

## "Cancer was a bomb going off in my life"

Behind this comedian's edgy act is a story of survival you helped make possible

People say to me, 'I just don't know how I'd deal with it if I got cancer.' And I say 'Well, dude, I didn't know how to deal with it either.'

That's the kind of blunt talk you would expect from comedy writer and performer Sean Kent. Except this time, there's no punch line.

"When you have cancer," Sean says, "you learn to become accustomed to what is, not what you would like things to be."

It's a lesson he learned the hard way, through two serious bouts with Stage III Hodgkin's Disease. But thanks to your support of City of Hope, Sean is not only healthy and on tour again, he's standing alongside you in support of innovative research and compassionate patient care.

### Everyone around me suffered

Born and raised in Austin, Texas, Sean Kent came to Hollywood in 1994 to pursue stand-up comedy and acting. By 2002, he was working as a writer on the Fox Sports Net program "The Best Damn Sports Show Period."

"I started having bumps on my neck, lots of little tumors," he remembers. "But



"The most noble of all causes is the alleviation of human suffering."

*"I was a [messed]-up neurotic before cancer, and this didn't help," comedian Sean Kent says. But thanks to your support of City of Hope, he's also a survivor.*

I didn't have any healthcare plan, so I just kept working. It was only when I couldn't finish a jog that I used to be able to do easily that I finally went to a doctor."

That's when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease.

I thought, "I'm dead."

Sean went quickly into chemotherapy treatment. But because he lacked a healthcare plan, he continued to work a full schedule on his writing job — sometimes as much as 60 hours a week. After three brutal months of this, doctors

determined his cancer was in remission.

Shortly afterward, Sean auditioned, and was hired, for the first season of NBC's reality program "Last Comic Standing." He filmed the show wearing a cowboy hat to cover his hair, which was growing back unevenly following his chemo treatment.

But before the program could even air, Sean's cancer returned. Like so many recurrences, it was even stronger this time.

"It was like a bomb going off in  
*(continued on page 3)*

## Double your gift before it's too late!

If you act quickly, you can have your gift doubled by our special Matching Challenge Grant. Office Depot will match your gift dollar-for-dollar, but only until the \$100,000 Grant amount is used up. After that, no more gifts will

be doubled.

Don't miss the chance to have twice the lifesaving, cancer-beating impact! Please give generously.

To take advantage of the Matching Challenge Grant, use the enclosed reply form, or the one on page 4 of this newsletter. Thank you!



# City of Hope team sheds light on rare skin cancer

Radiation study may help extend survival rates

**W**hen cancerous tumors develop in the pancreas, a patient's prognosis is generally not good: The survival rate of pancreatic cancer patients five years after diagnosis is less than one in four.

Your partnership with City of Hope is continuing to roll back the frontiers of science, even on the most rare and mysterious forms of cancer.

One of the latest examples of this is the work being done by City of Hope researchers investigating Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC). Only about 1,200 cases of this form of skin cancer are reported in the United States every year, but it is difficult to treat and highly malignant. Even after surgery to remove an MCC tumor and the surrounding lymph nodes, the disease reappears in between 50 and 79



*The research breakthroughs you make possible at City of Hope will improve the lives of cancer patients everywhere.*

percent of patients.

Pablo Mojica-Manosa, M.D., and Joshua D. I. Ellenhorn, M.D., both of City of Hope's division of surgery, and biostatistician David Smith, Ph.D., of the division of information sciences, investigated more than 1,600 cases of MCC to measure the effect of radiation following surgery. They uncovered clear evidence that radiation treatment can extend the survival time of MCC patients well beyond that of patients who didn't receive radiation.

While most MCC patients at City of Hope already receive this radiation treatment, less than half of MCC patients nationwide do. "Many physicians just

don't know how to treat MCC," Dr. Ellenhorn says. He hopes this study will encourage more caregivers to consider using radiation as a tool to treat MCC.

When City of Hope researchers make important discoveries, they don't keep it to themselves. The findings made by Dr. Mojica-Manosa, Dr. Ellenhorn, and Dr. Smith were reported in *The Journal of Clinical Oncology* and read by doctors and researchers across America and around the world. This shows that when you support City of Hope, you're helping make breakthroughs that will improve the lives of cancer patients around the world.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

# How you prove the power of teamwork



Michael A. Friedman, M.D.  
President and CEO

**F**riends like you make a difference when you support research and patient care at City of Hope. And when two, or three, or many of you choose to work together, then there is almost no limit to what you can do.

This is illustrated in this issue of *HopeCONNECTION* by the story of HopeCuts, the beauty industry's largest charitable event. For years, salons in the northeastern United States have come together to raise money for cancer research at City of Hope. We are very appreciative of the generosity shown by salon owners, stylists, and patrons during this annual event.

Another sign of the power of teamwork in supporting research and care is the Office Depot Matching Grant described on the front of this issue.

When you send a gift to City of Hope in reply to this newsletter, Office Depot will match that amount dollar for dollar up to the total grant amount.

Together, your generosity and Office Depot's will mean twice as much support for innovative research ... twice as much for compassionate care for people fighting disease ... and twice as much help for finding a cure.

As you read this, we are approaching the end of City of Hope's

fiscal year. This is a time when we make important budgetary decisions for the twelve months ahead. It is a wonderful time for you to cast your vote of confidence in our work — the work you make possible.

Your gift today will help us end our fiscal year on the strongest possible note, made stronger still by the power of the Office Depot Matching Grant.

Thank you for the generosity and compassion you show by supporting City of Hope. It is wonderful to know you are on our team.

