



MAKING

Spring/Summer 2012

Miracles

A publication of the IMF recognizing our supporters

Walking His Way to a Cure, **ONE STEP AT A TIME**



**Jeff Kearney and John Stoudemire –
*A Walk To Cure***

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Dear IMF Supporter,

As Director of IMF Member Events, it is my pleasure to work with IMF members all around the country – and the world. Each and every IMF member has his and her own personal story, and each of these stories inspires the work I do on behalf of the myeloma community. These personal stories also have a powerful common thread: a desire to raise awareness about this disease and to find its cure.

Every event, no matter how big or small, contributes to our cause in innumerable and very important ways. This issue of Making Miracles focuses on the wonderful IMF Member Fundraiser Events that took place during 2011, with some “sneak peaks” at our early 2012 events as well. Through these fundraising events, the IMF is able to continue its Brian D. Novis Research Grants Program for promising research in the field of myeloma, as well as educate and spread awareness about this disease amongst communities we might not otherwise reach.

If you’ve ever thought of hosting a barbeque, throwing a party, going bowling, playing croquet, training for a run, writing letters to your friends, celebrating your birthday – anything you can imagine – and would like to turn it into a public awareness and fundraising event with minimal effort, please give me a call or send me an email. I would love to chat with you!



With warmest regards and with much appreciation,

Suzanne Battaglia
Director, Member Events

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Walking His Way to a Cure, **ONE STEP AT A TIME**

April 1, 2012: "Sitting in a CVS two or so hours away from our hotel... A/C never felt this good."

It's 2:52PM on the first day of April. For others it's April Fool's Day, but Jeff Kearney, 22, is not joking around. That morning, in Orlando, Florida, he began a walk that will ultimately take him to New York City. He is walking for his mother. He is walking to find a cure for myeloma.

Jeff's mother, Robin, was diagnosed with myeloma in May 2008, when Jeff was 18. A single parent with three children, she had been working long hours with growing fatigue that was notable enough that she went to her doctor for a physical. Several tests and physicians later, she received her myeloma diagnosis.

"At first I was pretty calm about the situation," Jeff now recalls. "My mom is very strong, and deep down inside I knew she would be okay. But then I decided to do some research of my own, and all I found were the worst-case scenarios. It scared me. I went to Mom and she reassured me that everything was going to be fine."

April 2, 2012: "Orlando Beach today, Palm Coast tomorrow. Who's got a couch we can sleep on?"

Robin joined Florida's Central Myeloma Support



Walkers Jeff Kearney and Jon Stoudemire

Group in September 2008, and began a journey familiar for many myeloma patients and their families – at first she and her doctors monitored her disease, which segued to several chemotherapy treatments, with a variety of success. In March 2011, Jeff attended his first support group meeting with his mother, in anticipation of the stem cell transplant she would undergo the following month. Hearing the stories of this community of patients, families and friends inspired him. And unbeknownst to him at the time, it was also critical to the literal path he would soon undertake.

(Continues on page 8)

MY STORY:

Dr. Manny's **LEGACY**

by Penny Rivero

Dr. Manuel Rivero was the kindest, most generous man I've ever known. He practiced medicine for 40 years, always passionate, and always focused on helping people. "Dr. Manny" never refused anyone health care, whether they had the ability to pay or not. Sometimes he would work until midnight, seeing up to 80 patients a day, and they didn't seem to mind waiting two or more hours to see him. He was a friend and caretaker to many, and loved by everyone who knew him. I would know. Dr. Manny was my beloved father.

In December 2009 my father diagnosed himself with advanced, stage 3 myeloma. My life and my family were changed forever. My



father began chemotherapy and endured cell transplant treatments that increasingly sapped his energy. He also developed painful neuropathy. But he still insisted on working. He wanted to ensure that his staff maintained their salaries and that his patients could obtain

(Continues on page 9)

Sipping Wine, Supporting the **CAUSE**

When Holly Carson's mother was diagnosed with myeloma in 2010, her instinct was to find a place to volunteer in order to help combat the disease. An Internet search brought Holly to the IMF.

Holly has since spearheaded several fundraisers, with such success and feeling of achievement that she happily keeps expanding their scope. Her most recent, in March 2012, was a Wine Tasting Fundraiser at Antelope Valley Winery in Lancaster, California.

