

THE Voice of Friends

We Help People With Cancer

This *issue*

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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

A LOOK BACK

So much has changed in 25 years but one thing has been consistent, the support that our community has received from Friends Together. With the cancer center getting its start in a small section of an old part of the hospital to a full service Cancer Center in partnership with the University of Michigan, Friends Together has been by our side. It is not an easy story to tell as it begins with the loss of a mother and a daughter at a young age to cancer. Many of us might become secluded and depressed as a result of a situation like that but Judy Burns and her family saw something very different. Judy had a vision and passion to provide care in a different way... so Friends Together began as a grassroots effort to provide support to those that were dealing with a diagnosis of cancer in Alpena. This has been Friends Together sole purpose for 25 years and they have provided a significant service to our community and brought support and healing to those that are hurting. During these 25 years Friends Together has grown to meet the requested needs and has expanded services and transportation to



Chuck Sherwin

(continued on page 3)

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

This is the month of Maybe

Hello Friends,

I recently read this children's story book to the Tuesday Night Support Group,

maybe - a story about the endless potential in all of us

"Have you ever wondered why you are here?

Maybe—you are the only you there ever has been or ever will be.

Maybe—you will invent things never seen before.

Maybe— you should try as many things as you can.

Maybe-you will help others see the beauty in each day.

Maybe- you are here to shine a light into places that have been dark for far too long.

Maybe-you are here to help in ways that only you can.

Maybe-you will fail...but you will get back up and you will rise a little stronger and a little taller.

And Maybe—you are just getting started.

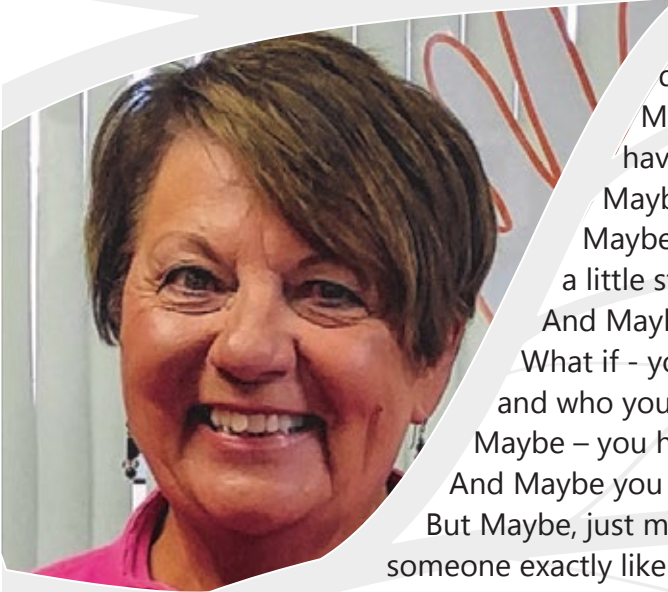
What if - you are only scratching the surface of what you can do and who you can be?

Maybe - you have no idea just how good you really can be?

And Maybe you don't know how much you matter.

But Maybe, just maybe, the world has been waiting centuries for someone exactly like you.

BECAUSE YOU ARE HERE....anything is possible."



I hope you were inspired by the excerpts of this book about possibilities and the maybes in our lives. To all of our mothers, wishing you a month of joy and a reminder that you are unique and special just as you are.

Warm regards,

You Are Not Alone
We are here with you

**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 Besser Company and
Candie Dombrowski, HR Director for
donating a brand new 56" Samsung
Crystal UHD TV and rolling stand
for our Outreach Programs!**

**pictured is Youngs Appliance
setting it up for us.*

(continued on page 3)

(continued on page 3) Chuck Sherwin

the entire region. So many people have been impacted by a diagnosis of cancer and I know when they interact and spend time with Friends Together they are getting the support that they need in a way that is caring and compassionate. This is why our partnership and the relationship has remained strong; both of us want to make sure that we care for and support our community. We are fortunate to have Friends Together here in Northern Michigan as this level of support and service are usually not found in rural America. Please join me in thanking Friends Together for their unwavering focus and effort to support our community as we look forward to the next 25 years of support for those in need.

Thanks Judy and your team for all you do, you have made a definite impact and are making a difference every single day in the lives of our community.

Chuck Sherwin
President
MidMichigan Medical Center - Alpena



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.

Trail Roamers present donation of \$600 supporting folks with cancer. Thank you Jamie Girard, Ben and Chandra McClain pictured with Judy Burns.



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.

Free Yourself from Self-limiting Thoughts

Most books, fiction included, teach me something. Either I'll isolate a phrase that has meaning to me or some random fact mentioned in the story will eerily speak to an event currently taking place in my life. I read for my edification and entertainment. Often I gain a deeper understanding of a topic or culture or myself.

