

# POSITIVELY A FIGHTER

EVERY CANCER BATTLE INVOLVES THE BRASS TACKS OF A TREATMENT REGIMEN: CHEMOTHERAPY, RADIATION, SURGERY, AND SOMETIMES A COMBINATION OF ALL THREE. BUT NOT EVERY CANCER BATTLER RELENTLESSLY PURSUES POSITIVITY, ENGAGES SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE, AND EVEN SETS RULES ABOUT HOW TO – OR NOT TO – RESPOND TO THE DIAGNOSIS. HERE'S HOW OLYMPIAN AND TAE KWON DO ACADEMY OWNER BARB KUNKEL TOOK HER CANCER FIGHT TO HEROIC LEVELS.



Olympian Barb Kunkel battled breast cancer with a uniquely positive perspective and a team of support behind her.





Dr. Sue Kim

Looking back, seventh-degree black belt and tae kwon do competitor at the 2000 Sydney Olympic games, Master Barb Kunkel knows all about working hard toward a goal. "A dream is what you hope for, but a goal — that's what you plan for. We trained six to seven hours a day. It was a hard life," says Kunkel, owner of a 350-student martial arts academy in Colorado Springs.

She made a goal of being an Olympian and did what it took physically, financially, and mentally to achieve it.

She made a goal of adopting two kids from Korea, and completed a complicated and time-consuming process to adopt her son and daughter in July 2013.

So just one month later when she found a lump in her breast and learned she had Stage 3 breast cancer, she made a goal to beat it. "I can and am ready for this fight," she remembers saying. "My plan always was to fight the cancer."

First up? Telling her newly adopted kids. "You can tell your kids in a doom-and-gloom way, and they will feel that. Instead, I explained the cancer, explained what treatment would do to my body, and then said, "We get to do this fight together."

She moved in with a supportive family friend who helped nurture her and her kids through treatment.

And next up? Telling her 350 tae kwon do students and their parents. In a series of videos, which she posted to the academy's website, she prepared them for the changes they would see physically. She urged them to stay positive. She even specifically asked them not to shave their heads in response to her chemo-induced hair loss. "I love looking at each and every one of you ... Just because I am going through this challenge, please don't shave your heads. It will draw attention to the challenge versus the solution," she said.

### HEROIC ATTITUDE

Di Thompson, MD, a psychiatric oncologist at Penrose Cancer Center, says when patients hear "cancer" it is like having a bomb dropped on them. "No matter the stage of the cancer, no matter the prognosis, just that word alone is incredibly traumatic," she says.

She applauds Kunkel's approach in being direct with her own children and the students at her academy. "Children are so perceptive. Not saying anything is probably more worrisome to them than if they are just told about the cancer," she says.

Sue Kim, MD, a hematologist/oncologist at Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers and Kunkel's physician, gives credit to Kunkel's amazing attitude.

"Once you've met her, you don't forget Barb Kunkel," Kim says. "She always sees the bright side. She tried to move through treatment with a good attitude. In fact, instead of taking

all the steps of treatment as cumbersome and difficult, she took them as something that will give her life and another chance to move on and impact humanity. Her attitude is really heroic."

Because she had locally advanced cancer, Kunkel began chemotherapy immediately. "Rather than waiting on the cancer to spread further, we started with preoperative chemotherapy. It's pretty harsh. We had to shrink the tumor so surgery would be cleaner and easier." As expected, Kunkel suffered fatigue, hair loss, and nausea.

After chemotherapy, she had a double mastectomy and removal of 10 lymph nodes, followed by radiation and then more rounds of chemotherapy.

A little over a year later, Kunkel says there is no evidence of remaining cancer. Her son just turned 11. Her daughter just turned 9. And Barb has turned the page on cancer.

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*“It's been so important to me to teach this positivity because your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your character, and your character becomes your destiny.”*

— **BARB KUNKEL**  
Breast Cancer Survivor





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### 'MINIMUM HAS TO BE GREAT'

Looking back on how she spoke to students about her cancer, she says it was super important to her to continue cultivating the positive energy that her tae kwon do academy is built upon.

"I never wanted the focus to be on me. There are a ton of people going through this fight," Kunkel says. It wasn't manufactured or phony. Long before her cancer diagnosis, she had instructed her staff and students on her doctrine of "great."

