

# THE Voice of Friends

We Help People With Cancer

## 25 YEARS STRONG

### This *issue*

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Over the past year we have shared the memories from those who helped us grow these 25 years. Now we would like you all to hear from those we help. If you have ever wondered what the true impact of Friends Together is, read on. The following quotes will clearly explain why we do what we do and why it is so vital to health and well-being of our communities.



**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 is a place to find comfort and give comfort. A place where everything is spoken. A place where strangers come together and become loving, supportive friends. A place of healing, a source of strength. A place to face what has happened and move forward each day living life to the fullest." ~TR*

(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.



**Friends Together**

[www.friendstogethermi.org](http://www.friendstogethermi.org)

FOR DETAILS CONTACT [talktous@friendstogethermi.org](mailto:talktous@friendstogethermi.org)


# Good Friends Never Say Goodbye They Simply Say “See You Soon”

Saying ‘Goodbye to Bill’ is really difficult...let me tell you why.

Newly retired Bill sat in my office about 15 years ago and said, “I’m Bored!”

It was at that time Friends Together started to grow and thrive and the need was great for a ‘master mind’ of grant writing and another helping hand as we continued serving so many with so little resources. Bill was part of the move into our little-tiny first office on State Street. He helped secure our very first van. Bill always had an eye for detail and a compassionate heart all rolled into one. He kept the staff in line and more importantly filled us with laughs and giggles with his quick wit and quiet presence. He enjoyed being in the background...working privately but at the same time he was the face of Friends Together throughout our community.

## BILL TRIVIA

- 
- Bill grew up on the south side of Chicago and is an avid Cubs Fan.
  - Graduated from the Nilis College of Loyola University as an English Major.
  - Worked hand in hand in the poorer areas of Chicago neighborhoods with community outreach programs as a Community Organizer.
  - Married Marge and moved to Michigan working as the Youth Minister for the Gaylord Diocese, later with Catholic Human Services, and involved in two parishes of Alpena as School Principal and Education Coordinator.
  - Bill and Marge have 4 adult children and 4 beautiful grandchildren...the joy of his life.
  - Never one to step aside, Bill serves on the Boys and Girls Club Board and now sits as President of St. Vincent DePaul Society Board.
  - Bill loves his family, good black coffee, music, chocolate and red wine.

I’ve known Bill for 40 years and in all of that time I was so keenly aware of his integrity and loyalty—to his family—his friends—his community and his God. I am so much the better for walking this path with him. We wish Bill a healthy and adventurous retirement. Thank you Bill....from all of us.....for the great work and dedication you give. “See You Soon.”

Sincerely, Judy and the loving community of Friends Together

**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.*

**Bill Morford retires from  
Friends Together, December 2021.  
We wish you the best in all, Bill.**

*"Friends Together...a source of comfort, strength, love & friendship. Being part of it makes me a better person." ~DR*

## 25 years strong (cont)

(continued from page 1)

"I was headed downhill with no plan...I believe I'd be dead now if not for the support of Friends Together." ~ LT

"To be understood is to feel loved. In group, we share a common experience, we learn what may help." ~DB

"...I can get help navigating my appointments. I couldn't make some of them without (the help) of Friends Together." ~BF

"Friends Together...like being wrapped in a cozy warm blanket of love and hope." ~AB

Friends Together is here for you and your loved ones, too. Whether it is through support groups, transportation & lodging assistance, or help with a wig or prosthetics, we are here. You are not alone.



## WELCOME

Friends Together is happy to announce the employment of Michelle Hoes, Financial Administrator.

Michelle comes to us with a strong background in financial analytics and practical office financial oversight.

Recently Michelle's father, Dave Hillert, passed after a courageous battle with lung cancer. Dave was a member of The Guys Like Us support group and the impact of that experience encouraged Michelle to join our staff.

Michelle is married to TJ Hoes and they are happy to announce the recent birth of their little bundle of joy, Parker.

