

SPRING 2022

THE Voice of Friends

We Help People With Cancer

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MORE TOOLS

Different people work with different tools. But there are some that can benefit all. Two of those freely offered by Friends Together are our Comfort Bags and our Patient Planners.

Comfort Bags are nicely sized totes designed to be carried back and forth to treatment.

Packed inside are all kinds of goodies to make treatment a bit nicer.

Patient Planners are designed by cancer survivors for you to use to track your meds, write down your questions, and keep your soon-to-be complex schedule manageable. If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with cancer, please contact us. We may be able to help!



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.



Friends Together

www.friendstogethermi.org

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

When the Dust Settles

Are you waiting for things to settle down? Do you feel caught in a whirlwind of life and not sure where to get off or how to move on? Many of you are aware of the Great Dust Bowl days of 1934. It was the result of months and months of drought. A strong two-day dust storm with a height of 2 miles removed massive amounts of the Great Plains topsoil. The dust clouds blew all the way to Chicago and beyond, where they deposited 12 million pounds of dust.

How did 'people of the plains' manage? What did they do to protect themselves? Were there signs of jeopardy in advance?



How did the people of plains survive? Desperate after experiencing the travesty, they attacked a bigger-than-life problem with simple survival methods; many home-grown and home-made. People protected themselves by hanging wet sheets in front of doorways and windows to filter the dirt. They stuffed window frames with gummed tape and rags. They wore wet bandanas and toweling around their faces. They survived. The Dust Settled.

Sometimes just existing when life is confusing and overwhelming can feel like swirling in a dust bowl. How are you managing? What are you doing to protect yourself and survive? Will this ever end? Could the whirling winds be your cancer issue, or the new caregiver roll you now assume, or the loss of a loved one? Will there be a time of calm and clarity once more?

Let's move forward as the people of the plains did. Armed with the knowledge and tools we need to overcome the 'dust in the wind' we experience. When the dust settled they rallied together, all as one, to cultivate a new life blessed in the warmth of the sun.

When the dust settles - and it will- I wish the same for you. Calm and clarity once more.

Warm regards,

**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.

Thank you to Austin Bros Beer for helping us spread the word. If you have been diagnosed with cancer, we are here for you!

"No one has ever become poor by giving."
~Anne Frank

Charitable Giving

Do you want to donate to Friends Together, but aren't sure exactly how? Here are some ideas:

If you are age 72 or older, and hold a traditional IRA, you must take a **Required Minimum Deduction** (RMD) each year. By directing all or a portion of your RMD directly to Friends Together you may eliminate or reduce the amount of income taxes due on your distribution and help Friends Together meet the needs of those with cancer. Consult with your accountant.

Make a legacy donation. Designate Friends Together as a beneficiary of your assets. This is a super way to make a donation without impacting your lifestyle.

Make a recurring gift. Friends Together has set up Paypal to accept recurring donations. In other words, donate \$10 or \$25 a month, for example, directly from

your credit or debit card. This is a constant revenue stream for Friends Together to meet the needs of those with cancer.

Visit our website www.friendstogethermi.org and donate online.

Drop a check off at our building, 105 Prentiss St., Alpena

giving made easy



Click on the QR code with your cell phone camera to easily set up your donation!

We've made donating even easier!

We have added the ease of a QR Code. This handy maze of black and white is coded specifically to Friends Together. Click on it with your smartphone camera and you'll automatically be directed to our donation page. From there you choose the amount and frequency! Simple.



Friendship is a two-way street

friend /'frend/ 1: a person who you like and enjoy being with 2: a person who helps or supports someone or something

My early life was not riddled with friends. Outside of the neighborhood, I didn't travel in a specific posse. I certainly didn't have a tribe. I could bounce in and out of many cliques and was friendly with everyone I met. I liked other people. I enjoyed slipping in and out of many different cliques. I simply didn't possess enough comfort in my own skin to develop real friendships.

As children we appear to seamlessly float between friendships. In adulthood, lasting friendships demand intention, time and effort. If you're an introvert like me and want friends, you must step out of your comfort zone, at least in small ways. Adult friendships need regular maintenance. Strong friendships require an investment of time on behalf of both parties. Together you cultivate trust, honesty, open communication, and compromise. None of this occurs without being vulnerable to being hurt, betrayed, or teased. When it works though, it is one of the truest gifts humans can experience.



