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firmly believe that one person can make a difference. I want to make a difference by doing everything I can to raise money and awareness for Moffitt. No amount of time is too short and no dollar amount is too small - every little bit helps. If you can't do either... THANK the people who work every day to keep you alive.

### THANK YOU MOFFITT!

By  
**Courtney Dempsey**

*If you have an inspirational story about Moffitt Cancer Center, please share it with us. Just email to Marsha Droste at:*

[marshadroste@moffittpinellaspartners.com](mailto:marshadroste@moffittpinellaspartners.com).

## MAGNOLIA BALL

### THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS FUNDRAISING GALA IN TAMPA

Please join Pinellas Partners as we celebrate our support of Moffitt Cancer Center by attending the 2008 Magnolia Ball, featuring entertainment by Chicago. The Pinellas Partners group will have two reserved tables for our members at this black-tie gala.

Moffitt's Magnolia Ball, now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, features wonderful food, entertainment and exciting live and silent auctions. Last year, more than 800 of Tampa Bay's business and civic leaders attended this premier event that sells out every year.

Funds received from members of the Pinellas Partners group will directly benefit the Pinellas Partners fund for cancer research at Moffitt Cancer Center.



### Dalton - A Rising "Starr"

Moffitt Cancer Center's president and chief executive officer, Dr. William Dalton, isn't the only one in his family who's making a name for himself. Dr. Dalton's son, Seth Dalton, put his USC film degree to good use last summer when he worked with former Beatle Ringo Starr.

For the full story, go to: [www.MoffittPinellasPartners.com](http://www.MoffittPinellasPartners.com).

### Mission Statement

*To contribute to the prevention and cure of cancer through education and outreach in an effort to support the work of the physicians and scientists working to cure this terrible disease that has touched all of our lives in one way or another.*

### Upcoming Events

- **BOWLING "BALL"**  
Moffitt Cancer Center presents the 2008 Bowling "Ball" at Splitsville to benefit prostate cancer research on Thursday, February 21. The fun-filled evening, sponsored by Moffitt's Corporate Partners Program, is designed to bring out the competitive spirit in corporate teams. Also, you can purchase a \$20 chance to win amazing prizes all night! Don't miss a FUN opportunity to PARTY HEARTY and support prostate cancer research at Moffitt! For more information, contact Shaina Sine at 813-745-3658.
- **"AN EVENING WITH..."**  
The Ritz-Carlton, Naples March 7, 2008  
This spring event brings a nationally known personality to speak on a variety of topics. For more information, contact Sharon Hastings at 813-745-3658.
- **MAGNOLIA BALL Annual Black-Tie Fundraising Gala**  
May 3, 2008  
For more information, contact Kathy Werner at 813-745-1340.



## Pinellas Partners

Welcome to the February/March edition of the Pinellas Partners Newsletter. We hope you'll find its content both inspirational and informative. Our goal is to provide some education to our neighbors here in Pinellas County of the treatments and advancements in research going on right in Tampa Bay. Not to mention the amazing partnerships Moffitt has created with hospitals across the country, including Morton Plant/Mease.

Our mission with Moffitt Pinellas Partners is "to contribute to the prevention and cure of cancer through education and outreach in Pinellas County in an effort to support the work of the physicians and scientists working to cure this terrible disease that has touched all of our lives in one way or another."

In only a year and one fundraising breakfast we've raised over \$32,000. After a presentation from Dr. Pilon-Thomas (a research scientist at Moffitt), the steering committee pledged to fund her immunotherapy trial that could effect treatments of all different types of cancer. Our next step is to host an informative and meaningful luncheon at the Island Way Grill on April 9th with guest speakers from Moffitt, along with Dr. Pilon-Thomas, to answer questions anyone might have regarding cancer treatments, screening, and research.

As our mission statement says, one way or another cancer has touched all of our lives. Staying connected to Moffitt may help some of us fight those battles or avoid them altogether.

For more info visit our website [www.moffittpinellaspartners.com](http://www.moffittpinellaspartners.com) and be sure to check out our Upcoming Events page. We'd love for you to join our efforts. For more information on H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute visit [www.moffitt.org](http://www.moffitt.org).

**Marsha P. Droste, Vice-Chair, Moffitt Pinellas Partners**  
[marshadroste@moffittpinellaspartners.com](mailto:marshadroste@moffittpinellaspartners.com)

### ED HOOPER FIGHTS FOR FUNDING

Moffitt Cancer Center has a friend who's willing to fight for its funding in the Florida Legislature.

