



2023 Great Lake to Lake Memorial Bike Riders

WHAT'S INSIDE:



Summer is finally here! At Friends Together summer is fundraising season.

PAGE 2



Even if we do everything right and live 'as directed by medical experts' we can still be diagnosed with a condition that limits our days.

PAGE 4



We drove nearly 5,000 miles transporting patients to their cancer care appointment during the month of May.

PAGE 8

we help people with cancer, and their loved ones too

THE voice OF Friends

**ISSUE NO. 3
SUMMER
2023**

Third Party Fundraising

a small group of caring people can be powerful

you can make a difference

Periodically an individual will approach us with an idea to raise money to help Friends Together help people in our area with cancer. We couldn't be more tickled when this happens. It means so much to us that others understand the daily effort needed to fundraise. As a nonprofit, everything we do for others is because someone had a big heart and shared their time, talents, money and/or idea to raise money with us.

We try to educate the community so they know the financial hardships people incur as they go through cancer treatment. But we realize it is difficult to understand unless you've lived it or watched someone you love endure the stress, sickness, emotional ups and downs.

One individual recently gathered a small group of dedicated individuals to raise awareness and money for Friends Together. Peggy Marzean dreamed up The Great Lake to Lake Memorial Bike Ride. This five-day ride covered 285.2 Michigan miles. The group rode an average of 8 hours a day from the start in South Haven on Lake Michigan to the end in Sarnia on Lake Huron.

Throughout the ride they remembered loved ones and share the story of hope and support; all while bringing awareness along wherever they travelled.

Have you thought of giving back? Turn to page two (2) for a brief explanation of Third Party Fundraising and the how-to tips.

continued on page 2



Lori Gehrke & Peggy Marzean

Friends Together is grateful for the generosity of so many individuals and organizations that make it possible for us to help those dealing with cancer. People in our community often spend their own time and money organizing 3rd party fundraisers to benefit Friends Together. These fundraisers include everything from concerts, bake sales and 5k races, to poker tournaments, casino trips, raffles, and more.

What is a third party fundraising event?

A third-party fundraising event, or Friendraiser, is conducted entirely by an individual, group or organization in the community with proceeds to benefit Friends Together.

Friendraiser ideas:

- Photo Contest
- Facebook Fundraiser
- Private Christmas Party
- Garage Sale
- Jeans Day at the Office
- Trivia Night
- Tailgate Party
- Scavenger Hunt
- Costume Party
- Gala
- Singing Telegram Service
- Wine Tasting Event

If you are interested in hosting your own third-party Friendraiser event to benefit Friends Together, please contact Shelly: (989) 356-3231 or shelly@friendstogethermi.org and we'll help make your event a success!



MELISSA BURNS

SUMMER FUN:

coming together for you

*Summer is finally here!
At Friends Together summer is fundraising season.*

As many of you know, we hosted our annual “drive-thru fundraiser” in June. Because many families must travel for cancer care, it was decided that this year’s proceeds will go toward our lodging assistance program; providing cancer patients and their families a place to stay when traveling for care. Organized by Fundraising Coordinator, Shelly Gibbs, Friends Together staff and volunteers stayed up for 24 hours collecting donations, raising more than anticipated!

Although we exceeded our goal, not all donations were monetary. While most donated cash, others showed up to donate their time by cooking hot dogs, waving in vehicles from the street, or helping set up tables and canopy tents. Local businesses stopped by to donate food and beverages for our fundraising crew. Our neighbors at the radio station spent time with us to help promote the event while playing music for everyone to enjoy!

What made this fundraiser unique is that I was able to talk to just about every person driving through, giving me a snapshot of who our donors are. Most felt compelled to share with me why they were there. One young woman drove up in an older vehicle with her three children; I could tell they were heading to the beach nearby. She handed me 4 crumpled one-dollar bills and said, “it’s not much, but you helped my mom when she had cancer,” thanking us with teary eyes. Almost every donation during those 24 hours came with a similar story.

Whether it is a gift of money, time or a special talent, everyone has something to contribute to the betterment of our community. This is the reason that Friends Together can continue this important work making sure no one goes through their cancer journey alone.

families need support, too we understand

There are a variety of programs of support for the person with cancer. But what about those who love the person with cancer? They too have a cancer journey. Is it different than experiencing cancer firsthand? Of course. But their journey is just as real.

