



For immediate release

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New Pink Lemonade CEO hits ground running
Changes in throes of Covid-19

Vancouver, WA – It is more than safe to say that the new CEO at Pink Lemonade Project has had a challenging onboarding as she has taken the helm. Just days after Susan Stearns got her office keys, Covid-19 changed everything about how the nonprofit delivers its services to breast cancer patients and their families in the Vancouver-Portland metropolitan area. PLP was founded ten years ago by local Drs. Allen and Cassie Gabriel.

Stearns explained, “We swiftly pivoted and now are offering many of our programs using Zoom web-based technology. We are working mightily to create a virtual community for those in treatment and recovery during these stressful and uncertain times.”

It quickly became apparent that there was a great deal of unmet need. Susan continued, “Events are being added daily as we aim to meet the growing need by women with breast cancer and to help bolster our healthcare system partners. We are working to spread the word through our healthcare partners and through social media to make these programs available to those women who are sheltering at home, and who might still be in active treatment and require visits to their medical providers for chemotherapy, radiation, or even surgeries.”

PLP Program Committee Chair, Board Member Dean Stenehjem, gives these changes a big thumbs up. “In three short weeks of operating virtual programming, PLP has learned that this new format allows PLP to connect women who might not have even been able to attend our in-person events. So, after the height of this pandemic is over, PLP sees the opportunity to continue this format and expand our reach to include more women, possibly even those who are immunosuppressed and home-bound yet need connection.”

Susan Stearns

A breast cancer survivor herself, Stearns is uniquely qualified to lead PLP. she brings more than two decades of experience in healthcare policy and reform to her new role. She attributes much of her success in treatment to her strong healthcare system knowledge and a highly activated approach as a patient. Now, she is interested in combining the patient perspective with her background in healthcare policy through a community-based organization like PLP. Susan has an MBA from the Peter F. Drucker Graduate School of Management. She also has a master of arts in political economics from Claremont Graduate University.

She earned her BA in American History from Northwestern University, and is a graduate of the Coro Fellowship, a national leadership training program in public affairs.

A Move is in the future

Pink Lemonade Project will be moving to its new offices in Downtown Vancouver. The board has signed a lease for an office at 1207 Washington Street, Suite 125. When the COVID-19 restraints are lifted, PLP will announce a grand opening.

About Pink Lemonade Project

Pink Lemonade Project is a 10-year-old nonprofit founded by local Drs. Allen and Cassie Gabriel. Its purpose is to educate, empower and support those affected by breast cancer in the Vancouver-Portland metropolitan area. Pink Lemonade Project goes beyond what the healthcare system can offer in terms of emotional, practical, and psychological support.

We want to make sure you are aware of Pink Lemonade Project as a resource you can call upon. Originally we hosted retreats and offered one-on-one mentorship as a way to provide support and create community for those going through their cancer experience. Today, we have a large portfolio of [programs and events](#) for patients, caregivers and families. We also have many healthcare organizations from across the region who are our partners to serve those affected by breast cancer. Learn more about at pinklemondeproject.org.

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