Holly had no previous experience hosting a wine tasting, so she thoroughly researched how to throw one as a fundraiser, from start to finish. The winery helped her select the wines to taste – from their list of 12, Holly selected six for her 20 guests, who also bought raffle tickets for restaurants, movies and sporting events as they sampled the wine.

"I really enjoyed putting it all together, getting the word out about the IMF, and seeing how much fun everyone had" Holly reports. "I would do it again in a heartbeat!"



Abby Brown and Julie Visner

A Family Fundraiser's **FIFTH YEAR**

For the Werra family, kicking off the New Year with a fundraiser is officially becoming a trend. This past January marked the fifth Dennis Werra Family Benefit, which honors their father, who was diagnosed with myeloma in 2006.

The Werras are thoughtful about incorporating small new elements each year – expanded raffle prizes, a variety of food and drink donations, and extending their list of invites. But they are also comfortable with the structure they've created. "It's a blueprint that has worked well for us," says Jayson Werra, Dennis' son.

The Dennis Werra Family Benefit is an open house-style celebration in New Berlin, Wisconsin. At this year's event, close to 100 people joined in, with more than half of them staying from start to finish. "We've been very happy with the support we've gotten over the years," Jayson says.

The support of family and friends – both for the fundraiser and for the cause – has taken on different meaning since Dennis passed away in December 2009. The 2012 event was the second without Dennis there. "This year was a little bit easier than last year," Jayson observes. "And the IMF is still important to us, because they have supported us so much throughout the years. To this day, I have always felt like part of the IMF family. I love this type of attitude towards patients and their families, and we use our benefit as a way to give back."



Eric Ziarek and Steve Monroe

*"We've been very happy
with the support we've gotten
over the years."*

Playing Games to **BLAST** Myeloma



“Word has to get out what myeloma is and how it affects our community,” Anne Girod says. “People are willing to work hard and help when they are aware of what they are working for.”

That’s why, more than three years ago, Anne was inspired to turn to her friend Carol Klein with an idea: To gather their Monday Night Bridge Group in order to “blast” myeloma. That first year, Anne and Carol hosted 50 women at Carol’s house. It was a great success, which they happily duplicated the following year with 60 women in attendance.

But their other friends were becoming envious of the fun, and were equally eager to help the cause. Keeping their “game” theme in mind, Anne and Carol expanded their fundraiser to include mah-jong and canasta, simultaneously expanding their invitation list.

Their March 2012 event, Ladies Game Day Blasts Myeloma, moved from Carol’s house to the Lakewood Country Club in Rockville, Maryland, which accommodated the 102 women who arrived ready to play – and to blast myeloma to benefit the IMF. In addition to the games being played at the tables, Carol and Anne upped the ante: “We added a lot of door prizes, which was fun,” Carol reports.

Three months later, women are already staking their claim on 2013. “We already have a ‘waiting list’ for next year’s event,” Anne says. “What a rewarding feeling!”

“It’s because of our dear friend Benson, Carol’s husband, that I first became familiar with myeloma 12 years ago,” Anne adds. “Since then I have not only witnessed their battle, I have also become aware of many other cases. It’s obvious that a cure needs to be found – and soon.”

Third Time, **THIRD CHARM**

Yvonne Yaksic and her daughter, Lisa Mehalick, found the IMF soon after Yvonne was diagnosed with myeloma in 2005, at the age of 51. “The IMF was accessible and informative,” Yvonne recalls. “Right away, we developed a better understanding of myeloma, and we became more at ease.”

“The IMF was accessible and informative. Right away, we developed a better understanding of myeloma, and we became more at ease.”

In order to support her mother – and the entire myeloma community – in search of a cure, Lisa planned her first IMF fundraising event in 2009, Jeans and Jewels, a special occasion where guests could still be comfortable and have fun. It was a big success, so big that December 1, 2011 marked the third annual Jeans and Jewels event.

Lisa and Yvonne’s fundraiser has grown over the years, in both attendance and scope. In the first year, Lisa cooked a lot of the food herself; now that Lisa and Yvonne have established the event, they have been able to secure more local Treesdale, Pennsylvania food vendors who enthusiastically donate to the cause. Similarly, more

and more premium beverages are now donated, and the live and silent auctions are filled with coveted prizes. Lisa and Yvonne have also expanded the festivities to include families with children. The most recent Jeans and



Yvonne Yaksic and Lisa Mehalick with a member of Rusted Root

Jewels included a magic show, face painting and games for the kids.

