

GREENWICH

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The celebrity event planner
and host of *My Fair Wedding*
hasn't forgotten his roots

DAVID TUTERA

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with NFL star turned
sitcom funnyman
TERRY CREWS

+ THE LATEST
IN THE **FIGHT**
AGAINST AIDS

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HOPE IS IN THE GENES

A cure for cancer delivered in a single, painless dose? Even the most optimistic proponents of cancer gene therapy thought the idea might be a shot in the dark.

Yet promising news from researchers at the University of Pennsylvania's Abramson Cancer Center—funded by a pioneering and philanthropic Greenwich couple—suggests successful cancer treatment from a lone dose of gene therapy is astoundingly possible.

"When I first heard, it was like an answer to a prayer," says Barbara Netter of Greenwich, cofounder of the Stamford-based Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT), which funded the UPenn study. "We've had good results with some of our research, but nothing like this." News of the trial made national news on virtually every major news outlet from CNN to the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

So far, the clinical trial has produced remarkable results in a small group of patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. Two patients are in remission, while others

have shown improvement after receiving doses of their own genetically-altered T cells.

Barbara and her husband, Edward, who passed away last February, supported the groundbreaking research through an ACGT grant. Since its inception in 2000, ACGT has donated more than \$22 million to support seventeen clinical trials exploring gene therapies and their potential for cancer cures.

The Netters founded ACGT following the loss of their daughter-in-law, Kim, to breast cancer. "We felt helpless and we wanted to do something," explains Barbara. "Some people thought genes were risky, but we were intrigued and willing to take the risk. My husband believed eventually they would be the cure."

Even though the Netters were early believers, the UPenn results left Barbara only "guardedly happy." "The idea that two people are in remission is so heartening, but [another trial participant] isn't quite there yet, although they seem to be making progress," she explains. "I consider remission something that needs to be achieved over a period of years. But we've been deluged with letters and inquiries from people who want to become part of this. It gives them hope. It gives me hope."

What inspires Barbara now is that ultimately, gene therapy could lead to more humane and tolerable cancer treatments. ACGT is currently funding research into the use of genetic material to treat ovarian, lung, brain and breast cancers as well as melanoma. "What's exciting is that the kind of breakthroughs we've just experienced could motivate venture capitalists and pharmaceutical companies to try to bring this research to the marketplace," she says. "My only regret is that my husband is not here to witness this. This is what we envisioned together."

—Beth Cooney Fitzpatrick



Edward and Barbara Netter

Thinking Pink

Every October retailers around the country show their support for breast cancer research by donating a portion of product proceeds to the cause. In this battle, every dollar counts.

Here, fashionable ways you can help make a statement.



VINEYARD VINES: Pink ribbon tie, \$75 with 100% being donated to the Breast Cancer Alliance during the month of October.



LUX, BOND & GREEN: Love Leaf ring by Carelle in 18 carat rose gold. \$1,495 with 10% being donated to the Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation.



KIMARA AHNERT: Pucker Pink Ribbon Lipstick and Pink Petal Blush. \$24 and \$25 with 15% being donated to the Libby Ross Foundation.



SPURGE: Gianna Rose French milled pink ribbon soap set, \$27 with 20% being donated to the Breast Cancer Alliance.

