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***The Star Campaign Honors Southern California Couple for  
Extraordinary Cancer Caregiving***

**Washington, DC** - The Wellness Community (TWC) announced today that Michael Walachy is *The Star Campaign's* featured *Star* for December. Mr. Walachy joins more than 200 family members, friends, medical professionals, counselors and others who have been honored through *The Star Campaign*, a web-based effort, [www.starcampaign.org](http://www.starcampaign.org), which enables people with cancer to honor and reflect on the caregivers who support them. The campaign is made possible by a charitable donation from GlaxoSmithKline Oncology.

Mr. Walachy is being honored by his wife, Arlene, a three-time cancer survivor since 1983. For more than 20 years, he has accompanied Ms. Walachy to numerous doctor appointments, supported her through five major surgeries and dozens of chemotherapy treatments, while maintaining a full-time job in the aerospace industry. Due to the positive attitude that she and her husband kept each other going with, Ms. Walachy's battles with ovarian and breast cancer have had successful outcomes.

The Walachys are both dedicated volunteers at The Wellness Community – South Bay Cities in Redondo Beach, CA. Nida Padilla, the facility's office coordinator, can attest to the help Ms. Walachy provides. "Arlene goes above and beyond the duties of a volunteer and we are fortunate to have her as a part of our community. She is always willing to work the front desk, oversee other volunteers, work at fundraising events and help at health fairs to promote The Wellness Community. In addition to this hard work, she leads meetings for first time visitors. As a two-time ovarian and one-time breast cancer survivor, she is an inspiration to those facing cancer for the first time, and an ambassador for The Wellness Community."

Ms. Walachy's path to The Wellness Community was quite a journey, beginning in 1998 after she read Gilda Radner's book, *It's Always Something*, which mentions Gilda's strong involvement with The Wellness Community during her battle with ovarian cancer. Ms. Walachy was interested in the idea of free support services, but never made her way to a facility. Through her cancer treatments, Ms. Walachy practiced positive thinking and visualization techniques on her own. After returning from vacation in 2006, Ms. Walachy had to report for jury duty. This led her to a courtroom next door to The Wellness Community. "It was at this point that I knew – something was telling me that I should be involved with The Wellness Community." She is now heavily involved in speaking to cancer patients, both survivors and newly-diagnosed patients. "It's heartwarming to see that I can make a difference in their lives by telling my story. I've been able to help facilitate more positive outlooks on life based on my own experience."

Ms. Walachy's three-time cancer survival was always accompanied by the strong support of her husband, her *Star*. Mr. Walachy has been a caregiver for more than 20 years – but the experience hasn't always been easy. He remembers, "When we got the news of her first diagnosis, I didn't know what to do. I saw how upbeat she was, so I knew I needed to stay positive to keep her going. She's a fighter, and I wanted to be as supportive as I could – the best way to do that is to give your love to someone."



As a caregiver, Mr. Walachy has had his own sacrifices throughout his wife's treatment. Maintaining a stressful job when he took time off for doctor visits made his work life more difficult. He was also unable to continue his morning exercise routine because he took over many household tasks. Perhaps his most important job as a caregiver was highlighted in this year's *Star Campaign* public service announcement – going out late at night to get his wife milkshakes when it was the only thing she could drink.

Mr. Walachy's dedication as a full-time caregiver has shown in his wife's resiliency through her cancer journey. He is being honored as December's *Star of the Month* for his consistent efforts.

On *The Star Campaign's* website, people living with and beyond cancer can honor their *Stars* by completing a simple form about themselves and the person they are choosing to honor. All *Stars* are listed on the "Star Walk of Fame," which serves as a place to share inspirational stories of cancer caregiving. Visitors may also purchase a *Star Campaign* lapel pin for \$5 in support of cancer caregivers, create *Star* certificates, access caregiving resources, and learn about free support and education available for patients and caregivers at TWC.

To read more about this month's *Star*, Michael Walachy, the many other caregivers who are honored by *The Star Campaign*, or TWC's free support and education services please visit [www.starcampaign.org](http://www.starcampaign.org).

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### **ABOUT THE WELLNESS COMMUNITY**

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in June 2007, The Wellness Community is an international organization dedicated to providing support, education and hope to people with cancer and their loved ones. Through participation in free professionally-led support groups, educational workshops, nutrition and exercise programs, and stress reduction classes, people affected by cancer learn vital skills that enable them to regain control, reduce isolation and restore hope regardless of the stage of their disease. The Wellness Community provides support, education and hope for people affected by cancer at over 100 locations worldwide including 24 U.S. based and 2 international centers with 73 satellite and off-site programs and online at [www.thewellnesscommunity.org](http://www.thewellnesscommunity.org).