

# LUPUS LA

West Coast Division of the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation · Member of the Lupus Research Institute National Coalition · Spring 2012

## Toni Braxton Lights Up Lupus LA Executive Council



Six-time Grammy Award winning singer-songwriter Toni Braxton has joined the Lupus LA Executive Council. Living with lupus herself, Braxton has been a long-time supporter of Lupus LA.

Toni has sold more than 60 million records, garnering every music industry award including the Grammys, AMAs, MTV and Billboard Awards. Her own Women Entertainment TV series *Braxton Family Values* has become the #1 reality show ever in WeTV's history.

Commenting on her appointment to the Executive Council, Toni said, "I am honored to have been asked to join Lupus LA. My passion for this cause runs deep, and I am looking forward to raising awareness for this somewhat mysterious disease. Lupus LA accomplishes so much, but there is much more we can do together."

And Toni is already out there drawing attention to lupus! High-profile outlets such as Hollywood Reporter and examiner.com raised awareness for lupus by reporting on her appointment to the board. Guest co-hosting the ABC-TV national talk show *The Revolution*, Toni shared her experience with lupus with Dr. Jennifer Ashton and Christine Miserandino, lupus advocate and writer of the popular *ButYouDon'tLookSick* blog. Sporting her own, Toni presented Christine with the Lupus LA signature Life Without Lupus orange bracelet. Find out how you can get one at [LupusLA.org](http://LupusLA.org).



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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Friends,

As you're about to read, our LA Marathon, half-marathon, and 5K teams were hugely successful. We raised more than \$67,000 for Lupus LA, and we had more than 100 runners and walkers this year. But what's truly amazing is just how these people came together for a single cause. Everyone had their own story of why they were running and whom they were running for, but one team was especially impressive. A group of over 25 women decided to all run the half-marathon for the daughter of one of the team members. Seeing firsthand the commitment these women made and the true grit and determination they all had to do their best and raise as much money as possible was inspiring.



That type of inspiration is what makes Lupus LA special. This disease is unique, it's personal, and it can sometimes be very lonely, but what I learn day in and day out in my role as Chairman of this organization is that we are not alone, not at all. Friends, colleagues, and family surround us all as we battle this disease and that makes it so much better.

The marathon effort is just the beginning of our year as 2012 will be filled with so many exciting and successful events. Next up, we have the Orange Ball on May 24th. We have a spectacular lineup this year, featuring a performance by Natasha Bedingfield, as we honor Dr. Soram Khalsa and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals. Sharon Stone will work her magic once again as our auctioneer as we look to raise as much as possible for Lupus LA and the Lupus Research Institute. On September 13th, we'll rock the Petersen Automotive Museum once again with our star-studded Get Lucky for Lupus LA poker event, and then, on November 1st, we'll celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Hollywood Bag Ladies Lupus Luncheon with a slew of surprises in store. Please join us for any or all of these fundraisers.

As you read the rest of our newsletter, you'll see recaps from some of our 2011 events as well as a heartwarming story about a Lupus LA hero and honest to goodness Boy Scout. You'll also read about four new Lupus LA Executive Council members. Toni Braxton, Lauren Shuler-Donner, Kate Kelly, and Nancy Utley are all unbelievable women and I am so thrilled that they have committed their time and energy to this organization. Working with them, and the rest of our dedicated team, is like experiencing the thrill of our marathon team every day.

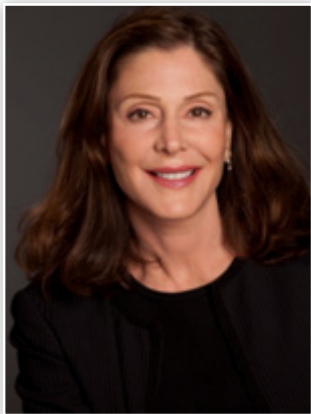
Warmly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Adam Selkowitz". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Adam Selkowitz  
Chairman

P.S. Don't forget to follow us on Twitter (@LupusLA) and "like" us on Facebook (facebook.com/LupusLA)!