Family, friends, and others who care about and for those with cancer need support, too. We understand.

Friends Together is absolutely here for your loved one before, during, and after treatment.

We are here for you, too.

Our support groups are directed toward the patient. But loved ones can attend group to help

understand what their person is experiencing - all in the safe atmosphere of the support group.

During group confidentiality, respect for each individual's choice, and open, honest communication are key.

Call Friends Together for more information on how we can support you.



4 Tips Choose your path

Get to know yourself

It can be difficult to know our true selves. We are often told who we are and what we should do. Understanding who you are and what matters to you is the first step to choosing the path that best fits your needs.

Ask for advice

Don't make decision in a vacuum. We can't know everything. Asking experts and friends for their opinion can help you to see other views and gain knowledge. Add this new information to what you already knew to strengthen your choice.

Research your options

Talk to people who've been in a similar position. Learn the ins & outs of what can realistically happen with each choice. Make your move with facts, not fiction. Weigh all choices and possible outcomes.

Don't be afraid to change your mind

So, you've made your decision and aren't liking the outcome. It is ok to opt for a different path. Choosing one way over another is the right answer for only as long as you say it is.

family fun day: August 20, 11am—2:30pm

Friends Together presents
FAMILY FUN DAY

Friends Together is partnering with Dinosaur Gardens to celebrate Families! We welcome all families coping with cancer who have children - young or old.
THIS DAY IS FOR YOU!

Sunday, August 20, 2023
11am-2:30pm

Free Admission with wristband

27 Life-sized Dinosaurs
Win Prizes
Lunch 12pm-2pm
Putt-Putt Golf

Must have wristband by August 18, 2023.
Contact Friends Together for your wristband.
(989) 356-3231

1180 U.S. 23 South Ossinehe, MI 49766 (989) 471-5477

Friends Together is partnering again with Dinosaur Gardens to celebrate Families!

We welcome all families coping with cancer who have kids.
THIS DAY IS FOR YOU!

Free Admission - must have wristband from Friends Together.

Win Prizes, Eat Lunch, Putt-Putt, Dinosaurs & more!

THE MEASURE OF A LIFE

It's about more years



LESSLEE DORT

Have you ever noticed how some books linger longer than others? In some way books shape my life, clarify my thoughts, and (hopefully) open my mind. Without planning it, some texts even echo a real-life situation. That was the case, recently.

The book, The Measure by Nikki Erlick, still resonates with me. The over-arching plot was a topic many people deal with every day: Would you make different decisions or live your life differently if you knew the span of it? Then it took a twist. All at once, every adult in the world could know, with certainty, the span of their life. All they had to do was look in the box that was delivered to their doorstep for the answer.

Would you look? What would you do if you learned you only had two years to live? Six months? What if you knew you were going to live into your mid-80s? Would you conduct your life differently? How many different areas of your life might be impacted if you knew how much time you had left on earth? What if you held a position of power? Would you demand to know the lifespan of those around you and use it to your advantage? That is exactly what the characters in the book dealt with in varying degrees.

And while the plot of the book seems fantastical, every day in medical centers across the world countless people are hearing the span of their life might be less than they thought.

We all know the average lifespan for a human. Many of us understand that certain factors reduce that lifespan. Even if we do everything right and live 'as directed by medical experts' we can still be diagnosed with a condition that limits our days.

Would you like to know the length of your life? How would that impact your romantic involvement with someone? Would you start a family, or quit your job? Does the answer to that question change if you were told you had six months to live versus 30 years?

Those among us diagnosed with life-shortening medical issues deal with this question. We have specific knowledge we didn't before. Once we know something, we can't remember what it was like not to know it. Nor can we choose to not know it once we've

heard it. Unlike a fictional story, ours is not concrete knowledge. Doctors and experts can give us a prognosis and treatment plan based on medical expertise. But the treatment may make living uncomfortable. Treatment can bring with it many other conditions; good and bad, physical and mental. But you won't know the impact treatment has on you until you try. And once you try, you've potentially changed the quality of your life. All choices have consequences.

The measure of a life isn't how long our body lives. Our life should be measured by how long the things we did while we are alive are still felt after we've gone. We live on in others because of our life's choices. What choices have you made? What legacy will you leave? Will the impact of your life positively change a life? Will your words, your presence, and your friendship make a difference in another's life? And then, because of how they were impacted by you, will they continue forward making someone else's life better.

