

Convention Cause

Each year, the generous members of NYSSMA bring items for a charity in the region of the convention. Our members have prepared back packs for *Make a Wish Kids*, pet items for Canine programs, toiletry items and food items for pantries.



Onondaga Chapter has chosen *Hope for Heather*, An organization dedicated to ovarian cancer awareness, education, and hope. This

foundation is named for Heather Weeks, a very passionate local girl who danced her way to numerous competitions across the country, and graduated from the University of Buffalo with a BFA in 3 years with honors. Heather went on to tour the world as *Zoë* in *Sesame Street*. When Heather wasn't well enough to dance, she took a position as the assistant to the CEO of the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation in New York City. Heather's new passion was this cause. While being treated for colon cancer, she worked at home learning everything she could about ovarian cancer, and asked her family to continue to spread the word. In an effort to honor her wishes, her family started the Hope for Heather Organization (www.hopeforheather.org). People are astonished that she chose a cancer that she didn't have as one to educate us about.

Did you know that it is expected that 21,000 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer and 15,000 will lose their lives this year alone in the United States? In the state of New York, it is estimated that 1530 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer and 970 will die from the disease. Ovarian Cancer is the most deadly of all gynecological cancers but if detected early and treated properly, survival rates increase to over 90 percent.

In addition to awareness, fundraising for research, and education, *Hope for Heather* also offers comfort and care by reaching out to those with this disease as well as other cancers. Volunteers take a meal to the family, sit with the patient, and bring items to comfort them. .

You can be a part of this. We ask that you consider bringing comfort items to convention so that baskets can be made (or perhaps your chapter would like to make the basket). Items such as warm fuzzy socks, body lotions, journals, aromatherapy items, inspirational books, other books, soft blankets puzzles, and chocolate make wonderful care baskets.

There will be someone at the registration desk to take your donation, and a member of the Hope for Heather Organization will join us at the Awards Luncheon to take these items. (If you will not be there until Saturday, donations will still be welcomed and delivered to the organization.)

*Thank You for your caring and giving,
Onondaga Chapter of Medical Assistants*