

January/February 2021

THE Voice of Friends

We Help People With Cancer

25 YEARS!!

This *issue*

p.2 25 Years!

p.4 On a Hot Day in 1995...

p.6 You be You,
Let Them be Them

p.8 Support Groups

Friends Together is a non-profit 501(c)3. Our mission is to help people with cancer in northeast Michigan. We operate solely on donations & fundraising. We recently began an endowment fund. See page 9.



Friends Together

www.friendstogethermi.org

Can you believe we've been here, serving our community members with cancer for 25 years? We have. It was 1996 when Judy Burns embarked on her mission to be available to support those traveling the cancer journey.

It was because of her family's experience with the disease

that she set out to

comfort and help those who were about to

experience what she had - fear, isolation, uncertainty, financial stress, and loneliness. She was determined to replace that with compassion, support, understanding, and hope.

In this issue of The Voice of Friends you'll read how we are going to keep the promise alive for years to come.



Judy Burns
Friends Together Found

Have a *Cancer Diagnosis?*

Contact Friends Together! You do not have to travel the cancer journey alone. When you walk through our door you open a world of hope and joy.

We have traveled a similar journey.

We understand. Let us help.

FOR DETAILS CONTACT talktous@friendstogethermi.org

On a Hot Day in 1995...

This year we celebrate 25 years serving and supporting friends coping with cancer. I want to take you on a journey from the start. From our humble beginning we have grown into a very unique, stand-alone non-profit organization embracing those who need us most.

I recently came across a letter I wrote in those early days to one of the important persons who helped me dream and have the confidence to begin...just begin to honor the promise I made to my daughter that no one would go through cancer alone.

It was June - **a hot June day in 1995.** Jeff Davis, a Hospice Social Worker, first met Dawn and in a matter of minutes his quiet compassion opened her soul and guided her to release her fears and anxieties. She found a new soulmate who lifted her spirit again. This mother was so grateful because Jeff not only lifted

Dawn's heart—but my heart also. It was a day I will always remember, as the seed of hope was planted that I could make a difference and embrace those who need love and support during the most trying times.

Over the next year, Jeff and I met at my dining table and discovered how we could make this dream come true...our dream and the dream of everyone touched by cancer. We agonized over how would we start. What do we want to do?

What will we name this organization? Will people come? Where will we meet? Who will pay the bills? We never gave up.

Cold March evening -1996 - The Birth of Friends Together. The first meeting with interested community members was held at the conference room of the former Grove Restaurant. Overwhelmed by the attendance of more than 40 supportive Alpena residents—I knew it was right. Friends Together was right.

I pounded the pavement of Alpena. Made phone calls to all parts of our state to collect the best ideas. We had to find out what worked and how we could make it part of Friends Together.

We communicated with the medical and spiritual community. We brought together our first Board of Directors, became incorporated, filed as a non-profit with the State of Michigan and held our first Support Group Meeting January 16, 1997, at the Alpena County Library.

Dawn's dream and my dream was becoming a reality before our very eyes.

And it continues every year—every day.

January 2021- Looking Forward.

We begin the celebration of 25 years of dedicated and creative support and programming for this 6 county region. For the thousands of people who have been touched by cancer and know our embrace of support and comfort, and for those to come, I am so grateful and overwhelmed by the good work we accomplish. Yes, the dream is a reality and together with many we have made it possible.

**Free support
is a call away**

(989)356-3231 (phone)

(989) 354-0813 (fax)

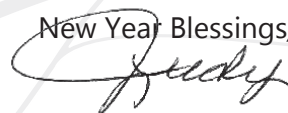
talktous@friendstogethermi.org

We listen.

We understand.

You are not alone.

New Year Blessings,



Judy,

daughter

Melissa, &

Bill accept the

keys of the

first Friends

Together van

(2011).

Being in control and making choices about care, having a sense of hope, these are extremely important to those with cancer."