Other aspects of the event happily have remained the same. To everyone’s pleasure, the presence of Rusted Root, a beloved Pittsburgh-area band, has been part of the celebration all three years. And though the number of guests, participants and donors wonderfully grow, Lisa and Yvonne still feel the strength of the constant support of friends and family.

“Lisa is the mother of six children,” Yvonne says. “But I lovingly refer to Jeans and Jewels as another one of her babies.”

Celebrating the **IMF** Member

The year 2012 keeps marching forward, but we also want to make sure 2011 keeps getting its due – because it was a wonderful year for our member fundraisers, bringing myeloma awareness into communities far and wide, and raising extraordinarily important proceeds for research and support. . . an amount that totaled \$384,000!

On January 29, 2011, the fourth year for the Werra Family Benefit in honor of their father, Dennis, set this IMF member fundraising year off on its successful path (see page 4 for a report on the 2012 incarnation of this event).

We've noticed that fundraising festivities often feature food! Ken Fabian and the Central Florida Support Group hosted a delicious Spaghetti Supper, Ivy Prosper organized Birthday Brunch for a Cure, Geri and Bill Kennedy threw a Backyard BBQ, Alexandra Zousmer and Joanna Share spearheaded Misbehave for Myeloma III, a pizza party in honor of Alexandra's dad, Arnold. (Previous years of this event funded a 2011 Brian D. Novis Junior Grant.)

IMF members are also a sporty bunch. The Saletan Family held their 1st Annual RHS Open Golf Tournament to honor their father, Rich Saletan, a former IMF Board Member. Golf tournaments were wonderfully abundant in 2011, with the 12th Annual JC Memorial Golf Tournament (funding the 2012 Brian D. Novis Junior Research Grant awarded to Dr. Antonia Cagnetta), the 4th Annual Carolyn Czerkies Memorial Golf Outing (funding the 2012 Brian D.

Novis Research Grant awarded to Dr. Ulf Krause), the 6th Annual Meredith Fiacco Memorial Golf Tournament, Coach Rob's Benefit Bash and Golf Tournament (funding the 2012 Brian D. Novis Junior Research Grant awarded to Dr. Charitha Madiraju), and the Gary C. Heuer, Jr. Golf Tournament (funding the 2012 Brian D. Novis Junior Grant awarded to Dr. Eyal Zcharia).

Runs and walks also make for very popular and successful IMF fundraising events. Friends and family gathered for Barb Pytlik's Walk of Hope, Cyndi Schaap organized the Aloha Kakou Walk, Josephine Diagonale and her Delmarva Myeloma Support Group participated in the Monster Walk at the Dover Speedway, Julianne Basques braved the San Francisco Marathon, and the Miles for Myeloma 5K successfully ran again in Philadelphia (funding the 2012 Brian D. Novis Senior Research Grant awarded to Dr. Suzanne Lentzsch). In November, Steve Schecter ran a 5K as the first of three endurance runs he has planned as Steve's Run for Myeloma.

Other terrific sport-inspired member fundraisers included Dick Bloom's 2nd Annual Bocce Fall Classic and Andy Sninsky's bicycle journey across the Mojave and beyond as a Bicyclist Riding in Search of a Cure. We consider card games forms of sport too, so let's not forget Jack Aiello's always-successful Poker Bash and Carol Klein



Fundraisers of **2011**

and Anne Girod's Ladies Game Day Blasts Myeloma (see page 5).

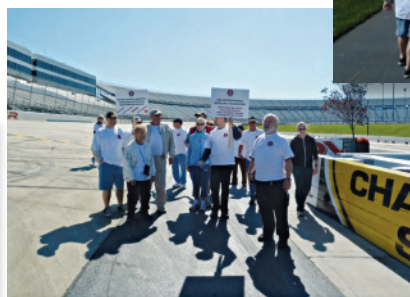
The IMF community also likes to fundraise with music. Doug and Kate Farrell once again celebrated St. Patrick's Day with A Song For Ireland, Slava Rubin threw another successful Music Against Myeloma bash, Ally Tuohy organized the Downbeat Glee Club Performance, and Susan Spafford spearheaded a Memorial Concert in honor of Bruce Morton Wright.

