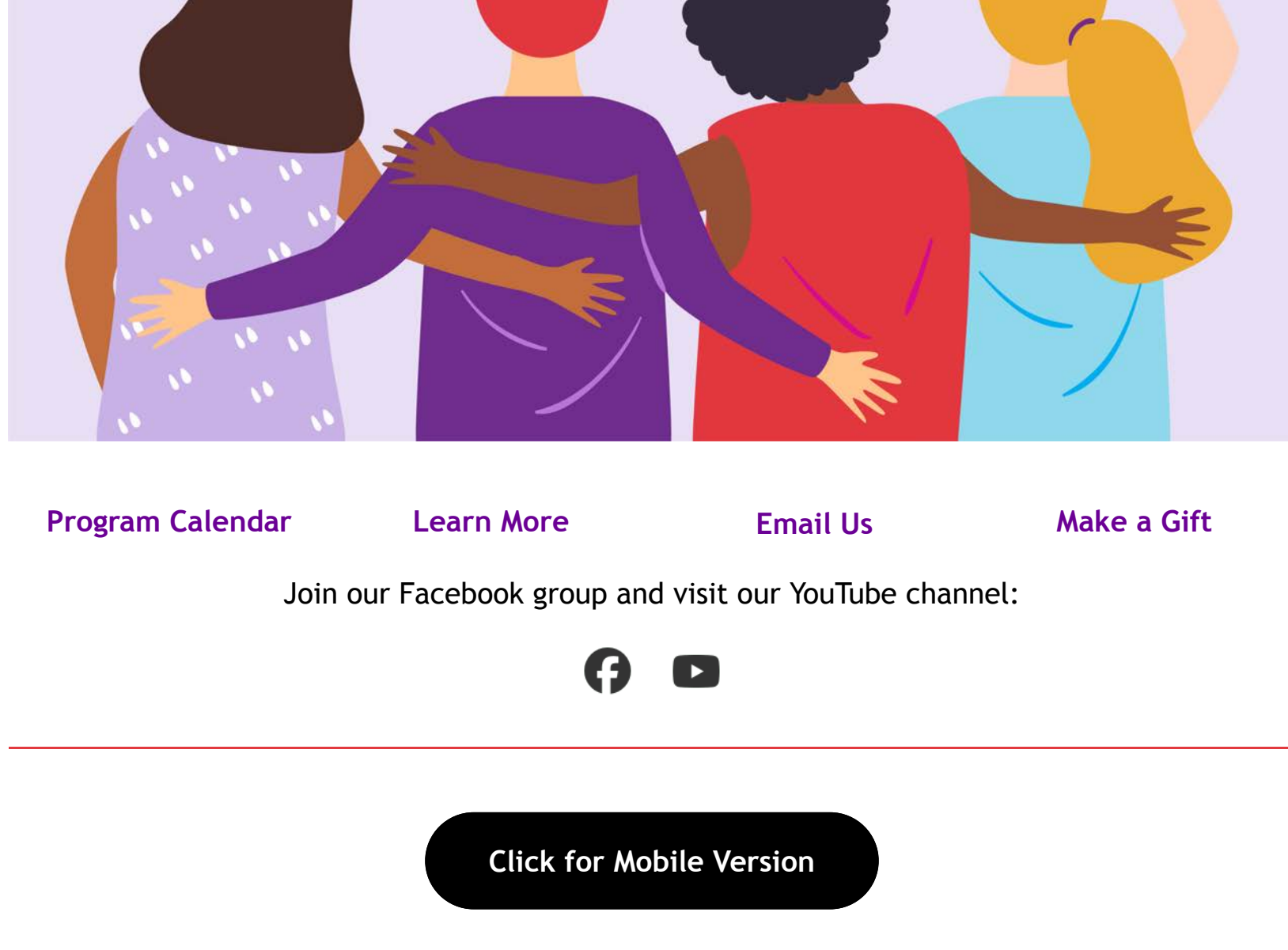




## Relational Love

June 2025



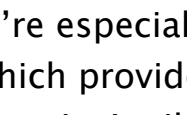
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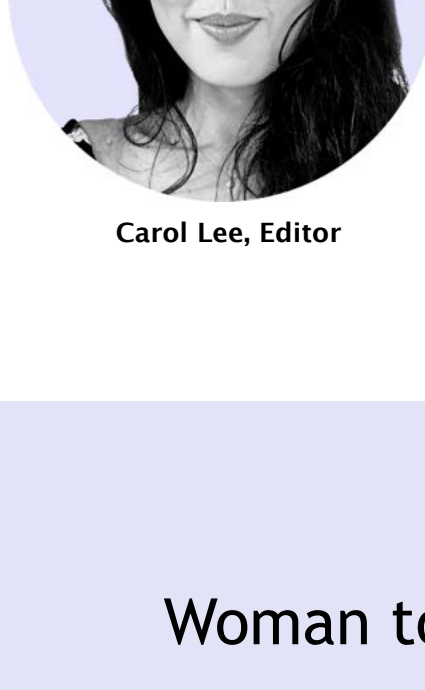
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Jillian Levinson & Rachel Justus,  
Woman to Woman Program  
Managers

### A Message from Jillian & Rachel

We've had a busy and rewarding spring here at Woman to Woman! We're especially excited about the launch of the Wig Program, which provides free, stylish wigs to support women on their journeys. In April, it was wonderful to see so many of you at the 26th Woman to Woman Reunion—we're, as always, immensely grateful for this special connection. Wishing you all a healthy, relaxing, and joy-filled summer!



Carol Lee, Editor

### A Letter from the Editor

The second installment of our love-themed newsletters—this time on *relational love*—reminds me just how vital a supportive community is, no matter our physical, emotional, or mental state. And that community can take many forms: family, friendships, mentorships. Bonds with loved ones sustain us through hard times and enrich our lives in joyful ones. As our Woman to Woman community members exemplify in this newsletter, meaningful and beautiful relationships are always worth striving for.