He's State Rep. Ed Hooper (R) of District 50, which includes about one-third of central Pinellas County.

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with Rep. Hooper to talk about his personal tour of Moffitt's research and medical facilities. He serves as vice chairman of the Committee on Healthy Families in the Florida House and will likely become the chair when he is reelected in

2008. His committee and its counterpart in the Florida



State Representative  
**ED HOOPER**

Senate are responsible for allocating the entire health care budget, so he was quite intrigued when invited to visit the Moffitt campus.

"I was not aware that there are over 16 affiliate hospitals and 400 oncologists within the Moffitt network, all sharing information and resources. I was also not aware of Moffitt's Total Cancer Care program and how they are compiling data on all of the patients, their treatment, and their responses to the different therapies," Rep. Hooper said.

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### Steering Committee Members

- Scott Andringa
- Brian Aungst
- Rob Bauer
- Dick Beagles
- Ernestine Bean
- Beverly Billiris
- Bruce Bokor
- Joe Burdette
- Gary Conners
- William Crown
- Jodie Cunningham
- Edward Droste
- Marsha Droste
- Holly Duncan
- Ron & Ann Duncan
- Jackie Edgington
- Larry Feder
- Fred Fisher
- Doug Graska
- Lucy Grinnell
- Bob "Gator" Handley
- Lindsay Hardee
- Mary Harvey
- Judy Mitchell
- Pam Muma
- Bob Passwaters
- Ron Petrini
- David Ruppel
- Leslie Schipani-Anderson
- Karen Seel
- Covington Sharp
- Gary Skinner
- Laverne Smith
- Jack Spangler
- Richard Spayde
- Susan Stern
- Bill Swisher
- Dan Walker

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“Every piece of information about a patient is stored on a small microchip that can be cross-referenced with information from other patients. At some point -- hopefully, in the not-too-distant future -- the doctors and scientists at Moffitt should be able to predict what the best treatment is for each individual patient,” he said.

The microchip program “will revolutionize how cancer is treated,” Rep. Hooper said.

The legislator explained that during the process of appropriating funds for health care, it is much easier to fight for a program such as Moffitt’s because it has a positive effect on all areas of the state, not just Tampa Bay.

“There are only so many dollars allocated for health care funding each year, and every legislator naturally promotes the programs that will directly affect their own community. The great thing about Moffitt’s Total Cancer Care program is that it has far-reaching implications for nearly every region in Florida,” he said.

“Also, the fact that Moffitt is the only [facility] in Florida designated as a Comprehensive Cancer Center by the National Cancer Institute is really important for our entire state, as well as our local area.”

Rep. Hooper said he always assumed that if he or a family member ever got cancer, they would have to go



**Ed Hooper**

*Comments on a measure considered on the House floor in Tallahassee, Florida*

to Moffitt for treatment. “I now know that we could go to Morton Plant Hospital in Clearwater and receive all of the benefits of Moffitt’s research and drug trials” because of the affiliation between the two institutions.

“We are fortunate to

live within an hour of Moffitt, but what about the person who lives in Ft. Myers and would have to drive two hours every day for treatment if there was not an affiliate in their area?”

The affiliate network “is something we need to educate all of the members of the legislature about because it is significant for most of their constituents as well as those of us who live close to Moffitt,” Rep. Hooper said.

He also noted how the different clinics within the hospital are laid out. All of the physicians treating a particular type of cancer are grouped together. That really helps facilitate continuity of patient care and ease of communication among doctors and other specialists regarding treatment options and patient progress.

Escorting Rep. Hooper on his tour of Moffitt Cancer Center were its president and chief executive officer, Dr. William Dalton; Nick Porter, executive vice president for Institutional Advancement and Corporate Relations; and Jamie Wilson, vice president for Government Relations.

Others who contributed to his understanding of the Moffitt mission included Dr. Steve Enkemann, a staff scientist at the Microarray Lab; Hugh Cruse, manager of Information Technology Development; and Vicki Caraway, clinic operations manager.

By the time you read this, the Committee on Healthy Families and the entire Florida Legislature will be in the second regular session of 2008. Their mandate is to cut an additional \$2 billion from the 2007-08 budget, as well as to create a 2008-09 budget with significant reductions in all areas. The health-care budget will be significantly affected because of the anticipated cuts. Both the House and Senate will address all of the decisions about next year’s funding in detail over the next five months. Pinellas Partners is fortunate to have someone like Ed Hooper, who feels strongly about Moffitt’s programs, working to keep our state funding in place in the year to come.

