

GREATER PITTSBURGH'S PREMIER LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

# WHIRL



## CORPORATE WHIRL

### Magical Moments

Dr. Randy Pausch's wife, Jai, honorary chair of this month's LHAS gala, shares her positive outlook on life.

By Katie Mavrich

Photos courtesy Jai Pausch

CLICK HERE TO ORDER YOUR WHIRL 2009 STANLEY CUP COLLECTORS' EDITION

August 2009

[Publishers' Page](#)

[WHIRLED Culture](#)

[Corporate WHIRL](#)

[Culinary WHIRLED](#)

[Quick Bites](#)

[Chef](#)

[Recipe](#)

[WHIRL After Midnight](#)

[Edible Allegheny Excerpt](#)

[Features](#)

[Lucky Dog](#)

[Out There Grindin'](#)

[Game On!](#)

[Semi Annual Event Guide](#)

[Event Coverage](#)

[House on the Block](#)

[WHIRL Travel](#)

[WHIRLED Style](#)

[Style News](#)

[Style File](#)

[Shopping: Sweet Violet](#)

[Shopping: Hoop Dreams](#)

[Style Feature](#)

[WHIRL Weddings](#)

[Submit Your Wedding](#)

[Workout Wisdom](#)

[One Last WHIRL](#)



Pancreatic cancer, once a disease rarely discussed, has rocketed into the public eye in the recent years. Actor Patrick Swayze was diagnosed with the disease in January 2008 and has been fighting the battle, with frequent updates in the news, ever since. Carnegie Mellon University professor Dr. Randy Pausch was diagnosed in September 2006 and delivered the poignant and touching "Last Lecture" in September 2007. The lecture was a surprising YouTube sensation and spurred Dr. Pausch to co-author a book of the same title, published in 2008. At press time, it had been on The New York Times bestseller list for more than 62 weeks. Dr. Pausch passed away at his family's Virginia home last July, leaving behind his wife, Jai, and three small children.

The disease came to the attention of the Ladies Hospital Aid Society. "Several of our board members had been talking with people who had been newly diagnosed," says LHAS Executive Director Dee Dee Troutman. LHAS wanted to do something to support research into this and related diseases, so this year's annual gala, on August 22, raises awareness of pancreatic cancer, colon cancer, and other digestive diseases.

LHAS is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to supporting people in need of educational, financial, medical, and social services. "We do a lot of small things that make a big difference, from buying prescriptions and taxi fares, to supporting educational grants and supplying wigs for cancer patients; we have salons where we help patients who are under treatment, just trying to make them feel good in light of their predicament," says LHAS President Laura Penrod Kronk.

***"I want to see the miracle of living in each day we live."  
— Jai Pausch***

The obvious choice for honorary chair was Jai Pausch, Dr. Pausch's widow. "Cancer sucks. It's here, and it's not going away," Pausch says. "But if we work together, if we support these really talented folks, like Dr. Herbert Zeh [co-director of University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute's Pancreatic Cancer Center and Dr. Pausch's surgeon], then, together, we can create early detection protocol, develop preventative methods, develop drugs that inhibit cancer cell growth and other treatments, and create hope for millions of people who have or will one day hear the terrifying phrase, 'I'm sorry, but you have cancer.'"

Pausch says that she and the children have been coping very well despite everything that they have been through in the last couple of years. At first, she had trouble sleeping, listening to the house creaking and worrying about burglars, or how she would get the kids out of the house should a fire break out. "The reality of being a single mom, being solely responsible for three lives, was overwhelming," she says. "I've since learned to cope with these feelings, and after buying a security system, have been able to sleep just fine."

Pausch has also had an outpouring of support from fans of The Last Lecture. "I find it amazing that people keep me in their thoughts and reach out to help me," she says. "For example, several people sent me Valentine's Day cards saying that they were thinking of me on my first Valentine's Day without my husband, and wanted me to remember that I am loved. One widow sent me a wonderful grief meditation book that I have found very helpful as each day goes by and the grieving continues in different ways."

In addition to the gala, Pausch is maintaining a full schedule this summer: She's teaching her two youngest children to swim and to avoid sunburn. She's working on her forehand and backhand as well as her doubles strategy on the tennis court. And, she's developing a support structure for her cucumbers, watermelons, and pumpkins in her garden so that they don't spill out into the yard — all efforts that are proof-positive of her upbeat outlook on life.

"I want to create a little magic between the time the sun comes up and when it sets. I want my kids to learn by example that we play a big hand in how our lives unfold, just by the way that we interpret and respond to situations," Pausch says. "I want to see the miracle of living in each day we live."

*The Ladies Hospital Aid Society's 2009 Gala, Come Fly With Us, takes place August 22 at the Westin Convention Center Pittsburgh. For tickets or more information, call LHAS at 412.648.6106, or visit [lhas.net](http://lhas.net). For more information on pancreatic cancer, visit [pancan.org](http://pancan.org).*

## **Lasting Lessons**

**Dr. Randy Pausch was a computer science professor at CMU. But, the lessons that he taught his family were far more valuable than Java script. Here, Jai shares some of her favorites.**

- Get three quotes before you hire someone to do work for you.
- Don't spend more than you have; live within your means, and save for a rainy day.
- Experiences are worth more than things.
- Happiness is being with people you like.

- There is magic in all of us. You just have to believe in yourself to see it inside you.
- You can love someone more on the day they die than on the day that you marry them.
- We all lose people we love, but some of us will have the privilege of caring for that loved one and walking as far into the valley of the shadows as God permits.
- Cancer sucks.