The ripple effect of each of our lives cannot be measured in years. The measure of our lives is far greater than we can ever fully comprehend. Each day matters. Stop saying someday I will make amends, volunteer, strengthen my relationship with (fill in the blank), or advocate for myself. We simply need to make each day, each moment count. If you were in your last days, how would you speak to people? How would you treat your neighbor? How would you want to be remembered?

Support Groups

Participating in group support provides you with an opportunity to be with people who are likely to understand one another and have a common purpose.

compassion

privacy

laughter

respect

understanding

hope

GROUP FOCUS

there's one for you

Each week Friends Together offers several different support groups for those among us with cancer and those who love them. Read on to learn about the opportunities available for support, hope, and friendship.

On page 6 you will see a list of all the support groups we offer.

Did you know we have a group for men and one for women? We do this on purpose so each can speak freely among like persons.

We also have support groups north of Alpena and south of Alpena. Men and women can receive support through group meetings on Mondays in the Presque Isle area, or on Tuesdays in the Tawas area.

There are also a few specialized groups that support the individual in other ways than just talk.

Mindful Movement for Healing is for women-only. This slow movement class will help all who attend with simple, useful stretches.

Friends Crochet & Craft is for men and women. During this group, attendees can bring a craft

project they are working on or start one of ours. Through the creative process can come much healing.

For further information on any of our support groups or programs, please contact us.



Group members from the Tawas area proudly display their creations.

“Why do I attend a support group? Easy. I am always in a better place when I leave here (support group) than when I come in.”

Benefits include:

- Feeling less lonely, isolated or judged
- Reducing distress, depression, anxiety
- Being open/honest about your feelings in a safe place
- Improving skills to cope with challenges
- Gaining a sense of empowerment, control, hope

mayoclinic.org

TUESDAY TOPICS

come learn with us

August 8, 2023 @ 4:30pm

Nutrition during and after Treatment Understand the importance of good food/fuel to help your recovery. Paulette Feldhiser, RD

September 12, 2023 @ 4:30pm

Advance Directive Join us as we learn why it is important to have advance directives and what they need to have to be legal. Kelly Perry, Advance Care Planning Educator, MyMichigan Medical Center

October 11, 2023 @ 4:30pm

Sleep! It is more than just closing your eyes at night. Learn how to get a good night's sleep and why it is so important. Jane Bailey RRT, RPSGT, MyMichigan Medical Center

PROGRAMS OF SUPPORT

all Friends Together programs are open to the public and free of charge

Each diagnosis of cancer brings new trials. The patient and their loved ones are stepping into a world that seems to have its own language and rhythm. Lean on us as you travel this journey called cancer. We've walked a similar path and are here to help. You do not need to do this alone.



Group support in Alpena

Friends Crochet & Craft

Learn crafty ways to overcome 'chemobrain'. Meets in April, June, August, October, and December on Mondays at 3pm. For men and women.

Good Grief

Meets Tuesdays at 10am. For those dealing with loss.

Mindful Movement for Healing

Slow movement to improve balance and overall women's health during and after treatment. Meets Tuesdays at noon in January, March, May, July, September, & November.

Tuesday Topics

Join us on the second Tuesday of each month at 4:30pm for our monthly program. Available in person at Friends Together or via Zoom.

Guys Like Us

For men with cancer. Meets each Wednesday in person and via Zoom at 10:00am.

Women on Wednesday

For women with cancer. Meets in-person and via Zoom on Wednesdays at 4:30pm. Come for a dash of hope, some laughter, and real-talk.

Be YOU tiful

For women with cancer who would like to look and feel their best. Join us for this evening of pampering. Offered periodically.

Friends Breathe Together

Meets the first Thursday of the first full week of the month at 2pm. For men and women who want to improve breathing, speech, and swallowing following treatment.

Friends Eat Together

For all with cancer who find eating in public uncomfortable due to dysphagia. Meets the first Thursday of the first full week of the month at 4pm.

Group support off-site

Friends Together North

All meet on Mondays at the *Presque Isle Library in Rogers City* at 3:00pm.

Friends Together South

Men and women meet at 5:00pm on Tuesdays at *Knights of Columbus in East Tawas*.