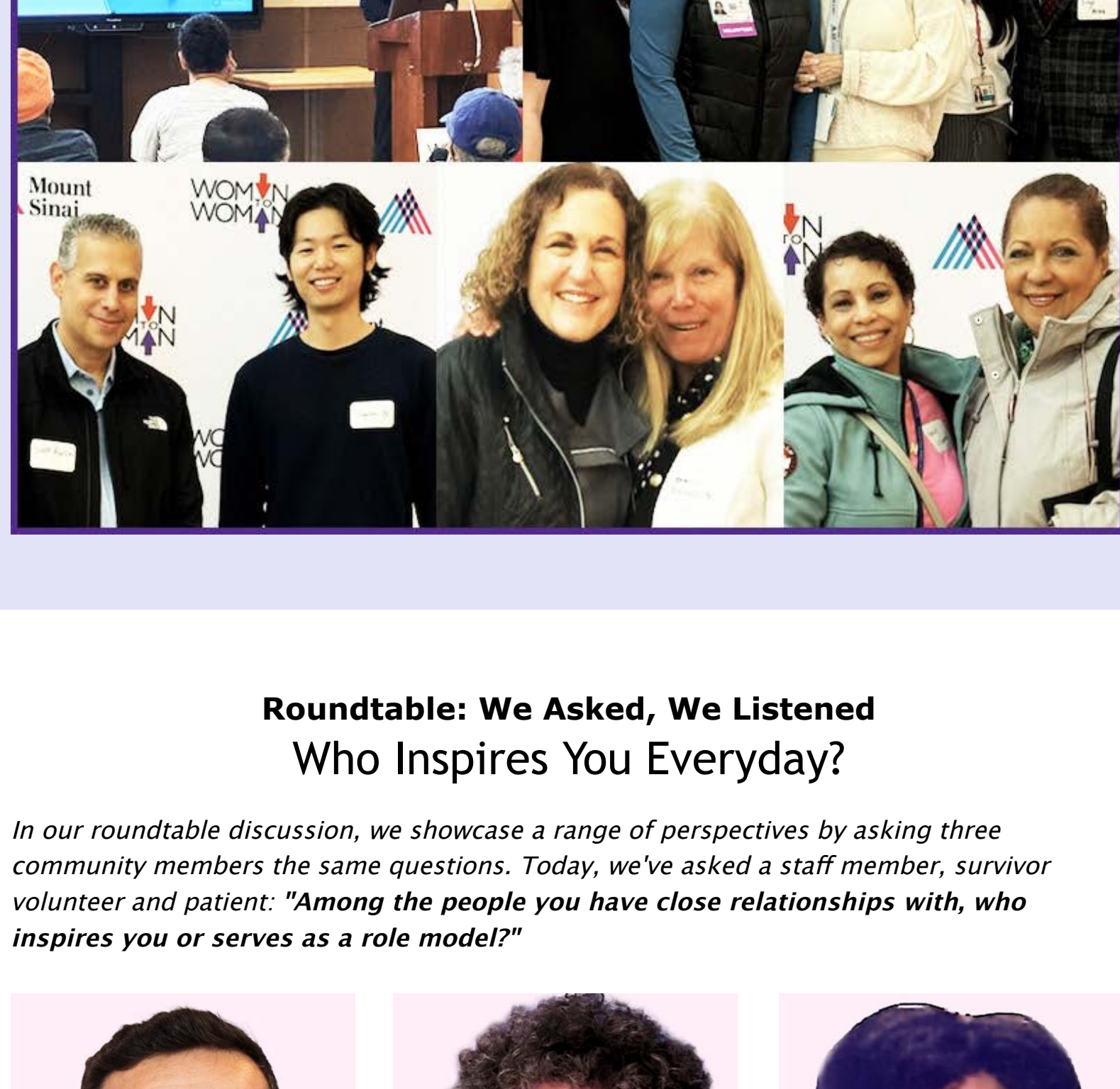
### Spotlight

#### Woman to Woman Thank You Reel & Reunion

We have a double Spotlight feature in this issue! First up is **Thank You Reel**, a video project featuring our Woman to Woman survivor volunteers, produced by Mount Sinai's Marketing and Communications Department. Their messages of hope, gratitude, and the positive impact of the connection between volunteers and patients on their journeys will move all who watch. Click to view their powerful testimonials—and please share widely!



This past April, we celebrated the **26th Woman to Woman Reunion**. The event centered on the timely theme of **Healthy Brain Aging**, featuring an eye-opening talk followed by a lively discussion. It was another successful gathering with a great turnout, delicious food, and generous goodies donated by our community members.



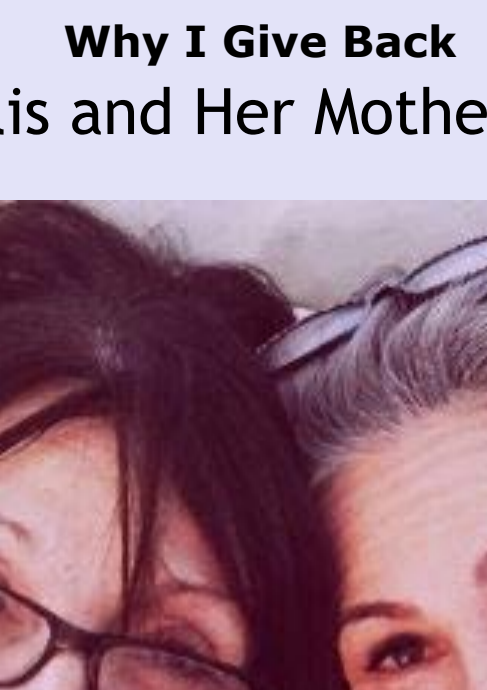
### Roundtable: We Asked, We Listened Who Inspires You Everyday?

