



February 2020 Newsletter

Letter to our South Lake Tahoe community from Eileen Liu, 2nd Vice President

How many of us have been affected by cancer? If it wasn't you, could it have been your family member, friend, childhood friend, neighbor, or coworker?

My name is Eileen Liu and I'm a cancer survivor. I had breast cancer at age 39. I felt blessed because my "chemo cab" consisted of my college friends from UC Berkeley. They made sure I made it to each and every appointment, and when I became even more sick from treatment, they drove me every single day. That was when I lived in San Francisco and lived close to the hospital.

Now imagine that same cancer diagnosis in one of your loved ones here in South Lake Tahoe. Do you have the time and resources to take them to their six months or more of chemotherapy, 2 months of daily radiation appointments, possibly multiple surgeries and overnight stays? What if I told you cancer services are sometimes an hour or more away, and that you would have to brave weather, road conditions, traffic, and also take time off work and potentially give up your paycheck to do it?

The South Lake Tahoe Cancer League is a local non-profit organization that helps patients access treatment and with financial needs. I joined the South Lake Tahoe Cancer League a volunteer in January 2019 after I moved here from the Bay Area. I had previously volunteered with UCSF, The National Lymphedema Network, Project Open Hand, Bay Area Young Survivors, and other non-profit groups. I served as a Board Director and helped with fundraising, events, patient care, counseling, and helping friends and strangers. When I moved to Tahoe, I wanted to continue my tradition of giving. I wanted to help cancer patients and survivors like myself.

I began doing information technology work, but because of my prior legal experience, I quickly assumed responsibility for revising the Bylaws and other jobs. I noticed in March that our group needed more leadership. How so? We didn't act like a "normal" Board of Directors. There were no monthly profit and loss statements and Board Members assigning proxy votes was more the norm than the exception. There were no Standard Operating Procedures, no Policies, and no checks and balances.

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In May, we needed to hold the Annual Election of the Board of Directors. I drafted the Ballot, the Affidavits of Mailing and Affidavit of Election. I volunteered to be an "Inspector of Election" to count votes because I wasn't running for an office. There was a vacancy in the 2nd Vice President role and several people wrote in my name. I enthusiastically began my term June 1st, but soon found a lot of trouble brewing. Because of my legal expertise, I began collecting corporate documents to better understand the Cancer League. But while futilely chasing down documents, I received a text message from the Treasurer stating "I've never seen a budget". Wow.

In August, I saw aggressive bullying, intimidation, manipulation of votes, infighting and name calling. Subversive illegal votes were being used to purchase a fundraising business when we already ARE a fundraising business. Board Members were being asked to vote in August when the check was already written and cashed in July. Board Members who intended to vote "No" weren't given a chance to even voice their opinion. This is when I saw someone removing Members from the roster because they had some personal issue with them. Membership had become so alienated that when someone called to verify Members' addresses, people got angry and slammed down the phone. Wow.

In November, I was shocked to receive a letter from a non-existent Cancer League position, the "Acting President". I was notified that I was being "removed" from my "appointed" position as 2nd Vice President because of "friction". I knew this was wrong because I was ELECTED by Member vote in May and "friction" is not a cause for removal. I chose NOT to quit. Instead, I knew my vote counts since I was still legally on the Board of Directors.

I attended the regular Board Meeting on the 2nd Wednesdays at 6 PM at Round Table at the "Y" in November. I met Members I had only heard of and this gave me a spark of hope. Surely someone can make sense of this renegade group and set us back on track. The smaller group of Board Members cancelled the meeting in under 15 minutes and refused to allow Board Members or attendees to speak and then decided to hold the rest of the meeting on the following day at a private residence stating that it was "open to all". Thursday came and we found that it was not in fact, "open to all".

The Board became divided. The smaller group kept holding unannounced meetings in secret, the time and location unknown, in violation of law, never bothering to notify current Board Members of activity or whereabouts. I just kept returning to Round Table on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 6 PM. The smaller group claims they are the rightful Board, my Board wants transparency, profit and loss statements, audits and accountability. Full transparency.

November came the "Winter Bazaar" where vendor tables originally promised to sell for \$210 in the August Golden Bear Events prospectus were actually sold for as little as

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\$40 each! The annual holiday candy sale in December was held against the stated rules in the “Standing Committees of SLTCL” document that states for candy sales “Entire Board is the full committee to oversee operations of SLTCL annual candy sale....”.

Some members were in tears, some offered to volunteer and were turned down. I didn't attend the prior year but I knew it had seen a lot of unproductive “friction”. Volunteering is supposed to be fun and rewarding. Holidays are a time to come together as a community.

Yesterday, I heard that the smaller group is now suing people AND BANK OF THE WEST. I can't help but believe this is frivolous and a waste of Cancer League money that is better used for PATIENTS and PATIENT CARE.

Today I am pleading for your help. The Cancer League needs the community to support us. We need ONE election for ONE Board. We need leadership that will lead ethically, honestly and with integrity for “Helping, Caring and Sharing” here at home. PLEASE COME to the meeting, JOIN the Cancer League for only \$20 per household, LISTEN to the candidates, and VOTE for the 7 best candidates you want to lead by example. Better yet, you can volunteer! This groups oversees the management and ensures the Cancer League will operate within a budget and will continue to operate. I'd like to do this with a sense of fun and community.

The next meeting is Wednesday, March 11 at 5:30 pm at Round Table Pizza, 1062 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe. The meeting begins promptly at 6 PM in the back room. It is open to the public and please support our generous host, Round Table Pizza.

Board Members must meet MINIMUM criteria per our Bylaws Section 5. They MUST live in the South Lake Tahoe area and be of sound mind and without a felony. While it's not against the law to be a jerk or bully, these are not the best people we want on our Board. Please talk to your candidates, listen to what they stand for, and vote your conscience. Let's all protect this valuable resource for our community together. Thank you in advance.

Please visit our website at <https://sltcancerleague.org/>. The Newsletter, Events, Board Minutes and Bylaws are posted.

NOTE: As the 2nd Vice President, my duties include Membership roster and dues for which I have not billed because I cannot verify the Member Roster.

Respectfully,

Eileen Liu, 2nd Vice President South Lake Tahoe Cancer League

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