My sister taught me about adult friendship. Though, I wouldn't say we were close growing up. There was love, certainly. Though, as the baby of the family, I was not sought after. She was four years older. We didn't share school buildings, we developmentally enjoyed different activities, and I was pretty much a stereotypical little sister.

That said, I always knew she had my back; she was my champion.

However, the real friendship didn't begin until adulthood. At some point during our adulthood, my sister and I made the conscious decision that we each wanted more out of our relationship. Throughout our now decades-long friendship we established important rules. Many of those rules still exist today.

One of the very first things my sister taught me is the need for a confidant. The need for a safe space. Without trust and honesty, there is no authenticity. We have enough sources in the world telling us falsehoods in order for us to like them. Real friendship requires genuineness. Foundations should never be built on the shifting sands of deceit and insincere compliments.

She also taught me the power of sharing and listening. There are two kinds of listening and both must be done without judgment. The first is active, attentive listening. This is where we learn the most about one another; we see each other clearly. If you are not fully present when a friend is sharing and only half-hearing them, you are trampling on your would-be friend's vulnerability.

The second type of listening is what I call 'receiving the vent.' This was one of the first types of listening we employed, honestly. Venting, to us, is safely spewing all the ickiness that is building up and blocking the way for all the goodness in our lives. Mostly the situations being vented are insignificant or unchangeable. They get under our skin, but we are essentially not in control of affecting change. This feeling of helplessness needs to be exercised and sweated out. Doing so with another party who won't speak of it to another is so much more cathartic than yelling at a blank wall. But, venting must be announced at the top of the conversation to avoid hurt feelings and unwanted solutions being offered.

Respect and forgiveness are the last two attributes of our friendship. Our boundaries and needs are different. Part of learning about one another involves honoring their values and views, even when they conflict with your own. Inevitably, we'll stumble and make a mess of a situation. Own it. Talk about it. Forgive. If the offending party doesn't realize the misstep, let them know gently and with forgiveness.

If you are fortunate to have true friends, be sure to tend to the relationship. Let them know how much you value them in your life. Cultivate what you've planted. Please don't waste it. Friendship is precious. These relationships can be full of joy, love, laughter, and healthy, bonding tears. Being vulnerable can yield great benefits.

~ *Lesslee Dort*, Program Director & Patient Advocate

New Programming Coming in April

Meet Devon

focusing on head and neck function

Join us in welcoming Devon Burke a speech-language pathologist who recently moved to the Alpena area. Devon has opened Channels Rehabilitation in downtown Alpena. She will specialize in adult neuro and swallowing rehabilitation, providing evidence-based speech and language therapy services.

As part of Devon's commitment, to helping others, she has approached Friends Together with four (4) new group offerings.. Each group will meet once a month at Friends Together and once a month at her office.

Here is a short description of each: Friends Think Together will introduce strategies to overcome 'chemo-brain'. Friends Stretch Together will focus on helping with swallowing and head/neck range of motion has been impacted by cancer treatment. Friends Breathe Together aims to improve breathing, speech, swallowing, and cognitive function following treatment. Friends Eat Together will focus on working to make those with dysphagia more comfortable eating in public. All four (4) groups begin in April.



Devon Burke,
speech-language pathologist

Nutrition & cancer

Stayed tuned! This April we'll not only be introducing new support groups, we will have free access on our website to nutrition video series to help you understand what to eat while going through cancer treatment and why.

Paulette Feldhiser, MyMichigan Registered Dietician, talks to us in very easy-to-understand language about what we should do to keep our bodies in the best possible condition while

**Paulette
Feldhiser, RD
Clinical Dietitian**

receiving treatment.

Each video will cover different aspects of nutrition as it applies to treatment, in general. For recommendations specific to your needs, please contact your healthcare provider or oncology team and ask for a nutrition consultation.



Meet one of our very first volunteer drivers

Your give us strength and hope. Thank you for your continued support and generosity. By giving your time and resources to help our neighbors with cancer, you are helping to see that no one faces cancer alone.

Cancer doesn't stop, so neither can we.



Friends Together Volunteer driver Jim Hoppe is one of the first volunteer drivers to assist with transporting cancer patients to and from their critically necessary medical oncology appointments. Jim remembers the first Friends Together van that was purchased in 2009. And he carries with him all the fond memories of the patients he has met. Jim was inspired to be a volunteer driver for Friends Together after he experienced his own cancer journey.