~Judy Burns

1996

Friends Together

In 1996, Diane Speer, The Alpena News' Lifestyle Editor at the time, spoke with Judy Burns just before Friends Together was set to open. Here is an excerpt from that article:

Judy Burns of Alpena remembers making a promise to her dying daughter, Dawn. If it's the last thing she did, Judy told her, she would start a local support group for others with cancer and their families.

Judy's promise is becoming a reality with the formation of Friends Together Inc., a new support group offering a hopeful approach to fostering healing for cancer victims. With a 10-member board in place, the group has been in the planning stages since the beginning of this year and has now set Jan. 16 as the date for the first official public meeting.

The group is intended as a place where those with cancer and their families can come to exchange and obtain information

about the disease. Just as importantly, it also will be a place where they can come to draw support and comfort in knowing they are not alone in their battle against cancer.

"There's such an absolute vital need in our community for this," said Judy, who speaks from heartfelt experience. Her daughter was diagnosed in 1993 with cancer and for the next two years, the Burns family sought treatment all over the country at research and development centers for cancer. At many of the hospitals where Dawn was treated, support groups were readily available to her.

(excerpt continued on page 5)

Bill Morford and Judy hard at work on a report for the board of directors in 2007.



Cancer In the time of Covid-19

During the last months, we were often reminded that cancer doesn't pause for anyone, regardless of what is going on in the world. People still needed to talk, to be heard. The barriers to treatment seemed to grow. Yet, Friends Together found new and creative ways to help while observing current safety precautions. As we all continue forward, learning the new normal of the world, know that you can contact us. You are not alone.



You be You, Let Them be Them

Years ago, when our children were quite young, my husband and I introduced 'Table Topics.' Each night during our family's sit-down dinner, a current event or topic would be introduced and discussed. There were rules, such as respecting the speaker and participation. Some nights provided easy conversation that continued well after dinner, other topics were uncomfortable and more abbreviated. The point really wasn't how long the conversation took. Nor were Table Topics meant to persuade any one person to another's view. Rather it was to be an exchange of thoughts, an opening of minds. We were trying to instill the idea that a group of people can sit at a table and share differing views and still have great conversations built on respect.

Were we successful? I'm going to say yes! The conversations took place regularly and the world now has two more independent thinking adults. Though, truth be told, I would probably enjoy hearing, "I agree with Mom," a bit more on a topic or two. Yes, today there are topics we view differently, but that does not get in the way of our love and respect for each other. We are a family who shows up for one another.



Throughout my life I have noticed my views change on a variety of topics. Life's experiences have a way of mucking-up otherwise clear views. As a younger person with limited access, I had uncomplicated views on how life should be lived. It makes perfect sense. When I lived in my family's controlled setting I was exposed to only what they allowed. This is neither positive nor negative, it just is. We all work within the spaces available.

I can remember a brave teenage friend of mine telling me in an exasperated voice, "I just can't live up to your standards." I would try to retort that those standards are my own and weren't used to measure her. But, how could they not? I was not yet developmentally sophisticated enough to differentiate between what I expected of myself versus others.

This exchange would bother me for years to come. The thought that I was unintentionally driving people away was so hard to understand. Friends have the right to express themselves in order to make a friendship its best. My slice of history is eye-opening and a bit embarrassing to look back on. I share today as a reminder for us all.

As I grew I learned people want to live up to the standards of those they love, those they care about, those they respect. It's not that all people demand automatons as friends, but it is written into our code. Acceptance. Yes acceptance is often the underlying goal.

My suggestion? Strive to accept the people in your life as they are. You don't have to agree with them on all topics. Nor must you throw your beliefs out the window. Simply respect the individual. You be you and let them be them. That's it. Allow others to believe what they believe and love them, regardless. Accepting people does not signify acceptance of their views. You are simply valuing another human.