Welcome Michelle!!



## 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.

# Tell it to the tattle-phone

Several years back there was a popular movement to stop complaining for 21 days. It was a challenge people would give themselves. Whole companies would get on board and challenge their employees to participate. The challenge had fairly simple rules, on the surface:

- Get (and wear) an official Complaint Free Bracelet
- Switch the bracelet to the other wrist with every spoken or written complaint
- Stay with it until you go 21 days in row without complaining and become a certified Complaint Free person

This challenge seemed to have it all and just three rules! And one of the rules was to simply get some bling. The bling was important, not only for the creator's bottom line, but for accountability. It served as a reminder of the task you've undertaken. It told those around you, 'Hey, I'm trying to do this and I'm announcing it by wearing this purple bracelet. So, I'm basically giving you permission to correct my behavior as a way to help me grow to be a better person.'

Step two was the tricky one. You were to change the wrist the bracelet rested on every time you forgot and aired your complaint. It messed up

a lot of people. That was the genius of the movement. It seemed easy. It seemed like we could all live in a paradise of tranquility if we just got everyone around us to commit to this certification program.

We could almost collectively hear the din of chorus music. More than 14,000,000 bracelets were ordered. Popular personalities from Oprah to Oz sung it praises. Dr. Maya Angelou even wrote the forward for Will Bowen's international bestselling book "A Complaint Free World", which, by the way, sold over 4 million copies and was printed in 35+ languages. At last count 106 countries were inundated with purple rubber bracelets, at a mere \$7.97 each. A literal purple wave covered the globe.

If you were one of the dedicated, after 21 days in a row of no complaining you became a certified Complaint Free person.

On the surface the program seemed fun and harmless and could ultimately serve to make communication among us more pleasant. But did it work? If the noise I hear coming from today's news programs is any indication, I don't think it stuck.

Just the other day I listened to a two year old podcast from This American Life entitled, 'No Fair!' It was, at times, delightful. But moreover, it was eye-opening. It held such static truths about the human condition. The segments focused on a pre-K classroom, an NBA replay room, and the Constitution of the United States, specifically the Ninth Amendment. Each story, in its own way, was about grievances. Someone was wronged by another and wanted justice.

In the pre-K classroom the teacher, in an effort to squash the incessant complaints of this age group, installed an old tissue box on the wall with an attached plastic phone receiver. She explained to her students that this was the new tattle-phone. If they needed to tattle, tell it to the phone. Like the complaint-free bracelets, it was brilliant, at first. But after a month, the students ceased used of the tattle-phone. Why? It didn't fix the situation. Seamus still had issues with sharing. Nathan never did apologize. Eli still hit.

Fairness. That is the common denominator in life. We desire the world to be fair. We complain when we judge a situation to be biased. We want to be heard. We need to feel that others see our point of view and agree we've been mistreated. We want justice, absolution, love and understanding. None of those things are out of line in the scheme of life. So why don't more people feel accepted and heard?

Could it be that those around us are so busy airing their own versions of neglect that can't pause to take in another's mistreatment? We are all tired. We are all trying to be our best selves. One t-shirt I've seen says it best, 'I'm not saying it's your fault. I'm saying I'm blaming you.'

The big question is can the world be fair and just for all? No. Not as long as we are individuals with the right to our own views and customs. Perhaps what we need to work on is acceptance and understanding. Rather than highlight what is different among us, let's focus on working together to make our environments the best they can be. If everyone took a minute to think through how what they said or wrote might impact another, to consider others' feelings first, we might just love a little more.

~ *Lesslee Dort*, Program Manager & Patient Advocate



## The Donor Dollar

Recently overheard, "You certainly do a lot of fundraising. I want to give my money to help cancer patients, not fund your parties." We couldn't agree more!

Did you know that nationally it's considered good if a nonprofit spends \$35 to earn \$100. Strictly speaking, that is considered a good value fundraiser, financially speaking.

