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## Cancer Opens A Lens

BY **Allan Appel** | MAY 17, 2012 1:40 PM

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CAROLYN TAYLOR PHOTO

After surviving cancer, photographer Carolyn Taylor documented a disease that knows no boundaries. In the process she tripled the number of survivor groups in Vietnam.

Beating an early detected ovarian cancer in 2006 inspired Taylor, a commercial photographer, to log 100,000 miles to many countries of the developing world. There she photographed cancer patients and their families.

She discovered that only one cancer hospital and four oncologists serve Tanzania's 45 million people. All of Vietnam has only one cancer support group, the Breast Cancer Club of Hanoi.

So she founded [Global Focus on Cancer](#). It aims to raise awareness and to bring concrete aid.



ALLAN APPEL PHOTO

Carolyn Taylor, N'Zinga Shani, Tara Sanft.

Taylor's poignant images got the attention of [Smilow Cancer Center Survivorship Clinic](#) Director Dr. Tara Sanft. Sanft has tapped Taylor to be the featured speaker this Saturday at Smilow's [Cancer Survivors Day event](#).

Taylor showed her pictures and Sanft gave tips on surviving cancer (example: a strong belief system is as valuable as the best medicines) as they appeared together at a taping of N'Zinga Shani's "21st Century Conversations," a program of the [One World Progressive Institute](#). It will air in the Greater New Haven area in coming weeks.



During the show, Taylor (pictured) described her photographic challenge: "I can shoot a pork chop, but a person recovering from cancer—how to tell



their story?"

She rose to the challenge.

