

**Julia Child may have said it best:
“The pleasures of the table, and of life, are infinite
– toujours bon appétit!”**



Growing up, when the block of Parmigiano Reggiano was out on the table, you knew something delectable was coming. Today I poured a heaping bowl of freshly made escarole soup. I absolutely love this soup! Can I serve you some? Yes, you’ll love it! Go ahead, tear a piece of crusty bread and generously shave the cheese. Would you like a drizzle of olive oil? Some hot pepper flakes? COZY UP. Dig in! This is simple comfort in a bowl.

I bring this up because comfort is so needed during challenging times. What brings you comfort? Family? Spirituality? Being in nature? Pets? Breaking bread with others?

Cancer Connection is my comfort. It keeps my focus on healing. The staff and volunteers have such dedicated person-centered care that cultivates deep comfort through support groups, integrative therapies, education and activities. A feeling of kindness, sensitivity, and patience envelops you from the moment you walk in.

My first visit was about a year ago soon after moving to Western MA from Long Island and four months after my diagnosis. I sat with lovely Sheila learning all about their services and a sense of the community. My passion to help quickly jumped to action. I described my creative/director background, and asked, “Ok, how can I help?” Sheila thanked me and asked me to consider for this moment, to focus my energy on healing. **She was right, and that pause was a great lesson.**

Soon after, I began the first of many integrative therapies, each offered free of charge. I started with acupuncture, then reflexology, facial and body massage, craniosacral & Reiki energy work. I would never have had the opportunity to gain such peace and mentorship from highly trained specialists without Cancer Connection.

Some days are hard and those days are when I feel their presence most substantially. There are few places I’ve been in life that have been an emotional, physical, and spiritual comfort. Sometimes this is delivered in a heavenly foot reflexology and other times it’s a few extra minutes of listening and each play a significant part of my healing.

I was honored when asked to share my experience and struggled how to best translate my

message into print, because the connection seemed best shared up close in person. Finally with tremendous gratitude, the words came.

To circle back, it's no secret one great pleasure at my family's table is escarole soup.

More importantly, one great pleasure of my life is supporting the abundant goodness I found at Cancer Connection. Much like the warmth and healing from a bowl of soup.

I invite you to give generously to Cancer Connection and empower their reach to others like myself. Their support and healing connection to the community is immeasurable!

With warm thanks,

Catherine Verdi

Simple & Comforting Escarole Bean Soup (ZUPPA DI SCAROLA E FAGIOLI)

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 pound escarole, chopped
4 cups low-salt chicken broth or vegetable stock
1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 (1-ounce) piece Parmigiano Reggiano
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper or hot pepper flakes to taste
6 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

Steps:

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a heavy large pot over medium heat.
Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 15 seconds.
Add the escarole and sauté until wilted, about 2 minutes.
Add a pinch of salt.
Add broth, beans, and cheese.
Cover and simmer about 5 minutes.
Season with salt, pepper, or hot peppers flakes to taste.
Ladle into bowls & drizzle with olive oil.
Serve with crusty bread.
Also delicious made with chard, kale or elbow macaroni! Enjoy!

Serving suggestion: crusty bread & lovely company!

