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Welcome to the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging and the Sam and Rose Stein Institute for Research on Aging e-newsletter!

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## National Cancer Survivors Month: Stein Institute Executive Director Danielle Glorioso's Story of Resilience and Hope

June is National Cancer Survivors Month, a time to honor the strength, resilience, and perseverance of individuals living with and beyond cancer. As the month comes to a close, the Stein Institute's Executive Director, Danielle Glorioso, shares her deeply

personal story of facing advanced-stage colorectal cancer and emerging cancer-free. Her story is a moving testament to the power of hope, community, and gratitude—and a reminder of why raising awareness about cancer prevention, early detection, and survivorship matters.



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## Ringling the Bell: Reflections on Cancer, Community, and Survival

by Danielle Glorioso

As National Cancer Survivors Month comes to a close, I wanted to take the opportunity to share my story. As a newly minted cancer survivor, this month feels especially meaningful and emotional. Over the past year, I battled advanced-stage colorectal cancer. There were many days when I wondered whether I would survive, and many more when I struggled to imagine what life would look like on the other side of treatment. Today, I am grateful to say that I am cancer-free.

Cancer is becoming increasingly common, particularly colorectal cancer, which is rising at alarming rates. I did not fit the typical profile. I had no family history and none of the common risk factors. Yet looking back, one of the most important lessons from this journey is the importance of trusting our instincts and advocating for our health. For more than a decade, I struggled with significant digestive issues. I made countless trips to doctors, underwent scans, and even visited the emergency room. Each time, the underlying cause was missed. When my symptoms finally became impossible to ignore, I learned that my tumor was so large it had likely been growing for five to ten years. Looking back, I wish I had advocated more strongly for myself.



I have always been a private person, but I quickly realized that surviving cancer was not something I could do alone. I shared my diagnosis with family, friends, and colleagues, and the support I received was extraordinary. Flowers arrived. Residencies scheduled. Meals were delivered. Flights were booked. The kindness and generosity shown to me often brought me to tears.

I underwent an aggressive treatment plan of radiation, chemotherapy, and surgery. Each phase brought its own challenges, fears, and hardships. Nothing could have prepared me for the physical and emotional toll of treatment, particularly the overwhelming fatigue. There were weeks when my world shrank to the distance between my bed and my desk. On the days my body allowed it, I went to yoga. I took walks. When the days felt especially difficult, I would allow myself to dream about the future. I imagined ringing the treatment bell. I imagined what it would feel like to hear my oncologist tell me I was cancer-free. I imagined myself skiing in the mountains again. I am happy to say that I have now experienced each of those moments, and they were every bit as emotional, powerful, and joyful as I had imagined.

I am deeply grateful to my Stein Family, including our leadership team, Dr. Alison Moore and Dr. Anthony Molina, and Paula Smith, for the extraordinary kindness and grace they extended to me throughout this journey. There were many days when I was not operating at my best, yet I was consistently met with patience, understanding, and encouragement. Work became a lifeline during treatment. At a time when cancer threatened to consume every aspect of my identity, my work helped me stay connected to a sense of purpose and to

the parts of myself that existed beyond my diagnosis. My colleagues and team cheered me on through every milestone, celebrated each victory, and supported me through the difficult days. Their compassion carried me farther than they may ever realize.

As I reflect on this journey, I continue to think about how to make meaning from an experience that changed my life so profoundly. While I am still discovering what that will look like, I am grateful to be taking a first step. With the encouragement of Linda and Dr. KB Lim, we will host this year's LEE Tuh-Fuh and Ruby LEE Wang Zu-Ming Endowed Lecture on October 20, 2026 at Osher Lifelong Learning, focused on cancer prevalence, prevention, emerging therapies, and survivorship. My hope is that by sharing knowledge, raising awareness, and encouraging people to advocate for their health, we can help others navigate their own journeys and, perhaps, prevent some from facing the challenges that I did.

While I am incredibly grateful to be cancer-free, I am also learning that survivorship comes with its own challenges. Every three months I will undergo scans and surveillance. I am learning to trust my body again and to live with the uncertainty that many survivors know well, the tendency to wonder whether every ache or pain is something ordinary or a sign that cancer has returned. It is a new chapter that requires its own kind of resilience and hope.



To anyone currently facing a cancer diagnosis whether for you or a loved one, my heart is with you. I know how frightening and isolating cancer can feel. Today, I can tell you that hope is worth holding onto. What I learned from my experience was to lean on the people who care about you, accept help when it is offered, and remember that you do not have to carry this burden alone. Cancer changed my life in ways I never expected. It tested me physically, emotionally, and spiritually. But it also revealed the strength of community, the importance of hope, and the profound gift of gratitude.



After months of treatment, uncertainty, and perseverance, Danielle rings the bell celebrating a milestone she had envisioned throughout her journey: being cancer-free.

## Congratulations, Danielle!

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### SAVE THE DATE

October 20, 2026

JOIN US FOR THE LEE TUH-FUH & RUBY LEE WANG ZU-MING  
ENDOWED EDUCATION LECTURE

**“The Changing Landscape of Cancer: Prevention, Emerging Therapies,  
Survivorship, and Healthy Aging”**

As cancer rates continue to rise and advances in treatment reshape outcomes, this timely discussion will explore prevention, emerging therapies, survivorship, and strategies for healthy aging.

