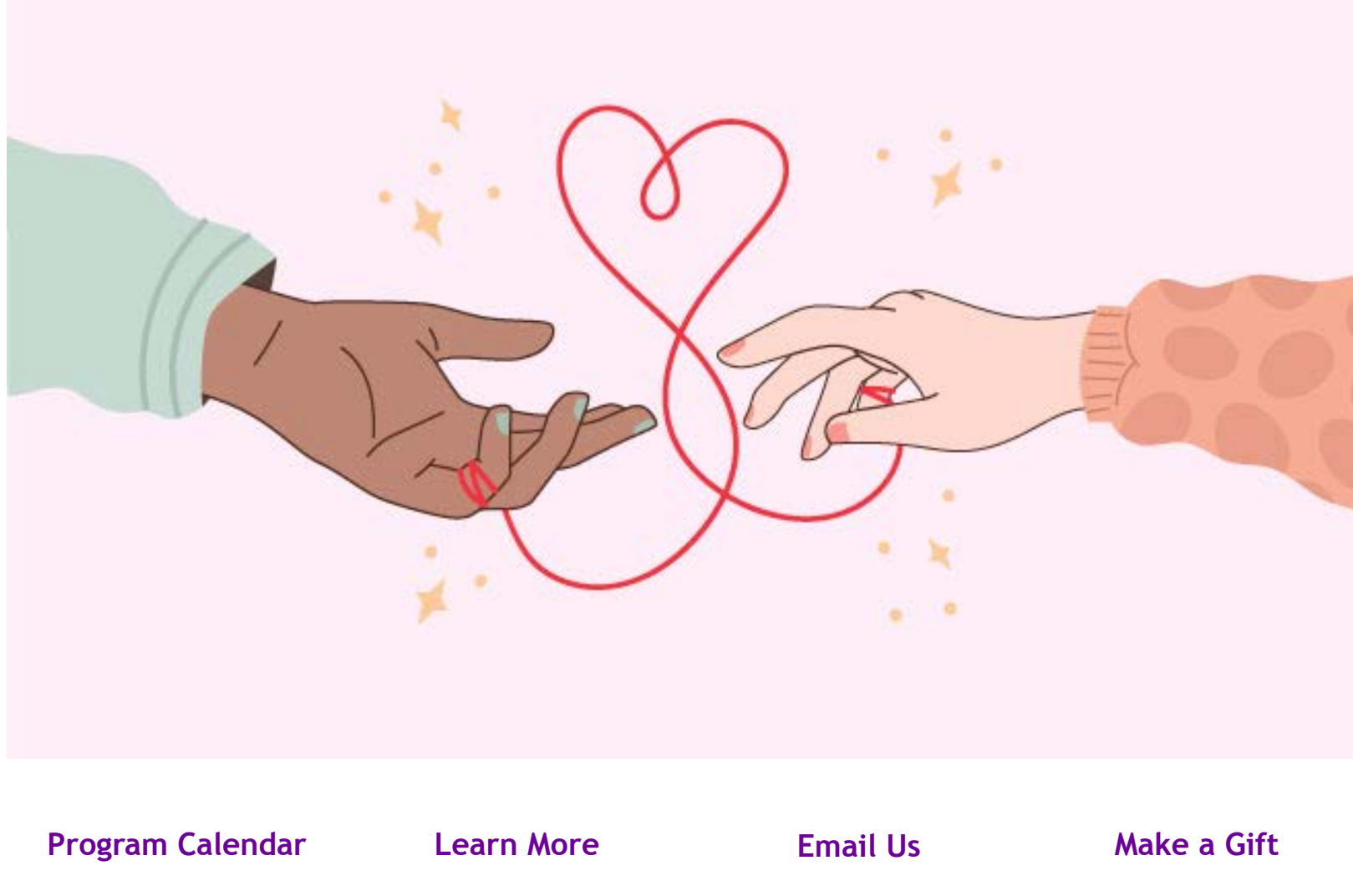




## Touch of Love

January 2025



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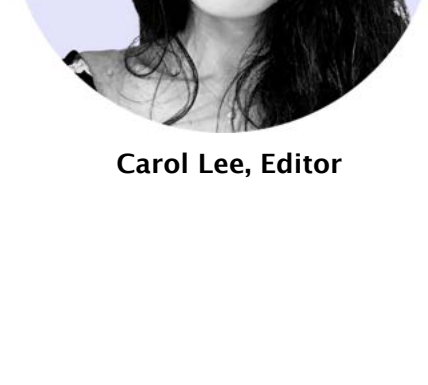
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Jilian Levinson & Rachel Justus,  
Woman to Woman Program  
Managers

### A Message from Jilian & Rachel

We are delighted to join you in the new year as we look forward to celebrating love in its many forms. As always, we'd like to share our gratitude for the love and support within our community, which continue to inspire us. We'd also like to take a moment to introduce survivor volunteer Carol Lee, our new editor, who has been at the helm of our growing newsletter and its makeover since last September.



