Gala & Auction! Meadowbrook Country Club will once again host the event on **April 18, 2026**. Join us by attending, donating, or volunteering, and helping make a meaningful difference. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit sloca.org or scan the QR code below!





Leaving a Legacy Support SLOCA through Stock and Estate Donations

SLOCA relies on supporters to continue their mission; while much of this support comes from individual donations, there are other ways to support SLOCA. Stock and estate donations are a way to leave a legacy of support. A stock donation gives shares of your stock directly to a charity. Estate donations are planned giving that involves leaving assets to a non-profit organization as part of your estate plan. Both options can offer potential tax benefits and leave a legacy of support that allows SLOCA to continue to serve our community. Please consider supporting the future of SLOCA through a stock or estate donation. For more information about stock donations or planned giving, consult your tax professional or reach out to SLOCA for more details.

Research Funds at Work

Written by Foundation for Women's Cancer

Since **St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness (SLOCA)** began supporting the **Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC) Research Grants** program in 2006, your generosity has helped advance innovative research focused on improving outcomes for people diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The FWC is deeply grateful for your longtime partnership and sustained commitment that has played a vital role in cultivating the next generation of physician-scientists and ensuring a strong pipeline of leadership in gynecologic cancer research. The FWC's research grants program is designed to support early-career investigators at a pivotal moment, empowering them to pursue bold ideas with the potential to meaningfully improve gynecologic cancer patient outcomes across all five gynecologic cancers – ovarian, uterine/endometrial, cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers.

Through the **St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness Research Grant for Ovarian Cancer** awarded in 2024, Dr. Anne Knisely, Assistant Professor in the Department of Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine at



The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, led a study focused on a critical and often overlooked phase of ovarian cancer: minimal residual disease (MRD). MRD refers to very small amounts of cancer that remain in the body after treatment and are believed to be responsible for most ovarian cancer recurrences.

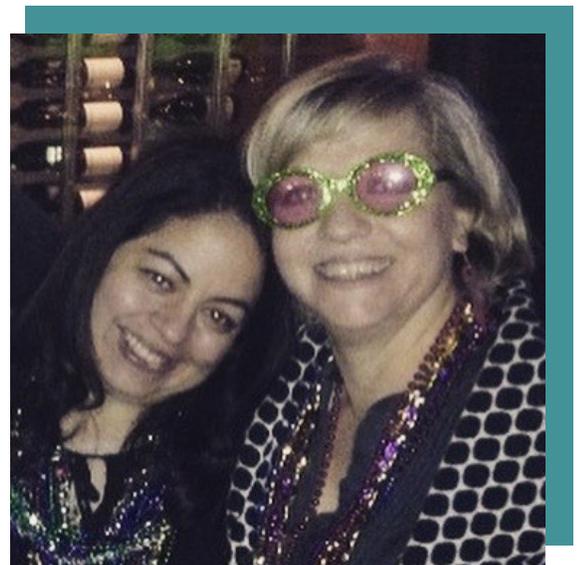
With support from your generous grant, Dr. Knisely studied rare ovarian cancer samples collected after frontline treatment to better understand how cancer cells survive therapy and avoid being destroyed by the immune system. Her work revealed that these remaining cancer cells adapt in ways that make them harder to treat and harder for the immune system to reach. Importantly, the study also identified features of these cells that could potentially be targeted with existing or future therapies.

These advances would not be possible without the support and generosity of SLOCA, and the FWC is profoundly grateful for your partnership in accelerating research with meaningful promise for individuals affected by ovarian cancer.

Volunteer Spotlight:

Julia Dummit

Julia Dummitt attended her first SLOCA Gala in 2014 to support her friend, Karen Nevins, who was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. After the Gala, she graciously offered her services as a graphic designer. In 2015, she began designing all the collateral for the Gala. Year after year, she has designed Gala save the date cards, invitations, programs, and other event signage; she has also designed SLOCA shirts and sweatshirts along with design work for Teal Toes. Julia says, "I love being able to do this and will continue as long as the services are needed, not just to support SLOCA, but also to honor Karen."