Ask yourself, "Am I encouraging relationships or smothering them with unsolicited views?" It is absolutely our right to have our own views and live our lives as is best for our situation and beliefs. At the same time, we need to think about how we interact with others and how we represent ourselves. Let's agree to stop pushing personal agendas and focus more on listening to others and being in the moment with them.

This year perhaps we could all strive to be a bit gentler if we find ourselves in the company of someone with different views. Focus on listening and breathing rather than holding your breath waiting to set them straight and pronounce your views as law.

Listening could possibly be the greatest gift we give one another.

~ *Lesslee Dort*, Program Manager & Patient Advocate



A walk down memory lane...

Mural of Hope

Back in 1998, Friends Together board members Bill Morford and Sue Fitzpatrick proposed a simple idea to involve children and heighten their awareness. It was an art project at its core. A way for all to appreciate the journey of the cancer patient and their loved ones. The project soon grew into a collaborative effort between Friends Together, the Alpena Cancer Center, and Art in the Loft.

Tony Hendrick, now known for Alpena's downtown pocket-park mural, was invited to come to Alpena to collaborate. According to Hendrick at the time, "I am beyond pleased. I haven't teared up as much on any other project as I did on this one. They were tears of joy. So many people were involved in the project. It just comes to life and turns into a beautiful piece when you don't control the outcome."

More than 40 artists, age 7 to 75, created 50 drawings for the project. It took two years. At 56 feet in length, the vibrantly painted Mural of Hope now hangs outdoors in a walled courtyard area at the Alpena Cancer Center where it can be viewed indoors or out.

As voiced by Judy Burns on the day of the unveiling, "These panels are worth a million dollars in hope and love."



One of seven panels of the Mural of Hope

News

(continued)

"Friends Together is a hopeful approach to foster healing for persons who have cancer and their families. It is designed to provide a supportive environment which focuses not only on the disease process and recovery, but also upon the individual experiencing the disease. Individuals and significant others are provided the opportunity to participate in the exchange of information."



Judy and friends cut the ribbon on the opening of Friends Together's new office at 105 Prentiss in 2011.

"Friends Together will help to identify and provide support to implement realistic measures in the development of a healthy lifestyle."

"We want it to be welcoming so that those who come can set aside their fears," she (Judy) said.

For a copy of the full article, please call Friends Together or The Alpena News.

Give a Hand to our Neighbors with Cancer

Your support and generosity give us strength and hope. Please help us in 2021. With your help we will do it again. We must.

Cancer doesn't stop, so neither can we.



Businesses throughout northeast Michigan rallied in 2020! Together they helped us raised \$198,000 to help people in our communities with cancer. Friends Together spent that money on support programs, gas cards, a robust transportation service, lodging assistance, wigs, prosthetics, and more. All to try our hardest to see that no one with cancer has to travel the journey alone.

Cancer has no season. Everyday our friends, family, co-workers & neighbors are affected by hearing the news that they or someone they love has been diagnosed with cancer.

Cancer weaves its way into every facet of life. Friends Together helps lessen the burden of cancer. We understand. We are here to support people so no one has to face the burden of cancer alone.

Every donation and fundraising dollar we receive positively impacts the life of a cancer patient.

Support is just a call away

Need help?

Are you finding that getting to and from your oncology appointments is difficult? Is the financial burden adding stress to your life? Are you alone and would like someone to drive you to appointments?

Our drivers live in Alpena, Presque Isle, Rogers City, and Ossineke. We are available to support you.

For more information, call (989) 356-3231.

Shelly Gibbs, Transportation Coordinator

Covid-19 Van Precautions

- **Van will be sanitized with each use.**
- **Drivers & passengers will wear protective masks.**
- **If passenger displays symptoms of illness, the scheduled transport will be cancelled or rescheduled.**
- **If driver displays symptoms of illness, a replacement driver will be sought.**

Friends Together receives donation from AAACU Board of Directors. Judy Burns gratefully accepts check from LeAnn Schultz.



auction

This April, Friends Together is planning an online auction of some pretty unique and amazing items. From the perfect tea party basket to original artwork to gift certificate packages. There is no telling what kinds of fun things we'll have on the auction block.