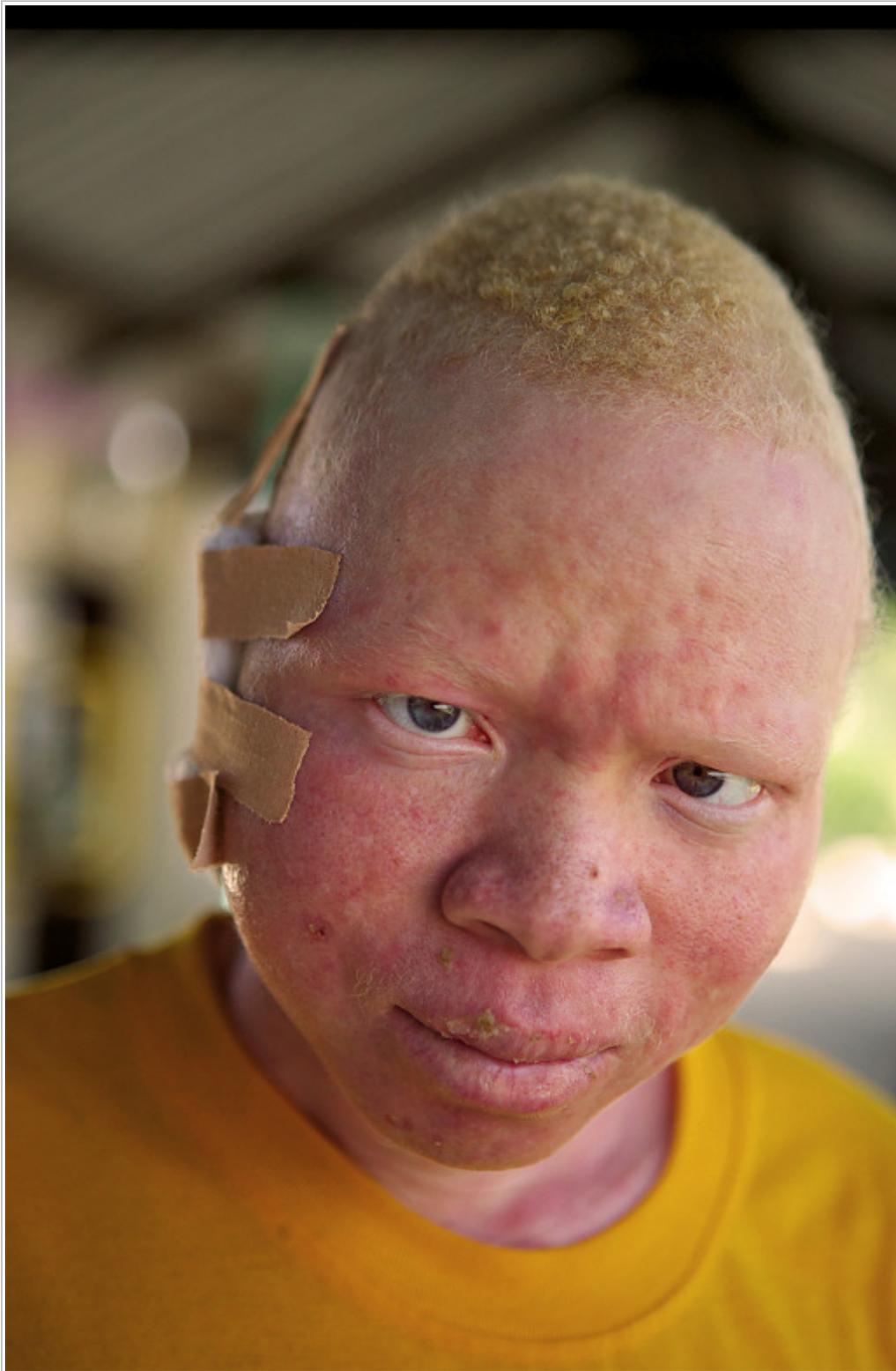


CAROLYN TAYLOR PHOTO

When she visited the cancer hospital in Ho Chi Minh City she saw 1,200 beds and 3,000 patients, not counting family members who minister to them.

That means two to three people shared a bed. Sometimes patients slept under the bed.

"I can't just photograph. I've got to do something," Taylor recalled deciding.



CAROLYN TAYLOR PHOTO

This photograph tells the story of Hassan, age 26, one of approximately 150,000 albinos in Tanzania.

The social ostracism of this group, the absence of public awareness and no sunscreen have contributed to widespread melanomas. Taylor's group is now working with the [Skin Cancer Foundation](#) to address the crisis among this besieged population.

In Vietnam, Global Focus on Cancer has already tripled the number of cancer support groups. Taylor said cancer provided her the opportunity to serve and to become "a better person."

Of Taylor's example and that of her own patients, Sanft said, "When you watch someone deal with adversity and come out the other side, it's awe inspiring."

Sanft estimated the U.S. has 12 million survivors of cancer, with 120,000 in Connecticut. She ascribed those numbers to early detection and to improved treatments that can be better tolerated by patients. In the developing world, Taylor said, 70 to 80 percent of the cancers are advanced when found because of a lack of equipment or expertise for early detection.

Sanft said she hopes Taylor's images and cancer survival story will show that "we are all united through the world by this terrible thing no one wants to have. It's universal, regardless of race, religion, national origin."

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### Comments

posted by: [N'Zinga Shani](#) on May 17, 2012 11:44pm

Carolyn Taylor is proving everyday how much individuals who are caring, committed and determined can do to help humanity. Her story is one from which we can all learn. She drove up from New York to participate in this OneWorld education program because her own story is exceptional. When she was diagnosed at the tender age of 43 with two forms of primary cancers: Ovarian and Uterine, she first set about getting well then she immediately started exploring how she could help others. In the past 18 months she has been travelling the world photographing the various Global Faces of Cancer and documenting incredible stories of triumphs and tragedies.

We do not have to be rich or powerful to make a positive difference. Giving others good information and HOPE is a powerful thing to do. Carolyn told us the story of another 43 year-old woman in Kenya; upon being diagnosed with cancer she immediately gave up on life and was preparing to die. She did not know anyone who had survived having cancer. After losing her breast she thought there was no point to living. Then Carolyn told her own story and her mother's and gave her two mastectomy bras. The bras made her feel whole again; she could wear regular dresses! She started to dance and sing. Today she is alive and doing well; such is the power of a helping hand and HOPE; knowing that others care.

Carolyn's now 83 year-old mother survived breast cancer at age 24! Recently she donated 50 pairs of mastectomy bras to women in other countries. The benefits of this gift are immeasurable. There is a great deal we can do to ease the suffering of others and to give HOPE to many who feel hopeless. At OneWorld we are striving to bring factual messages of hope, goodwill and good information to the community. We want to help people to make positive changes. We thank the NHI for helping us to do so. To learn more about Breast, Ovarian and Prostate cancers, please visit our web site and watch informative video clips with Yale cancer specialists at: [http://www.oneworlddpi.org/health/health\\_videos.html](http://www.oneworlddpi.org/health/health_videos.html) Each program will play for at least 8 Mins.

N'Zinga Shani, Program Producer

**posted by: gmf on May 18, 2012 2:26am**

Thank you for this article, for One World's thoughtful programming, and for the strength and dignity of all the individuals profiled here.