Over the last year, Friends Together has been tracking this very information. Were we surprised! We knew we were careful, but wow!

We found that for every \$100 we earn we only spend a mere \$21!

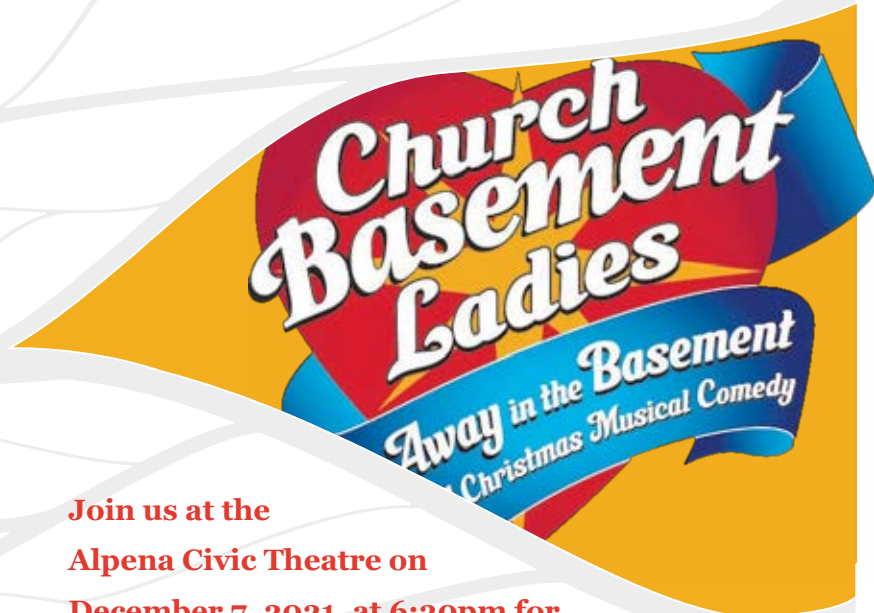
And that isn't even the best news! Our most recent calculations show that on average, 90% of the monies we receive go directly to helping people with cancer in northeast Michigan.

So, as you look to give to a charity, look to Friends Together. Cancer isn't slowing down and we are here to help cancer patients and their families.


## You're Invited

Alpena Civic Theatre has once again asked us back to view their latest live performance. Mark your calendar! *Church Basement Ladies III* opens in December. We are invited to a free night at the theater on Wednesday, **December 7**. Arrive in time for a **6:30pm** show.

Remember, the Alpena Civic Theatre recently installed a new air filtration system to better protect their patrons.



**Join us at the Alpena Civic Theatre on December 7, 2021, at 6:30pm for a private showing of their winter comedy.**



**Nutrition  
TIPS  
for  
cancer  
patients**

**Coming soon! Friends Together is working with MidMichigan Alpena to produce short, informative nutrition videos! These 10 minutes shorts will be freely available to all on our website [www.friendstogethermi.org](http://www.friendstogethermi.org) beginning in February 2022! Stay tuned!**

# Meet One of our Drivers

Your support and generosity give us strength and hope. Please consider a charitable contribution to us in 2021/2022. With your help we will be here for all who need us. We must. Cancer doesn't stop, so neither can we.



Travel & Lodging assistance are two dynamic services that Friends Together provides for cancer patients and their families.

Please meet, Myrl Prevo, who has been a volunteer driver for Friends Together for nearly five years. When asked why he chose to dedicate his time to become a volunteer driver, Myrl stated, "my close friend and neighbor for many years had passed away from cancer and I wanted to do something good for the community." Myrl said that volunteering in honor of his friend helps him by helping others who desperately need transportation to their critical, cancer related appointments.



A cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming. If your diagnosis comes with frequent prescribed treatments and you need help getting to and from home to Alpena's Mid-Michigan Health Center or another neighboring medical facility, contact us!

