

## Proud (and healthy) to be a quitter



Lee O. Crawford proudly stands next to a smoke-free sign on O'Farrell Street. He has been smoke-free himself for over two years.

Happy to be alive. That's how **Lee O. Crawford**, a shuttle bus driver at the San Francisco Medical Center, feels after sustaining injuries from a near-death motorcycle accident last August. But before his accident, Lee took charge of his health by saying no to cigarettes and quitting after smoking for nearly 20 years.

*"I lost my mother to cancer, and my sister, and both of them were smokers. I quit smoking before my sister died, but she was already pretty sick when I did. I spoke to one of the nurses who was giving her chemotherapy and he said I should have myself tested in case something was running in the family. He thought smoking definitely had a lot to do with why my mother and sister got sick.*

*When I finally decided to quit, I ran into **Tim Regan, MSW**, who's a clinical health educator, and he took me to his office, explained everything to me, prescribed some medicine, and within seven days, I had stopped smoking. It's one of the best things I've ever done. My kids and my brother are very happy that I'm not smoking, and I can breathe much easier since I stopped.*

*People ask me if I ever wanted to start smoking again, like when I had my motorcycle accident or when my sister died, but I said 'no way.' Once I decide to give something up, that's it.*

*Smoking is bad all around and I'm glad we don't allow cigarettes around any of our buildings. Overall, I feel very blessed to be alive and healthy, and to not be a smoker anymore." ■*

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## Training for the future

women as they fulfill their goals in becoming health care professionals," said Gallot.

Hansen and her colleagues are thrilled that the program fills the gap between youth programs and women in their early twenties, where there is a decided lack of initiatives. A key component to the program is that the women are paid for their work and not expected to take on several other jobs to support themselves during the training.

"It's very important to give these women that extra support they need to become well-trained and fully working members of their community, and this program, ideally, does just that," said Hansen. ■

## Beat the burn this summer

By Noelle Tanas

Things are heating up around Kaiser Permanente San Francisco, literally. Summer sunshine and higher temperatures have people itching to spend more time enjoying the outdoors. But the increased intensity of the sun coupled with extended time spent outdoors can often result in painful sunburns if you do not take precautions.

"The incidence of melanoma—the most deadly form of skin cancer and one of the deadliest cancers in human beings—is increasing alarmingly," said **Inder Dhillon, MD**, physician lead, Cosmetic Dermatology. "The reason for this is simple: increased skin exposure."

According to Dr. Dhillon, besides causing skin cancers, the sun also gives us age spots and wrinkles. So to stay alive and to stay young-looking, protect yourself from the sun.

"I don't say never go into the sun. We all love the outdoors," added Dr. Dhillon. "And the Bay Area is an incredible place to enjoy being outside. Just follow the sun-protection guidelines for safety."

The Skin Cancer Foundation cites that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer during their lifetimes. Kaiser Permanente wants to keep you safe and burn

free. So slap on a hat, slather on some sunscreen, and follow these sun-safety tips.

- Use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 or higher every day, no matter the weather.
- Apply sunscreen 15 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every two hours.
- Seek shade between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when the sun's rays are at peak intensity.
- Cover up with protective clothing, sun glasses, and a hat.
- Don't forget your ears and lips need sunscreen too!
- See your primary care provider for a full skin exam once a year.

For more sun safety information, go to [www.skincancer.org/prevention/scf-tips](http://www.skincancer.org/prevention/scf-tips). ■



## Update: KP San Francisco Dragon Healers

By Noelle Tanas



Never one to shy away from a challenge, **Kathy Pollonais-Britt, MSW**, social work, NICU, is looking to create the first corporate competing breast cancer survivor team in the United States.

"In the U.S. there are 18 breast cancer crews, but no corporate breast cancer crews," said Pollonais-Britt.

Dragon boating has been a growing activity for breast cancer survivors because its strenuous repetition improves paddlers' strength, fitness, muscle mass, and immunity. It also allows survivors to connect with other cancer-survivor paddlers from around the world.

As a board member of the California Dragon Boat Association, Pollonais-Britt is leading team building workshops at such diverse corporations as Google, Intel, and Text 100. "Lots of companies are looking for ways to engage their workforce in positive and collaborative activities. Paddling a dragon boat is an excellent way to do just that," said Pollonais-Britt.

Members of the San Francisco team, the Dragon

Healers, will be participating in races at the Long Beach Dragon Boat Festival in July, and Pollonais-Britt will work with Kaiser Permanente San Diego to help develop a dragon boat team for that facility as well.

Several healers will also be taking part in a South American adventure, and travel to the Peruvian section of the Amazon River in September for a three day, 135-mile race against other teams from around the world. "We hope to have the Kaiser Permanente flag waving from our hand-crafted raft and also to contribute something to the villages we pass along the way," said Pollonais-Britt.

Don't miss the KPSF Dragon Healers at this year's San Francisco International Dragon Boat Festival, taking place the first weekend of October (4-5) on Treasure Island. For more information about the Dragon Healers or about joining the breast cancer survivor crew, contact Kathy Pollonais-Britt at: [Katbleen.Britt@kp.org](mailto:Katbleen.Britt@kp.org) or 415-833-4235.

To view the KPSF Dragon Healers web site go to: <http://kpbealers.com/> ■