

## non-profit making a difference

By Resident Barbara Kavanagh/Sandolore Sykes



# Arizona Myeloma

## NETWORK & CANCER CAREGIVERS AZ

Several Residents of Arrowhead Lakes attended a lovely event to bring awareness to Cancer Caregivers AZ, a non-profit charitable organization founded by Barbara Kavanagh. In attendance were Lake's residents, Andrea Parker, Stephanie Finnegan, Chris Libbey (the owner of the magazine) and of course Jack and Barbara Kavanagh.

Our very own Barbara Kavanagh is a tiny powerhouse of a woman whose own story has inspired incredible feats. Her husband Jack was diagnosed 28 years ago with multiple myeloma and Barbara has transformed this hardship into a compelling and dynamic effort. Barbara and Jack Kavanagh founded Arizona Myeloma Network & Cancer Caregivers AZ in June 2004. Their members are patients, families, healthcare professionals, volunteers and others concerned about cancer in its many forms. They are a nonprofit charity organization conducting outreach events and educational programs for

cancer patients, their families, and caregivers, with special consideration for the underserved: African American, Asian /Pacific, Hispanic American and Native American populations.

Collaborating with many partners, from scientific and medical researcher partners, lobbying partnerships, and many other joint efforts, has clearly made an incredible impact. She has used her personal experiences as an inspiration to improve the lives of others living through the same misfortune. The organization's goal is to "promote collaboration, awareness, education, and advocacy for improved treatment and quality of life for cancer patients, their families and all cancer caregivers with special consideration to the underserved." Barbara developed this organization with the specific goal of helping and educating caregivers of patients with cancer.

The organization supports HB2166 with the goal of putting patients first

and to ban unfair insurance practices. As the name suggests, the organization's focus is on the wellbeing of caregivers and their access to information and support. Their events highlight different strategies and approaches to caregiving. The events teach skills related to the roles and tasks for caregivers, as well as techniques and approaches to caregiving itself, putting an emphasis on the importance of the caregiver taking care of themselves, their stress and their personal lives. They approach organizational strategies for balancing the patient's needs, work and family as well as how to connect with the resources and support available.

The event, catered by "Los Sombreros" had an excellent turnout, thanks to the dynamism of Barbara and the uniqueness of her mission. It is the only organization in the United States that trains caregivers, and thereby often welcomes attendees from all the over the country.

Their website <https://cancercaregiversaz.com/> contains a wealth of resources including events, fundraising, discussions, a learning center and a directory of resources. Barbara is always looking for new volunteers and never turns down a donation!