

# The Joy Foundation

by Anne Kennedy

Bringing joy and inspiration to cancer patients through the arts is the mission of The Joy Foundation, a nonprofit organization established by Kathy Feldt in honor of her mother, Joy Feldt, who died of ovarian cancer in 2001. The Joy Foundation embraces the philosophy that visual, musical and performing arts offer experiences of hope and happiness for someone facing a life-threatening illness or other life adversity.

Kathy Feldt was inspired by her mother's creative spirit as she battled cancer. Kathy explains, "She used her creativity to create joy in her life and connect with those she loved. Although my mom ultimately lost her fight with cancer, she never lost the ability to live life with spirit and passion."

This month Feldt will launch a new "Arts as Healing" program at the Siteman Cancer Center, part of Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine. The program will offer comprehensive,

on-site art programming including the full spectrum of visual, musical and performing arts to empower and educate cancer patients.

In addition to on-site programming, Feldt also started a Community Arts program where local arts, cultural and entertainment venues will donate unused tickets for use by cancer patients and their families. She believes this is an important part of the foundation's mission because, "cancer is not only physically and emotionally draining, it can be financially devastating. Many patients feel they need to save their money for treatment, so discretionary purchases like tickets for the performing arts or other entertainment are the first items dropped." Kathy says that local performing arts and entertainment venues have been very

supportive of the program and eager to explore how they can help.

On December 4, the Joy Foundation and Aeterna Medical Spa will be co-sponsoring a concert at the Contemporary Art Museum to raise money for the "Arts as Healing" program for the Siteman Cancer Center. As a fitting tribute to the opening of the Arts as Healing program at Siteman, the Joy Foundation will be bringing in two national artists, Cindy Bullens and Beth Neilsen Chapman, to perform a special fundraising concert.

Feldt was recently chosen as one of ten "Chanel Women of Influence" for her role in founding The Joy Foundation. The award recognizes women who use their personal experience as a catalyst in making a difference

in the community.

Feldt sums up the need for art-based patient care programming by stating, "Until we eradicate cancer, there will continue to be a need for innovative tools that help cancer patients and their families work through fear, grief and isolation. With programs that educate and empower, we help patients shift the focus from their illness to experiences of beauty and joy." ■

