

Marc Eichenholtz provides a voice for a silent killer

BY ADELE WOODYARD
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When Marc Eichenholtz lost his 37-year-old wife, Lisa, to ovarian cancer Dec. 12, 1999, he channeled his grief into helping others who struggle with this silent killer.

Within a year the Tampa geologist and branch manager of Environmental Compliance Services Inc. founded the Lisa Eichenholtz Memorial Fund Inc. With no paid staff and the help of about 15 volunteers, the nonprofit organization has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for research, nursing scholarships and the promotion of awareness of ovarian cancer.

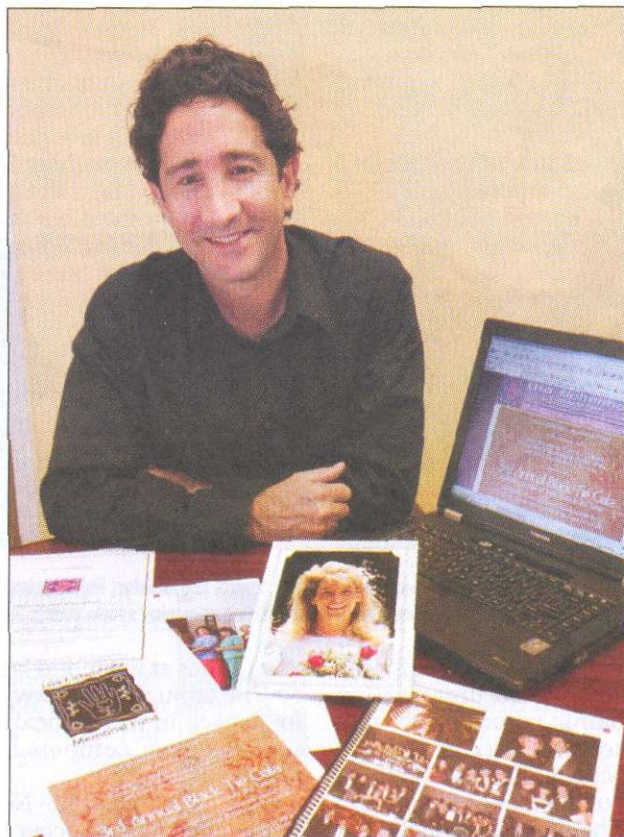
Eichenholtz's largest fund raising event is the Annual Black Tie Gala, a dinner-dance that this year raised about \$20,000. A golf tourney added another \$2,000 to the kitty, with more dollars coming in from smaller, assorted projects. National recognition came

when Lifetime Channels carried a public service announcement underwritten with the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition in Boca Raton.

Locally, LEMF was featured on the Tampa Bay Live morning show. When Eichenholtz appeared with Dr. Hector Arrango, an oncological gynecologist, on Good Day Tampa with Ann Dwyer, the station was flooded with calls. Several newspapers and magazines publicized LEMF, and several other ovarian cancer related organizations want to join in its efforts.

As a registered nurse, Lisa Eichenholtz worked for eight years in the Progressive Care Unit at Brandon Community Hospital. One of the first things Marc Eichenholtz did with the funds raised was to establish an annual \$2000 Lisa Eichenholtz Memorial Nursing Scholarship at her alma mater, Brookdale Community College in New Jersey.

Later, LEMF added the nursing program at Hillsbor-



KATHLEEN CABBLE

Marc Eichenholtz lost his wife, Lisa Eichenholtz, to ovarian cancer in 1999.

ough Community College, and LEMF is currently working with the University of South Florida program. Since its beginning in the fall 2001/spring 2002, scholarships have been awarded to four second-year nursing stu-

dents at BCC and two at HCC.

Two years ago LEMF sponsored Jingwei Yu, Ph.D., in his ongoing study of ovarian cancer development in the earliest stages with the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Inc. in New York.

Ovarian cancer is an insidious disease that is said to effect one woman in 50. The disease often goes undetected until it is too late. It is known as a silent killer because there are few clear symptoms and what there are mimic a number of other diseases.

For Lisa Eichenholtz it was a two-year ordeal that began when doctors found an ovarian tumor "the size of a grapefruit" during an operation to remove a cyst. Although a hysterectomy and chemotherapy at first resulted in a clean bill of health, radiation and two more surgeries were necessary when the cancer returned.

"The hardest thing is the helplessness you feel watching your loved one suffer and be unable to do anything about it," Marc Eichenholtz said. Having heard that 45 to 60 percent of men leave their wives during cancer, he added, "Eventually I hope to start a men's support group."

Meanwhile Eichenholtz and Luis Salaman, a volunteer who has been with him from the beginning, are looking toward 2006. In the works are winter fund-raisers similar to the summer series Jazz Fest in Tampa's Old Hyde Park Village and a springtime golf tourney with women players, while "local, celebrity men" greet and wait on the spectators. Whatever their fund-raising efforts, it looks as if LEMF accomplishments will continue to exceed its goals.

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Founder
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