## Support is just a call away

Do you have a car, but the cost of fuel is overwhelming? We can provide gas cards to defray the cost of cancer.

Please contact Friends Together if you are in need of an overnight stay to receive out-of-town treatment for cancer. We may be able to provide the solution.

Help is available. Lack of transportation or ability to secure lodging should never stand in the way of your cancer treatment.

Call 989-356-3231 today!

## 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.

**This gentleman won big at our annual Comedy Night featuring Dueling Pianos. Maybe 2022 is your year! Tickets on sale for our February 18, 2022, event NOW! \$25.00/each**

## Re-gifting for good

As the gift-giving season approaches keep Friends Together in mind.

Did you know we always welcome new items to give-away at our events?

Keeping our fundraising event costs down is important to us. We want every dollar donated to us to be spent on the care of those undergoing cancer treatment. Instead of us buying gifts and prizes, we will happily accept your new items or gift certificates that you really don't want/need.

Have you been the recipient of a gift? Feel free to pass it on to us. And we will use it to raise money for those who need support.

Clearance shopping after the holidays is another great way to buy items to donate, too.

Next time you unwrap that thoughtful gift you really don't have a use for, smile and think of us! We'll put it to good use.

So, let's clean out that closet you stash your presents in. Friends Together will pass it on.

## Bowling for Friends

Looking for a fun night out with friends and family? We have a perfect idea! Meet us at Thunder Bowl Lanes on Ripley in Alpena on January 21, 2022. Registration begins at 5pm with bowling at 6pm. Tickets include 2 games, pizza, rental shoes, and a chance at a great door prize. Raise extra money to increase your handicap! Prizes to the top 3 teams! Space is limited to 24 teams. Call Friends Together to reserve your spot and learn more.



**These kind folks care about our neighbors with cancer and bowled to raise money to help. Your chance is coming up!**

## Events coming up

### December

Alpena Civic Theatre Play - Dec. 7

Kettlecorn Sales Dec. 17

### January

Bowling for friends Jan 21

### February

Dueling Pianos Feb 18



# Weekly Support Groups

Please note: Support groups meet at Friends Together, unless otherwise noted.

**NOTE: All in person support groups are suspended until the week of January 3, 2022. Please find us on Zoom!**

Call with any questions. (989)356-3231

## **Friends Together North - Rogers City**

Meet others in the Rogers City area who are coping with a variety of cancer issues, share resources and information, discuss family issues and coping strategies. Make new friends who understand. Our evening is filled with comfort and fellowship. Beginning the first and third Wednesdays in January 2022.

## **Good Grief - Alpena**

This group is designed for those journeying through grief after the loss of a loved one. We understand what you are going through. We encourage you to join others who are also coping with the loss of a loved one. Grief can be overwhelming; you are not alone. Feel free to bring a friend or family member. Available on Zoom.

## **Mindful Movements for Healing - Alpena**

Mindful Movements for Healing is designed to nourish, inspire and empower each woman healing from and dealing with cancer. We welcome women (all ages and abilities) touched by cancer to this gentle and therapeutic movement-based experience. *For women only.* Starting in January 2022

## **Caregivers Connect Cancer Support Group - Alpena**

Meet others who share your experience as a caregiver. Recognize your needs and discover ways to care for YOU. Learn about cancer issues and how to partner in your loved-one's care. Refreshments and snacks provided.

## **Friends Together Live! Cancer Support Group - Alpena**

Meet others who are coping with a variety of cancer issues, share resources and information, discuss family issues and coping strategies. Make new friends who understand. Know you are not alone. Our evening is filled with comfort and fellowship.

## **Guys Like Us Cancer Support Group - Alpena**

Morning coffee crew of men who are coping with cancer. Join us in discussion, or just listen. This group is informal and meets to provide encouragement and support. For men only. Every Wednesday on Zoom @ 10am.

