



Communities of COASTAL GEORGIA FOUNDATION

LUCKY ENOUGH *to* SHARE

by Valerie Hepburn, President & CEO Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation



Trauma surgeon
Andrew
Kerwin, MD,
with the Sono
Site X-Porte
Ultrasound Kiosk
supported by
the Ace 'n Mac
Fund.

To some, she is known simply as “the woman who was shot at Ocean Forest.” To many others, Jane and her husband, Joe, are known as compassionate and generous philanthropists who care about young people, women and children, economic empowerment, animal welfare and, now because of two very personal experi-

ences, health care. The couple directs a charitable fund named in honor of their fathers, Ace and Mac.

After some years of vacation visits, Jane and Joe Prendergast made Sea Island their permanent home in 2005. Following successful careers in human resources and banking, respectively, the couple (*continues*)

continued from page 56

settled into a busy, active life in the community, splitting their time between winter sports in Utah and year 'round adventures in the Golden Isles. Jane and Joe are passionate about exercise and taking care of themselves physically and mentally. Jane's commitment to a healthy lifestyle surely played a role in her survival that fateful Sunday afternoon.

Jane and Joe were playing golf on her beloved Ocean Forest course in May 2013, when she was shot in the abdomen. Accident though it was, no one would ever expect to get shot at Ocean Forest. Jane was taken by ambulance to Brunswick where she was flown by helicopter to the Level I Trauma Center at UF Health in Jacksonville. Though her injury was life-threatening, after four hours of skillful surgery, Jane had survived, losing only her gallbladder and part of her liver. Less than two months later, she was playing in a golf tournament!

Jane credits her remarkable recovery to Andrew Kerwin, MD, chief of acute care surgery at UF Health Jacksonville, along with her physical and mental resilience. To express their appreciation, the Ace 'n Mac Fund has provided a grant to UF Health to assist with purchase of portable ultrasound equipment, allowing even quicker, more accurate responses for trauma cases.

Jane's commitment to health care concerns was further galvanized earlier this year, when her younger sister, Ginger, rather suddenly lost a seven-year, courageous battle with cancer. Jane is the eldest of six children, and she has been a caring and supportive sister to her siblings and their families. Ginger and her husband lived in Savannah and the families often socialized and traveled together. Ginger received her cancer care from St Joseph's/Candler Health System, where she also had worked for many years. To help ease her loss, Jane knew she wanted to do something to memorialize Ginger and to help others in their fight with cancer.

Whether it be to the United Way, STAR Foundation or Boys & Girls Club, this remarkable couple supports causes that make a difference in the lives of others, with a goal of helping people help themselves.

During her journey, Ginger had embraced the book, "There's No Place Like Hope: A Guide to Beating Cancer in Mind-sized Bites," by Vickie Girard. Ginger had told Jane that she wanted to share this survival guide with others in their time of need, and to provide a center of hope to assist cancer patients, particularly those who had nowhere else to turn. The Ace n' Mac Fund teamed with Ginger's husband and friends to fulfill her wishes, establishing "Ginger's Hope Corner," in the hospital's cancer center, an array of services and resources, including Girard's book, for cancer patients and their families.

Jane and Joe have a remarkable zest for life and the creative hearts of true philanthropists. Whether it be to the United Way, STAR Foundation or Boys & Girls Club, this remarkable couple supports causes that make a difference in the lives of others, with a goal of helping people help themselves. They also have a newfound passion for the importance of life-saving and life-sustaining health care.

Despite her brush with mortality, Jane retains a keen sense of humor. To anyone else, the 5th hole at Ocean Forest might make for painful memories, but Jane is quick to point out that it is her lucky hole, where she has scored three of her four holes in one! Reflecting on both the good times and the occasional challenges, Jane Prendergast notes, "I'm a lucky person who knows I'm lucky – and wants to share it."