Some less categorizable but equally wonderful events: Mario Bonacorsi organized a Car Raffle of a red Mazda Miata convertible, with proceeds benefitting the IMF; Su Snook organized a Casual Day at work; Cecilia Izquierdo donated the proceeds of her book, Signs From Heaven, in honor of her son; Lisa Mehalick and Yvonne Yaksic organized yet another fantastically successful Jeans and Jewels Gala (see page 5); Friends and family raised money in honor of Joyce Dean's Birthday; Holly Carson spearheaded a Candy Campaign and sent out Mail For The Cure letters; Matt Jacob's Fundraising Email Campaign was a hit yet again; Carol and Benson Klein oversaw the ongoing Trooper Benson campaign (funding the 2012 Brian D. Novis Senior Research Grant awarded to Dr. Nancy Krett).

Then there is the yin and the yang: In September, Kerri Marion honored our cause with her annual Myeloma Month at Salon 926,

which was held six months after David Chan and Steven Brown were the poster-men for Shave Your Fro For Some Dough.

Finally, we must honor 2011's youngest fundraisers. Thirteen year-old Morgan Machado donated the gift money from his Bar Mitzvah. Erin Concannon (age 14) and Clair Concannon (age 11) organized a Concannon Family Night for their friends and their friends' parents. Like the rest of us, they are fueled by their desire to contribute towards bettering the world for of all families living with myeloma, while marching toward a cure.



April 4, 2012: On Facebook, Jeff posts a photo of his friend Jon's bloodied pinkie toe.

"After my mom's stem cell transplant, it was a struggle," Jeff says. "It still is. The side effects – the energy loss and the severe pain – means she probably won't be able to go back to work, and she is not getting disability. The financial responsibilities of the bills and medications each month while managing to take care of two children in school and with extra-curricular activities... It was getting next to impossible for her to keep up. And I know we aren't the only ones with this kind of story."

Jeff thought back to his first encounter with the Central Florida Myeloma Support Group, and Ken Fabian's report on the success of his Spaghetti Supper fundraiser. Jeff decided he wanted to get involved in a similar way, not just for his mother, but to lend his support to every person and family challenged by myeloma, and to raise awareness for the cause.



He decided on a walking event. The reason for his decision was simple yet elegant: He loves walking. "I had spent a month on tour with a local band called 'A Hero's Fate,'" Jeff explains. "I took many long walks exploring the towns we visited. It was such a great experience, and creating a similar experience to support myeloma felt like the right thing to do."

Jeff asked his friend Jon Stoudemire if he was

interested in joining him on what Jeff envisioned as a fundraising walk up from Florida up the east coast of the United States to New York City – a route called the "East Coast Greenway." Jeff's plan was to call his event "A Walk To Cure."

Jon's response to Jeff's idea: "You're crazy."

Jeff persevered, meticulously planning his walking route, securing sponsors, creating a website and lining up professional



From left to right: Mariah Link, friend; Nita Hart, front desk clerk; Jon Stoudemire, walker; Robin Kearney, myeloma survivor & mom; Jeff Kearney, walker; Lillian Hess-Salmeri, Clarion Deland Manager; Lauryn Kearney, youngest sister to walker.

videographers to shoot a promotional video. As his start date drew near, he asked Jon again. This time Jon saw that Jeff couldn't be denied. And Jon didn't want to deny him. He said yes. Eventually he would get that bloody toe for his trouble.

April 15, 2012: "Day 15, goodnight."

The young men began fundraising in earnest, while also preparing physically. They took several 12-hour walks to train for the 12,000-mile, 10-state journey they would soon endure.

That first day, for others known as April Fools Day, Jeff and Jon walked 38 miles to Deland, Florida. Family and friends met them there for dinner.

Jeff and Jon then trekked onward through Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. They met up with family and friends along the way, and also encountered interesting strangers. They were inspired



Kelly Bodiford with Jeff and John

by unexpected generosity. "Random people would bring us bottles of water and Gatorade," Jeff says. "The further we got on our journey, the more attention we were getting." And he is incredibly grateful. "It would have been incredibly difficult without the support of the many individuals, restaurants and hotels that helped us along the way," he adds.

April 22, 2012: "Dunn, North Carolina this evening. A lot of people have been asking how they can donate directly to us with food, lodging and other needs. . . These donations are a huge help and any bit makes it easier on us. You can also donate to the International Myeloma Foundation at the website as well. Thank you :)"

routine care. Finally, when his pain was too great and his energy too low, we were able to convince him to give up his practice and let others take care of him for a change.

