

**CANCER PATIENTS AT ST. LUKE’S-ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL WIN SOUTH JERSEY
GETAWAYS IN LATEST GIVEAWAY FROM LAURA’S JOURNEYS**
Program encourages and facilitates therapeutic recreational travel for cancer patients

Two Manhattan residents were selected as winners of seven-night stays at the Marriott Vacation Club Fairway Villas resort near Atlantic City in the latest vacation giveaway by Laura’s Journeys (www.laurasjourneys.org), a support program for cancer patients at Continuum Cancer Centers of New York at St. Luke’s and Roosevelt Hospitals in Manhattan and other institutions within the Continuum Health Partners network. The program is designed to encourage and facilitate recreational travel for the patient along with their spouse/partner or other family members/friends.

The winners’ names were drawn from more than 75 entrants, all currently undergoing treatment for cancer, during a raffle last month in the hospital’s infusion suite.

Both winners received weeklong stays this fall in two-bedroom units at the Marriott Vacation Club Fairway Villas resort in Galloway Township, N.J., donated by Marriott timeshare owners Laurie and Clark Nardinelli of Laurel, MD. Laura’s Journeys also awarded the winners American Express gift checks to cover the cost of meals, activities and sightseeing.

The winners will be able to enjoy all activities at this golf and tennis resort, including an indoor pool, gym, Elizabeth Arden Red Door spa, and movies, as well as visits to Atlantic City’s boardwalk and casinos, and day trips to nearby attractions such as Cape May, Renault Winery, Smithville Village, Tuckerton Seaport, and Long Beach Island.

The grand prize winner, Gerolyn Martinez, a 31-year-old employee in the admissions office at Teachers College at Columbia University, will travel with her husband. “We’ve been battling this thing for so long and haven’t had a break or a vacation since,” said Ms. Martinez. “This trip will allow us to take our minds off of things.” Ms. Martinez added that she and her husband, who were married just five months when she was diagnosed with cancer, plan on combining the trip with a celebration of their upcoming second wedding anniversary. The second prize winner, Kelly Chisolm, 70, will be traveling to the resort with his family. Both winners live in upper Manhattan.

Laura’s Journeys was created by Aberdeen, N.J. resident Bill Parness in memory of his wife Laura, who passed away in November 2008 at the age of 54 after a courageous battle with breast cancer. He developed the program based on the therapeutic benefits he and Laura derived from their extensive travels during the six years she was being treated for advanced breast cancer. “The rewards Laura and I received from traveling during those years are just too numerous to mention,” said Mr. Parness. “Beyond the sheer pleasure of traveling, Laura always came home feeling refreshed and ready to tackle her next treatments.”

He added: “We are very grateful to Laurie and Clark Nardinelli for their very generous donations of Marriott Vacation Club timeshare weeks to our program. With these latest trips, three patients and their families will have visited Marriott properties in New Jersey and Florida this year for week-long stays donated by Clark and Laurie, who was a dear friend of Laura. Through her conversations with Laura during the years she was being treated, Laurie was well aware of the restorative powers of our journeys. This is such a meaningful way to honor Laura’s memory.”

Since the program’s inception in fall 2009, Laura’s Journeys has now awarded 20 vacations and weekend getaways to chemotherapy and radiation therapy patients. These have included one-week cruises to various parts of the Caribbean and New England/Canada; a one-week trip to Athens, Greece;

one-week stays in Merritt Island and Palm Beach Shores, Fla.; and weekend getaways to the Berkshire Mountains in Massachusetts and Atlantic City.

Laura Parness was a patient of Gabriel A. Sara, M.D., Medical Director of the Chemotherapy Infusion Suite and Executive Director of the Patient Services Initiative at Continuum Cancer Centers of New York, located at Roosevelt Hospital. Dr. Sara is a strong advocate for [therapeutic travel](#) for his patients.

“Over my many years of practice, I have come to believe that there are therapeutic benefits to traveling while undergoing treatment for cancer,” said Dr. Sara. “No matter what the duration, planning a trip gives patients something to look forward to and provides a vitally important psychological lift from grappling with the day-to-day issues associated with cancer. I especially enjoy hearing stories of my patients’ trips, seeing their photos and, more than anything, seeing their smiling faces as they felt revitalized and happy. After their trip they continue to remember the beautiful moments they had and know that they can do it again.”

In addition to trip giveaways, “Laura’s Journeys” offers tips for traveling while undergoing treatment for cancer.

For travel tips or to donate, please visit www.laurasjourneys.org.