Carol Lee, Editor

### A Letter from the Editor

Happy New Year and a warm hello to everyone! As a survivor volunteer, I'm thrilled to be part of the Woman to Woman team. After being diagnosed with endometrial cancer in 2019, I joined the W2W's mentorship program and have been deeply touched by the loving gestures of many "strangers" since then. Serving as the editor of the newsletter now is truly an honor.

Over the next three love-themed editions, we will explore physical love, relational love, and self-love. In this issue, we invite you to take a moment to ponder your pelvic floor muscles, the state of your sexual health, and a touching gesture that has meant the world to you.

## Roundtable: We Asked, We Listened Most Touching Gestures

In our roundtable discussion, we showcase a range of perspectives by asking three community members the same questions. Today, we've asked a staff member, survivor volunteer and patient, "What gesture of love has someone shown you that meant a lot?"



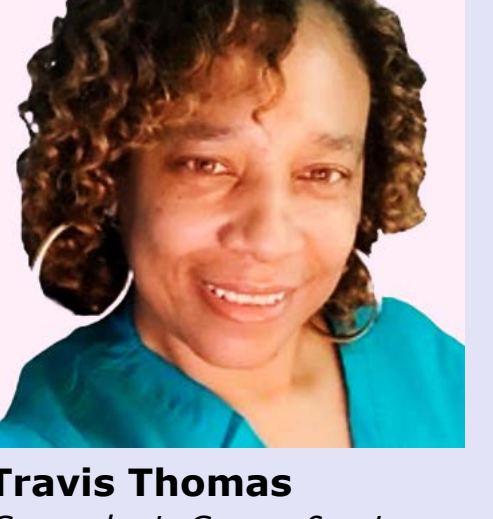
**Dr. Monica Prasad**  
Gynecologic Oncologist

"I was deeply touched and incredibly grateful when my best friend and her husband drove four hours before dawn to support me during a difficult family event. Their gesture was so unexpected and kind, and it meant the world to me."



**Shawn Smith**  
Woman to Woman Volunteer

"My 60th birthday arrived shortly after I overcame endometrial cancer. I had planned a quiet day at home, but a dear friend had other ideas. He picked me up, encouraged me to invite my niece, and took us to a beautiful restaurant."



**Travis Thomas**  
Gynecologic Cancer Survivor

"I was a married mother of five when I faced my second cervical cancer diagnosis. Since no one could care for all my children at once, my friends and family stepped up, each taking care of one of my kids for months."

### Spotlight

## Woman to Woman's 25th Reunion

Last September, our community gathered to celebrate **Woman to Woman's 25th Reunion** centered on the theme of managing stress after cancer. It was a monumental occasion, made even more special by the presence of our distinguished guests, dedicated members, incredible volunteers, a delicious spread of food, and fun activities!



### Ask the Expert

## Mollie Aidasani Gives Advice on Sexual Health

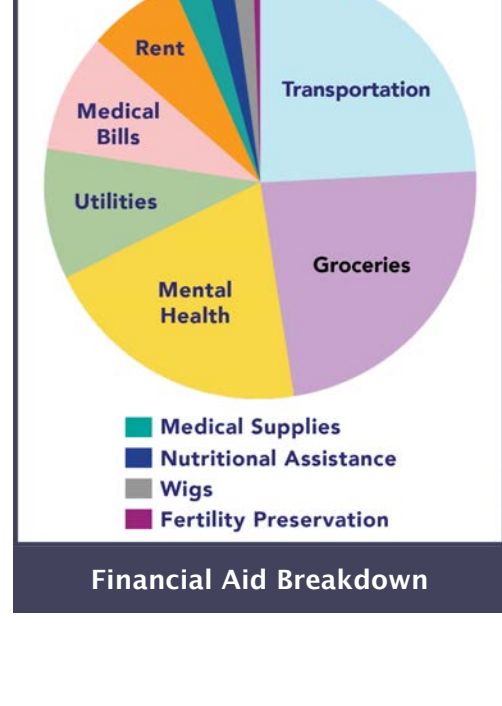


Mollie Aidasani, a nurse practitioner, has been a dedicated advocate for sexual health in women after gynecologic cancer treatment. She has given several talks on the topic to the Woman to Woman group over the years, and we've turned to her once again for insightful conversation and advice.

