

December 2008 Meeting News –

New Members

There were no new members at this month's meeting.

Business & Other Information

Nancy led the holiday potluck meeting. The group collected many toys to donate to the Egleston Children's Hospital. Thanks to all who donated! Our new website, which is referenced in our new brochure, is now available at <http://mmsg.org/>

There are additional copies of the book, "100 Questions & Answers about Myeloma" by Dr. Bashey available in the group's library. "Cell Phones for a Cure" bags are available for sending unwanted cell phones in postage-paid envelopes to the IMF for recycling. **Andy** reminded the group that if they book travel arrangements through the IMF's website, some proceeds will go to the IMF, which benefits all of us. Andy also recently purchased a page in the IMF's Peter Boyle fund brochure for the group; and the group agreed to reimburse Andy. **Nancy** announced that 1000 copies of the group's new brochure have been sent to be printed. These brochures will ultimately be placed in various public areas such as clinics, hospitals, doctor's offices, etc. with the goal being to get the information made available to those who need it most. There will be more information on this topic in the January meeting, including distribution plans. The **American Society of Hematology (ASH) Conference** is in process in San Diego. This is a large annual conference where myeloma receives a lot of attention because of its organized research. The results of this conference can greatly influence our doctors.

We wish to acknowledge a generous donation from the Southside Support Group to MMRF Race for Research to benefit all patients.

Member Updates & Collaboration

Sandy reported that **Wanda** has a stem cell transplant planned for the end of December. **Nancy** mentioned that **Sharon** is beginning treatment with a new agent called carfilzomib, which is a selective blocker of proteasome activity in relapsed solid tumors.

Doris reported that many of the Southside group's members have recently had stem cell transplants and are doing well. The group's January meeting guest speaker will be **Andy**.

Doug, brother of **Ginny**, joined the group this month to provide an update on Ginny's progress. Ginny has been hospitalized due to adverse affects of treatment. Doug explained that the treatment has been rough, but some good results have been achieved and so Ginny is continuing. Ginny remains in good spirits, but can not have visitors and is limited with phone calls. A website is available for communicating with Ginny at

<http://www.caringbridge.org/> and Doug and/or Ginny update the site frequently. **Jeanette**

also mentioned that some of Ginny's previously stored stem cells were recently re-inserted and successfully grafted. **Suzanne** has begun her third round of Revlimid, Dex, and Velcade and is doing well and getting a good response, although she is also experiencing some neuropathy. **Nancy** reported that she will begin the stem cell transplant process at Northside in mid-December. Nancy plans to harvest stem cells Christmas week, and then have the actual transplant on New Year's Eve day. Nancy expects to collect enough stem cells for two transplants for a possible second (tandem) transplant three months after the first (to be decided after knowing the results of the first transplant). We heard that **Fred** had his transplant at Northside recently and we look forward to hearing good news from him.

Jameca reported doing well after a setback in March when she had some radiation

treatment. Jameca has recovered, returned to work full time, and expects good results from her upcoming annual bone marrow biopsy. **Bill** is continuing with HuLuc63 treatments and is doing well with a good response. **Frank** reported feeling OK after recently beginning treatment with Revlimid and Velcade in preparation for a stem cell harvest planned for February. **Mike** reminded the group of how important it is to harvest stem cells while you can; before your body has endured a lot of chemotherapy treatment. Generally, the more chemotherapy that your body endures, the harder it becomes to harvest. **Karyn** has begun home dialysis with success and has even been able to make it portable. Karen mentioned that she has a lot going on right now between the dialysis, chemotherapy, blood transfusions, etc. with a lot of appointments keeping her busy. She has met with Dr. Lonial and a stem cell transplant is planned for January at Emory.

Submitted by Wendy