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: **"Among the people you have close relationships with, who inspires you or serves as a role model?"**



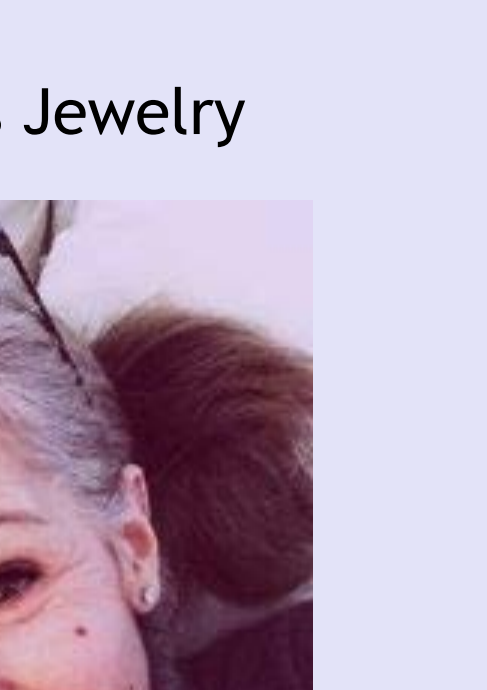
**Diego Ortiz Quintero**  
Director of Public Affairs &  
Media at Mount Sinai

"My wife, Jezebel, inspires me daily. Diagnosed with ovarian cancer at 26, she met every challenge with courage and grace—even without health insurance. Her strength through the ordeal led me to a career in healthcare communications. Jezebel didn't just endure—she lit the way for me."



**Eugenia Nascimento**  
Woman to Woman Volunteer

"My greatest inspiration comes from my **spiritual teachers**, who helped me discover strength within. Through their compassion and guidance, I've learned to understand my purpose and discovered that true healing and freedom begin from within."