"When I ask staff and students, 'How are you?' their minimum has to be 'great.' It's been so important to me to teach this positivity because your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your character, and your character becomes your destiny," Kunkel says.

And Kunkel, having conquered her treatment for breast cancer, is back to coaching and teaching tae kwon do, parenting her tweens, and sharing her unique brand of positivity with everyone who crosses her path. In fact, she is coaching an internationally ranked competition team, which last year was ranked No. 1 in the nation and No. 2 in the world. Their performance on ESPN focused on a message of hope for those who have been affected by cancer — and they are now taking their inspirational routine around the country to perform for others affected by cancer.

Join Barb Kunkel for *A Message of Hope*. Her inspirational story will help you learn how to prepare, plan, and handle life when a curveball comes your way; engage supportive people; set rules for yourself when responding to your diagnosis and treatment; and break the news to your children, family, and friends. See Page 10 for details.

### SCREENING YOUR OPTIONS

The statistics are clear. When breast cancer is detected at an early stage, it is more treatable and survival odds are better.

What is less clear for women in the wake of changing mammography guidelines is when to begin screening. The American Cancer Society just adopted new guidelines, recommending that women start annual mammogram at age 45. Other experts recommend age 40. Still others recommend age 50. What's a woman to do?

"Precious lives can be saved if you start earlier screening," says Sue Kim, MD, hematologist/oncologist. "If you delay screening, you're going to lose the opportunity for prompt care at manageable stages."

Kim recommends talking over your individual risks and screening options with your physician.

It also helps to know where to go. The Center for Women's Imaging offers a full range of screening and diagnostic tests, including 3-D mammography and breast ultrasound. For more information or to schedule your screening, call 719-776-8010, option 2.

#### KNOWN RISKS OR BENEFITS

ACTION	RESULT	RESEARCH
DRINKING ALCOHOL	Increases risk	A recent study in the <i>International Journal of Cancer</i> finds that risk quadruples with each additional daily drink.
TAKING "THE PILL"	Increases risk	Use of oral contraceptives slightly increases risk, but that risk seems to level off after more than 10 years of nonuse.
COMBINED HORMONE THERAPY AFTER MENOPAUSE	Increases risk	While the use of estrogen alone does not increase risk, combined hormone replacement therapy (HRT) does appear to increase risk.
BREASTFEEDING	Lowers risk	Studies show breastfeeding may slightly lower risk, especially if continued for 1.5 to 2 years.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	Lowers risk	One study from the Women's Health Initiative shows as little as 1.25 to 2.5 hours per week lowers risk by 18 percent.
EMERGING RISKS		
LOW VITAMIN D LEVELS	May increase risk	Research suggests that vitamin D may be able to stop breast cancer cells from growing.
LIGHT EXPOSURE AT NIGHT	May increase risk	Studies show that factory workers, doctors, nurses, police officers — and even those who live near many street lights — may have a higher risk.
CHEMICAL EXPOSURE	May increase risk	Chemicals in cosmetics, food, and lawn and garden products may put women at greater breast cancer risk.



# CALENDAR Spring



## FAST FACT

In the language of flowers, the iris is a symbol of hope.

## A MESSAGE OF HOPE

**Date** | Thu, May 12

**Time** | 6-7:30 p.m.

**Location** | Penrose Pavilion, 2312 North Nevada Avenue, Conference Rooms B and C

**Cost** | FREE

**Registration** | [penrosecancer.org/hope](http://penrosecancer.org/hope)

When you or a loved one is diagnosed with cancer or any other life-changing medical condition, it can wreak havoc on your emotions. Barb Kunkel, U.S. Olympian, business owner, mother of tweens, and cancer survivor, shares her cancer diagnosis experience and how she decided to pursue positivity throughout her cancer battle journey. Her inspirational story will help you learn how to prepare, plan, and handle life when a curveball comes your way; engage supportive people; set rules for yourself when responding to your diagnosis and treatment; and break the news to your children, family, and friends. Kunkel's zeal for life will leave you inspired and hopeful in whatever life challenges you may be facing. Plus, you'll see an inspirational taekwon do routine, leaving you with a message of hope.