Do you have never-used or nearly-new items that you would like to donate to our auction? Perhaps you received a gift you will likely never use. Please contact us. We can help make the goodness of gift giving even sweeter

garage sale

We think with all this time spent at home during Covid-19 restrictions, you may have noticed some things in your home, office, garage, workshop, or cottage that you simply don't want/need anymore. Save yourself the trouble of having a garage sale and give your things to us. Friends Together is having a huge spring garage sale to support those with cancer in NE Michigan.

Events coming up

January

The Promise Fund

February

Gas Card Challenge

April

Online Auction

May

Spring Garage Sale



**A
BIG thank you
to Charlie and
KettleNation from these
two elves and Friends Together!
Our one-day drive-thru kettle corn sale was a success!**



You Are Not Alone

Weekly Support Groups

Please note: Support group meeting places may change due to availability, pandemic restrictions, and weather. Current updates will be posted on our Facebook page whenever possible. Call with any questions. (989)356-3231

Friends Together North If you live in or near Rogers City and have been touched by cancer, or know someone who has, please join Friends Together North! Temporarily suspended during restrictions on social gatherings. For more information call 989-464-4164 or 989-356-3231

Mindful Movement Join Friends Together on Tuesdays at noon for Mindful Movement for Healing, a gentle, unique yoga program designed to nourish, inspire and empower each woman healing and dealing with cancer. **Next series may begin in February** at Bella Rose Yoga & Fitness Studio

Caregivers Connect Come to Caregivers Connect to meet others who share the caregiver experience. Identify your role as caregiver. Recognize your needs. Discover ways to care for YOU. Tuesdays, 6:00 pm via Zoom. Call (989) 356-3231 for more information.

Friends Together Live! Meet others who are coping with a variety of cancer issues. Share resources and information, discuss family issues and coping strategies, and make new friends who understand. Our evening is filled with comfort and fellowship. Tuesdays, 6pm 6:00 pm via Zoom. Call (989) 356-3231 for more information.

Guys Like Us Wednesday Morning coffee crew of men who are coping with cancer. Join in the discussion or just listen. 10am every Wednesday via Zoom. Call (989) 356-3231 for more information.

Women on Wednesdays Women united in the cancer experience—all cancers, all women, all ages. Join us for support, sharing, information & encouragement—all in a confidential, welcoming environment. Women only. Currently meeting via Zoom at 6pm every Wednesday. Call (989) 356-3231 for more information.

A Touch of Beauty Join other women at Friends Together for A Touch of Beauty, a free program designed for women during and after the cancer experience. Facilitated by a licensed esthetician, utilizing all-natural products & demonstrations. Next class is **TBD**. Reservations required

Living After Loss Recovering after the loss of a loved one? You are not alone. Temporarily suspended during restrictions on social gatherings. For more information call 989-464-4164 or 989-356-3231

All Friends Together Programs are Open to the Public and Free of Charge

Friends Together programs are offered in partnership with:



MidMichigan Health
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HEALTH SYSTEM



ZONTA
CLUB OF
ALPENA
EMPOWERING WOMEN
THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

In accordance with federal law and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice & TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

You Are Not Alone

Friends Together supports you and your decisions on how to treat your diagnosis in the best way possible for you. We are here to listen, help and support.

support groups

Until further notice, Friends Together will be holding our support groups virtually by using an online application called Zoom. If you would like more information about this technology, please contact us.

we are here

Due to current safety restrictions related to Covid-19, our office has temporary hours. We are open from 9am - noon each weekday. Our phones are always on. Please call and leave a message if we are not in. We are checking voicemail regularly.