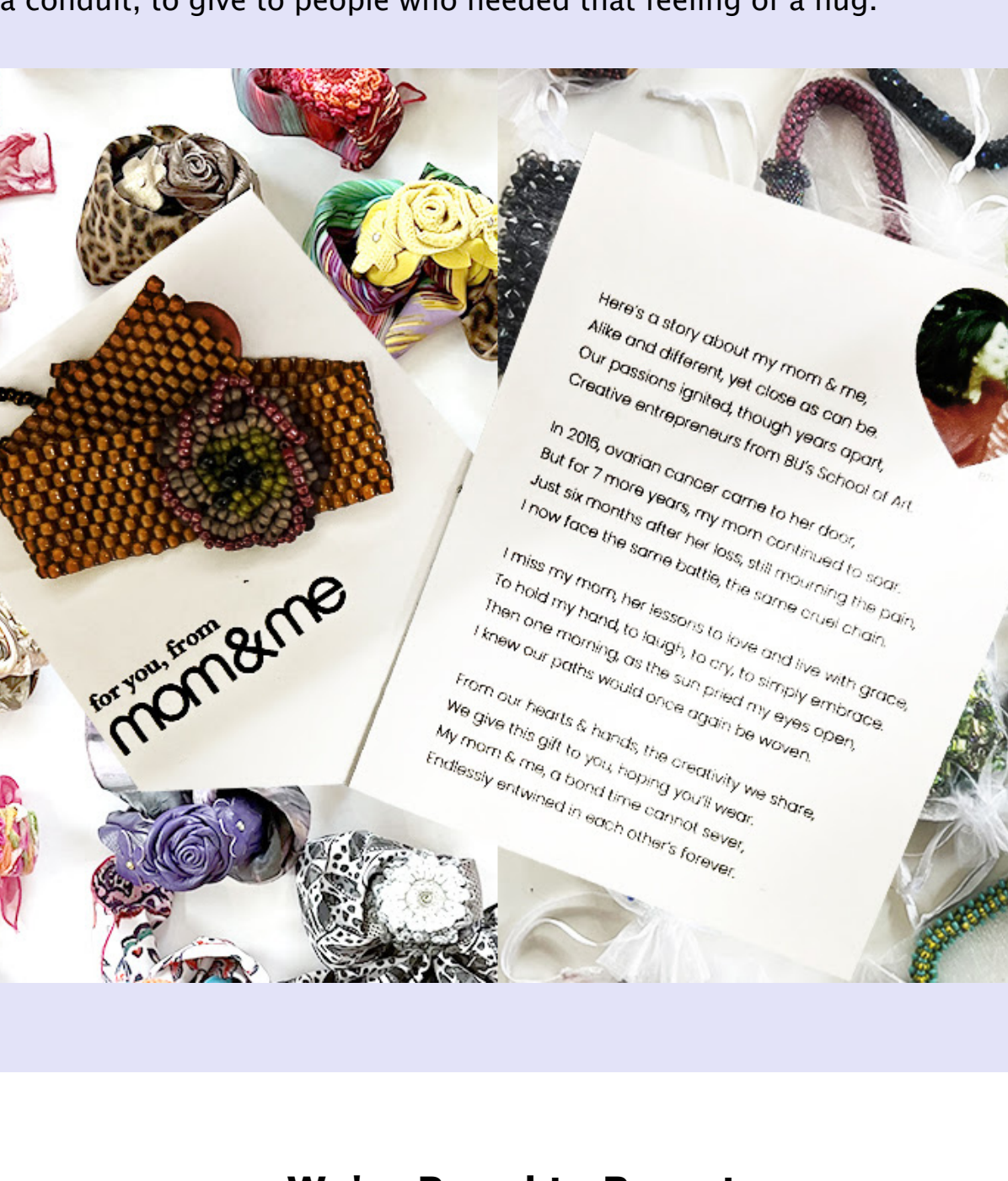


**Kimberly Ray**  
Gynecologic Cancer Survivor

"My mother, **Annie Wyche**, is my heart—my love and my life. She embodies unconditional love. Through every medical journey in my 55 years, she has been by my side. I honor her by listening to her stories and cherishing her presence every day."

