



California October 2024 Quarterly Newsletter



Greetings, Cancer Change Makers from your California SLA, Jamie Escoto!

As Election Day approaches, the urgency to act is greater than ever. Our [Cancer Votes](#) work is crucial during this time, as we recognize the pivotal role elections play in shaping cancer policy. This year, we've made remarkable progress—from state initiatives to our recent Leadership Summit and Lobby Day—but the sudden, heartbreaking loss of my brother's best friend to glioblastoma this past weekend reminds me yet again why our work is so vital.

In this newsletter, you'll find:

- Highlights from our annual **Leadership Summit and Lobby Day**, including our Lights of Hope fundraising efforts and the remarkable achievements of our CA team;
- Updates and events from our **Affinity Groups**, featuring our [first-ever All Affinity Groups joint virtual event](#) for Breast Cancer Awareness Month;
- Opportunities for you to take action, including urging **California Senate candidates** Adam Schiff and Steve Garvey to sign our [Cancer Promise](#).

Each one of you plays a vital role in our fight against cancer. **Together, we are a community of healing and hope**, advocating for cancer patients and their families. I

am deeply grateful for your passion, commitment, and dedication to driving our mission forward.

I look forward to "seeing" you at our next Quarterly Ambassador Call on **Wednesday, October 23rd at 5:00 PM**—details in the "Key Dates" section below.

Thank you for all that you do!

Warmly,

Jamie Escoto



KEY DATES

October 23rd, 5-6 pm, **Get the Scoop on Leadership Summit & Lobby Day- Quarterly Ambassador Call**
[Zoom link here](#)

November 5th, **VOTE!!!**

November 6th at 4pm, **Virtual Film Screening of Trans Dudes with Lady Cancer** [Register here!](#)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

- Reach out to your Grassroots Manager if you are interested in supporting at one of the many Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Events. With the Governor's veto of our Every Woman Counts bill, we have more work to do collecting petitions in support of this bill. [Sign & ask others to sign!](#)
- Watch the replay of [Cancer & the Vote: Health, Hope and the 2024](#)

USEFUL LINKS

[2024 Call Calendar](#)

[New California Ambassador Hub](#)

[National Volunteer Home Page](#)

[CA Society of Emerging Leaders](#)

** [Volunteer Report Back Form](#) Please report all actions taken!

[Elections](#) and get involved in Cancer Votes!

- Review [Everything You Need to Know to Vote](#), share it with others and make your plan to VOTE!
- Got feedback or ideas for the newsletter? Please send them to Congressional District 10 ACT! Lead [Tina Tankka](#).

HOW WE'RE CELEBRATING OCTOBER...

It's October when everything turns pink in honor of breast cancer awareness month. **Did you know** that breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed among women in the United States and it is the 2nd leading cause of death from cancer among women? Learn more in the recently released [American Cancer Society \(ACS\) Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2024-2025](#).

To celebrate pink October, ACS CAN's volunteer Affinity Groups hosted their first ever joint virtual event. [You can watch the recording of Equitable Access: Return to Breast Cancer Screening for Under Resourced Communities here!](#) The event discussed breast cancer screening disparities and opportunities. Cancer survivors and panelists shared their stories and expertise.

The celebration continues with **Hispanic Heritage Month** September 15 - October 15! We want to acknowledge the ACSí Se Puede Hispanic/Latino Advocacy Alliance at ACS CAN and wish everyone a Happy Hispanic Heritage Month. America's history and culture would be incomplete without understanding the contributions of American citizens of Hispanic or Latin descent.

September 15 is significant because it's when Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras celebrate their independence. September 16th is Mexico's and September 18th is Chile's.

Check out our celebration videos featuring California Ambassadors **Stephanie Gordon Rivera** and **Juan Villalobos** on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Threads](#).

The Hispanic/Latino community is one of the strongest voices as lawmakers and constituents in our cancer journey. We cannot fight the fight without them!

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT & LOBBY DAY



Once again LS&LD and Lights of Hope 2024 brought out the heart and soul of ACS CAN. Over 700 Ambassadors, including 55 California volunteers of which 15 were first-time participants, marched up to Capitol Hill on September 17 and poured out our stories, asked for funding, and secured sponsors. The asks this year included:

- **The Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage (MCED) Act -**
(S. 2085/H.R. 2407). At the time of publication, the House bill has 314 cosponsors and 62 cosponsors in the Senate.
- **The highest possible funding for cancer research & prevention programs:**
 - 51.3 billion for the National Institute of Health (NIH), including 7.934 billion for cancer research at the National Cancer Institute (NCI)
 - 1.5 billion for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H)
 - 472.4 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) cancer programs, including 230 million for the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

- A commitment to make permanent **The Affordable Care Act (ACA) enhanced tax credits** at their current levels before they expire in 2025.

A few highlights include:

- **Congressman Dr. Raul Ruiz** was awarded the National Distinguished Advocacy Award. Dr. Ruiz defied all odds, growing up as a Latino in a farm workers community to reach the highest academic achievements. Not only does he represent California's 25th District he is a humanitarian and staunch advocate for health care.
- This year's **keynote speaker** was best-selling author, artist, advocate, and cancer survivor [Suleika Jaouad](#). Her life and book, *Between Two Kingdoms*, makes us examine not only the challenges of cancer but of survivorship and the daunting task of integration back into the world of "normalcy" after illness. A recipient of two stem cell transplants, Suleika is sadly battling the return of cancer for the third time.
- Another speaker was [Dr. Kimryn Rathmell](#), the newly appointed **Director of the National Cancer Institute**, leading the charge in our President's Cancer Moonshot. An accomplished physician-scientist, renowned kidney cancer specialist. She is the recipient of numerous awards and leadership positions.