Contact us for more information. (989) 356-3231 www.friendstogethermi.org

Thank you to all who volunteered, donated, and helped us put on our first 24-hour drive-thru fundraiser. We helped raise awareness to the need in our communities. Whether being treated locally or out-of-town, neighbors are supporting neighbors through Friends Together.

Thank you for your support

“Hello, this is Joan (from the hospital downstate your doctor referred you to). Your scan will be at 7:30am next week, Tuesday. This is the only time we could get you in.”

Imagine this was a message you heard on your answering machine. You need the scan in order to properly diagnose and determine treatment. But, in order to get to a 7:30am appointment you will need to start driving around 2:30am. That is a blurry-eyed time to drive if you are healthy. If you are dealing with cancer it comes close to crushing your spirit.

You thought about a hotel the night before. But rates are climbing upwards of \$200 a night. With all your medical bills, money is beyond tight right now.

Friends Together can help. We are here to support you along your cancer journey; diagnosis, treatment, survivorship.

With MyMichigan and the Alpena Cancer Center, we have wonderful cancer care right here. But even our medical facility can't handle all. Sometimes specialists are required.

When cancer care takes you away from home, Friends Together can help. Whether you need lodging for an outpatient appointment or your loved one needs a place to stay while you are an inpatient, we can help with lodging during your cancer journey.

“

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

”

Charles Dickens



3 ways your donation Helps our neighbors

VAN TRANSPORTATION GOING OUT OF TOWN

Traveling for cancer care can be unmanageable for some. Because you help us buy and maintain two vans, we can often drive to out-of-town appointments.

GAS CARDS

OFF SETTING THE COST OF FUEL

Making multiple trips for weekly treatment can be financially daunting. Your donations help take the sting out of the cost of fuel.

LODGING

KNOWING YOU CAN REST

Driving and going to appointments well-rested is critical to the success of your treatment. Your donation may represent a safe, clean bed at the end of a long day to wrap folks in supportive love.





SHELLY GIBBS

TRANSPORTATION & LODGING

Cancer treatment and logistics

We drove nearly 5,000 miles transporting patients to their cancer care appointment during the month of May.

Friends Together currently offers two vans that are in full use as we are actively transporting patients from Alpena and 5 surrounding counties: Alpena, Alcona, Presque Isle, Montmorency, Oscoda and Iosco.

In May 2023, Friends Together drove over 4,750 miles getting patients to and from their cancer related medical appointments. And that is just one way we help patients get to treatment.

As soon as you or someone you know is in need of transportation or lodging assistance related to their

cancer treatment, please contact us.

When calling to request a ride, it is crucial that requests are made with as much notice as possible. Rides are coordinated in the order that we receive the request.

Friends Together can provide gas cards for those that have their own means of transportation.

As the need increases for Friends Together to transport, so does the need for more volunteer drivers.

Karen Hansen

one of our
volunteer drivers

*Volunteers are crucial to the success of Friends Together!
If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver
please call Friends Together (989) 356-3231.*

Introducing Karen Hansen, volunteer driver for Friends Together. Karen is a native of Alpena who returned to her hometown to be closer to her family and to enjoy the beauty of northern Michigan and the sandy shores of Lake Huron. Having compassion for those who have been affected by a medical concerns including a cancer diagnosis, Karen stated that “it’s a great way for her to help others...a little bit of time, helps out in a huge way”! She said, “I like to do things like this to be part of the bigger picture in life, beyond myself”. She enjoys being a volunteer driver and getting to know the patients she transports.

**If you are interested in being a volunteer or a volunteer driver,
please call 989-356-3231!**



Spontaneous Donations

kind people generously contributing

“

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

Mahatma Gandhi

”

Every once in a while, we will be surprised by a group of people who just want to help. They get together completely on their own, come up with a plan, and execute it. Here are a few recent examples.

Pastor Jim & Jeanne Nephew donated on behalf of the Alpena Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The American Legion Oscoda 274 held a Poker Run to benefit Friends Together.

This year's MacKenzie Invite in memory of Lori MacKenzie was held in May. Proceeds from the baseball tournament came to us.