### Hollywood Standouts Join Lupus LA Leadership



Lauren Shuler Donner

Lupus LA is proud to announce the addition of two other industry stand-outs to its Executive Council — Hollywood producer Lauren Shuler Donner, and Fox Searchlight President Nancy Utley.

Donner, whose producer credits include the *X-Men* franchise, *The Secret Life of Bees*, and *You've Got Mail*, among many others, has received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and a Women In Film Crystal Award for her outstanding achievements.

As president of Fox Searchlight Pictures Utley has overseen some of Fox Searchlight's most successful and critically-acclaimed films, including *The Descendants*, *Black Swan*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *127 Hours*.



Nancy Utley

As board members, Donner and Utley, along with Toni Braxton, will help lead efforts on behalf of Lupus LA to raise awareness, promote research and education, reach out to new members, and serve people with lupus and their families throughout Southern California.

"Lupus LA is thrilled to welcome these three entertainment powerhouses to our Executive Council, comments Lupus LA Chairman Adam Selkowitz. "Toni's personal battle with lupus is an inspiration to many others suffering with the disease, and her passionate commitment to the cause is helping to change lives. Having media industry influencers Lauren and Nancy on our team will also help Lupus LA continue to raise lupus awareness around the world."

### First Bi-Coastal Board Member



Kate Kelly

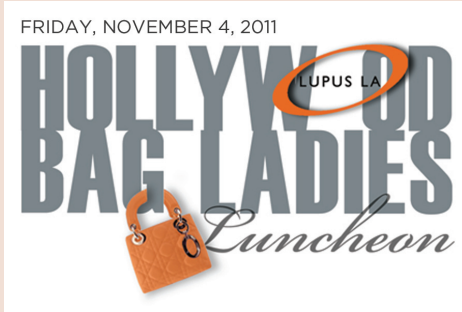
Long-time member of the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation Board in New York, Kate Kelly has gone bi-coastal and now also serves as a member of the Lupus LA Executive Council here in Los Angeles. Her dedication knows no bounds!

Kate is a highly successful author of more than 30 nonfiction titles including the bestselling *Organize Yourself!* She currently devotes full-time to her website, [www.americacomesalive.com](http://www.americacomesalive.com), writing interesting stories about America's past. (Expect more stories with a western slant now.) Kate is a veteran of television talk shows, having appeared as a guest on *World News Tonight*, *Good Morning America*, *The View*, *The CBS Early Show*, *Fox and Friends*, and on CNN, MSNBC, and The Fox News Channel.

"Kate has been an amazing member of the Board in New York, and we are very fortunate to also have her support on our Council," noted Adam Selkowitz.



## RECENT EVENTS



400 women braved the first rain storm of the season to attend Lupus LA's 9th Annual **Hollywood Bag Ladies Luncheon** at the Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills. The stylish event supports lupus with a lively auction of more than 200 of the hottest handbags of the season. The event raised **\$246,000** for the fight against lupus — and achieved even more in raising awareness of the need for more research and education to diagnose, treat and cure the disease!

Honored were two dynamic "Women of Achievement" — Co-founder and Executive Producer of Entertainment Studio **Carolyn Folks**, a tremendous supporter of Lupus LA, and **Christine Devine**, Fox News anchor and 16-time Emmy winner. **Lawrence Zarian**, style expert and author, hosted the event in tribute to his recently deceased father to bring hope to all those suffering from a difficult illness.

Special gratitude to our event sponsors **Prada, M.L. Shank Company, Inc.** and our fashion show sponsor **Neiman Marcus**. With everyone's support from Hollywood Bag Ladies Luncheon, a cure for lupus... is in the bag!



Hollywood's dramatic Petersen Automotive Museum was the glamorous backdrop for the **Get Lucky for Lupus LA** event in September. Guests enjoyed mingling in the **Coke Zero Lounge**, having their picture taken in a customized photo booth, and sipping cocktails among such celebs as rock star **Slash** from Guns N' Roses and TV star **Jason Alexander** from *Seinfeld*.