Support is just a call away

Jim has a compassionate and a caring heart for others with a cancer diagnosis. Jim said, "helping others is important to me. I am grateful to be able to help those in need; who need a little help with a simple ride to their appointments. I enjoy meeting new people and have made several friends that I have stayed in contact with over the years."

Friends Together transportation program currently operates and maintains 2 vans driven by volunteer drivers exclusively for cancer patients who live in Alpena, Alcona, Presque Isle, Montmorency, Oscoda and Iosco Counties.

Friends Together can assist by gifting gas cards to caregivers and patients when traveling for medical oncology appointments.

If you or anyone you know is in need of transportation assistance due to a cancer diagnosis, please call 989-356-3231.

Interested in becoming a volunteer driver like Jim? Give us a call, or stop in and talk with Shelly.

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.**

Jim Hoppe, one of our valued Volunteer drivers.

Gas card challenge

We know you are feeling the increase cost of filling your vehicle with fuel. We are too! But we are committed to getting those diagnosed with cancer to their oncology appointments.

The cost of cancer care keeps going up. No one should have to choose between food or fuel. When people come to us needing gas to get to their appointment we gladly help. We can do this because of the generosity of our donors - you! Please, if you are moved to help, drop a gas card or two off at our building.

Here's an idea - start a challenge of your own! Challenge your friends or other businesses to match your donations. Let's make it count for those needing support.

"Giving is not just about making a donation, it is about making a difference."
~ Kathy Calvin

Events coming up

March/April

Gas Card Challenge

May

Golf Scramble

golf scramble

It is never too early to start forming your Golf Scramble team for our golfing event this May 28, 2022! Join us for the Double Deuce Poker Run at River's Edge.

Comedy night
volunteers, Judy and
Carol Putkamer.



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 9:00am to 3:00pm. Plus, we have several different ongoing support groups each week. One is sure to fit your needs. See page 8 for a full list.



Weekly Support Groups

Support groups meet in-person at Friends Together and via Zoom., unless otherwise mentioned.
Please call the office at (989) 356-3231 for Zoom link and more information.

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

Friends Together Noth - Rogers City

This group is suspended indefinitely. Please contact Friends Together for more information.

Friends Think Together

Strategies to overcome 'chemo-brain'. Begins in April. Meets the first Monday of each month at 2:00 pm.
For men and women.

Friends Stretch Together

For both men & women whose swallowing and head/neck range of motion has been impacted by cancer treatment. Meets the first Monday of each month at 4:00 pm, beginning in April.

Good Grief

Meets Tuesdays at 10am.

Mindful Movement for Healing

Meets Tuesdays at 12:00pm. For women only. Whole body slow movement to improve balance and overall health during and after treatment. Begins March 29, 2022.

Tawas Friends

Men and women can meet on Tuesdays at Barnacle Bills in Tawas at 5:30pm. Begins in April

Tuesday Nights Together

For both men & women with cancer. Meets monthly on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday at 6:00pm.

Guys Like Us

For men with cancer. Meets each Wednesday at 10:00am.

Women on Wednesday

For women with cancer. Meets each Wednesday at 4:30pm.

Friends Breathe Together

Meets the first Thursday of the month at 2:00pm. For men and women who want to improve breathing, speech, swallowing, and cognitive function following treatment, beginning in April.

Friends Eat Together

For both men and women with cancer who find eating in public uncomfortable due to dysphagia.
Begins in April. Meets the first Thursday of the month at 4:00pm.

Friends Together programs are offered in partnership with:



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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.

Meet Mary Morse

Mary Morse will be facilitating our newest support group in Tawas City!

If you have been diagnosed with cancer, join us for a Meet and Greet on March 23, at 5:30pm at Barnacle Bills on Newman Street in Tawas!

support in Tawas City

Tawas Friends will meet each Tuesday beginning in April at 5:30pm at Barnacle Bills on Newman Street in Tawas City.

If you live south of Alpena, and have experienced cancer, please join us as we support one another along the journey.

Zonta thank you

Recently, the Zonta Club of Alpena presented Friends Together with a check in the amount of \$8,053.95. This amazing group of women work hard to help other women have their best life! Friends Together is thrilled to use these funds to support women in our area facing a cancer diagnosis. Because of Zonta and their sponsors, women with cancer have access to free wigs, bras, prosthetics, Mindful Movement classes, and HealinComfort shirts to make recovery from surgery a bit more comfortable.