Sometimes I read through a book in days. Others can take weeks if not months. If I cannot get in to the flow of the book, I am fine putting it down. Most of the time I never revisit a book that didn't capture my attention the first time. One big exception to the rule was a little book by Don Miguel Ruiz; *The Four Agreements*.

I tried reading it in paperback form and the text seemed like a foreign language to me. So I tried the recorded version. Nope. Then I tried the Kindle. Nothing. Over the course of four years I could not get in to this book. Try as I might, the style of writing was as though I was asking my brain to trudge through soft, muddy grounds in springtime. Each time I tried to read it I would inevitably put the book down in frustration. What did all these hundreds of thousands of people

see that I wasn't?

The trick, for me, was to simply let go and read. I stopped approaching it as 'the book that will change my life' and picked it up merely to read it. I'm not sure if my approach was the only change, but it took me just two days to finish the book.

It read so smoothly! The language is used differently than I am used to hearing. Yet by approaching the text with an openness of heart and mind I found the higher meaning for me.

According to the author, we are unknowingly robbing ourselves of joy. By adopting the Toltec wisdom, we can approach life in a healthier way.

It begins by understanding that we are born perfect. Through time we are trained in the ways of those who raise us. From the beginning, we grow by accepting teachings from many sources as irrefutable facts. In essence, we make agreements with the influencers around us. But these agreements are not always in our best interest. The author encourages us to adopt four basic codes of conduct, agreements that will free us from self-inflicted needless suffering. Below is my simplistic explanation of these four agreements.

Be Impeccable With Your Word – Say what you mean. Speak with integrity. Stop using your word to spread negativity, mistruths or gossip. Our words have power. Use them for good, knowing they can cause irreparable harm if misapplied.

Don't Take Anything Personally – Nothing others do or say is a reflection of you. Their choices and actions are their own and you cannot take responsibility. What they say and do is a projection of their reality, not yours.

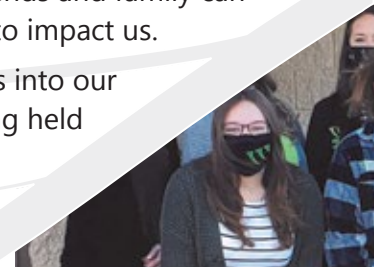
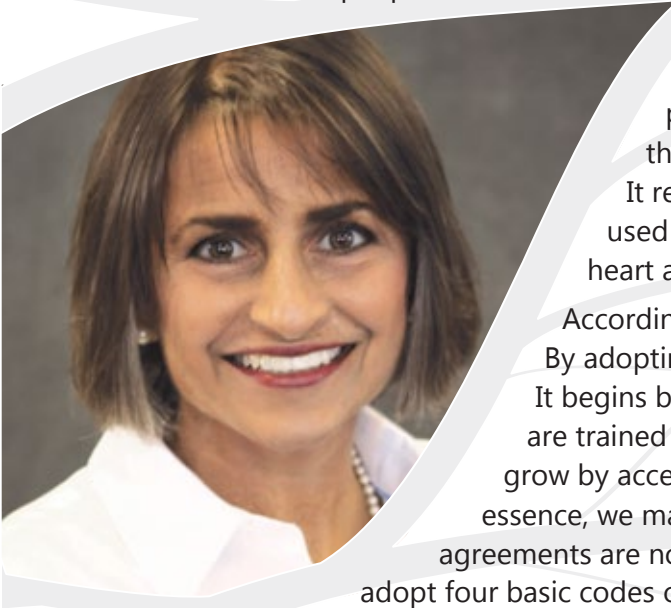
Don't Make Assumptions – Learn the truth of a situation before passing judgement or altering how you feel. One of our worst enemies is the silence that breeds assumptions.

Always Do Your Best – You won't always win. But each day you should put your best effort into each task. Some days that effort will be better than others. That doesn't mean you weren't giving all you could at that moment. If you do your best under any circumstance, you avoid the negative self-talk and regret.

Being human is complicated. We continually receive and process messages. Those messages go through the filter of our individualistic understandings. Commentary from media outlets, colleagues, friends and family can feed into our self-worth, if we let them. We have to agree with what we see and hear for it to impact us.

We have the ultimate control over what we believe. By incorporating these four agreements into our lives, we can avoid much of life's strife. It is not easy. There is a reprogramming of some long held beliefs that must take place. But the effort can make a positive difference in our lives.

~ Lesslee Dort, Program Manager & Patient Advocate



Come Golf!

golf scramble

This year's annual Scramble for Friends will be held on June, 5, 2021. We will again enjoy the course out at River's Edge on Werth Road in Alpena.

