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[www.catherineboulayfoundation.org](http://www.catherineboulayfoundation.org) Supporting your journey through cancer...and beyond.

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### **EMMY Nomination**

## **Close to Home: Cancer Survivorship**

*Allentown, PA --* Last evening, The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) Mid Atlantic announced an Emmy Nomination for “Close to Home: Cancer Survivorship” in the category of Health/Environment/Science/Program/Special.

“It is incredibly fulfilling to capture, so beautifully, the authenticity of cancer survivorship,” says Rick Boulay MD, Director of Gynecologic Oncology and Lehigh Valley Health Network Cancer Institute and the Founder of the Catherine Boulay Foundation. “I truly believe that the *Close to Home* narratives and songs will resonate profoundly with those touched by cancer.”

The *Close to Home: Cancer Survivorship* collection shares the wisdom of cancer survivorship in several ways. In partnership with WLVT PBS39, The Catherine Boulay Foundation created a 30-minute documentary which premiered on September 20, 2016. In this, cancer survivors, caregivers and physicians describe the subtlety and nuance of their personal experiences with cancer; how their lives were affected, challenged and

changed and how they navigated those challenges. The result is a rich tapestry of collected wisdom spoken from those who live it each day. Additionally, because in the early part of a cancer diagnosis thirty minutes can feel like an eternity, several five minute videos on specific topics of survivorship – hope, fear, caregiving, cancer as a journey, spirituality, and advocacy – are available online for viewing at any time. Additionally, Dr Boulay has co-written and recorded a full length CD of 11 new songs as a companion musical collection to the videos. “The lyric of the song,” says Boulay, “was inspired by the many cancer journeys I have been privileged to attend both as a physician and a caregiver.”

In general, two types of cancer stories are published: the tragic tale of a cancer diagnosis and loss, and the heroic saga of a cancer diagnosis and achievement despite unbelievable odds. However as most patients with cancer live over five years, the most common narrative of survivorship lives somewhere in between. “Many people with cancer are quietly and completely transformed,” states Dr. Boulay. “And the wisdom they share about their journeys is quite powerful.” *Close to Home* captures the transformative power of shared stories.

“The passion to share the wisdom of survivorship stories and song has been in my blood for a long time. I’m returning a favor,” says Boulay. Dr Boulay’s wife, Julie Bolton, was diagnosed with leukemia eight years ago. “My wife’s leukemia diagnosis rocked our young family,” recalls Boulay. “I thought I knew this disease. Leukemia took my uncle leaving my adoptive cousin once again fatherless. And although this was twenty years ago, I expected the same for my family.”

But times have changed. New drugs and treatment options are extending the landscape of the cancer journey. Now over two thirds of all cancer patients live over 5 years. Most of them are cured. “I’m happy to say, my wife is living well with her leukemia. During her eight years of treatment our family has witnessed: two high school graduation, one college graduation, one medical school enrollment, one high school valedictorian, and numerous musical and theatrical performances and a Freddy award,” says Boulay.

Trouble is, he had essentially given these family experiences away. He held little hope of survival. Of an intact family. “You’d think with all the improvements in the cancers I treat, that I would somehow translate those benefits into my wife’s treatment. Her survival. Her longevity. But I couldn’t. I thought I knew this disease. And as my family entered the abyss of cancer diagnosis, help came from an unexpected places.”

His patients’ stories. And music.

His patients shared with him their wisdom of the cancer journey. How to talk to the kids. How to ask for and accept help. How to breathe. And he learned. And he grew. “I began to realize that they knew far more than I about managing a cancer diagnosis. I had the

degree, but they had the wisdom. I had the books, but they had the practicality. And I wanted what they had. And within a few years, I was transformed.” Boulay adds, “And music. I listen to music so differently.” It used to be for entertainment. Now it’s a narrative...with a melody. That combination of thoughtful lyric and a gorgeous melody speaks in ways that nothing else can.

And a passion to share the wisdom of cancer survivorship was sparked. He has published numerous articles on cancer survivorship in the medical literature including the New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), Journal of Clinical Oncology, and many others. Boulay, a classically trained singer, recorded three full length CDs “ Hope” ‘Peace” and “Love” each telling the story of various aspects of survivorship. He founded a 501 (c) 3 not for profit corporation, The Catherine Boulay Foundation , in honor of his grandmother dedicated to raising funds for, and sharing the wisdom of cancer survivorship. He founded an online community, Journey through Cancer, geared toward sharing practical solutions to today’s cancer issues.

“With *Close to Home*, PBS39 is honored to partner with Lehigh Valley Health Network and Dr. Rick Boulay to share intimate stories of local cancer survivors,” said Teri Haddad, EdD, SVP of Education and Production. “These individuals and their families have inspired us with their candor and wisdom to provide comfort to those on the journey through cancer.”

The goal of The Catherine Boulay Foundation is to share the wisdom of cancer survivorship. We look forward to creating and sharing a library of video topics of cancer survivorship free of cost, with easy accessibility to those who need it. “This is just the beginning,” says Boulay. “The beautiful beginning.”

YouTube site of Journey through Cancer with all videos of “Close to Home”:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcp9uM1EPcV7YhUX108k\\_-w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcp9uM1EPcV7YhUX108k_-w)

LinkedIn profile of Dr Boulay:  
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NATAS MidAtlantic Emmy Nomination (full list)  
<http://natasmid-atlantic.org/2017-mid-atlantic-regional-emmy-nominees/>