The Tutu Project Receives Grant to Provide Financial Aid for People Living with Cancer

The project is the first recipient of $5,00 from Vital Options International's and healtheo360's Selma Schimmel Vital Grant

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Vital Options International (VOI) and healtheo360 announced on October 3 that it has created the Selma Schimmel Vital Grant as a way to provide support to cancer patients facing financial hardship as a result of their treatment. The Tutu Project™ for the Carey Foundation will be the first recipient of the grant and will oversee vetting applicants, as well as dividing and allocating the $5,000 donation to families who need help paying for non-medical necessities.

"I imagine my sister Selma in heaven dancing right now knowing we partnered with The Tutu Project™," says Debby Bitticks, the CEO of VOI. "As a cancer patient and founder of VOI, she spent more than 30 years advocating for her fellow patients and survivors. It troubled her to think that someone saddled with medical bills might not have money to put gas in their car or might have to skip lunch."

The Selma Schimmel Vital Grant is one of several initiatives created by the Cancer Collaboration, a partnership between VOI and healtheo360 to support the 12.7 million Americans diagnosed with cancer annually in the United States. VOI recently published The Cancer Concierge, a free organizing eBook created in partnership with Dorothy Breininger (a.k.a. "Dorothy The Organizer") and based on the system Schimmel used to manage her own cancer treatment. Healtheo360, a fixture at the major medical meetings, uses its online platform to disseminate the latest health information and provide a forum where patients, caregivers, family and friends can connect in time of need.

"A nearly 15-year battle with stage IV breast cancer has forced my family to deal with a mountain of unpredictable costs, including high deductibles and my needing treatments not covered by our plan," says Linda Carey, who with her husband Bob founded The Tutu Project™. "This has only reinforced our resolve to continue to raise funds and try to lessen the burden for other cancer patients. As I know, the small things—having a cell phone, a utility bill paid for, or a car service to a doctor's appointment—can go a long, long way."

The Tutu Project is the brainchild of Carey's husband Bob, a photographer who took photos of himself in a pink tutu as a way to lessen the gravity of his wife's diagnosis. After the photos went viral, the couple began channeling their efforts into helping others affected by the disease.

"Unfortunately, we hear stories at healtheo360 all the time of cancer patients skipping their medication or treatment to save money," says Dave Duplay, the founder. "While we can't fix the healthcare system or rising cost of treatment, there are things that we can do to address the issue and lessen the patient burden."

Both Bitticks and Duplay have been deeply affected by cancer. Bitticks, her sister, grandmother, and mother all had the BRCA gene mutation and diagnosed with breast cancer. Duplay's sister-in-law was diagnosed with stage IV breast cancer and his partner and company's vice president of marketing and community management developed breast cancer in her early 30s.

The Tutu Project is a campaign of The Carey Foundation, a registered 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. Information on their grant programs can found on its website. This information comes courtesy of Vital Options.

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http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/tutu-project-receives-5000-grant-provide-financial-aid-people-living-cancer