*Becker's Hospital Review* recognized Penrose-St. Francis Health Services on their list of "100 hospitals and health systems with great women's health programs" for 2015!

## CHECK IT OUT

### ORAL, HEAD, AND NECK CANCER SCREENING

**Date** | Wed, Apr 13

**Time** | 4-6 p.m.

**Location** | Penrose Cancer Center, 2222 North Nevada Avenue, Conference Rooms A-C

**Cost** | FREE

**Registration** | 719-776-2000 or online at [penrosecancercenter.org/headneckscreening](http://penrosecancercenter.org/headneckscreening)

Screening consists of a painless and noninvasive five- to 10-minute exam of the mouth, head, and neck area. Limited appointments available.

### SKIN CANCER SCREENING

**Date** | Sat, May 7

**Time** | 8-11:30 a.m.

**Location** | Peak Vista Family Health Center, 225 South Union Boulevard

**Cost** | FREE

**Info and registration** | 719-630-4982

Penrose Cancer Center is partnering with Peak Vista Community Health Centers, Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers, and Memorial Hospital to offer **FREE** skin cancer screenings. Physicians will check areas of concern and will refer you to your primary care provider if needed.

### \$99 SCREENING MAMMOGRAM

**Date** | May 1-31

**Location** | Center for Women's Imaging, 2312 North Nevada Avenue

**Appointments** | 719-776-8010, option 2

For women at normal risk, an annual screening mammogram starting at age 40 is the best tool to help detect breast cancer in its earliest and most treatable stage. Schedule a \$99 screening mammogram at the Center for Women's Imaging. We pamper our guests with plush robes, aromatic hand treatments, and a special gift, including a 10 percent off coupon to the Mother \* Daughter \* Sister \* Friend boutique. *Price valid for 2-D screening mammography only.*

## DIABETES PREVENTION CLASSES

**Date** | Informational sessions and program start in April

**Cost** | FREE

**Info and registration** | Mike at 719-776-4685

If you have prediabetes or other risk factors for type 2 diabetes, this proven program can help prevent or delay getting it. In group sessions, you will work with a trained lifestyle coach and other participants to learn the skills needed to make lasting lifestyle changes. You'll learn how to eat healthy, add physical activity to your life, manage stress, stay motivated, and solve problems that can get in the way of healthy changes. Plus, you'll have opportunities to win items to help you reach your goals, including gift cards, a Fitbit, and more! Limited to 15 participants.

## WHAT IF? WHAT ELSE? WHAT NOW?

**Date** | Sat, Apr 23

**Time** | 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Location** | Penrose Pavilion, 2312 North Nevada Avenue, 2nd Floor Conference Room

**Cost** | \$125/person

**Registration** | [sarastrategies.com/register.html](http://sarastrategies.com/register.html)

Are you exploring a career change, a recent empty nester, or just in need of guidance on the next chapter of your life? Experience a one-day interactive, life planning session facilitated by best-selling author Sara Boatz. You'll identify your dreams; articulate your goals; and leave with a clear purpose, direction, and a written plan to live the life of your dreams. Seminar includes continental breakfast, boxed lunch, work binder, and book. Registration is required by April 20. Payment due at time of registration.



Penrose Cancer Center offers FREE breast health awareness seminars for the community. If you have a group that would be interested in hosting a presentation, call 719-776-5954.

## WHY DO MY FEET HURT? COMMON SOURCES OF FOOT AND ANKLE PAIN

**Date** | Thu, Apr 28

**Time** | 6-7:30 p.m.

**Location** | St. Francis Medical Center, 6001 East Woodmen Road, Conference Room 1

**Cost** | FREE

**Registration** | [penrosetfrancis.org/events](http://penrosetfrancis.org/events)

Foot and ankle pain can occur in almost any part of the ankle, down to the heel or even the toes. Sometimes pain can result from injury or a more chronic condition. There are various causes of foot and ankle pain. Join orthopedic surgeon and foot and ankle specialist Dr. Alex Simpson, who will help you look at some of the more common causes of foot or ankle pain and what you can do about it.



Power Up, Yoga, and Zumba are just a few of the fitness classes offered at the Penrose-St. Francis Wellness Center. For a complete list of classes at both hospitals, visit [penrosetfrancis.org/PHFitness](http://penrosetfrancis.org/PHFitness) and [penrosetfrancis.org/SFMCFitness](http://penrosetfrancis.org/SFMCFitness).

