

Year in Highlights

January 28: 4th Purple Ribbon Awards, held at San Jose Marriott, honored outstanding contributions to the lupus community.

March: Spanish-language conference returns. Held in San Jose, headlined by Dr. Christina Lanata of UCSF.

March 21-22: LFNC joins Lupus Research Alliance in Washington DC to lay out principles of health reform.

May: Lupus Awareness Month is recognized by California legislature and cities across Northern California.

June 11: First ever 100+ person team at the Outrun Lupus 5K.

August 12: Summer Lupus Conference Held in Santa Rosa.

September 7: Inaugural Pour for a Cure event raises LFNC's largest contribution to research ever at \$30,000.

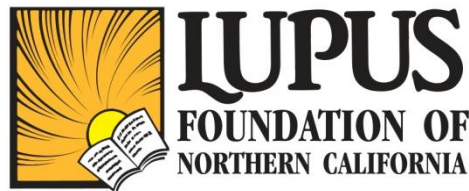
September 25: LFNC provides scholarship for patient to attend Patient-Focused Drug Development meeting.

Plus: Lupus 101 on Facebook Live and more.

Lupus Foundation of Northern California

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Dear friend,

It was May 11, 2017.

Both houses of the California State Legislature had just proclaimed May as Lupus Awareness Month, and the assembled advocates brought together by the Lupus Foundation of Northern California were making the best of this photo-op on the floor of the Assembly. Suddenly, one patient started to feel so weak she could no longer stand. She was led to the back of the chamber and the on-duty emergency personnel were called. When emergency personnel arrived, she was taken to the local hospital. She had pneumonia. I rode in the ambulance and then stayed in the hospital room with her and helped her to speak to a medical team that didn't know much about lupus. These four hours, more than anything, made lupus real for me.

That patient is **Roberta Kracht**, a fierce advocate and a member of the LFNC Board of Directors. Roberta was excited to be in Sacramento, and she loved being with her fellow warriors. She had herself driven local awareness proclamations, she was impressed with the group of advocates LFNC brought together in Sacramento, and she was proud of the California legislature. She was happy and walked around with us all day all over the capital. I was just a new Executive Director just over a year on the job.

I am happy to report that Roberta recovered well from that incident, and that she is doing well. She is even thankful that this instance was not a flare she had to face alone - that all of us were there, with her.

Because as Roberta said, "too many lupus patients, too much of the time, feel alone." That feeling of isolation is amplified by an often-long and arduous diagnostic process (due, not infrequently, to the lack of awareness in the medical community), deepened by casual dismissal from family members and friends, and scarred by general invisibility from the broader community.

You understand the isolation of too many patients, the courage it takes to talk about one's lupus, and the importance of a community. That's why I am asking you to make a commitment today - a commitment to **make more than a difference; a commitment to make an impact. Give a gift that you can be proud of.**



Far too often, when they feel badly ill, patients have to endure remarks like “You don’t look sick.” Too many times, patients whose bodies are fatigued and pained from fighting their own immune systems are told by their own loved ones, “Don’t be lazy.” Way too many patients walk out of doctors’ offices with the words “It’s all in your head” ringing in their ears.

Too many times, for too many patients, lupus can seem like a desert of despair. For Roberta - and for many other Northern California lupus patients - the Lupus Foundation of Northern California is an oasis. **Roberta wants her fellow warriors to know “you are not alone, LFNC is here for you.”**

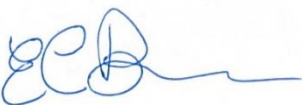
Roberta’s own journey through lupus wasn’t so different from what so many other patients experience. Her pain and fatigue started in 2000, but she wouldn’t be diagnosed for another 10 years. In the interim years, Roberta would find her pain level increase consistently. As a professional therapist, she would find it excruciatingly difficult and painful to see a full load of clients. As stinging as the physical pain she felt were comments like, “You are not as sick as you think you are.” Diagnosed in her 50s - and suffering from associated conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, sjogrens and fibromyalgia in addition to lupus, Roberta often felt that she had to suffer in silence, that no one would really understand.

That feeling of paralyzing hopelessness changed when Roberta found LFNC. She describes her experience with LFNC - starting with forming a team for the Outrun Lupus 5K in 2013 and shortly after joining the Board - as “coming out of the shell.” It was here that she finally gave herself permission to listen to her body, to ask for help, and to be able to say ‘no’ when her health required it. She learned that her unpredictable journey had a whole bunch of fellow travelers. It is because of these fellow travelers - from other fighters to staff to members of the Board and the community (this includes you) - that Roberta, who’d never joined a Board before, found *her calling* here at LFNC.

From providing new patient education to conferences and our Live Lupus 101 series, from helping meet the needs of patients as whole individuals with the Buddy Program and socials to advocating for patients in the halls of power, everything you help us do sends a message to the lupus community: **that we are here, that we understand, and that we will not let patients walk alone.** You help us be as focused on patients as on their surroundings and their communities, because we believe we cannot effectively address the needs of the patient without bringing the community with us. That is our calling.

Roberta inspires her fellow warriors every day. She inspires our Board every day. And **you inspire us by standing with leaders like Roberta.** Please stand with Roberta today and give.

Sincerely,



Erin C. Badillo
Executive Director

PS: Please give at roberta.lfnc.org.
