



Energy Partners:

A Service Program of the Heart

by Sandy Priestler, MBA, CHTP, LifeSpark Executive Director

It was a warm September morning, just 11 days after the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center. I arrived for a Level 3 Healing Touch class with only two other students from the roster of those who had registered.

Over lunch, sitting outside at a local restaurant, our class discussed our fragile world, and the mood was somber. We were feeling shock and grief, and I had an empty feeling in my heart. Each of us wanted to do something, and we knew that Healing Touch could help with the healing...but New York City is a long way from Colorado.

Then our instructor began telling us about a service program that she had been involved with in Hawaii, which matched breast cancer patients with Healing Touch providers. Each individual with cancer was matched with a volunteer who provided weekly Healing Touch sessions for a year. She told us how these sessions provided peace and support, and

how the sessions made a huge impact on the lives of these women. I thought of all of the people I knew with cancer, and as she spoke, I felt a rush of energy and my pulse quickened. I knew that a program like this would make a difference in Colorado, and in that moment I knew that I would help create it.

Within weeks a committee was formed, and QuaLife Wellness Community, a non-profit organization - serving individuals with cancer, agreed to host the program. Our planning committee, with much vision and forethought, chose to open the program to other modalities, including both Reiki and Healing Touch. This decision has resulted in a rich mixture of volunteers who learn from one another and add to the wisdom and collective strength of the program. The committee made other decisions as well, such as the decision to welcome individuals with any stage and type of cancer, to shorten the matching time to six months, and to require all volunteer providers to carry professional liability insurance (QuaLife, of course, carried its own). In November 2002, after a year of planning and preparation, we launched the program.

Our first two years of the program ran smoothly with much growth and learning. We served 64 people with over 1,000 hours of sessions. Then, at the end of 2004, to our great dismay QuaLife closed its doors. Suddenly, we were without a home and without a parent organization. Our committed group of volunteers was determined to continue. However,

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after looking for another organization to host us, we realized we really needed to start our own. We held sessions in churches and clinics and the program continued without interruption while we set up a new organization. We named this new organization LifeSpark, to signify the spark of life that we hope to strengthen in each person we touch, and named our program Energy Partners.


This month marks the fourth year of this program, and we have continued to expand and develop. We hold New Provider Seminars twice a year to welcome and train Healing Touch and Reiki providers for our program. These 18 contact hour seminars cover topics such as ethics, professionalism, psychological aspects of the relationship, and self care. We have a committed core of about 40 volunteers who serve in the program and work together to support those individuals receiving services. Since our inception, we have served over 140 individuals with over 2000 session hours.

This year, we added several new health care sites including two outpatient oncology departments, one in Englewood and one in Denver. Each site is different and provides the opportunity to discover the best way for our program to meet the needs of the patients and staff. We work in space that often has multiple uses, and we must be adaptable and flexible. Building relationships with our partner medical facilities take time, and we take great care in nurturing them. Our job is to be an oasis of calm and peace, providing comfort and support to the individual with cancer while supporting and accommodating the medical staff.

While many things have changed in this program, some things will never change. We were founded on the principle of service, a desire deep within our hearts to be of service to other individuals, and to make the world a better place. We were also founded on equal partnership between the individual and the provider, between our program and the hosting facility, and between the providers and their mentors. Our program will always be centered on these principles.

There are many to thank for our success. Those early planners established a solid foundation for this program. The

instructor that I met was none other than Anne Day, who brought the Bosom Buddy program model from Hawaii to Colorado, and played a central role in building our program. Other committee members were Janet Mentgen, Lisa Anselme, and Mary Maynard from the Healing Touch community, Kim Strombous and Doug Gibbs from the Reiki community, and Carole Lindroos and Naomi Sullivan from QuaLife. Each brought something unique and special, and it was the combination that created such a strong and vibrant beginning. Our volunteer providers and mentors are the heartbeat of this program, our Board of Directors provides leadership and guidance, and our donors nurture us with their belief in our program. We are truly blessed.

I remember that September morning five years ago, when we discussed our precious world; I believe good things can come from tragedy. I join hands with my amazing colleagues and friends who are energy therapists, health care professionals, cancer patients, and community members, in bringing forward a program that comes from the heart, that touches many, and that makes a lasting difference. That program is the Energy Partners program of LifeSpark 

For more information about LifeSpark's Energy Partners program log onto www.LifeSparkNow.org or call 303-425-5670.

Sandy's Bio:

Sandy Priester, MBA, CHTP, has 20 years of experience in marketing, fundraising, and volunteer management, and has held leadership positions in organizations such as Historic Boulder, Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, and QuaLife Wellness Community. Sandy has practiced Reiki for over 17 years and Healing Touch for five. She is co-founder and Executive Director of LifeSpark Cancer Resources and serves as Public Relations Director for Healing Touch International.