**SAMIR GUPTA, M.D.**



Samir Gupta, MD, is a board-certified gastroenterologist specializing in colorectal cancer screening, prevention, and the care of patients at increased risk for colorectal cancer. His expertise includes hereditary cancer syndromes such as Lynch syndrome and familial adenomatous polyposis, as well as the management of complex colorectal polyps. Dr. Gupta's research focuses on improving colorectal cancer screening and prevention through clinical trials and population-based studies. His work aims to increase screening rates and identify new approaches to risk assessment and early detection. He earned his medical degree from the University of Michigan and completed training in internal medicine and gastroenterology at UCSF and the University of Pennsylvania.

**RANA R. MCKAY, M.D.**



Rana R. McKay, MD, is a board-certified medical oncologist specializing in genitourinary cancers, including bladder, kidney, prostate, and testicular cancer. She leads UC San Diego Health's multidisciplinary prostate cancer clinic, providing coordinated, specialized care for patients with advanced disease. A professor in the Departments of Medicine and Urology at UC San Diego School of Medicine, Dr. McKay conducts clinical research focused on developing innovative therapies and biomarkers for genitourinary cancers. She serves as principal investigator on several kidney and prostate cancer clinical trials and has published extensively in leading medical journals, including Nature, The Lancet, and the Journal of Clinical Oncology. Before joining UC San Diego Health, Dr. McKay was on the faculty at Harvard Medical School and a medical oncologist at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

**DANIELLE K. GLORIOSO, LCSW**



Danielle K. Glorioso is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with extensive experience in aging, community health, and clinical research. Since joining UC San Diego in 2001, she has taken on a leadership role as the Executive Director of the Center for Healthy Aging and the Stein Institute for Research on Aging. In this capacity, Ms. Glorioso oversees a wide range of operations including strategic planning, organizational development, community outreach, training, philanthropy, communications, and marketing. She is also a certified therapist in prolonged grief disorder, specializing in manualized interventions. One of her major accomplishments includes leading the research and development of a licensed, evidence-based six-week program designed to enhance resilience, compassion, and self-compassion among older adults. This intervention, which has undergone nearly a decade of research, has been tested and validated in various community settings, including among older adults in group and individual settings. Through her work, Danielle has made significant contributions to improving the mental health and well-being of older adults.

**OCTOBER 20TH**

**1PM - 3PM**

**OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE  
8980 LA JOLLA VILLAGE DRIVE - 3RD FLOOR  
LA JOLLA, CA 92037**

**REGISTRATION COMING SOON**

# Osher Open House

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Dear Lifelong Learners,

We are excited to invite you to our Summer 2026 Open House at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC San Diego!

**Date:** Tuesday, July 7

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Location:** Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, UC San Diego, 8980 Villa La Jolla Drive, 3rd Floor

**Virtual Option:** Join us via Zoom (link to be provided upon RSVP)

**Parking:** Free parking available; please follow the signs on Villa La Jolla Drive and in the parking lot.

*\*Registration and information tables open at 9:30 a.m., program starts at 10 a.m.*

**REGISTER TODAY**



## BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

Join us to explore the enriching opportunities that await you as part of our Osher community. This event is a wonderful chance to:

- Discover the range of classes and seminars available this spring, offered both on campus and live streamed via Zoom.
- Learn about the benefits of membership.
- Meet our volunteer leadership team and connect with fellow members.
- Enjoy light refreshments and gather more information about our upcoming programs in modern, comfortable classrooms.

### WHY JOIN US?

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute offers a variety of intellectually stimulating learning experiences for adults over 50. Our programs cover a wide range of subjects, including medicine, science, history, art and more. With convenient daytime classes, flexible scheduling, and no prerequisites or tests, you can immerse yourself in learning and connect with a vibrant community of peers. View our [membership options here](#), or explore our [upcoming classes](#)!

We look forward to welcoming you and sharing the joy of lifelong learning!

Warm regards,

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC San Diego

[Register Here](#)

## Resilience, Compassion and Self-Compassion Program available for license

After nearly a decade of research led by our Executive Director, Danielle K. Glorioso, LCSW we are thrilled to announce that our Resilience Intervention is now officially licensed through UC San Diego and available for implementation in community settings. This evidence-based, six-session program is specifically designed to enhance resilience, compassion, and self-compassion in older adults. It has been studied in various community settings across the United States, as well as in England and Israel, with results showing improvements in resilience and self-compassion, along with reductions in perceived stress, depression, and loneliness.

For more information about our intervention, please contact Danielle K. Glorioso, LCSW at [dglorioso@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:dglorioso@health.ucsd.edu)

Find us and Follow us on:

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## We Need Your Support!

When you give to the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging and the Stein Institute for Research on Aging, you're making the decision to support **the pursuit of a healthier, longer life for you and your loved ones**. Please **make a gift** to help sustain and expand our successful aging programs.

[GIVE NOW](#)



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