## **Women on Wednesdays (WOW) Cancer Support Group - Alpena**

A program of support and wellness for women of *all* ages and backgrounds touched by cancer. We are stronger when each step of the cancer journey is shared. Empower yourself, unite with others, share the journey, and find your voice. Every Wednesday on Zoom at 4:30pm.

## **Living with Loss Support Group - Alpena**

This group is designed for those journeying through grief after the loss of a loved one. Grief is overwhelming; you are not alone. We understand and encourage you to join others who are also coping with the loss of a loved one. Come meet others on a similar journey. Feel free to bring a friend or family member.

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

Friends Together programs are offered in partnership with:



**MidMichigan Health**  
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## Zoom Groups

Beginning November 22, 2021, Friends Together is temporarily suspending in-person support groups. We will still have support options! Each group will have the ability to switch to an online meeting with Zoom. By incorporating technology, we can still effectively support one another through the group experience.

Don't have technology at home? No problem. The Alpena County Library has computers to use! Call them to find out how you can sign up, 989-356-6188.

If you are interested in attending a support group, please call us at 989-356-3231. We can help find the one that best fits your needs and how to sign in.

Please know, support groups are not depressing meetings. Many come to us fearful that they will walk into a room full of crying people. What most find is hope, joy, unconditional support, privacy, and a space to share without judgement.

You are not alone. Your journey is unique. But we are here to share the ups and downs with you. Please reach out if you want to no be alone.

## amazon smile

Do you ever shop at Amazon? Did you know that if you shop smile.amazon.com instead of amazon.com, Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchase amount to Friends Together? YEP!

All you need to do is go to smile.amazon.com when choosing to shop online and select Friends Together as your charity of choice. We will automatically get a percentage of your purchase as a donation.

(No we won't know what you bought)

Note: *smile.amazon.com has the same prices and products as amazon.com.*



## 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 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.



# A BIG thank you to Thunder Bowl Lanes

# Thank You

Have you been to the bowling alley lately? We have! During the peak of Covid last year the bowling alley was incredibly generous with their space. They allowed Friends Together to basically move in to their spacious Other End so our support groups could still meet. We were also able to hold several fundraisers there. It was such a beautiful, large space for us to use while we were remodeling!

Regardless of the challenges we each face, support is important. The circle of support that we experience is overwhelming. We are thankful to all.

Today we are extending a great thank you to John & Bill and their staff for opening their doors to us.

We hope to see you all there for our Bowling Kick-Off event in January!

*see page 7 for more information*

<p>Memory Care</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b> <b>BESSER</b></p> <p>Assisted Living</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY</b></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><b>Alpena Alcona Area Credit Union</b></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

Tom Kwiatkowski  
 Polly Haselhuhn  
 Edna Homan  
 Virginia Bruski  
 Elaine Wagner  
 Stanley Antkowiak  
 Grace Lobel  
 Joe Smith  
 Ed Wojicki  
 Dale Ilsley  
 Gordon Burns  
 Tammy Kennard  
 Carol Rumbles  
 Loreale Rouleau  
 Angela Galbraith

Lee Grant  
 Jackie Smith  
 Pat Richards  
 Barb Skaluba  
 Mary Jane Malone  
 Mary Lou Schlak  
 Cyndi LeDuc  
 Betty Smigelski  
 Dave Hillert

## In Honor

The wedding of Tami and Bruce Anschuetz  
 The birth of Matilda Lea Breckenridge  
 Katie, Joe, and Uncle Jerry  
 Barb Bouerman



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Enjoy a **FREE** small Cup of Coffee  
 Friends Together is Celebrating 25 Years!

**Thank you Friends and Volunteers!**



expires 12/31/21



# Friends Together

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# POP-IN to our Sale

(pre-orders available - call 356-3231)

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17

7am  
to  
2pm

Drive-Thru



**\$10 Kettlecorn & \$15 Caramel Corn Available**

**Friends Together** *We Help People with Cancer*

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