Teal Together Survivor Socials

Building Community Among Survivors

In 2025, SLOCA launched Teal Together Survivor Socials, a new series of gatherings designed to help ovarian cancer survivors build community through meaningful and fun experiences. Research shows that connecting with others who share similar experiences can lead to improved outcomes for ovarian cancer survivors. Teal Together creates space for survivors of all ages and stages to come together, connect, and support one another.

Throughout 2025, participants enjoyed activities such as Muny shows, candle making, floral arranging, and meal prep—offering opportunities not only to socialize, but also to learn new skills and share moments of joy.

In 2026, Teal Together will continue to grow with quarterly gatherings, save the dates below and watch for more details on each event! Event details will be emailed to survivors along with a registration link.

- January 29, 2026 – Meal Prep at Time for Dinner
- May 21, 2026
- August 20, 2026
- December 10, 2026



An Un-fore-gettable Event

Denise Nagel Memorial Golf Tournament

Overcast skies couldn't dampen the spirits of the golfers at the 5th annual Denise Nagel Memorial Golf Tournament! Forest Park Golf Course hosted this sold-out event on Saturday, July 19. The morning started in full swing with a tasty Chick-Fil-A breakfast and a Bloody Mary and mimosa bar. Golfers could participate in a variety of activities including a putting contest as well as prizes for closest to the pin and the straightest drive. Raffle tickets were also available to purchase in hopes of winning coveted items such as a Blackstone grill, smart TV, and an igloo cooler. The teams carted off to enjoy 18 holes with family and friends. The tournament was sponsored by BuildingStars Commercial Cleaning Solutions and raised more than \$12,000 for SLOCA.

Thank you to the golfers, volunteers, and sponsors for all the amazing support. According to Denise's brother-in-law Paul, this tournament is a way for Denise to "continue to do good work in the world through those she loved." Save the date for the 2026 golf tournament which will be held at Forest Park golf course on **Saturday, July 18**. Sponsorships are available, reach out to SLOCA for more information. Registration for the 2026 tournament will open in Spring.



Pedi Party

Teal Toes

The 13th annual Teal Toes pedicure fundraiser kicked off on Tuesday, September 16 at Nail Pro in Des Peres. The event was started by friends and family in memory of Shawn Blaes, who lost her courageous battle with ovarian cancer. More than one hundred supporters received pampering teal pedis along with drinks, refreshments, and SLOCA swag. A bursting raffle display featured 34 baskets with prizes ranging from a pickleball adventure from Chicken N Pickle, a Nespresso machine, and even a teal Dooney & Bourke handbag. Thank you to the Webster Groves Lion's Club for the donation of many of the raffle baskets, and to Nail Pro and their staff for hosting the event. The event raised an impressive \$5,200 – mark your calendar for **Tuesday, September 8** for the 2026 event.



Together in Teal

Patient Need Fund

SLOCA recognizes the significant financial burden ovarian cancer places on patients during treatment and established the Together in Teal Patient Need Fund to help ease that strain. Since its creation, the fund has provided financial assistance to numerous women, allowing them to focus on their health and healing rather than financial stress.

Kelly Logan was diagnosed with ovarian cancer at just 39 years old. At the time, she never imagined that cancer would become part of her life. "I had no idea just how much it would impact my life," Kelly shared. One of the most difficult and unexpected challenges she faced was the financial toll of treatment. Kelly has received financial assistance from SLOCA through the Together in Teal Patient Need Fund for the past two years. The support helped cover physical therapy costs after her insurance denied benefits. This year, the assistance provided relief by helping pay a month's worth of essential bills. The additional support from SLOCA has offered Kelly a sense of financial stability during an otherwise overwhelming time. Her advice to others beginning their cancer journey is to take things one day at a time.