We all remained optimistic the treatments would eventually put the cancer into remission. But in January 2011, we realized that my father had lost hearing in his right ear, and discovered that he had contracted a rare form of the disease, called meningeal myeloma. Only about two percent of myeloma patients have this rare form, in which the cancer spreads to the brain. The vision of my father sobbing when he learned there was no successful treatment for meningeal myeloma is still seared in my memory.

Prior to my father getting sick, my fiancé and I had been planning our wedding for New York City in June 2011. I had hoped my father would be there to walk me down the aisle. But when his health quickly declined and he was hospitalized in Dallas, Texas, we shifted the wedding there and moved it up to March. As we finalized the new wedding details, my father's health took a turn for the worse and his doctors feared he couldn't leave the hospital. Once again we changed our wedding plans, arranging for it at the Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas. If my father couldn't come to us, we'd bring the wedding to him.

On February 25, 2011, Dad lost his battle with cancer and was called home to be with his creator for some greater purpose.

At the end of someone's life, we often think about the beginning of it. My father was born in the Philippines and very proud of it. He was an active leader in the Filipino-American community. At least once a year he'd find time for mission work to help the poor in his native

country. He was always willing to help anyone who asked, often giving money from his own pocket or providing a job to those in need. My father's death was a devastating loss not only for our family, but for the entire Filipino community. Nearly 800 people paid their respects to Dr. Manny at his funeral.

My father once vowed that if he won the battle against myeloma, he would dedicate his life to advancing research and helping find a successful treatment for this form of cancer. On the one-year anniversary of his death, my family honored Dr. Manuel Rivero's life and vow by organizing a fundraiser for the IMF. The entire Filipino Community participated and provided food and entertainment. With the help of the IMF, we coordinated a guest speaker, and held a silent auction and an estate sale, which collectively raised more than \$3,000 for the cause. Organizations like IMF are critical to help further research in genetic markers of myeloma, which is linked to meningeal myeloma. Everyone in attendance was proud to be a contributor.

Although I'm saddened that my father was never able to walk me down the aisle, I find comfort following in his footsteps by raising money and awareness for a cause that he cared so much about. And although he is greatly missed, his spirit lives with us. As his first born, my father inspired me to make the most of my life and to make a difference in the lives of others. By raising money for the IMF, we are moving closer to finding answers while helping others deal with this illness. Unfortunately for us, there was no cure available for my father in 2011, but we hope, dream and strive to find a cure someday for the sake of others.

Kearney/Walking – continued from page 8

Jeff and Jon left Dunn, North Carolina at 7:30 the following morning. They walked 20 miles, then took a break in search of some interesting photographs. "At the end of each day, we were posting a video blog with each day's events," Jeff explains. "Our followers would watch, then ask us questions and tell us what they would like to see." That afternoon, the enthusiasm of his supporters led Jeff towards the sound of running water – a waterfall. He headed down an embankment for a potential photo opportunity.

"The rest is history," Jeff says.

The history is this: The embankment was very steep. Jeff lost his footing. He heard a popping sound. He "hoped" it was a bad sprain.. Jon assisted him to the side of the road. They flagged down a helpful motorist, who took them to a safe waiting place in Raleigh, North Carolina. Jon's cousin picked them up and brought Jeff to the

emergency room. Doctors determined that Jeff had broken both his ankle and his leg.

Jeff and Jon traveled back to Orlando by train. Jeff soon underwent a two-and-a-half hour surgery.

Three weeks post-surgery, Jeff was already focused on the future. Just as he meticulously planned his walking route to begin with, he now was concentrating on his timeline for healing: "At six weeks they will put me in a removable boot. At 10 weeks I will have a bolt removed. At 12 weeks I will start therapy."

Jeff Kearney will not be deterred.

May 19, 2012: *"The broken leg and ankle are healing well. We are aiming to finish A Walk To Cure in Dunn, North Carolina to NYC in October of this year. Just wanna thank everyone for all of the continued support and we promise we are not done... we will finish!"*



Mail for the Cure

MAIL FOR THE CURE is a simple but very powerful concept with which you can make a big difference. Here's how it works: All over the country, people just like you are mailing letters to their friends and relatives asking for their support of myeloma research and other important IMF programs. We provide you with a specially coded IMF donation envelope and a letter template, which you can personalize.