**Mary Harvey**  
*Vice-Chair,  
Moffitt Pinellas Partners*



## 2008 BOWLING “BALL” at SPLITSVILLE



Moffitt Cancer Center is presenting the **2008 Bowling “Ball”** at **Splitsville** in Channelside on Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, at 5 p.m. benefitting prostate cancer research.

It is a lighthearted casual part mixer/part competition and your **Pinellas Partners Steering Committee** is hopeful of assembling a team. If you (and friends) would like to join the team, for \$100, you can join the 1 hour competition, get a shirt, and enjoy food and libation, while Pinellas “Bowls Over” the Hillsborough competition. If you just want to mingle and network and cheer on the hometown team, \$75 will get you in for everything but the bowling.

Contact Jackie Edgington at 727-451-6136 to make arrangements.  
**Roll in and Rock Out.**

## A PERSONAL STORY by COURTNEY M. DEMPSEY

When I first moved to Tampa from Chicago in 2005, I did what most northerners do – I laid out in the sun as much as possible. I had my sister’s bridesmaid dress fitting back in Chicago in March, and I wanted to look as tan as possible to offset my Tiffany blue dress.

After I tried on the dress, a family friend of ours, Carol Gibbs, noticed that one of my moles on my left arm was particularly darker than my other moles. I have a lot of moles on my body and I didn’t really think too much of it. I am from Chicago, and I didn’t think of skin cancer or melanoma. After much persuasion from my family and the friend, I made my appointment with a local dermatologist here in Tampa.

After the doctor looked at the mole, he told me that, given my age and lack of family history of melanoma, there was nothing to worry about, but if I insisted, he would biopsy the mole. I did insist that he remove it, at least for my peace of mind. Twenty-four hours later

I was called back into the office. The doctor sat me down and told me that I had malignant melanoma. The initial biopsy showed that it

was Stage IV and the excision of my cancer had to happen that afternoon.

The excision occurred in his dermatology office. After removing 40% of my upper left arm, his recommendation was to leave the wound open to heal better. He told me that it would be easier to go back and remove more cancer if he didn’t clear the margins.

I called Moffitt the next day. I didn’t feel like the doctor had my best interest at heart. I was 29 years old and alone in Tampa with a gaping hole in my arm.

After I left the dermatologist’s office in hysterics, a nurse from that office came rushing out and told me that Moffitt was the best

Cancer may have chosen me... but I chose Moffitt.

After a bit of searching I found Dr. Vernon Sondak. I approached my experience at Moffitt as I would a business. I was the customer -- a paying customer -- and I should be treated as a VIP (Very Important Patient). A VIP should be listened to. I was not a statistic. I was a

*Courtney (left)  
In her Tiffany blue bridesmaid dress*



the Endocrine/Tumor Clinic. For three years I have been a VIP at Moffitt.

Moffitt has given me my life. How else can you thank those who save your life than give them as many resources to continue as possible? You can’t walk around life blaming other people for your problems. If you don’t do everything you can to make a difference in your own life, you have no one to blame but yourself.

I am the CEO of my life and I choose to exhaust every option I can to make my experience at Moffitt better for me and those in the same boat. I don’t have any “treasure” to speak of to make a monetary donation

29 year old single woman with a history of cancer in the family. My age didn’t fit any “norm.” I wanted a doctor to be as concerned about me as I was.

I say that some of my greatest friends I have in this town are from Moffitt. Dr. Sondak, Roz Atchinson, Darcelle Welker, Dr. Paul Smith, Dr. Howard Lilienfeld and the surgical nurses have been my family in Tampa since 2005. I have since had a double mastectomy in April 2006 and most recently I have been receiving treatment in

for the betterment of research, so I use the next best thing - my time and talent. I volunteer for the Key to the Cure to benefit women’s cancers and I am helping to develop the first annual Bowling Ball to benefit prostate cancer. I am the biggest cheerleader of Moffitt and whenever the opportunity arises, I speak of the wonderful experience I have had at Moffitt. I take any opportunity I can to thank my doctors and my nurses. They make my life better.

I know that this may sound cliché, but I

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*Courtney (center) with Carol and Dick Gibbs  
The lady friend who found my dark mole*

place to be treated. She gave me the number and the name of who to call as well as my medical records, and I have never looked back.