

A BREATH *of* HOPE

L U N G F O U N D A T I O N

Our founders...



Judy Golz was a visionary person who was often mentioned as the inspiration for the founding of A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation. Judy was instrumental in planning the first Twin Cities Lung Run/Walk and the process that led to the incorporation of A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation in 2008. She served on the first board of directors and fought valiantly against the disease that would eventually claim her life.

Judy lost her battle with lung cancer in 2009 leaving her loving children and many adoring friends behind. A volunteer award was created and named in Judy's honor to recognize one exemplary female volunteer each year. The award is announced at the A Breath of Hope Women's Wellness Tea in March.



Shanna Ballsrud is the daughter of Judy Golz and was at her side as a caregiver, helper and advocate from the day she was diagnosed and through today. Losing her mother was devastating for Shanna and her siblings, yet they continue the fight in her honor.

Shanna served as a board member for three terms, as well as chair and lead for many A Breath of Hope efforts. Shanna and her family continue to support the work of A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation in loving memory of Judy.



MJ McKeon is an inspiration to all who battle lung cancer. MJ was diagnosed in 2006 with Stage 4 inoperable lung cancer, yet she continues to beat the odds today and spends her life advocating for lung cancer awareness, supporting patients and families through her endless work with Minnesota's Survivor groups, and assisting A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation in myriad ways as a volunteer. "I will never stop supporting patients and families hurt by this stupid cancer," shared MJ. And she hasn't!

To read more about MJ's survivor story and work for the foundation, read page 6 of our 2017 annual report found at:
<https://abreathofhope.org/donate/>



Mike Corcoran was a go-getter, great guy and fighter. After he helped launch the first Twin Cities Lung Run/Walk (and won the Spirit Award) and A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation, he went on to advocate for increased funding for research and improved awareness of this deadly cancer.

Mike shared his story near and far and spent time in Washington DC to help move the cause forward with legislators. Sadly, Mike lost his four-year battle with lung cancer in 2009 leaving behind his loving partner, Dave Karwacki, siblings and many friends. Mike's family and friends continue their support of A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation in loving memory of Mike.



Bernice (Bernie) Collins was a loving wife and mother who never saw the lung cancer diagnosis coming. Bernie and her daughter, Lorie, were busy planning a lung cancer awareness event of their own when their nurse, Michelle, told them that Judy Golz and friends were doing the same! Michelle brought the group together to plan the first Twin Cities Lung Run/Walk in 2007, and the rest is history!

Bernie lost her battle with lung cancer in 2011 leaving her loving husband, children and friends behind. Bernie's family continue to support the work of the foundation and can often be seen at events.



Lorie Beerling (Bernie's daughter) was at her mother's side to offer moral and physical support as she fought the cancer that eventually claimed her life. Lorie and her mother joined forces and brought their similar vision to Judy Golz and the other co-founders in their support group. They helped plan the first Twin Cities Lung Run/Walk, and Lorie has remained active ever since.

Lorie wants to help others avoid what her family went through and she is frequently spotted at ABOH events, along with her husband and children. They continue the support in loving memory of Bernie.



Michelle O'Brien was the nurse and force that brought the co-founders together. As leader of their support group at Fairview Hospital, Michelle encouraged the co-founders of A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation to work together to create an event that has now been hosted 12 times (2007-2018) and draws more than 2000 people. She also encouraged and supported them as they fought their battles with lung cancer. We are grateful for Michelle's spirit of collaboration and the leadership she showed at the support group she led. Michelle was recognized with the 2012 Outstanding Nurse Award by Mpls.St.Paul Magazine – and we can see why!