The Great Cell Phone DRIVE



Put your old cell phone to good use!

Donate your old cell phone and become part of finding the cure. The IMF has partnered with a cell phone recycling organization that makes a donation for every cell phone we turn in. Current cell phone models are worth up to \$20 each. Many older models are worth \$1 to \$10.

You can help the IMF continue its research and programs. You can help our environment. You can provide cell phones to underserved communities. And it's as easy as sending us your old cell phones. For more information about how to turn your old cell phone into a contribution (or how to set up an IMF collection program at your business or school), contact Kemo Lee at 800-452-CURE (2873) or KLee@myeloma.org.

An estimated 200 million old CELL PHONES lie neglected in America's closets and drawers. Through Cell Phones For A Cure, IMF members can turn these phones into thousands of dollars in support of myeloma research.



A Weekend to End Myeloma



JOIN THE
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Organize a FUNdraiser
to support myeloma research!

- BBQ
- Car wash
- Bake sale
- Garage sale
- Volleyball game
- Walk in the park

Contact Janice Estrada at
jestrada@myeloma.org or (818) 487-7455

Unable to host a fundraiser?

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INTERNATIONAL MYELOMA FOUNDATION

6th Annual Comedy Celebration

benefiting the Peter Boyle Research Fund

Hosted by **Ray Romano**

Featuring:

Jeff Garlin Dom Irrera
Judy Gold Doris Roberts
Gilbert Gottfried Fred Willard

Presented by



and a special musical performance
by Joe Walsh

Saturday, October 27, 2012

The Wilshire Ebell Theatre & Club in Los Angeles, California

For information about sponsorship opportunities, please call (818) 487-7455 or
email: events@myeloma.org or visit: comedy.myeloma.org



The Hope Society

*Cultivating the future
by planting the seeds
to sustain the IMF*

In addition, by joining The Hope Society, you will receive:

- ✓ Ribbon of Hope pin
- ✓ Annual statements
- ✓ IMF Friends' Program benefits for your annual giving level
- ✓ Recognition in future issues of *Making Miracles*

The Hope Society Sustained Giving Program

With small, easy steps, you can make a huge impact on the continuation of the IMF's mission. Hope Society members make simple, secure, recurring contributions to help maintain the level of quality that you expect from our programs and services.

You tell us how much and how often

Your monthly or quarterly gift will automatically be charged and you will be at the interval and amount that you choose. Each January, we will send you a statement of all your contributions for the previous year.

Benefits of Membership

Becoming a recurring donor means knowing that the IMF is getting the most out of your contribution by cutting the cost of paper and postage.

Membership Level	Giving Range
Member \$35 to \$149 annually	\$5 – \$12 Monthly \$10 – \$37 Quarterly
Supporter \$150 to \$499 annually	\$13 – \$41 Monthly \$38 – \$125 Quarterly
Friends' Circle \$500 to \$999 annually	\$42 – \$83 Monthly \$126 – \$250 Quarterly
Associate's Circle \$1,000 to \$4,999 annually	\$84 to \$208 Monthly \$251 – \$1,250 Quarterly
Partner's Circle \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually	\$417 – \$833 Monthly \$1,251 – \$2,499 Quarterly

For more information program benefits, or to find out how you can join The Hope Society and set up your recurring gift, contact Randi Lovett at 818.487.7455 or at rlovett@myeloma.org.



International Myeloma Foundation

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Dedicated to improving the quality of life of myeloma patients while working toward prevention and a cure.

IMF *P*roducts



Your contribution for these items will help us provide critical education, research and support, raise awareness and show support for myeloma patients worldwide, and help us in our mission to improve the quality of life of myeloma patients while working toward prevention and a cure.

- **Ribbon of Hope Lapel Pins** (\$5)
- **IMF Caps** (\$15)
- **IMF T-Shirts** (\$15)
- **Awareness Bracelets** (10-pack for \$10)
- **IMF Holiday Ornaments** (\$10)



Imagine Moving Forward is the theme of the IMF's myeloma bracelet. Wear one in honor, celebration, or in memory of a loved one. When people ask you about it, you'll have a perfect opportunity to spread the word about multiple myeloma.



All merchandise can be viewed and/or ordered on our website myeloma.org