

Winter 2023

THE Voice of Friends

We Help People With Cancer

LOOK TO HOPE

This *issue*

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Each of us has had trials in life. For those with a cancer diagnosis, you know. But sprinkled in and around the tougher times is hope. If you cannot see the hope, let us help you.

What is hope? Hope is a positive state of mind, even in the face of great adversity.

When we are supported and listened to, hope grows.

Friends Together can help you. We offer many avenues of support, all free.

Whether you need the emotional and relatable experience of a support group, or transportation and lodging, our programs are designed to increase your hope and help you make your days their best. Turn the pages and see how we can help you in the days ahead.



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.

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

FOR DETAILS CONTACT talktous@friendstogethermi.org

Always

Dear friends,

As I write this letter, I recall the lyrics written by Irving Berlin and made famous by Patsy Kline. *Always*.

Planning today as we look to tomorrow may seem illusive, impossible maybe. But there is a way.

Friends Together has a plan to secure the tomorrows for persons with cancer and their loved ones. The Dawn Marie Burns Promise Fund

began with that same vision, not for just an hour...not for just a day, not for just a year...but always.

The promise was no one would walk the cancer journey alone. Not Ever.

The promise fund donations will continue to enhance the treatment and recovery experience with support programs and transportation assistance best suited to the needs of the patient and family. Today, tomorrow, and always.

Cancer in some ways is considered a chronic illness – one that has long-lasting effects and oftentimes recurrence. There is no beginning or ending to the challenges one faces. No timeline or deadline is set for assistance and support. We are here for as long as needed.

Friends Together is here. Today. Tomorrow. Always.

Please consider a thoughtful donation to keep the promise going....always.

Always

*I'll be loving you, always
With a love that's true, always
When the things you plan
Need a helping hand
I will understand, always, always*

*Days may not be fair, always
That's when I'll be there, always
Not for just an hour
Not for just a day
Not for just a year, but, always*

*Days may not be fair, always
That's when I'll be there, always
Not for just an hour
Not for just a day
And, not for just a year,
but, always*

Songwriters: Irving Berlin
Artists: Patsy Kline



**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.

Warm regards and a grateful heart,

Founder/Executive Director

"Courage is like love; it must have hope for nourishment."

~Napoleon Bonaparte

Promise Fund

Within this newsletter is an envelope. This envelope is for you to use, if you wish, to contribute to the Dawn Marie Promise Fund. This fund directly helps people with cancer through programs of support, transportation, and lodging.

Our doors are always open and our arms are extended to comfort and love those who need us most. We understand that we cannot provide a cure. But our friends, those with a cancer story, know we care and we will support them in many ways.

That is The Promise, our mission of love, to bring compassion to those with cancer in northeast Michigan.

I invite you to give a hand once more this year and donate to the Dawn Marie Burns Promise Fund. Your monetary gift will ensure that our staff is here and available to those with cancer, and our programs of support for this six county region continue.

Please give a hand to make a difference in the lives of those who are in need.

You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going.

What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, with courage, faith & hope.

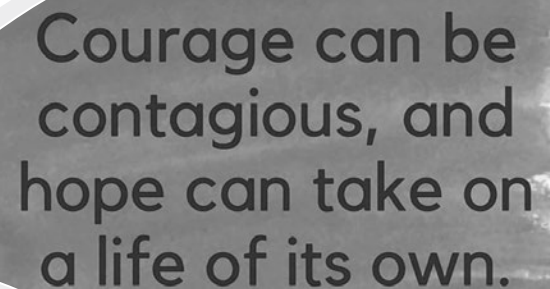
~ Thomas Merton

Helping Students

Friends Together is proud to announce our Board of Directors has made the decision to increase our annual college scholarship amount from \$500 to \$1,000.

Each year, up to two applicants planning to attend Alpena Community College will be considered if they or a close family member have had a cancer experience.

Cancer changes everything in the family dynamic; financially, emotionally, as well as physically. It is our hope that with this helping hand, more of our young adults will opt for a career in healthcare.



Courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own.

— Michelle Obama

Cancer

We are 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. Friends Together has found new and creative ways to help people stay connected during illness, poor weather, or even travel.

Know you can contact us. You are not alone.

What a bay leaf can teach us

I like every part of soup; prepping, simmering, and eating. Doesn't matter the season, a bowl of soup will always sound good to me. The whole process is cathartic.

I often add a bay leaf to my homemade broths. It makes the broth more pleasing and rounded. Because they are nearly impossible to chew, it is relatively important to remove the bay leaf prior to serving soup. One day I forgot to remove the bay leaf and served bowls of soup at a family dinner. Wouldn't you know it, one of my young children discovered it mid-chew.

Not wanting her to be turned off by this unpleasant turn of events, I quickly named it the Lucky Bay Leaf. For some reason I instantly made a big deal about it. To this day, I am purposefully lazy about removing the bay leaf. It has become something we almost search for in hopes of a little good luck sprinkled on our day.