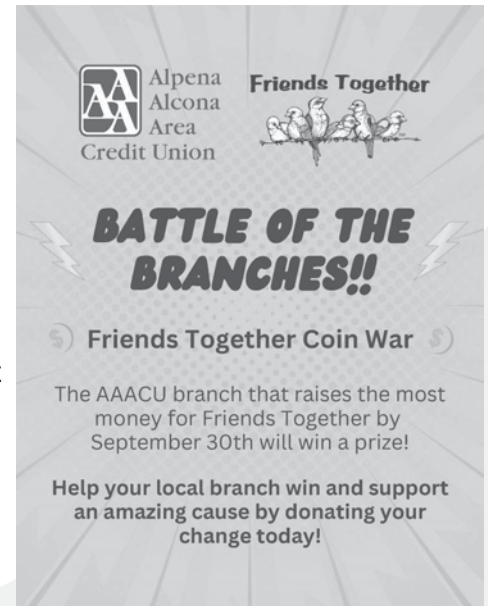
Pat Niedzwiecki and Darryl McQuarrie presented a donation on

behalf of the Alpena VFW Auxiliary #2496.

Track IV played at Bolton Ridge Bar & Grill dedicating the proceeds to Friends Together.

The 2nd Annual Dave Hillert Memorial Hubbard Lake Classic in February raised funds for those dealing with cancer.

On behalf of those we serve, **thank you, all!** ❤️



it's a fun mystery

pop up purse party @ Maplewood Tavern

July 18, 2023

Grab your best girls and make your way to our newest event - a **Pop-Up Purse Party!** You read it right. This FUNraiser will be held on Tuesday, July 18th from 5:30-8:30pm, at the Maplewood Tavern.

There will be a cash bar, food, live music, and, of course, a plethora of purses with surprises inside! All who are interested in a grab bag can purchase a token for one of our mystery purses. \$20 each. Some

exciting wins in random purses. Let's pack the house for our pop up purse party. Call us for more information.

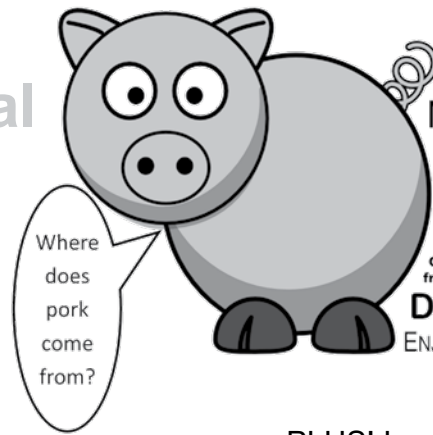


Pig Roast 2023: a succulent drive-thru meal

July 23, 2023 @ The Depot on Fletcher Street
1 - 5pm \$15/ticket

That's right! Our annual pig roast is just around the corner. This event sells out every year! Get your tickets and know that on July 23rd you will have all you need for a great meal. Meet friends or family at the park or bring a meal to someone who can't get out to get their own.

We are keeping the prices the same as they've been for several years. Why you ask? This is a fundraiser for us, yes. But we want to make it as accessible as possible. \$15 is a very reasonable price for the amount and quality of food we serve at the pig roast. Oftentimes, folks will generously tell us to 'keep the change' and our hearts swell with gratitude.



NOT SURE what to do for
Dinner on
July 23, 2023

Come to THE DEPOT ON FLETCHER STREET
from 1-5pm

Drive-thru
ENJOY A YUMMY PORK MEAL

PLUS! Large cash raffle -
\$2,000 1st Prize, \$500 2nd
Prize, Re/Max Hot Air Balloon
Ride 3rd Prize. Cost is 3 tickets
for \$20. Tickets available at
Friends Together. Drawing will
be Sunday, August 20th at
Dinosaur Gardens.

BALANCE
WELLNESS PROGRAM
SPECIALIZING IN:

- Hormone Balance Evaluations / Testing / Consults
- Nutritional Education Consults

Schedule an appointment with
Dr. Kristine Spicer, Pharm.D. today!

www.lefavepharmacy.com
email: balance@lefavepharmacy.com

989.354.3189

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

**ALPENA SDA
CHURCH**

Alpena Seventh-Day
Adventist Church
WORSHIP SATURDAY AM
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM

4029 US 23 South, Alpena, MI 49707
989-356-2932
www.alpenamisda.org

Proudly Serving the Greater
Alpena and Hillman Communities

Bannan Funeral Home

222 S. Second Avenue 131 E. First Street
Alpena, Michigan 49707 Hillman, Michigan 49746
(989) 354-8411 (989) 742-3993
www.bannanfuneralhome.com

TBTA: (989) 354-2487
Call for out-of-town appts. & contracted services.