NATIONAL AWARDS & LIGHTS OF HOPE

The outstanding work of California volunteers was recognized during the Awards Dinner at LS& LD.

Laura LaRose received the ACT Lead of the Year Award. Laura describes her work with ACS CAN as an opportunity to go beyond the care she provide at the bedside and amplify the voice of her patients to fight for policy that will change the course of cancer – and she does an incredible job in every way, shape and form.

Kira Sano received the Young Leader Award. Under Kira's leadership, nearly 100 youth and young adults state-wide have mobilized to save lives from cancer through policy change, advocacy, and community activism.



Pictured above from left to right is Laura LaRose and Kira Sano. Pictured below left to right are Janice Montle, Laura LaRose, Jamie Escoto and Kay Coleman.



LIGHTS OF HOPE

The evening display of the Lights of Hope bags at Constitution Gardens has become our shared poetry bringing to life memories, missed loved ones and battles still being fought. It is a magnificent memorial built by you! Here are your accomplishments.....

103 – number of California volunteers with fundraising pages

56 – number of California volunteers raising at least \$50

18 – number of California volunteers raising at least \$1000

4 – number of California Ambassadors in the top ten!!

Collectively, **we raised an amazing \$116,458.38** toward our \$115k goal and placing us soundly as the top fundraising state in the Nation! Enjoy watching this complication of [Lights of Hope Across America 2024](#) to relive the magic.

A huge thank you to so many volunteers for doing their part. Not only the great work you have done in 2024 but also by raising the bar in 2023, you encouraged volunteers in other states to rise to the occasion which means we will be able to fund more advocacy and work toward our mission to end cancer as we know it, for everyone!



California Ambassadors reflecting at the Lights of Hope display.



California's Story Column featuring former State Lead Ambassador Patsy Romero.

PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS: Elevate!



What are our 2024 Goals?

1. To demonstrate the **power of ACS CAN California Ambassadors** by engaging 100 different volunteers in completing and reporting 500 distinct actions to move our lawmakers.

Progress to date: Almost 670 actions have been reported! Goal met!!!

2. To demonstrate the **support behind our mission - to end cancer as we know it for everyone** - by raising \$115,000 through volunteer fundraising and Lights of Hope.

NEW AMBASSADORS

Let's give a warm welcome to our new volunteers!

- Alyssa Liu - District 16
- Anika Heart - District 16
- Benjamin Belvins - District 50
- Bethany Zoe - District 36
- Carrie Lieneweg - District 10
- Diya Chivukula - District 14
- Giya Kaur - District 13
- Kairah Maqsood - District 15
- Kaitlyn Lee - District 36
- Manijeh Pouliot - District 49
- Mary Kuprianczyk - District 48
- Michele Barton - District 43
- Myra Punia - District 19
- Nick Hassas - District 40
- Nimeesha Komatireddy - District 47

GOAL MET: California volunteers have raised over \$116,000!! Goal met!!!

3. To build a collection of **your powerful cancer journeys** to inspire action against cancer. These stories will be featured on our Instagram Hub [@acscanstoriesofhope](#) in either images accompanied by written word or videos.

Progress to date: 8 of 100 journeys are currently featured in the Instagram Hub (8% toward our goal).

- Olivia Kim - District 45
- Patrick Mason - District 49
- Pranav Barla - District 37
- Rohail Kahan - District 12
- Teyonna Bowman - District 10

VOLUNTEERS IN THE NEWS

Kudos to our amazing volunteers in the news:

Sabrina Toor, [FOX40 News: Modesto bans new smoke shop permits](#)

Claudia Pérez-Favela, [Desert Review, California: Imperial Valley Resident Wins Cervivor Award](#)

Laura LaRose, [Brentwood News, California: Brentwood Resident Laura LaRose Honored for Cancer Treatment Advocacy Leadership](#)

Jamie Escoto, [VoyageLA, California: Life & Work with Jamie Escoto of Los Angeles](#)

Tina Tankka, [Mercury News, California: LTE: Newsom Must Uphold Smoke-free Protections](#)

Patrick Mason, [Times of San Diego, California: Carlsbad Becomes First City in San Diego County to Require Smoke-Free Multi-Family Housing](#) and [San Diego Union-Tribune, California: LTE: Smoke-Free Multi Unit Homes Make Carlsbad a Healthier Place to Live](#)

Kira Sano, [KNBC-TV \(Los Angeles\), California: Los Angeles County wants to require hospitals to notify before pursuing medical debt collection](#)

Cesar Serrano, [Univision San Diego, California: Innovative Cancer Treatment \(Spanish\) and Caló News, California: He thought he only had months to live, but a new cancer test](#)

[changed that](#)

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Check out the **ACS CAN National Film Premier Documentary In Due Season**, directed by Chicago-based independent filmmaker Ashley O'Shay. This film captures America's health care system at a crossroads, highlighting the stories of Black Americans impacted by the lack of Medicaid expansion in the American South.

[Watch the trailer here!](#)

The film has not been released to the public yet and we are in the process of finalizing our accompanying screening toolkit. If anyone would like to host a screening, [please let your Grassroot Manager know and they will help you complete the form to request materials and support.](#)

Promote the **VOICES of Black Women ACS study** which is a long term study of 100,000 Black women in the United States over the next few years. The goal is to better understand health conditions, like cancer, so that overall health for this cohort can be improved. Please visit the website for more detailed information about how you can participate. [Your Grassroots Manager is also able to email you a flyer and other resources for promoting this study.](#)



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