You Are Not Alone

Dawn Burns Promise Fund

Friends Together began as one woman's promise to her daughter. Today, that Promise, the mission of Friends Together, has grown into its own. The Promise now lives in all those we have supported throughout the years and all those who have supported us.

No longer is Friends Together just one woman., a loving Mom with a promise. Friends Together is all of us. We can all proudly say we are - today and always - Friends Together. We can all shout with certainty that as long as we are here no one will have to go through cancer alone.

Contact us today to learn more. Visit our website www.friendstogethermi.org or call us at (989) 356-3231.



Dawn Burns
1969-1995

Need to Talk?

Friends Together is staffed with compassionate individuals who have personal experience with cancer. We understand what you are feeling and experiencing. While your journey is unique to you, we have walked a similar path and know how to navigate the terrain.

Please contact us or just stop in to talk. We are here during the week from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Plus, we have seven (7) different ongoing support groups each week. One is sure to fit your needs. See page 8 for a full list.

A Little White Cross Can Say it All



Friends Together recently received a donation of handmade, wood crosses from Robert Discher. The crosses are painted white and each have a stick built in to the design. Each of the 12 crosses are approximately 5 x 7 inches, not including the stick.

We would like to offer these to anyone interested in using. These beautiful symbols of love, faith, and hope, could be used multiple ways. For example, a message could be written on them and then placed at a gravesite or in a floral arrangement. Or they could be sent to someone who recently experienced hardship. They could even be used by a person to commemorate a significant event.

However you would like to decorate and/or use to celebrate or honor someone in your life, please contact us. We can arrange to be here for you to pick up.

<p>Memory Care</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B BESSER</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assisted Living</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Making a positive difference in the lives of our residents!</p> <p>325 Johnson St. Alpena • 989-884-9787 • besserseniorliving.com</p>	<p>Alpena Alcona Area Credit Union</p> <p>ALPENA 989-356-3577 ATLANTA 989-785-3800 LINCOLN 989-736-8912 OSCODA 989-739-9103 OSSINEKE 989-471-2332 TAWAS CITY 989-362-7980</p> <p>www.aaacu.com</p> <p>New Members Always Welcome!</p> <p>   </p>
<p>Judy McFalda, Attorney-at-Law</p> <p>540 N. Bradley Highway Rogers City, MI 49779 989-734-4486</p> <p>Wills, Trusts, Probate, Real Estate Guardianship, Business Law “When Peace of Mind Matters”</p>	<p>the drug store  HealthMart PHARMACY</p> <p>CBD Oils</p> <p>The modern drug store where you are greeted with a friendly “Hello” and “How can we help you?”</p> <p>...where Pharmacist Keith Misiak and Jim Straley will be glad to serve you!</p> <p>2236 US-23 S • ALPENA • (989) 354-2171</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting All Major Health Plans • Free Delivery Service • Drive Through Window
<p>Proudly Serving the Greater Alpena and Hillman Communities</p> <p>Bannan Funeral Home</p> <p>222 S. Second Avenue Alpena, Michigan 49707 (989) 354-8411</p> <p>131 E. First Street Hillman, Michigan 49746 (989) 742-3993</p> <p>www.bannanfuneralhome.com</p>	<p>Be a part of this informal group of men providing encouragement and support every week. Please join us on Zoom. Wednesdays at 10:00am</p> <p>Guys Like Us</p> <p></p> <p>A Cancer Support Group For Men</p> <p>For more information call (989) 356-3231</p>
<p>FOR YOUR FAMILY'S TOUGHEST TIMES, CALL OURS ANYTIME.</p> <p>Let us help by calling (866) 323-5974.</p> <p> McLaren HOSPICE DOING WHAT'S BEST.</p> <p></p>	<p>Meets on Zoom each Tuesday night at 6:00pm. This is an opportunity to meet both men & women who are coping with a variety of cancer issues.</p> <p>Friends Together Live</p> <p>For more information call (989) 356-3231</p>

In Memory and In Honor

We remember those who have touched our lives. Often, family and friends make a donation in their name. Please contact us if you have any questions about this listing or would like someone to appear on a future newsletter.