If you or a loved one has been financially impacted by an ovarian cancer diagnosis, visit sloca.org to learn more and apply for the Together in Teal Patient Need Fund.



Welcome New Board Members

Dr. Premal Thaker and Dr. Erica Huelsmann

SLOCA is pleased to welcome two outstanding new members to its Board of Directors: Dr. Premal Thaker and Dr. Erica Huelsmann. Both bring deep professional expertise and personal commitment to advancing SLOCA's mission.

Dr. Premal Thaker was first introduced to SLOCA in 2006 by Dr. Mutch when she joined the Washington University faculty. Early in her career, she received a SLOCA-funded grant and soon became actively involved in attending and supporting events. Today, Dr. Thaker serves as the Division Chief of Gynecologic Oncology at Washington University School of Medicine. As a Board member, she hopes to further expand SLOCA's efforts in fundraising and advocacy for ovarian cancer research, as well as programs that support survivorship. She shares that SLOCA "is a great network for ovarian cancer patients in so many aspects of their cancer journey" and is eager to help the organization continue to grow and thrive.

Dr. Erica Huelsmann became connected to SLOCA in 2022 after losing her mother to ovarian cancer. Since then, her family has participated in FamiliesROC and attended the Living Out Loud Gala each year. While she reflects that losing her mother was one of the most difficult experiences of her life, Dr. Huelsmann also shares that it has been "incredibly humbling and has made me a more compassionate physician." She looks forward to finding meaningful ways to give back and help expand SLOCA's mission.

SLOCA is pleased to welcome Dr. Thaker and Dr. Huelsmann and looks forward to the leadership, insight, and passion they bring to the Board of Directors.



Board Transitions

Thank You Sandi Tolliver, and Welcome Joan Gummels

SLOCA staff and supporters extend heartfelt gratitude to Sandi Tolliver, who has faithfully served as Board President for the past two years. Sandi first became connected to SLOCA while undergoing treatment, after her oncology nurse introduced her to the organization. Since that time, she has generously shared her story to raise awareness and has volunteered her time and talents at numerous events. Her leadership, compassion, and unwavering dedication have made a lasting impact, and SLOCA is deeply thankful for her service.

SLOCA is also pleased to welcome Joan Gummels as the new President of the Board of Directors. Joan was initially diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2016 and has been living with metastatic ovarian cancer since 2020. During her treatment journey, SLOCA provided her with important information and resources, inspiring her to give back through volunteering with Survivors Teaching Students. Her continued involvement led to her joining the Board of Directors. Although retired, Joan remains actively engaged at both the state and national levels, advocating for public education on ovarian cancer symptoms and expanded access to treatment options. As Board President, Joan looks forward to further advancing the mission of raising awareness, supporting survivors, and funding critical research. She is committed to helping SLOCA “remain a strong voice and advocate for survivors in the St. Louis region.”

SLOCA extends sincere thanks to both Sandi and Joan for their continued commitment and devoted leadership in support of SLOCA’s mission.



Reflecting with Gratitude

Susan Robben Announces Retirement, Jannet Dieckgraefe Serves as New Executive Director

After 10 years serving as Executive Director, Susan Robben has retired from her role. The staff, Board, and supporters of SLOCA share immense gratitude for Susan’s devotion and leadership. Although Susan is formally stepping down from her role, we look forward to seeing her at SLOCA events in the future. Her leadership has allowed SLOCA to continue to grow and serve ovarian cancer patients and their families in our community.



With the departure of Susan Robben, SLOCA welcomes Jannet Dieckgraefe as Executive Director. Jannet is no stranger to the organization, becoming involved in 2013, a year after her ovarian cancer diagnosis. She began volunteering at the Gala and other events through the years and joined the Board of Directors in 2015, becoming Board President in 2018. She has also organized the silent auction for the Gala and coordinated the Teal Toes fundraiser. Jannet hopes to broaden SLOCA’s reach throughout the St. Louis area and expand survivor support. Jannet knows the operations of SLOCA and has strong relationships with staff, board members, and volunteers. She is “honored to continue to be a part of SLOCA” and we are honored to partner with her!