Zonta Club of Alpena President, Eileen Budnick presenting a check to Lesslee Dort of Friends Together.

You Are Not Alone

Mary Morse, a retired Medical Assistant, is the current Executive Director of Harbor Lights Pregnancy & Information Center in East Tawas. She is excited to become part of the Friends Together family. She will facilitate our newest support group in Tawas City on Tuesdays beginning in April.



Cancer & Creativity

In the time of Covid-19

Non-profits and individuals have had to get creative the last couple of years. Covid has reminded us of the value of being with people.

A heart-wrenching story we would hear repeatedly was that people were hearing of a malignancy alone. Their support person was not allowed in for the protection of all as healthcare facilities learned what could safely be done to protect patients.

Yet, people still need to talk, to be heard, even as the barriers grew. Friends Together found new and creative ways to help while observing ever changing

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

~Winston Churchill

safety precautions. As we all continue forward, we will continue to learn how to safely meet the needs of the cancer patient. For example, **our support groups are now available in-person and simultaneously on Zoom.**

Please know that you can contact us.

You are not alone. We are here.



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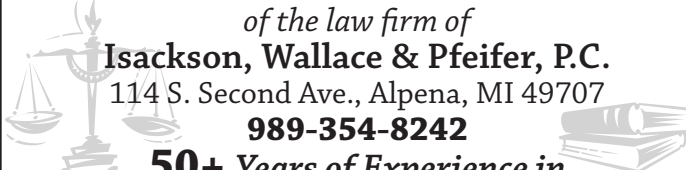
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DART: (989) 356-4596
Dial-A-Ride is a curb-to-curb service within the City of Alpena & adjacent locations. Reduced fares for seniors and disabled riders.

3859 US 23 N. Alpena
www.thunderbaytransportation.com



Tuesday Night Together
We Help People with Cancer

For both men & women with a cancer experience. Meets monthly on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday at 6pm.

Safe, confidential space to freely share your hopes and fears with others who understand.



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 in a future newsletter.

Virginia Bruski
 Rocky Camara
 Richard Chowen
 John Ewing
 Tom Frantz
 Mariann Gaydos
 Polly Haselhuhn
 Dave Hillert
 Edna Homan
 Jim Kuchnicki
 Tom Kwiatkowski
 Cynthia LeDuc
 Grace Level

Kevin MacKenzie
 Walter Miller
 Patrick Orban
 Carrie Linn Roulear
 Lynn Marie Smith
 Jackie Smith
 Bruno Stefani
 Virginia Suszek
 Keith Thomopson
 Elaine Wagner
 Susan Weinkauff
 Carrie Linn Wisely

In Honor

Bruce & Tami
 Anschuetz
 Brad Birmingham
 Barb Bouerman

Barb Jacobs
 Carol Smart

In Memory

Amy
 Stanley Antkowiak



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(ask for Margie*)

Has cancer treatment has left you with dysphagia, 'chemo-brain', limited upper body range of motion, or difficulty swallowing, speaking or breathing? Join us for one of our newest support group opportunities with Devon Burke. See page 5



Tawas Friends, our newest cancer support group serving those south of Alpena, will meet each Tuesday beginning in April at 5:30pm at Barnacle Bills on Newman Street in Tawas City.

FOR YOUR FAMILY'S
 TOUGHEST TIMES,
 CALL OURS ANYTIME.

Let us help by calling (866) 323-5974.



DOING WHAT'S BEST.



Enjoy a FREE small Cup of Coffee
 Friends Together is Celebrating 26 Years!

Thank you Friends and Volunteers!



expires 12/31/22



Friends Together

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

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When someone is facing treatment for cancer, the last thing on their mind should be, "how will I afford the gas to get to my appointments."



2022 Gas Card Challenge

The cost of getting to cancer care can be tough for many in northeast Michigan.

Give a gift that uplifts and extends hope.

Help our neighbors by allowing them to focus on what's really important - their health.



Please send or drop off gas cards to:
Friends Together, 105 Prentiss, Alpena MI 49707
or call (989) 356-3231 to gift using credit/debit card.
You can also visit our website and donate online.
friendstogethermi.org