

# Meet Our Members

## Beyond 9/11: The Power of Resilience

### *Featuring two-time cancer survivor: Jen Pincus*



As we commemorate the 23rd anniversary of the **9/11 attacks**, we reflect on a day that forever altered our world. In the face of unimaginable chaos and fear, our nation rose with extraordinary unity. New Yorkers opened their homes to strangers, and people across the country volunteered their time and skills- fighting fires, preparing meals, and providing clothing to those who needed it the most. Strangers became neighbors in an unprecedented outpouring of compassion and solidarity.

**Jen Pincus**, a devoted New Yorker from Greenpoint, Brooklyn, was working at Chow Bar Restaurant at the time. Fueled by a deep sense of duty, she volunteered to **deliver free meals to first responders**. She vividly remembers slogging through two feet of ash, feeling the dust settle in her lungs with each breath.

*"I thought to myself, this can't be good for me. I have a bad feeling that I'm eventually going to get sick from this," she recalls with a heavy heart.*

In 2015, Jen's fears materialized when she discovered a lump in her breast. At just 37, her doctor dismissed her concerns, insisting she was too young to be seriously ill. But Jen trusted her instincts and sought additional opinions. After undergoing numerous tests, MRIs, and CT scans, she was diagnosed with both breast and lung cancer that same year.

*By 2017, the cancer had spread from her breast and right lung to her lymph nodes, abdominal wall, colon, and eventually, her left ovary. Jen's battle was far from over; her fight against this invasive disease had only just begun.*

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Jen often reflects, "**No good deed goes unpunished,**" but she remains unwavering in her refusal to give up.

She emphasizes the importance of self-advocacy and the need to question and challenge medical advice. Her journey has been about more than just finding the right doctors and treatments; it's been a testament to her personal resilience, especially after facing abandonment by those closest to her. Amidst it all, she found the strength to raise her two young children with special needs on her own, embracing alternative medicine and holistic support to reclaim her health.

In 2019, feeling isolated and alone, Jen reached out to Crossroads4Hope and soon after joined our Living with Advanced Cancer support group. Here, she found a lifeline. Crossroads4Hope became her safe space, and a place where she learned to manage her anger and fears. Within this community, Jen found the strength to confront her fear and worry, especially the unimaginable thought of leaving her children behind if she couldn't overcome this disease.

Jen is not alone; her story highlights the profound connection between the mind, body and cancer. Since 9/11, many exposed to the toxic debris and devastation of the World Trade Center collapse have faced increased rates of chronic conditions, including PTSD, depression, cancer and other respiratory and digestive issues. Jen's journey is a powerful reminder that the impact of 9/11 continues to shape lives in deep and lasting ways.



Today, Jen is a **two-time survivor, celebrating five years with no evidence of cancer.** Her journey underscores the critical need for ongoing support for both mental and physical health in the aftermath of such a catastrophic event. Crossroads4Hope remains committed to supporting individuals like Jen every step of the way. No matter where you live or what type or stage of cancer you face, there is a community ready to restore your well-being and hope.