

A Simple Plan

John Nicholas is helping cancer survivors cope with the not-so-basic pressures of daily life. **By Danielle Beurteaux**

John Nicholas knows how to throw a party. From 1992 to 1999, he co-hosted the Intrepid Fall Ball, an annual black-tie fundraiser held onboard the *USS Intrepid* aircraft carrier to raise money for the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum and other charities. As co-founder of the not-for-profit Metropolitan Foundation, Nicholas helps throw an annual gala at the Central Park Boathouse to support New York City organizations that do everything from cancer research to protecting the local water supply.

So when breast cancer survivor Monica Knoll decided she needed help setting up her own nonprofit in 2002, she turned to Nicholas, whom she had met through a

Cancer101 is an information resource for women with breast cancer who are dealing with the challenges of balancing medical treatment with the demands of daily life. The group's primary focus is its breastCANCER101 ten-year planner, a calendar to help patients and their families track medical care history, health insurance and bills, and gather information about clinical trials, support groups and other resources before, during and after treatment. The planners are available free of charge at 600 treatment centers in the New York tristate area, as well as in Chicago, where Knoll's sister, Laura Roberts, who is also a breast cancer survivor, runs a branch of Cancer101.

Nicholas says that Knoll's experience during her own treatment showed her that there was a need for a centralized resource for women who must make informed, quick decisions during what is a traumatic and stressful time. Although support groups and information are available, he says, finding them can take a lot of effort, time and energy — all of which are in short supply for breast cancer patients undergoing intensive treatment.

Nicholas has helped Cancer101 with everything from building its board of directors to fundraising and finding donors. Knoll, a former marketing professional who now works full-time on Cancer101, says she knew nothing about nonprofits when she began. "John has been a guiding light," she says. "We make a good team."

This May, Cancer101 is hosting its second annual golf tournament at the Old Oaks Country Club in Purchase, New York. The organization hopes to raise \$200,000, up from \$150,000 last year. The money will be used to print and distribute 100,000 planners this year, compared with 6,000 in 2007, as the group tries to reach more women nationally. It will also produce Spanish and Chinese language versions in response to feedback from patients and medical care professionals. Eventually, Nicholas, whose paternal grandfather died of prostate cancer, would like to expand the organization's efforts to offer planners for other types of cancer.

As Nicholas points out, Cancer101 does not give medical advice, offer support groups or fund cancer research. Instead, the organization focuses on the basic needs of individuals with breast cancer and those of their friends and families. "These are people's lives we're helping," he says. "We're really helping survivors get through their treatment."

For more information, visit www.cancer101.org.



Cancer101 board member John Nicholas: A guiding light.

mutual friend. It didn't take long for Knoll to convince him to become a founding board member of Cancer101.

"I saw my grandmother go through breast cancer," says Nicholas, 42, marketing director at Hull Capital Management in New York, a \$400 million hedge fund that specializes in private investments in public companies. "I feel a deep affinity for Cancer101."