



## *A Note from a Friend*

Hi, I am Jen Hebert! If you have attended the Soirée before, you have probably seen me running around at some point! I have always volunteered with the Blue Ribbon but a few years ago I officially became a committee member. Why did I decide to be a part of the Blue Ribbon Soirée? Well, that story dates back to around 2005.

I first met Janey and Dr. Nasca in 2005 when I started working for them at Dr. Nasca's office. Little did I know at the time, this job would be so much more than administration work. Working for Dr. Nasca not only taught me so many life lessons, it also provided me with a lifelong friend in Janey!

In my time there I learned that s\*\*\* hits the fan, there is no preventing that. It isn't about anything that happens before that point, it is everything about how you handle yourself when things aren't going as planned. I also learned that everything comes out in the wash, small things and big things alike. There isn't anything life can throw at you that a little stain remover, elbow grease, and a few times through the spin cycle can't fix. However, the biggest and hardest life lesson I learned was prostate cancer.

Sure I knew prostate cancer existed but that was about the extent of my knowledge. In fact, I didn't know much about any type of cancer. Sure, people close to me have passed away, but from things like car accidents, ATV accidents, suicide, old age, alcohol poisoning, and ways that take them away quickly and unexpectedly. When Dr. Nasca was diagnosed with prostate cancer, this was the first time someone I personally knew had cancer. I learned and grew a lot through his journey with prostate cancer and treatments.

Dr. Nasca was never a man of many words but one of the things I admired about him was that he seemed to know something about everything (and he knew a lot about vodka). There wasn't one random conversation that could be brought up at the lunch table that he couldn't contribute some tid-bit of information on the topic. He was also a man who created his career out of helping other people and making them feel good about themselves. It wasn't about him, he wasn't needy and he was just very simple. So in the beginning stages of his diagnosis and treatment, it was business as usual. He wasn't at all the "Hollywood" version of a cancer patient. Which made me often forget that he had cancer at all. Many people had said, "oh prostate cancer, that's the good kind to get" (as if there is a "good-kind" of cancer). "Most people out live prostate cancer" they would say, "you end up passing of old age or other things before prostate cancer." Well that was reassuring, and seemed to be the case at the beginning. As you know how this story ends, that wasn't the case.

One of the primary markers for prostate cancer is the PSA level. Did I know a PSA level existed before then? Nope! Did I know what the normal range for a PSA level was before then? Nope! A normal PSA range is from 0-4, that is something that will stick with me for the rest of my life. I became a quick study on this as I was tasked with retrieving Dr. Nasca's bloodwork results each week from the fax machine (yes those still exist) and bring them to him in his office. It wasn't long before I realized that his PSA level was moving further away from the 0-4 range and this man who seemed invincible and couldn't be rattled was becoming more vulnerable and fragile.

As I have learned, like most men, it isn't something he wanted to talk about. With every bit of strength and energy he had left he showed up for his patients. Until he made the decision to no longer practice, it was always about them. As far as his patients went, he had not a problem in the world when treatments had every fiber in his body aching. It was truly inspiring to witness that kind of perseverance, determination, and passion. I often think back on the strength he showed in those days to remind myself that I too can do hard things (and that things could always be worse).

So to answer the question, why the Blue Ribbon Soirée? Why prostate cancer? I proudly serve this organization for Dr. Nasca, my forever friend Janey Nasca, for my dad, brother, nephews, uncles, cousins, grandfathers, friends, and all the boys and men in my life that could also be faced with this horrible reality one day. For the men who don't want to make it about them, who may be fighting their own battle but would rather raise their voice for someone else's cause. I stand behind prostate cancer research and awareness for the wives, daughters, mothers, sisters, friends who have/had to watch the men in their lives suffer and fight through their prostate cancer journey.

Thanks to the efforts of the Blue Ribbon Soirée and so many other amazing prostate cancer organizations there have been many wonderful advances in detection, treatment, and prevention of prostate cancer. A cure for cancer is always the end goal, but until then I will continue to fight for more/better advancements that can make someone's cancer journey more positive and hopefully with a better ending!



*Jen Hebert*  
Committee Member