

## From Chemotherapy to Makeovers and Art

By MELANIE GRAYCE WEST

To Fuad Sawaya, the nondescript chemotherapy infusion suite is a place in need of improvement.



FUAD SAWAYA

It's an up-close observation based on the years his wife, Helen, received treatment at New York's Roosevelt Hospital. In her memory, Mr. Sawaya, the cofounder and managing director of the New York-based investment banking firm, Sawaya Segalas & Co., created the Helen Sawaya Fund for complementary therapies at Roosevelt Hospital. The Sawayas, who met at work, were married in August of 1997. Helen was diagnosed with breast cancer not long after the birth of the couple's second son. She died more than seven years ago. She was 36.

Mr. Sawaya says that he had little idea the number of people who knew Helen until after her death. She had a career in business and, later, worked as a chef. She was active in her older son's school, of course, but she also had a "low-key" way of helping others "in a way that I didn't even suspect," says Mr. Sawaya.

And so the fund is a total reflection of her: quiet help. Even though she didn't have the benefit of music therapy, an art program, massage, makeovers and pet therapy, it's a program that Mr. Sawaya says Helen would have liked. Mr. Sawaya has supported the Helen Sawaya Fund at Roosevelt Hospital since 2005, most recently giving a gift of \$50,000. He says that the fund receives donations from others, a testament to the many friends of his late wife.

The idea for the fund—developed in partnership with Helen's doctor, Gabriel A. Sara—was to provide activities to help patients take their mind off of a treatment that can be quite painful. The goal is to take the attention from cancer and worries to making a piece of art or strumming on a guitar. "There are different kinds of therapies out there that can improve the quality of treatment, not in the medical sense," says Mr. Sawaya.

At the same time, Mr. Sawaya wanted to give the patients a little hope. "They can look forward, if you will, not to treatment but look forward to the fact that this will pass," he says. In the last year, the Helen Sawaya Fund has helped more than 500 patients. A separate travel program, called Laura's Journeys, was created in memory of Laura Parness. That program is designed to encourage patients with recreational travel. Some 20 vacations have been given to Roosevelt patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatments.

In all, the complementary therapies have been a success for patients. "It's always painful to walk into a chemotherapy setting," says Mr. Sawaya, adding that his wife is still present in spirit. "She's helping others. For me and my children, it means a lot."

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*A version of this article appeared Mar. 26, 2012, on page A23 in some U.S. editions of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: From Chemotherapy to Makeovers and Art.*