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

KEITH D. WALLACE
of the law firm of
Isackson, Wallace & Pfeifer, P.C.
114 S. Second Ave., Alpena, MI 49707
989-354-8242

50+ Years of Experience in
Trusts, Wills, Probate and Medicaid Matters

HURON
Aviation
SERVICES

989-340-0829
www.huronaviation.com

**FLIGHT TRAINING
& SIMULATOR**

**FAA CERTIFIED
MECHANICS**

**AIRPLANE
RENTALS** **CHARTERS**

NORTH COUNTRY
Aviation
INC.

989-732-6192
www.northcountryaviation.net

gifts: in memory and in honor

We remember friends who have been memorialized or honored by their loved ones with this single list in each newsletter edition. Each has taught us something about living well through the cancer experience. Each leaves lasting, loving memories in our hearts. We promise to do all we can to support and care for those in northeast Michigan touched by cancer. Please contact us if you have any questions about this listing.



*“Those we love and lose
are always connected by
heartstrings into infinity.”*

~Terri Guillemets



- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Crystal Nelson | Shirley Mackenzie | Carl Pilarski |
| Rick Bennett | Francis Stafford | Dawn Burns |
| Ernie Nagy | Lowell Thomas Cannon | Janet LaFave DeLonge |
| Dave Karschnick | Barbara Lee Waltz | |
| Chuck Vogelheim | John Hering | Tim Buse |
| Rose M. Freel | Scott Olson | Melissa Burns |
| George Holmes | Ken Burman | Dawn Coleman |
| Joann Zinke | Debra Lange | Stacy Rieger |
| Jeff Trelfa | William Dzieszinski | Joe Zaborney |
| Virginia Suszek | Betty Smigelski | Wayne Leonard |



**Alpena
Alcona
Area
Credit Union**

**New Members
Always Welcome!**

CALL 989-356-3577
www.aaacu.com







the drug store  **Health Mart
PHARMACY**

CBD Oils

The modern drug store where you are greeted with a friendly *“Hello”* and *“How can we help you?”*

- **Accepting All Major Health Plans**
- **Free Delivery Service**
- **Drive Through Window**

...where Pharmacist Keith Misiak and Jim Straley will be glad to serve you!

2236 US-23 S • ALPENA • (989) 354-2171



When time matters,
it matters who you choose.

We're ready to help. Right now.

McLaren
HOSPICE | PALLIATIVE CARE | HOMECARE

Visit www.mclaren.org/healthmanagement, or call (866) 323-5974



**NEIGHBORHOOD
PROVISIONS**

ALPENA'S LOCAL CANNABIS CO.

Family Owned & Operated
MED & REC | NPROVISIONS.COM
989.266.9333 | 909 W WASHINGTON AVE. ALPENA

Nicolet
NATIONAL BANK

Alpena | NicoletBank.com | 800.369.0226



Retirement Living

300 Oxbow Drive • Alpena MI • (989) 354-4200
turningbrook@rlmgmt.com • www.rlmgmt.com



Enjoy a FREE small Cup of Coffee

Friends Together is Celebrating 27 Years!

Thank you Friends and Volunteers!



expires 2/29/24





FRIENDS TOGETHER

We Help People with Cancer, and their loved ones too

105 Prentiss Street
Alpena, MI 49707

Non Profit
US Postage PAID
Permit 157
Alpena, MI
49707

spotlight on services

one-on-one emotional support - group support
gas cards transportation - lodging - wigs - comfort bags
patient planner - hats - healing comfort shirts
bras & forms - and more



You are not alone reach out for support

Friends Together is here to help you and your loved ones throughout the entire cancer experience. From diagnosis to treatment and into survivorship, we are here for you. No one needs to be alone if they don't want to be. Our services are free. Stop into our office to learn more about us. You will find a warm, inviting atmosphere with a staff full of compassionate, understanding individuals.

For more information please call us at **(989) 356-3231**, visit our website **www.friendstogethermi.org**, or simply walk-in at **105 Prentiss in Alpena**.