Toasting in Teal

Survivors Celebration Brunch

The annual **Toasting in Teal Survivors Celebration Brunch** was celebrated on **Sunday, November 9 at the Hilton Frontenac**. Survivors and their caregivers joined together to enjoy mingling, a fun photo booth and a scrumptious brunch – including a Bloody Mary and mimosa bar. A highlight of the event was the announcement of a Missouri state bill recognizing September officially as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. The event also spotlighted several of SLOCA’s programs and ways to get involved; all these programs rely on volunteers, who are the hands and hearts of SLOCA.



- Ashley Austin, a SLUcare Nurse Practitioner and SLOCA Board member, discussed the **Volunteers and Awareness** program. Signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer and information on SLOCA programs are shared at various health fairs and community events to raise awareness and support. Ashley said, “as a healthcare provider, I see what medicine can do but as a volunteer, I see what hope can do.”
- Dr. Shannon Grabosch and Madeline Johnson spoke about the **Survivors Teaching Students** program which brings ovarian cancer survivors into medical education programs to educate future healthcare providers by sharing stories of diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. Dr. Grabosch shared that she has the great privilege of being a partner on the healthcare journey of many ovarian cancer patients – and recognizes how powerful the voices of her patients can be. Madeline, a medical student, shared that these presentations allow medical students such as herself to ask questions, and hearing the stories of survivors help students become better doctors.
- Sabrina Manley and Kelly Logan highlighted the **Together in Teal Patient Need Fund** which provides financial assistance to help reduce the financial burden that can accompany being diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Sabrina was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2015, and the fund helped her pay for much-needed medications. Kelly was first diagnosed in 2022 and is currently battling a recurrence; the fund has helped her make ends meet by assisting with costs for physical therapy, rent, and utilities.
- Gala Co-chairs Cathy Krege and Kelley Glatt spoke about the upcoming **2026 Living Out Loud Gala & Auction**, sharing that they have both watched friends and loved ones fight ovarian cancer and that fuels their passion for SLOCA. Kathy said, “It’s not just about raising funds, we want to honor those who are no longer with us and support the brave ones fighting.” They invited everyone to support the 2026 Gala on April 18, with attendance or an item donation.

Mark Your Calendars!



Living Out Loud Gala & Auction April 18, 2026

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, and seated dinner. We will honor our Teal Spirit Award recipient, Angela Carter of Mary Tuttle's, and hear an inspirational speech from our Survivor Speaker Carmelina Mattera. Tickets are now available online at sloca.org/gala.



Denise Nagel Memorial Golf Tournament July 18, 2026

Tee off for the sixth 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, **registration will open in Spring**.



Teal Toes for SLOCA September 8, 2026

Pamper yourself for a good cause at the 14th 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 for SLOCA was founded by friends and family of the late Shawn Blaes. **Registration will open in Spring**.

SLOCA Night at Busch Stadium September 18, 2026

Help us turn Busch Stadium teal at our 25th annual Ovarian Cancer Awareness Night! Our St. Louis Cardinals will be taking on the Washington Nationals. Grab your tickets and help us cheer on the home team. Survivors of ovarian cancer receive up to two free tickets to this event. **Tickets will be available in Spring.**



Families Run for Ovarian Cancer ROC Star 5k October 11, 2026

Celebrate 20 years of ROC! Register for a 5k run/ walk or a one-mile fun run! Return to our new home in Tower Grove Park as more than 1,300 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 8, 2026

Raise a glass for the 7th annual Toasting in Teal Survivors Celebration Brunch at the Hilton Frontenac on Sunday, November 8. 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, a photo booth, and musical entertainment.





St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness

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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/newsletter so that we can stay in touch.

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