Hosting the event, *Dancing With The Stars*' star **Karina Smirnoff** was joined by celebs **Melissa Joan Hart**, **James Denton**, and **Ryan Cabrera**, among others. Attendees tried their hand at poker, bid on celebrity memorabilia during a

silent auction and danced to music by deejay *American Idol*'s **Blake Lewis**. When the final card was dealt, Get Lucky for Lupus LA had helped raise awareness for lupus and \$70,000 for the cure! Special appreciation goes to our event sponsors **Coke Zero, Marken, Carnival Cruise Lines ®** and **Dr. Tea's** for helping make this event possible.



### Wellness Day Went Very Well!

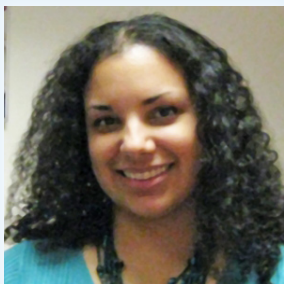
Lupus LA held its first annual Wellness Day January 28, 2012 at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. Wellness Day was conceived as a time to shift the focus away from the mechanics of the disease to gaining control over quality of life through complementary and alternative therapies.

More than 150 participants enjoyed the event. The highlight was an inspiring talk by Dr. Brooke Goldner, who had been diagnosed with lupus at the age of 16. Dr. “G” shared that after achieving remission through the use of Western medicines, she has continued to maintain a positive quality of life through exercise, nutrition and stress management. Participants also attended more than 20 workshops on nutrition, stress management, yoga, meditation, qigong, positive coping strategies, caregiver support, enhancing self-esteem, and much more. The event ended on a high note, with a lesson from Wendy Uribe on zumba, the Latin dance-inspired fitness program.



Many thanks to our outstanding volunteer committee: Diana Moreno, Jena Minassian, Yesica Villalobos, Estela Mata, Araceli Mata, Juana Mata, Stephanie Para-Lavender, Kai Trammiel, Jennifer Ziegler, Jessica Chaffin, Kimberly Howse, and Kimberly Dansby.

Special thanks to Wellness Day’s funder, GlaxoSmithKline, and to our partner organizations: Arthritis Foundation, Looms 4 Lupus, Howse Foundation, Purple Rose Foundation, Health Net and CoachArt.



### Jessica’s Advice for 2012 Spring Cleaning: Wash Your Hands of Self-Criticism!

As we leave the gloom of winter behind, I am writing today to suggest a thorough spring cleaning of the “should’s” you inflict on yourself and ask that you have the same compassion for yourself that you would have for others.

For example, it’s common to approach spring with new energy and ambitions – time to reorganize your closets. But despite pushing yourself, you can’t get through even one because you are just too tired. Do you judge yourself harshly, thinking: “I am a failure for not being able to get this done in one day the way I used to.” Or do you have the compassion you would have for a friend to say, “I am feeling very fatigued today, so I will do as much as I can and then I will rest. If it takes me longer than it used to, that’s OK.”

In the spirit of this season of renewal and growth, I’m asking that you try a kind of spring cleaning to sweep away unkind thoughts about yourself. What self-critical thoughts would you like to throw away during spring cleaning and what new thoughts can you plant and nurture?

**HONDA**

**LA MARATHON**

### Why I Run: Aslum's Story



Lupus LA is proud to be an official charity of the 2012 LA Marathon. Over the last three years, Team Life without Lupus has raised more than \$150,000 to fund education and patient support programs in the Greater Los Angeles area. This year, Aslum Khan, one of our 5k participants, shares his story:

"I am one of the rare males who has lupus. As a result of my lupus, I needed a kidney transplant this past fall; I ran this 5K event with the person who so generously gave me her kidney! While I can't say that I'm 'all better,' I hope to get there eventually, and Lupus LA has helped.