### Why I Give Back

#### Carin Willis and Her Mother's Jewelry



Carin (right) with her mom Martha Arginsky

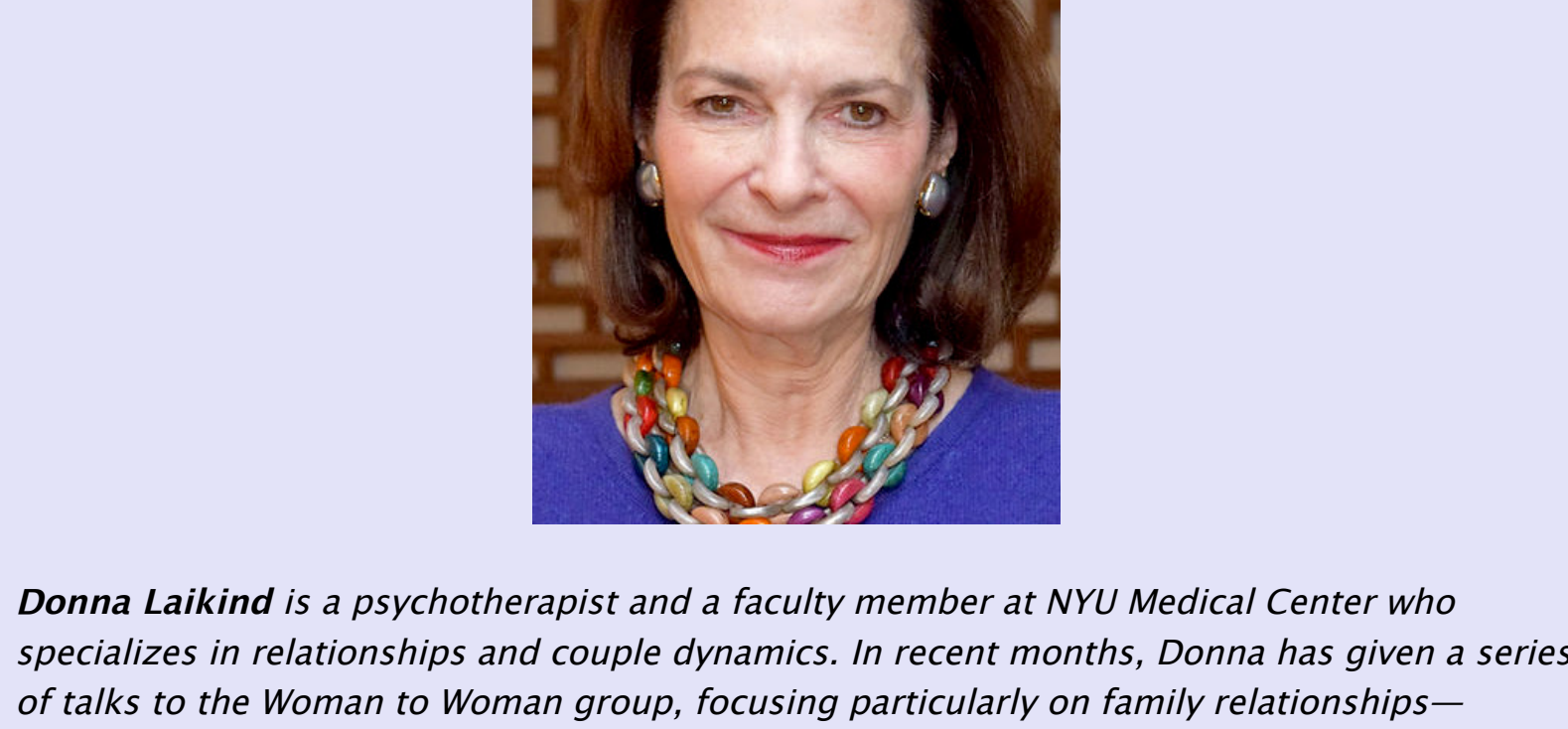
Carin Willis first encountered her mother, Martha Arginsky, was being treated for ovarian cancer at Mount Sinai.

"Whenever my mom went to chemo, she brought two bags," Carin recalls. "One was her chemo bag. The other had her crochet or beading." A former clothing designer and beading artist, Martha passed the time during long drives to the hospital and chemo sessions making small trinkets. For her, it was a kind of meditative mantra.