## LIVING SUCCESSFULLY AFTER STROKE

**Date** | Sat, May 7

**Time** | 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Location** | Penrose Cancer Center, 2222 North Nevada Avenue, Conference Rooms A-C

**Cost** | FREE

**Registration** | [penrosetfrancis.org/slts](http://penrosetfrancis.org/slts)

If you or a loved one have experienced a stroke, this full-day seminar will help you learn how to manage life. Taught by physicians, therapists, and other medical professionals, you will learn about driving after stroke, understand what causes uncontrollable crying/laughter, managing bowel/bladder control, navigating travel and leisure activity challenges, nutritional issues, vision issues, and more. Limited to 60 people. Registration deadline is April 29. Continental breakfast and boxed lunch included.

## WHAT'S NEW WITH KNEES: RETHINKING TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENT

**Date** | Thu, May 12

**Time** | 6-7:30 p.m.

**Location** | St. Francis Medical Center, 6001 East Woodmen Road, Conference Rooms 1 and 2

**Cost** | FREE

**Registration** | [penrosetfrancis.org/events](http://penrosetfrancis.org/events)

One in five patients is not satisfied with his/her knee replacement. Patient-specific knee implants may provide a better solution than traditional, off-the-shelf implants with respect to implant fit, implant shape, implant rotation, and kinematics. These may lead to improvements in pain, function, and patient satisfaction. Learn the rationale for rethinking knee replacement at this community education program.

## WOMENHEART SUPPORT NETWORK

**Date** | 2nd Tue of month

**Time** | Noon-1:30 p.m.

**Location** | Penrose Pavilion, 2312 North Nevada Avenue, Conference Room A

**Cost** | FREE

**Info** | Stephanie at 719-200-2645 or Elizabeth at 626-688-3420

Support, advocacy, and education for survivors of heart disease and stroke. Led by peers who have experienced heart disease or stroke, our goal is to thrive for the best quality of life. Call for more information.

## ICD SUPPORT GROUP

**Date** | Fri, May 20

**Time** | Noon-1 p.m.

**Location** | Penrose Pavilion, 2312 North Nevada Avenue, Conference Rooms B and C

**Cost** | FREE

**Registration** | 719-776-6000

Do you or a loved one have an implantable defibrillator? Would you like to talk with others who are learning to live with this lifesaving device? Join Vascular Center of Colorado electrophysiology physicians, allied health professionals, and those with implantable defibrillators for education, storytelling, and a Q & A session. Family members and caregivers are welcome to attend.



## PROMOTING RESILIENCE THROUGH EXPRESSIVE WRITING (FOR CANCER PATIENTS)

**Date** | Tuesdays, June 7, 14, and 21

**Time** | 4:30 p.m.

**Location** | Penrose Pavilion, 2312 North Nevada Avenue, 2nd Floor

**Cost** | FREE

**Info and registration** | 719-776-5311

A three-week workshop designed to reduce the impact of stressful and traumatic life events through expressive writing and journaling.

## FARMERS' MARKET ON THE PROMENADE KICKOFF EVENT

Sponsored by Penrose-St. Francis Health Services

**Date** | Sun, Jun 19

**Time** | 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Location** | The Promenade Shops at Briargate, 1885 Briargate Parkway

**Cost** | FREE

Join us for this kickoff event featuring summer's best organic produce. The first 500 customers will get a FREE reusable, eco-friendly tote bag filled with samples and coupons. Plus, you'll have the chance to win gift cards and prizes. Additional farmers' markets will be held every Sunday, June 26-Oct. 2, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

## STEPPING ON!

**Date** | Fridays, July 15, 22, 29;

August 5, 12, 19, 26

**Time** | 10 a.m. - Noon

**Location** | Penrose Pavilion, 2312 North Nevada Avenue, Conference Room B

**Cost** | FREE

**Registration** | 719-776-5926

Stepping On! empowers older adults to carry out healthy behaviors that reduce the risks of falls. In a group setting, older adults learn balance exercises and develop specific knowledge and skills to prevent falls. Older adults who should attend are those who are at risk for falling, have a fear of falling, or who have fallen one or more times. Limited to 14 participants.