"Until very recently, I suffered through my illness alone. When some co-workers introduced me to Lupus LA, and for the first time ever, I realized that I am not alone. I met people who could relate to what it is like to go through an unpredictable illness, because we all shared it. I started to feel better about myself, and that, I believe, will ultimately lead to my getting better.

"Lupus LA lives through grants and the generosity of others. The small staff of people who work there are dedicated, some suffering themselves from this terrible condition.

"I hate people begging for money myself, so I won't. While most are women of childbearing age, I am living proof that it can affect anybody, and our meetings underscore that. These meetings, like everything else, cannot continue with funding, so I am asking you all to help us with that. It's worth it. I wouldn't be breaking my own rule about asking for money if I didn't believe that. Please help."

### Lupus LA's Own Gabby Trejo Runs Marathon on Behalf of all our Patients



I can count on one hand how many times I had been to the gym. Shortly after I joined Lupus LA in August 2011, I decided to commit to joining Team Lupus LA in honor of all the great people I am blessed to work with. Since many of them cannot be exposed to the sun or run due to their lupus, I figured I could run on their behalf.

When a friend asked me if I thought I could win, I told her there are people who finish in 2 hours. I became a gym rat for months; at first I felt awkward, but I discovered an athletic side of myself. I started running in 10-minute miles, but by the end of my training I ran them in 7:45!

The day before the marathon I was excited, anxious, nervous and scared. What got me through was imagining the people who had motivated me to run this marathon.

Many people say finishing the marathon is a life changing experience and it's true. For me, running was the easy part. The challenge was turning doubt and nervousness into persistence and faith in myself. I completed the marathon in 5 hours 36 minutes and 39 seconds. I never would have been able to accomplish this without the love and support of all the Lupus LA members who inspire me not only to run 26.2 miles, but to be passionate about my work every day. Their dedication to finding a cure, and their courage to share their experience with everyone attending our support groups motivates me to do anything within my reach to be part of their support network.

I'm already looking forward to representing Team Lupus LA in 2013!



## THANKING THOSE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### A Boy Scout's Project Changes One Young Man's Life

Danny Fehrenbach comes across as a shy young man. Maybe it is because he is smarter than many people his age and likes to listen before he speaks. Or maybe it is because he endured so much at such a young age.

As a Boy Scout, Danny had to demonstrate skills and community service to earn his Eagle Scout designation. Having lost his mother to lupus as a young boy, he decided to educate his classmates about the disease. He invited Lupus LA to give a presentation on lupus. Afterwards, Danny was surprised not only by the number of people affected by lupus, but by how touched his classmates and teachers were by his story.



But the person who learned the most about the disease was Danny. He had always blamed himself for his mother's death. He thought his mother hadn't taken her medication and didn't eat because she was spending too much time with him. But listening to the Lupus LA speaker, he had a revelation that changed his life.

Danny said, "I felt a weight lifted off my shoulders after you explained that one of the symptoms for lupus was a loss of appetite." In that moment Danny began to understand he had nothing to do with his mother's death.

Danny's courage helped him raise over \$1,000 for two emergency grants. One helped the parents of a young girl pay their rent after they missed work during her hospitalization. The second helped a young woman fix her car, the only way she gets to dialysis and doctors' appointments.

As he intended, Danny's project was an education for everyone in his school. But it was so much more. It was therapeutic for him and gave two families hope for the future. Danny, thank you for the kindness you have shown toward the work we do here at Lupus LA. Thank you for helping us change lives.

## Join Us

Lupus LA would like to thank all those making a difference in the community. You help us impact lupus sufferers and their loved ones.

Do you or does someone you know want to get involved? Join us! Volunteer your time, participate in a clinical trial or help spread awareness about lupus and those it affects. For more information on ways you can contribute to Lupus LA and our work in the area, visit [www.lupusla.org/support](http://www.lupusla.org/support).



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Lupus LA, the West Coast division of the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation, promotes lupus research, awareness, and education, and serves the needs of people with lupus and their families in Los Angeles County.

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#### TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE!

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