



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center

# Community MATTERS

NEWS FROM MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING CANCER CENTER - BASKING RIDGE

## The Long Road Home Leads to Success



*Soft tissue sarcoma survivor Ron Kraemer has returned to his musical and other pursuits.*

Ron Kraemer, a New Jersey native living in Florida, was 50 years old when he found a lump on the right side of his chest in the spring of 2010. He didn't know it then, but his two careers — as leader of a jazz/blues band and a personal fitness trainer — were about to come to a hard stop. And there was a chance that he would never be able to engage in either activity again.

That August the lump became inflamed, so Ron saw a specialist. The doctor gave him alarming news: It might be a cancerous tumor, a soft tissue sarcoma. Ron was referred to the specialists at Memorial Sloan Kettering, for whom his diagnosis

isn't unusual. "While this type of cancer is rare, MSK cares for more than one thousand individuals with sarcoma each year and provides our patients with the most advanced treatment planning available," says Ephraim Casper, Medical Director for the MSK Regional Care Network.

### **A Drive, a Diagnosis, and Expert Care**

Luckily, Ron's parents were still living in New Jersey and he would be able to stay with them during his treatment. A handful of days and 1,200 miles later,

Ron arrived at Memorial Sloan Kettering for an operation to remove 80 percent of his major and minor pectoralis muscles, where the tumor was growing. Following surgery, he received a course of radiation therapy, which uses high-energy x-rays and electrons to kill any remaining cancer cells. Ron was able to have this next phase of his treatment closer to home, at MSK Basking Ridge.

Karen Schupak, Chief of Basking Ridge Radiation Oncology, designed an intensive regimen that targeted external-beam radiation to the region where the tumor had been. The plan required Ron to undergo six weeks of therapy, five days a week. "Ron had an extremely complex course of treatment," Dr. Schupak says. "The radiation doses were very carefully planned and artfully applied because of the proximity to vital structures."

### **His Own Best Trainer**

As the weeks went by, Ron found radiation to be increasingly difficult to tolerate. "The effects accumulated over time," he says. "It was like getting really bad sunburn — again and again." One side effect of the surgery that he experienced was lymphedema, a condition in which extra lymph fluid builds up in tissues and causes swelling.

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### **RESOURCES:**

**Memorial Sloan Kettering Basking Ridge**  
136 Mountain View Boulevard  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
908-542-3000

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But he was able to find ways to cope — and heal. “Proper diet and exercise helped take the struggle out of it,” he says, and allowed him to regain full range of motion in his right arm and much of his strength. His band and his work as a fitness trainer proved to be powerful motivations for him to restore dexterity and strength in his right hand and arm.

Ron was thankful that his doctors agreed to let him rejoin his band on stage approximately ten days after his treatment ended. “I was back in my element, and that

felt great,” he recalls. “The incredible care I received from my team at MSK Basking Ridge and the support from my parents, brother, and extended family and friends really helped me to face this with confidence and courage.”

MSK has six suburban campuses, with two locations in Westchester County, three on Long Island, and one in New Jersey. Patients interested in receiving care at any MSK facility can contact our Physician Referral Service at 800-525-2225. We are in-network with most health plans.

## New Clinician Joins Team



MSK Basking Ridge's expert care team is growing and now includes medical oncologist Marina Shcherba. Visit us at [www.mskcc.org/baskingridge](http://www.mskcc.org/baskingridge) to learn more about Dr. Shcherba and other MSK cancer specialists.



## Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Department of Public Affairs  
1275 York Avenue • New York, NY 10065  
[www.mskcc.org](http://www.mskcc.org)

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*Memorial Sloan Kettering wishes you a healthy and joyous holiday season.*

## MSK Ranks First in the Nation for Cancer Care



MSK is proud and honored to share that we have been named the number one hospital for cancer care in the nation, according to [U.S. News & World Report](http://www.usnews.com) in its annual listing of Best Hospitals. Since the inception of the revered list 25 years ago, MSK has held either the first or second spot each year.

In addition to our ranking for cancer care, MSK was ranked number four for gynecology; number nine for urology; and number 28 for ear, nose, and throat, and was recognized as high performing in the fields of gastroenterology and gastrointestinal surgery and geriatrics. Just 3 percent of the nearly 5,000 hospitals analyzed earned national ranking in even one specialty.