**When two or more people work together, their power is multiplied.**

*Michael A. Friedman*

# Survivors celebrate life at BMT Reunion

Annual event draws thousands in support of City of Hope program

In 1976, doctors, staff, and family gathered around Mushtaque Jivani to watch him blow out the lone candle on a birthday cake. Mushtaque was a pioneer: the first survivor of a hematopoietic cell transplant (HCT) at City of Hope. The “birthday” marked the first anniversary of his life-saving operation.

Thirty-one years later, that birthday party has grown into “Celebration of Life,” City of Hope’s annual Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation Reunion. The April 27 event drew thousands of transplant recipients, family members, and even

**“Even though we are researching a condition that affects many people, we never lose sight of the individual.”**

marrow donors back to the City of Hope campus for an afternoon of fun, food, and emotion. Most of all — as the name suggests — it was a party about life.

“We do this year after year and it never gets old,” says Stephen Forman, M.D., the Francis and Kathleen McNamara Distinguished Chair in Hematology and Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation and clinical director of the Division of Cancer Immunotherapeutics & Tumor Immunology. Noting that the total years of lives saved by City of Hope’s HCT team



*The celebration of life brings together City of Hope BMT recipients and their families.*

adds up to more than 19,000 years, he adds “That’s longer than recorded human history.”

Your gift to City of Hope is an investment in life. Thank you for your generosity.

## “Cancer was a bomb going off in my life”

*(continued from page 1)*

my life,” Sean recalls. “I had to watch everyone around me, everyone who cared for me, suffer because of my cancer. It was a little, private hell.”

### Not an easy patient

Sean was already familiar with City of Hope, since a friend of his had been treated here too. So when his doctors sent him to us, he knew he’d receive quality care.

But that didn’t make his ordeal any easier. Sean ended up requiring a bone-marrow transplant (BMT), high doses of chemotherapy, and a long stay in our hospital. They were tough times.

“You know you’re at your low point when you’re lying in a hospital bed getting chemo and you’re watching episodes of a reality show you’ve already been kicked off of,” he says.

He jokes about it now, but that’s almost a reflex. The reality wasn’t funny at all.

“I was not an easy patient,” he admits. “I don’t want to say I went through this with any kind of grace. I was a [messed]-up neurotic even before this, and I wasn’t any better going through the stress of cancer and the constant fear of death.

“When you look in a cancer patient’s eyes, you see so many things. Post-traumatic stress, survivorship issues. I lived my life in three-month increments. I never



*Comedian Sean Kent is back on the road thanks to you.*

made any long-term plans.”

But eventually, after nine months of treatment, Sean made a full recovery. Today, he’s back on the road with a standup act, a new CD, and a blog he updates regularly.

And this spring, he was the keynote speaker at City of Hope’s 31st annual BMT Reunion.

### Just a normal person

“The BMT Reunion is emotional and draining for me,” Sean admits. “I’m just a normal person. There’s nothing special about me. But I never thought I’d live to see four Reunions.”

Despite his insistence that he’s no hero, Sean is happy to be part of City of Hope’s Speakers Bureau. As he wrote on his blog last year, “I can’t

possibly think of a better way to spend my evening. Anything to help City of Hope.”

“I encourage people to support City of Hope, but ask them to do it for the right reason,” he told *HopeCONNECTION*. “Don’t do it because of me. Do it to support the idea of cancer research and treatment. The most noble of all causes is the alleviation of human suffering.

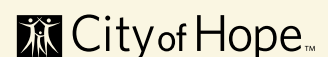
“At the end of my act, I always tell the audience, ‘This 20 minutes of fun and sharing would not have happened without you and people like you who support cancer research.

“There’s no finer place to put your money.”

The generosity shown by you and your friends and neighbors has made City of Hope a world leader in bone-marrow transplant research and care for more than three decades. Thank you for doing so much to help end cancer.

## HopeCONNECTION

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# East coast salons help cut out cancer

Annual fundraiser is beauty industry's largest charity event

**H**opeCONNECTION loves to report the many innovative ways City of Hope's friends around the country have found to help put an end to cancer and other deadly diseases. But one of our favorites is HopeCuts, the largest beauty-industry fundraiser in the United States.

For over a decade, beauty and hair salons in the northeastern U.S. have chosen a day to team up and raise funds for City of Hope. Most donate the proceeds of an afternoon's haircuts, manicures, and pedicures to support City of Hope's research and care programs.

Diane Bull of Changes Salon in Latham, New York, told her local TV news why she's so happy to support City of Hope.

"We've all been touched by cancer," she said. "Everyone here, either with their family members or personally. There are so many organizations out there, but what I liked is that this isn't just one cancer. [City of Hope is involved with] a little bit of everything, and also covers HIV/AIDS research."

Many HopeCuts participants have long-term relationships with City of Hope. Salon 27 in Raymond, New Hampshire,

has been a HopeCuts partner for 14 years!

But long-term or brand new, we appreciate the generous support of our friends in the beauty industry. Thank you for your compassion!

For more information on City of Hope's HopeCuts program, including how salon owners in the Northeast can participate, visit [www.cityofhope.org/hopecuts](http://www.cityofhope.org/hopecuts). And for more great ways you can help beat cancer, go to our homepage at [www.cityofhope.org](http://www.cityofhope.org) and click on "How to Help." Thank you!



Salon owners around the northeastern United States have joined together in HopeCuts, a charity fundraiser in support of City of Hope.

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**City of Hope**

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▼ To give a gift to City of Hope, cut out this form and return it with your gift to the address below. Thank you! ▼

## Double the Power of My Cancer-Fighting Gift

**YES!** I want to support City of Hope's combination of innovative research and compassionate patient care. Here is my gift of:

- \$15 doubled to \$30     \$25 doubled to \$50  
 \$50 doubled to \$100     \$100 doubled to \$200  
 Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



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- My check is enclosed, payable to City of Hope.  
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