On October 29th, students, staff, community, and alumni will gather in the Soda Center to share much more than a meal. From 1:00 to 2:30pm, community members will learn about the direct and indirect impact cancer, and specifically breast cancer, has on our community and the world at large.

This year’s luncheon will feature Saint Mary’s College Alumna, Andrea Sosa, who was diagnosed with Stage IV Metastatic Breast Cancer at the age of 37. Sosa will share her own journey, talk about the need for women to advocate for themselves, and discuss how men and women can stand in solidarity to challenge breast cancer. We interviewed Andrea to get a snippet of her story.

**WRC How did your breast cancer diagnosis impact your life?**

**Sosa** “I was very suddenly faced with the overwhelming reality of possible surgery, chemotherapy, and lifelong treatment. I experienced feelings of fear, sadness, and grief as I tried to understand how my life was going to change. I took action to prepare for treatment, which included the difficult task of sharing my diagnosis with friends and family. My job has been very amena-

ble to my illness and since about one month after my diagnosis, I have been on medical leave from work as I completed chemotherapy this summer.”

**WRC What have you done to get through this and stay strong?**

**Sosa** While I have always been very independent, I realized quickly I would need help. I talked to family and friends and received incredible support, and put faith in the medicine and the medical team for my care. I made sure to "do something" every day, even if it was just a short errand. Having a positive attitude and informing myself about my disease was empowering as this year has gone by.

**WRC What's the most important thing you learned on your journey?**

**Sosa** I have learned so much this year, its hard to say the most important thing. After speaking to people in my community, I realized, that to many, I was the first person they knew with cancer. I was placed in a role to console, and also educate, those who believed I was dying. Through a weekly blog and regular contact with friends, I helped people understand the medicine is better, and women with breast cancer are living longer lives than previously thought. I also learned my role in this journey is to battle a long painful war, and I am grateful for the support of many.

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**Quick Calendar:**

10/9—Body Positive (6pm, WRC)
10/15—LGBTQIA Luncheon (1pm, Soda Center)
10/21—Catalina Torres Night to Remember (6pm, WRC)
10/29—Rethinking Pink Breast Cancer Luncheon (1pm, Soda Center)
Though it has been six years since the woman who gave the WRC’s event its name passed away, people around Saint Mary’s still know the name “Catalina Torres.” At the WRC, a staff member mentions that they wish the student volunteers could have met her. Though that’s no longer possible, it doesn’t stop new students and staff from getting to know her memory through “Catalina Torres Night to Remember.” Coming together once a year in her honor, community members speak out about the issue that was close to the late Saint Mary’s student’s heart—domestic and dating violence.

After overcoming domestic violence herself, Catalina dedicated her life to helping others find the courage to seek resources and help so that they could live healthy, violence-free lives. In 2008 Catalina was tragically shot while protecting her cousin from an abusive partner.

In honoring her life, the WRC will also be examining the local and global impact of dating and domestic violence. We gather each year to retell her story, to create space for others to share their stories, and to walk in her memory.

This year’s Catalina Torres Night to Remember will be held in the WRC from 6 to 8pm on October 21st.
Celebrate everything that makes you who you are at the annual LGBTQIA Luncheon! All students are welcome to attend this event that honors National Coming Out Day and the LGBTQIA members of the Saint Mary’s community. The community time lunch will be held in the Soda Center’s Orinda room on Wednesday, October 15th from 1:00 to 2:30pm.

This year’s theme is “P.R.I.D.E. in our Identity,” with speakers including the Contra Costa County Rainbow Community Center, an organization which addresses issues of dating and domestic violence, as well as sexual assault, within the LGBTQIA community. Other community members and alumni, including keynote speaker Keelia Murphy, are invited to discuss finding one’s identity.

While attending Saint Mary’s, Keelia served as the president of PRIDE (then GSA) and chair of the BASH committee. Since graduating in 2011 with a Sociology degree, Keelia has worked with adoptive families, volunteered with programs focused on diversity and gender, and currently works in support of the MBA and Public Policy Programs at Mills College in Oakland. Check out some of Keelia’s thoughts on discovering one’s identity to the right.

Keelia Murphy will speak on identity at this year’s LGBTQIA Luncheon!

Keelia’s journey toward understanding identity:
“My journey toward understanding my own identity has been intensely personal, and at the same time, a shared and integrative experience. Much of my journey has been spent grappling with and sizing up the language that has been provided to me, deciding to reject those labels and categories, and learning to love myself - both within the boxes that society places me in and in spite of those perceptions. I’m so fortunate that I had the network of the GSA (now PRIDE) during my college years, and that I have many close queer friends to support me in my continual journey.”

Keelia’s advice to students discovering their identities, and to allies:
“To those queer kids exploring your own identities--talk to as many people as possible, in person or online. Go to queer events. Follow queer Tumblrs. Your best allies are each other. Learn from those who have been through what you have been through. Let other people support you in your journey - you deserve all of the love and support and listening ears that you can get. If the language doesn’t fit you, throw it out and take the power to define yourself. Don’t let anyone get you down. You are worth so much.

To those who wish to be allies--Listen. Listen as much as you can. Listen especially when you are uncomfortable. Your discomfort is a learning tool. Don’t assume you have the right answer. Don’t assume you are invited into queer spaces.”
DID YOU KNOW?
The Women’s Resource Center is holding a Women’s Retreat this November!

The weekend retreat will focus on topics including:

- Learning to value your identity
- Practicing reflection
- Learning to maintain self-care
- Becoming a part of an inclusive community

The retreat center is in Inverness, CA and a $50 fee will cover lodging, food, supplies, and fun activities!

The retreat is November 14th to 16th and space is limited, so email ssobotta@stmarys-ca.edu for more info!

SMCares

If you’re an SMC student, you have probably noticed recent e-mail notifications about sexual assault occurrences on campus. Saint Mary’s College and representatives of the WRC would like to invite all students to a conversation that will focus on promoting awareness, education, and action to reduce occurrences of sexual assault in our community. This important discussion will take place on Thursday, October 2nd at 7pm in Hagerty Lounge. We encourage any and all students to attend.