



Spring 2016

Touchpoints

Seen, Tested, Treated and Healed: A Patient's Story

Maria owes her life to a bright pink flier—and to her daughter's love and concern.

While volunteering at a dental clinic in 2013, Juliana Zapata was handed a flier advertising the See, Test & Treat program, a free cervical and breast cancer screening event taking place one weekend in October at Rhode Island Hospital. She immediately thought of her mother, who hadn't seen a doctor in almost 20 years.

"My mother is a stubborn woman. Part of it is our Colombian culture, but part of it comes from fear," Juliana said recently. "Think about what it's like to be in a foreign country: you don't speak the language, you don't know how to navigate the health care system, and you can't afford health insurance. When you don't feel well, you simply decide you'd rather not know. It's easier that way."

It took some steady persuasion and insistence on Juliana's part, but the two attended See, Test & Treat. To their delight, the program was offered by warm, kind volunteers who spoke Spanish. Maria quickly relaxed and was glad she let Juliana talk her into going.

Maria's breast exam was unremarkable, and she waited two days before receiving a call that the mammogram needed to be repeated. More images were taken, and Maria was soon asked to come in for a needle biopsy.

"We were scared. Our heads went to the worst place imaginable," Juliana said. "The biopsy revealed the dreaded

news: Mom had Stage 3 cancer in her duct. We were stunned. A blizzard of activity came next. Surgery followed by radiation, and months of constant monitoring."

All of Maria's treatment was done at no cost to the family, which was Maria's greatest fear. According to Margaret M. Van Bree, MHA, DrPH, Rhode Island Hospital's President, "The Rhode Island

Hospital community understands that we are the safety net for the most vulnerable among us. Patients who need our care are never turned away because of their inability to pay."

Today, Maria is cancer-free. And she and Juliana volunteered at the most recent See, Test & Treat event. "It's a small way we can give back so that people continue to get the help they need," Juliana said. "We are so grateful to Rhode Island Hospital. They saved my mother's life."



Juliana Zapata and her mother Maria with Dr. Van Bree at a recent Rhode Island Hospital event

SEE, TEST & TREAT

In 2012, Rhode Island Hospital became one of two sites in the state for a remarkable nationwide program called See, Test & Treat—a free cervical and breast cancer screening program funded through grants from the College of American Pathologists Foundation. The annual event features pelvic and breast exams with same-day test results, diagnoses and follow-up care. This lifesaving program, for uninsured or financially-challenged women ages 21 and older, works to break down financial, geographic, language and ethnic barriers and provide equal access to care. At each event, pathologists coordinate a team of volunteer physicians and health care professionals. Physical exams and Pap smears are done, and if an abnormality is found, a gynecologist is available for colposcopy and additional biopsies, or a radiologist might perform a mammogram. All resources at Rhode Island Hospital are available to patients who need further screenings and treatment. “See, Test & Treat created a new opportunity for patients who wouldn’t otherwise have the means to receive this preventive care,” says Dr. Douglas Anthony, Pathologist-in-Chief, Lifespan Academic Medical Center. “Scheduling the event on a Saturday allows patients to have the testing and diagnosis done in one day without needing to miss a day or two of work.”

“See, Test & Treat created a new opportunity for patients who wouldn’t otherwise have the means to receive this preventive care.”
— Dr. Douglas Anthony



Above: Dr. Martha Mainiero reviewing a patient's mammography images



Left: Physicians and staff, including Dr. Anthony (right), volunteer their time at the See, Test and Treat event.

ANNE C. PAPPAS CENTER CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF SAVING LIVES

Back in the early 1990s, “mammogram” was not quite a household word when Dr. Barbara Schepps first envisioned a new breast imaging center at Rhode Island Hospital.

“At the time, few insurers paid for screening mammograms—mammograms for asymptomatic women. Those, and the uninsured or underinsured patients, whether they had symptoms or not, often fell through the gaps,” says Dr. Schepps, who didn’t let that fact deter her. She convinced hospital leaders to offer mamograms for \$50, and an ad campaign encouraged hundreds of women to get screened for cancer.

health care is delivered. When the center first opened, mammography was treated like any other X-ray. Dr. Schepps had the vision to have a space and program where a woman could have all her breast imaging done in a dedicated center with a radiologist specializing in breast imaging immediately available to discuss results and facilitate the next step in care.

Today, the Pappas Center is an inviting space with state-of-the-art tools, staffed by experts in breast imaging who perform 25,000 biopsies, MRIs, ultrasounds, and other imaging procedures a year. The center also offers digital breast tomosynthesis, which provides 3D images with significantly more visual information.

According to Dr. Martha Mainiero, the center’s director, “We are an integral part of the breast health team. We’re the first line of defense, making the all-important diagnosis. Our dedicated nurse navigator, Laurie DeRuosi, NPC, works closely with the other nurse navigators as well as the surgeons and treatment teams across the Comprehensive Cancer Center.”