- Why is sexual health important post-gynecologic cancer?**  
A cancer diagnosis can bring fear, anxiety, depression, and treatment-related pain, often leading patients to disconnect from intimacy. Many focus solely on survival until they transition into post-treatment care. However, intimacy and touch are vital for emotional well-being.
- Do you approach sexual health from a clinical or pleasure perspective?**  
Both. Most patients I meet are navigating loss and re-engaging with intimacy. I encourage them to explore sources of pleasure on their own, independent of a partner. Awakening that exploration is the first step, after which I recommend methods and products to support their journey.
- Is this discussion relevant only for partnered women?**  
Not at all. Many women I speak with aren't currently sexually active—some hope to be in the future, while others may not have that goal. Regardless of relationship status, knowing your body is essential. For those in or entering a relationship, this self-awareness can help ease a partner's concerns and guide them in understanding what brings you pleasure. Equally important is fostering a genuine emotional connection. Trust your instincts about safety and intimacy, and share this part of yourself when a consistent bond has been established—not too soon, but not too late.

### We're Proud to Report

## 2024, Another Banner Year



In 2024, Woman to Woman experienced significant growth, highlighting the impact of our financial support and programs in helping women and strengthening the community—all made possible by the generosity of our donors.

**Support Groups increased by 16%**, from 148 to 172, while **Community Membership grew by 6%**, from 933 to 988. Additionally, total **Financial Aid provided rose by 19%**, from \$60,143 to \$71,338. We look forward to building on this momentum and achieving new milestones in 2025.

**Woman to Woman's patient assistance fund is completely philanthropically funded. If you would like to continue our legacy of support, please click here.**

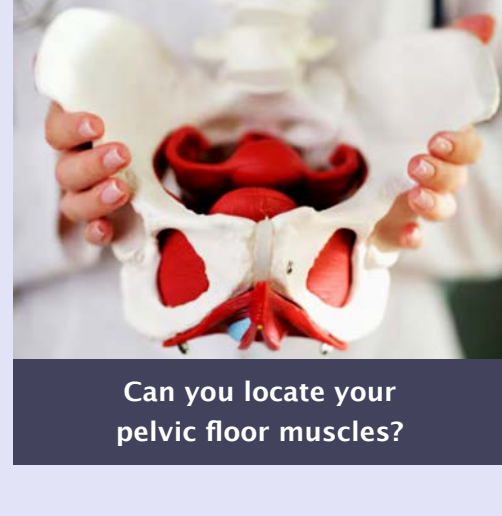
### Why I Give Back

## Dr. Denise Jagroo, a Pelvic Physical Therapist



Dr. Denise Jagroo, a certified Pelvic Physical Therapist, has generously donated her time to educating the Woman to Woman group on the benefits of pelvic floor health. Having faced her own pelvic health challenges, Dr. Jagroo is passionate about these often-overlooked yet essential muscles, especially for women who have endured gynecologic cancers.

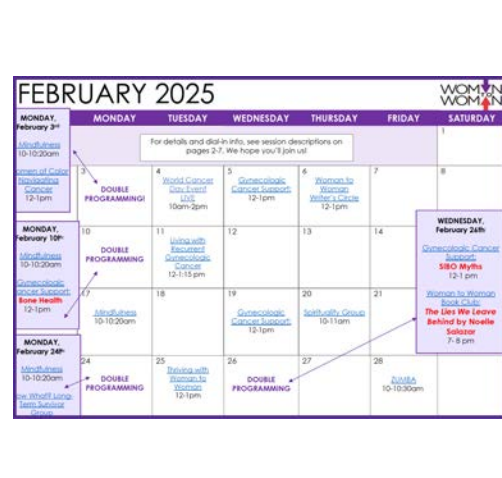
"Pelvic floor muscles are crucial for functions like pooping, peeing, and having sex," Dr. Jagroo explains. However, aging, surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy can significantly weaken them. "Pelvic floor exercises improve blood flow to the area, enhance sensation, strengthen muscle tone, and, in turn, help with incontinence and sexual function."



Can you locate your pelvic floor muscles?

Yet, locating these muscles can be tricky. In her practice, Dr. Jagroo often finds women mistakenly engaging their butt, stomach, or thigh muscles instead. She shared these insights in her most recent talk and will continue the conversation in her upcoming session, **Pelvic Health and Rehabilitation, on April 9 at 12 PM**. Mark your calendar and keep your pelvic floor muscles in shape!

### Our Events Calendar



Our monthly events calendar is online, making it easier than ever to attend a virtual class, join a support group or book club, and get involved with our Woman to Woman community. Be a part of online and in-person opportunities for learning, healing, celebration, and connection.

[Bookmark our calendar and stay up-to-date on Woman to Woman events.](#)

Please email [womantowoman@mountsinai.org](mailto:womantowoman@mountsinai.org) if you would like more information.

### Artful Pause



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