In Memory

Eleanor Tolzdorf Fry
 Marita MacNall
 Amy Bouchard Blackman
 Randy Bicksler
 Pat Richards (in honor of his Birthday)
 Carlin Thompson
 Cheri Muszynski
 John Benson, Sr.

Robert Przycucki
 Tom Ritter
 Louis Waltz
 Raymond (Tom) Szymanski
 Rose Meneghel
 Gladys Bennett
 Ron Philburn

In Honor

Dr. John Lightfoot



LeFave PHARMACY & COMPOUNDING
 "Caring about YOU...Since 1976"

1202 W. Chisholm • Alpena
www.LefavePharmacy.com
(989) 354-3189

- **FREE** Medication Synchronization -get all your Rx's filled same day
- **FREE** Medication Strip Packaging -organized by date & time, clearly labeled, securley sealed
- **FREE DELIVERY** to Alpena and surrounding areas!
- **DRIVE THRU or CURBSIDE**
- **NOW OFFERING** Compounded Medications & Bio-Identical HRT

TARKINGTON FAMILY DENTISTRY

Andrew C. Tarkington D.D.S. | Alex A. Tarkington D.M.D.

• **NEW PATIENTS WELCOME** •
 215 S. Ripley Blvd., Alpena, MI (989) 354-8340

KEITH D. WALLACE

of the law firm of
Isackson, Wallace & Pfeifer, P.C.
 114 S. Second Ave., Alpena, MI 49707
989-354-8242
Over 50 Years of Experience in
Trusts, Wills, Probate and Medicaid Matters



SKIBA VISION CENTER, PLLC.

VISION SOURCE Gerald A. Skiba II, O.D.
 Tyler Skiba, O.D.

2368 U.S. 23 South • Alpena, MI 49707 • Alpena Mall
 (989) 356-9096 • Fax (989) 356-3968
 Emergency (989) 255-4404 • (989) 255-4828
www.visionsource-skibavision.com

ALLEGRA

MARKETING • PRINT • MAIL

Formerly MODEL PRINTING SERVICE – Celebrating 50 Years
Serving all Northeast MI since 1970!

829 W. CHISHOLM ST. ALPENA 989-356-0834
allegraalpena.com ed@allegraalpena.com




Mindful Movement for Healing
 @ *Bella Rose*
 YOGA & FITNESS STUDIO

Join us for slow stretching designed for women who have gone through cancer treatment. Five Tuesday sessions from February 2 -March 2, 2021,
 12:00-1:30pm
 Led by Dez Nowaczyk

A Friends Together program for women in partnership with Zonta

WOW Please join us for Women on Wednesdays
Wednesdays at 6:00pm on Zoom. This weekly program of support and wellness is for women of all ages, all backgrounds, all cancers.

For more information call (989) 356-3231





Friends Together

105 Prentiss Street
Alpena, MI 49707
(989) 356-3231

Non Profit
US Postage
PAID
Permit 157
Alpena, MI 49707



[The support group] an amazing source of **strength & hope** through this [cancer] journey for me. ~DR

This is a great place to be ... it's like having another family where you can talk with folks about cancer and **they understand** the things you are talking about. ~JD



Without Friends Together's [**support**] I don't know how I would have been able to do it. ~T

Thank You for your wonderful **caring**, time and all your endless and timeless hours spent helping so many people at anytime of the day or night. You are all amazing! ~SM



Amazing people! Couldn't ask for better people to help me out while I **cope** with cancer! Just amazing! I've had absolutely excellent experiences! They are like angels... ~D

WE ARE CELEBRATING 25 YEARS



THANKS FOR GIVING A HAND TO OUR NEIGHBORS WITH CANCER