Serving underprivileged populations is central to the mission. The center takes part in the nationwide See, Test & Treat Program for underserved women

in vulnerable communities who might not have access to mammograms and other lifesaving tests.

In addition, members of the Pappas Center clinical team are actively involved in research and education on the next chapter of breast health care, investigating new advances in imaging and screening.

On the other side of the coin, says Dr. Mainiero, “We often reassure women that nothing is wrong. People are just as thankful that you put everything to rest. We’ve been around long enough that we have mother-daughter combinations. Sisters, whole families, come to us. It’s incredibly rewarding.”



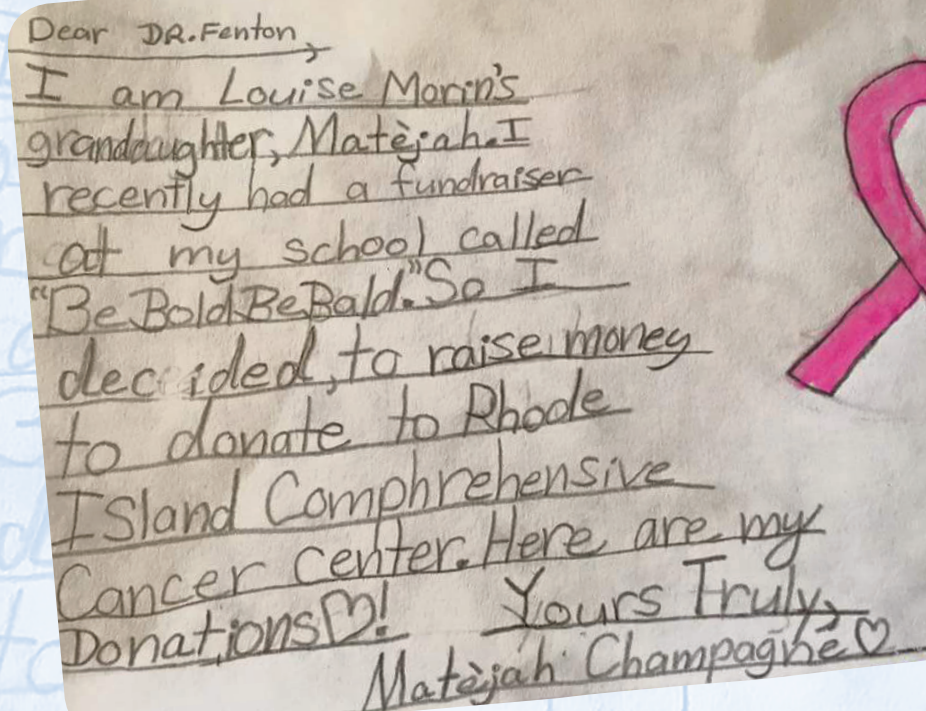
Tomosynthesis mammography

That was the start of what, in 1995, would become The Anne C. Pappas Breast Imaging Center, directed by Dr. Schepps until she retired in 2008.

The center’s namesake was the sister of Sandy Stimoulas, RN, then Rhode Island Hospital’s chief of nursing. Anne died from breast cancer at age 40 in the 1970s, and her family gave the foundational gift that helped launch the center. They have continued to stay involved, inspiring many other donors such as Team Tarro and the Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Resource Foundation.

The Pappas Center has helped change the way breast

A GRANDDAUGHTER'S TRIBUTE



Dear DR. Fenton,

I am Louise Morin's granddaughter, Matejah. I recently had a fundraiser at my school called "Be Bold Be Bald." So I decided to raise money to donate to Rhode Island Comprehensive Cancer Center. Here are my donations! Yours Truly, Matejah Champagne

Eight-year-old Matejah Champagne is a girl on a mission. For the past six years her grandmother, "Mimi," has battled cancer, receiving her treatment at Rhode Island Hospital's Comprehensive Cancer Center. When Matejah found out about her grandmother's fight, she wanted to help her feel better and also find a cure.

After hearing of her school's participation in "BeBold BeBald" she purchased a flesh colored cap, that when worn resembles a bald head, to be like Mimi. Many of her classmates did the same and decorated them with markers. Mimi was so touched by this tribute that she shared photos of Matejah wearing her cap with her friends. In response, several of them sent gifts to Matejah for Rhode Island Hospital's Comprehensive Cancer Center. She raised a total of \$100.

Her parents describe Matejah as a very thoughtful third-grader who enjoys helping those she cares about. Matejah says, "I believe someday I will change the world and find a cure for cancer!"

You can make an important impact with a tribute gift of any size in honor or memory of someone special. For more information, please call 401-444-6500 or visit giving.lifespan.org/RIH-foundation.



"I believe someday I will change the world and find a cure for cancer!"
— Matejah Champagne

If you have questions about giving to Rhode Island Hospital or any of its programs, please contact 401-444-6758 or RIHgiving@lifespan.org.

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