Martha passed away in 2022 at age 82. Six months later, Carin was diagnosed with ovarian cancer herself. Still grieving, she faced treatment—also at Mount Sinai—with the same resilience her mother had shown, and became a Woman to Woman participant, just like her. "It's like a hug around you," she says, emphasizing how precious these relationships are for the healing process. "A safe feeling."

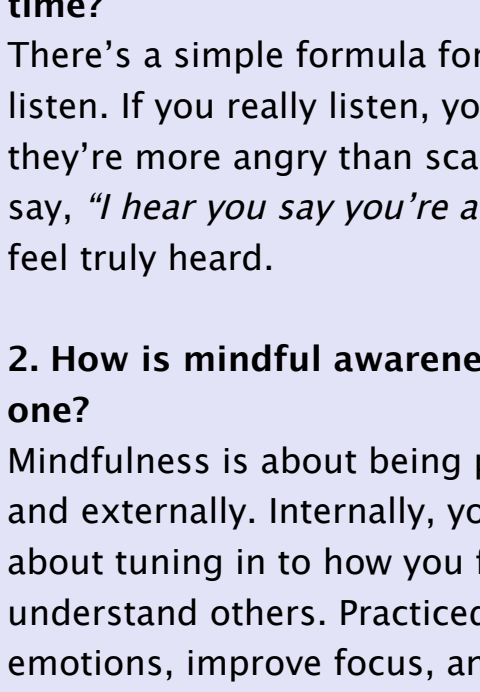
Her family wasn't sure what to do with the bags of handmade jewelry Martha had left behind—until Carin had the idea to donate them to Woman to Woman. "I wrote a poem and branded it *Mom & Me* because my mother couldn't give them away herself," Carin muses. "But it was her, you know?"