Would you like to participate? Teams of four (4) can sign up now. We are limited to 28 teams, so sign up quickly to be sure your spot is confirmed.

New this year is a Team T-shirt contest. Tell us why you golf on your t-shirt. Print them up for all members on your team and wear them during the scramble. Let's have fun! At the end of the day, the winner will be announce in true scramble-style!

sign sponsor

Also new this year is an opportunity to show your business off! **Tell the world you support Friends Together.** Sponsor a yard sign for \$100 and we'll place for all to see on the day of the scramble. To reserve your sign call Shelly at (989) 356-3231, today!

Thank You, Jim

Friends Together honored volunteer driver, Jim Kollien, for his years of service and dedication supporting our cancer patients. Jim has travelled thousands of miles making sure our friends coping with cancer are transported in comfort and safety. He has driven from Alpena to Ann Arbor, Detroit, Midland and places beyond being the guardian of their safe arrival. It doesn't end there – Jim almost daily offered his help with



Jim Kollien

our fundraising events – no job too big or too small. You may have noticed Jim installing our State Street banners or wiping tables at our annual Pig Roast. The mission of Friends Together is that no one would experience cancer alone – Jim has been there every step of the way. Thank you Jim Kollien and congratulations on your official retirement as a Friends Together Volunteer Driver.



Thank you Wolverine CU for being a \$3,000.00 sponsor!

Hello Friends and Happy Spring!

Friends Together's transportation services are available for cancer patients who need assistance getting to and from their cancer related medical appointments and that can be near and far!



Here is how FRIENDS TOGETHER can help:

- Call to schedule a ride as soon as you know you are in need. This is the best way to assure you will receive assistance.
- Rides are available in town and out of town.
- Driver's will arrive promptly...please be prepared for pick up.
- Offer great directions to your pick up location and destination.
- Travel in layers so that you can be comfortable for all weather situations.
- Depending on your appointment requirements you may want to have a bottle of water/snack for long trips. Any meals during long distance transportation are the responsibility of the patient.
- If you require personal assistance during your transportation, Friends Together requires you have a companion travel with you. All patients are welcome to have a companion travel with them.

Support is just a call away

- Wear your mask!
- If you have any Covid symptoms or have been exposed to Covid, please cancel your drive (driver's will do the same).
- If you have a friend, family member or neighbor who is willing to drive you...Friends Together can offer gas card assistance.
- If you have Medicaid you may be eligible for transportation services from another organization, too (we can make a referral for you).

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 offers two van's that are available upon request on a *first come basis*. We will do all that we can to help everyone in need and accommodate accordingly.

If we can assist you or anyone you know, please call us for details 989-356-3231!

Shelly Gibbs, Transportation Coordinator

garage sale

Have you heard? Friends Together is having a huge spring garage sale to support those with cancer in northeast Michigan!

We've been collecting bunches of really cool, can't-live-without treasures that you must see.

Great deals are ready to be had on May 15 and May 16 at the north end of the Thunder Bowl Lanes on Ripley Blvd in Alpena. Sale begins at 8am on Saturday and runs through 5pm. If anything is left over, we will open again for one last chance on Sunday from 10am until 2pm.

This isn't your garden-variety garage sale. The bowling alley has loaned us 8,000 square feet of space and because of your generosity we have filled it full!

Sale items include everything you might need to stock a kitchen and then some.

We have furniture, holiday and yard decorations, unique items, tools, *literally* something for everyone! Come stroll around, shop, and support those with cancer in NEMI.

Stop by and see us! We'll be ready to help you find your perfect items!

Events coming up

May

- May 15- Pop-Up Boutique @ Bowling Alley
- May 15- Spring Garage Sale @ Bowling Alley
- May 16- Spring Garage Sale @ Bowling Alley

June

- June 5 - Scramble for Friends @ River's Edge
- June 25 - Drive-thru Fundraiser @ Friends Together

July

- July 17 - Dueling Pianos @ Brown Trout
- July 25 - Pig Roast @ Depot on Fletcher



Pop-Up Boutique

Are you ready to accessorize?? We are! Meet us at the north end of the Thunder Bowl Lanes on Ripley in Alpena on Saturday, May 15, from 8:00am until 1:00pm (or until sold out). We will have scarves, ties, purses, belts, and jewelry! There is literally something for everyone! All the colors of the rainbow are alive and well at our Pop-Up Boutique! Come and give your wardrobe some new flair. Bargain prices!

