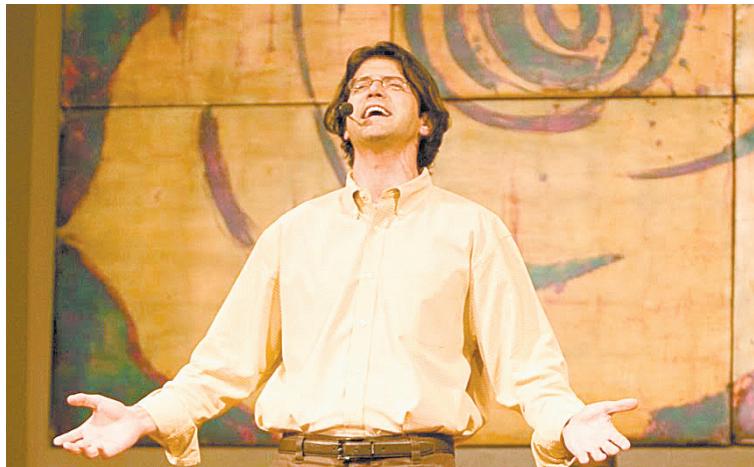


PLAYWRIGHT, SOCIAL WORKER BRING CANCER MUSICAL TO NATIONAL AUDIENCE



Tom Willner, above and bottom photo, wrote "Turning Thirty" after his own bout with cancer. Anne McSweeney, middle, is helping to bring it to a national audience.

By Clare S. Richie

Atlanta playwright and cancer survivor Tom Willner will perform "Turning Thirty," an acclaimed musical about his cancer experience, at the prestigious World Congress of Continuing Professional Development in San Diego later this month.

"I've always wanted my show to help others understand cancer from the patient's perspective," said Willner.

Last June, Anne McSweeney, a social worker and founder of CEU Concepts (an acronym for Creative, Educational, Unique) called Willner with just such an opportunity.

Healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses and social workers must obtain a certain number of continuing education hours on a yearly basis in order to keep up their license. Many earn their credit hours from standard lectures and presentations. With a musical and interactive discussion afterward – an extremely unique stage is set for the participant to learn.

McSweeney spent over 15 years working closely with geriatric clients throughout the Atlanta area. She was required to take continuing education classes, which were expensive and often boring. In 2010, she founded CEU Concepts in a light bulb moment. She would bring in sponsors to drive down or eliminate attendance fees and would develop creative and interactive workshops.

Ever since McSweeney read about Willner's "Turning Thirty" several years ago, she'd thought about by pairing it

with a healthcare team discussion. So, last June, when a speaker cancelled due to illness for an event with 90 registrants, McSweeney decided it was time to put her idea to the test.

Willner jumped at the opportunity. He performed a solo version of his musical, staying in character and talking to the audience between songs. During the discussion that followed, attendees remained engaged.

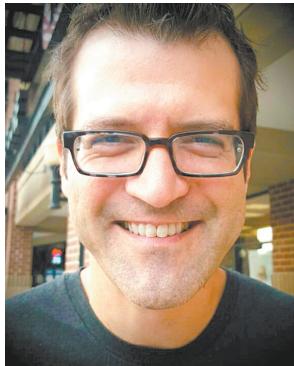
"Tom stepped right in and our collaboration and synergy was instant – a perfect format for learning," said McSweeney. "This was a continuing education course that attendees will remember; especially with a take home musical CD."

From there, McSweeney submitted the proposal that was accepted at the World Congress of Continuing Professional Development, which she says opens the door to more possibilities.

"We want to take the show on the road. Get into hospitals around the U.S. or "franchise" the program so that others could perform it across the country," shared Willner and McSweeney.

Willner also submitted "Turning Thirty" to theaters across the U.S. and is expecting to hear back shortly. Regardless of the avenue, he expects his future to include pursuit of his dual passions of music and addressing cancer.

"My hope is that with this unique event we've created, we'll be able to provide healthcare professionals with a deeper understanding of the cancer experience, and ultimately benefit cancer patients and their families across the country," said Willner. **IN**



Atlanta INtown

MARCH 2016 AtlantaINTownPaper.com

IRISH PUB GRUB

Eat and Drink Irish All Month Long

PAGE 38

Passing the Literary Torch, P. 28

Jewish Music Festival, P. 34

Home Décor T

Cancer doesn't Make the right decisions advancingyourhealth.

Atlanta International Suite 200
6065 Roswell Road, Atlanta, GA 30328
404.365.1000

Atlanta INtown Paper
is published monthly by
Atlanta INtown Media LLC
ISSN 2573-0001