Through these incredibly difficult challenges, Carin never lost her spark. "It was a way for me to share that special part of my mom—that quiet, creative center. And in every piece, I was able to be a conduit, to give to people who needed that feeling of a hug."



### We're Proud to Report

#### Woman to Woman Wig Program Launches!



We're thrilled to announce the launch of the much-anticipated Woman to Woman Wig Program!

Thanks to a generous grant from the Auxiliary Board, an idea has become reality—providing free, high-quality wigs to Mount Sinai gynecologic cancer patients. The program also supports women through the emotional impact of hair loss by pairing each participant with a dedicated Wig Advisor.

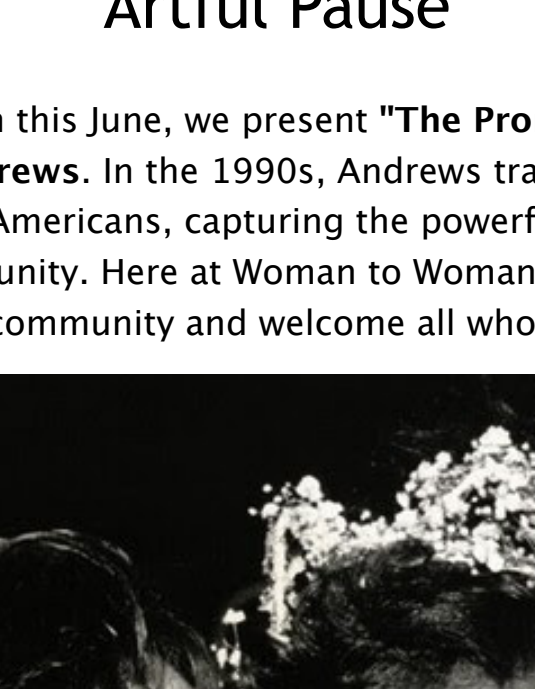
We welcome referrals from all Mount Sinai staff, and patients are also encouraged to self-refer!

[Click here to learn more about the Wig Program.](#)

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

### Ask the Expert

#### Donna Laikind on Building Healthy Relationships



**Donna Laikind** is a psychotherapist and a faculty member at NYU Medical Center who specializes in relationships and couple dynamics. In recent months, Donna has given a series of talks to the Woman to Woman group, focusing particularly on family relationships—opening up a floodgate of personal stories. We couldn't think of a more fitting person to speak with about relational love, and as always, Donna was both enlightening and insightful.

**1. What's the best way to show empathy to someone going through illness or a difficult time?**

There's a simple formula for expressing true empathy: don't try to problem-solve—just listen. If you really listen, you may realize the person is scared rather than angry. Or maybe they're more angry than scared. That's what you want to tune into and reflect. You might say, "I hear you say you're angry," without adding anything else. That's what makes someone feel truly heard.

**2. How is mindful awareness helpful in navigating a difficult relationship with a loved one?**

Mindfulness is about being present and developing a clear perception of yourself—internally and externally. Internally, you might feel tired. Externally, you might notice it's hot out. It's about tuning in to how you feel in your body and your soul and using that insight to better understand others. Practiced regularly, mindfulness can reduce stress, help regulate emotions, improve focus, and increase both self-awareness and awareness of others.

**3. What are the key traits of a healthy, mutually supportive relationship?**

Mutual respect is essential, as well as awareness. The goal isn't to immediately solve problems, but to create space for healthy choices. A shift in mindset is important, and so is forgiveness—but not necessarily complete forgiveness.

### 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

In celebration of Pride Month this June, we present **"The Prom Queen" (1991)** by photojournalist **Nancy Andrews**. In the 1990s, Andrews traveled the U.S. documenting the lives of gay and lesbian Americans, capturing the powerful bonds and relationships within a marginalized community. Here at Woman to Woman, we offer a support group specifically for the LGBTQ+ community and welcome all who seek connection.



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