Weekly Support Groups

Please note: **In person support groups are currently suspended.** A few do meet via Zoom. See descriptions below. 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! Meets at Presque Isle Library on the first and third Mondays at 6pm. For more information call 989-464-4164 or 989-356-3231 **Suspended**

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. **April 6 - May 4 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. Tuesdays, 6:00 pm. **Suspended**

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. (Thunder Bowl Lanes) **ZOOM**

Good Grief Beginning **Tuesday, June 1, 2021**, this 10:00am grief group will help us navigate grief in the best way possible. To be held at Friends Together. **Suspended**

Guys Like Us Wednesday Morning coffee crew of men who are coping with cancer. Join in the discussion or just listen. 10am every Wednesday. (Thunder Bowl Lanes) **ZOOM**

mini-WOW Wednesdays at noon, this small group of women meet at Friends Together. **Suspended**

Women on Wednesdays All cancers, all women, all ages. Join us on Wednesdays at 6pm for support, sharing, information & encouragement—all in a confidential, welcoming environment. Women only. (Thunder Bowl Lanes) **ZOOM**

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 **Suspended**

Living with Loss Recovering after the loss of a loved one? You are not alone. Join us as we work through living with the loss of a loved one. Held at 6pm at Friends Together. **Suspended**

Friends Together programs are offered in partnership with:



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

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meet Owlbert!

In-person groups are suspended until further notice. While that makes us sad, we are happy to announce we are still conducting support groups!

Introducing Meeting Owl! This handy new technology was possible through a United Way Emergency Grant. Owlbert, as we are calling him, allows us to communicate better using the online meeting service called Zoom. By using Owlbert, those of you participating at home can see a panoramic view and a view of the individual(s) talking - simultaneously.

We will let you know when we will open to in-person meetings again as soon as we can. Our collective safety and well-being comes first.

Please call 989-356-3231 as often as you'd like to talk with someone. Or email talktous@friendstogethermi.org.

We are still here for you and will help in any way possible.

You are not alone.

friends back together

Friends Together is doing everything we can to bring our friends back together. We are ever thankful for the benefits of technology, but we need to be back together at Friends Together.

We can't go into specifics. But know that when it is deemed safe, we will have a way for all of us to be in the same room during our support groups.

So, stay tuned and please be patient as we continue to support one another and stay connected through Zoom.



Owlbert, our meeting helper

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 different ongoing support groups each week. One is sure to fit your needs. See page 8 for a full list.



You Are Not Alone

Inspiration Garden/Butterfly Release



This summer we will have a peaceful new space to be with our memories and hopes. Soon Friends Together will break ground on our new Inspiration Garden. The death of our ever-inspirational board member Betty Smigelski was the catalyst for this new garden to be installed at the front of our building on Prentiss St.

As you watch the landscaping take place in the coming weeks, know that we will have a formal unveiling along with a honorary Butterfly Release near summer's end. In the next edition of The Voice, you will have information on how you can donate in your name or in the name of a loved one and watch as butterflies are set free to soar.

Special thanks (in advance) to our board member Gary Stephan for his efforts to make our new inspiration garden a reality.

<p>Memory Care</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B BESSER</p> <p>Assisted Living</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY</p> <p>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>
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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

Jody Baldwin
 Gladys Bennett
 Carl Pilarski
 Judy Hampton
 Kurt Ries
 Roger Stelzer
 Tom Render
 Rita Losinski
 Julia Cadarette
 Barry Keller

Greg Causley
 Rob Adamski
 Bob Przykucki
 Sally Brenner Schaedig
 Irv Crow
 Betty Smigelski
 Patti Duncan
 John Gloss
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Guys Like Us



Be a part of this informal group of men providing encouragement and support every week. Please join us on Zoom. **Wednesdays at 10:00am**
 A Cancer Support Group For Men

For more information call (989) 356-3231

SKIBA VISION CENTER, PLLC.

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

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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

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Alpena, MI 49707
(989) 356-3231

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COMING EVENTS

POP-UP BOUTIQUE MAY 15

RALLY IN THE ALLEY GARAGE SALE MAY 15 & 16

SCRAMBLE FOR FRIENDS JUNE 5

DRIVE THRU FUNDRAISER JUNE 25

DUELING PIANOS JULY 17

PIG ROAST JULY 25

come to Friends Together's community Garage sale

RALLY in the ALLEY

@ The Thunder Bowl Lanes on Ripley in Alpena

Saturday
May 15
8am-5pm

Hot Dog
concessions
11am-1pm



Sunday
May 16
10am-2pm

Friends Together's
Women on Wednesday Support Group Presents

POP-UP BOUTIQUE

May 15, 2021

• Scarves & Ties • Purses & Belts • Hats & Jewelry

8am-1pm (or sold out) @ The Thunder Bowl Lanes