I didn't realize it at the time, but that is when my preoccupation with perception versus perspective began.

These two words hold so much power within our daily lives. Our actions and behaviors can be traced back to how we understand a situation and how we view it. The emotional weight of these words together is considerable.

Perception is an individual's reality. How does anyone argue with perception? No matter what the facts are of any given situation, one's interpretation of a particular situation or belief alters their reality. If you are told and convinced of a thing, you will adopt it into your belief system and adjust your feelings about it going forward. Perspective, on the other hand, is your point of view, the lens with which you see the world.

So what comes first - perspective or your perception? You may think it is your perspective (your point of view) that determines your perception (what things mean to you). According to John Maxwell, a widely known author on the subject of leadership, it is the perception of our reality that controls our perspective. Our perspectives come from our perceptions and our perceptions are created from our beliefs.

Look at it this way; our belief system develops over time. For example, what I believed to be a steadfast truth 20 years ago looks and feels different to me now. Beliefs are often created or altered through repetition or a dramatic emotional impact. We use these learned beliefs to perceive meaning from our circumstances and surroundings. Gaining an understanding of the role of perception and perspective in our lives can be directly related to how we process events and interact with others.

As you hold a conversation with someone, keep in mind that your perception isn't necessarily held by the individual or group. People can only speak from their point of view. Be sure to give each person a safe space to be themselves. While you may not yet know or be able to understand their point of view, it has value. Listening to theirs doesn't mean you have to change yours. We can all hold different beliefs and still respect and love one another. Really listening to what others believe is not only a wonderful educational experience, but it helps us grow and improve our ability to have empathy and show compassion.

Think of the bay leaf. This small addition to soup suddenly took on the power of bestowing luck on the recipient. Train yourself to welcome hearing others' perspectives on a topic. You don't have to change yours. But, it just might lend greater depth to your views.

~ *Lesslee Dort*, Program Director & Patient Advocate

A Note about Support Groups

We Laugh

Often we hear people are reluctant to come to a support group. The most common misperception is that there is a lot of crying during group. Actually, that couldn't be further from the truth.

Support Groups are uplifting. According to one member, "I always feel so much better when I leave group than I did when I arrived." Once you allow yourself to experience the compassion and non-judgmental attitude that is so common in groups, you will wonder why it took you so long to try it.

We Share

Group is a safe space. Group is a confidential place. It has to be in order for the members to share. Sometimes thoughts and feelings are shared that we don't feel comfortable talking to anyone outside of group. Why? Because everyone in group 'gets it.' They understand because they've been in a similar place.

The key to sharing is knowing you never have to share. All with cancer are welcome to attend and share (or not share) as much or as little as they choose.

We Listen

When we share in group, everyone actively listens. They aren't doing anything else besides being present for themselves and the other group members. By giving each individual our attention, we each know we are heard. And if we aren't understood, or we've struck a familiar chord, well that is when the really wonderful, cathartic conversations start. Group is one of our favorite times of the day.

**No matter your
circumstance, there is
Hope, Strength, and
Courage to be found**

Laura Lane

We Care

Coming into our office and into the a support group for the first time can be intimidating. But know you are not alone. When you walk into our building you are greeted warmly, with a smile. If you are coming for the first time, bring a buddy. Or call ahead and talk with one of us. We have all been in scary places in our lives. We understand. We care. We are here so you don't have to go through this alone. **(989) 356-3231**

**You can't get
to COURAGE
without walking through
VULNERABILITY.**

~ Brene Brown

Volunteer drivers - getting you where you need to go

Friends Together's transportation program is a **free** service! We have 2 vans and over 20 volunteer drivers who help get patients to and from their critical cancer care appointments.

Did you know? **In 2022, our volunteer drivers drove nearly 50,000 miles to get patients to treatment – at no cost to the patient!**



Tom Couvreur

Please meet one of our volunteer drivers, Tom Couvreur. Tom began driving for Friends Together about 2 years ago. When I asked him why he decided to become a volunteer he stated, "we had just bought our future retirement home 5 years ago in Presque Isle when I read a newspaper article about Friends and the services they provided. I told myself, that it would be something I would like to be a part of in retirement. The following year I received my own diagnosis and went through treatment. That whole experience and the people I met along my journey made me realize the critical need for an organization such as this. Subsequently, retirement came a little early for me and the opportunity presented itself to start fishing a little more, enjoy up north living a lot more and begin volunteer driving a day or two a week to balance it all out. We are just loving our new life here in NE Michigan and are meeting some of the best people to share it with. Most of us are fortunate enough to have our own support system to assist us when we need a little help, but for those who are not so fortunate, Friends is there to help ease that anxiety and help navigate the road ahead".

Friends Together disbursed \$45,000 in gas cards and fuel so those with cancer wouldn't have too. And, over \$17,000 was spent in providing overnight lodging for patients when traveling to out-of-town care.

When we take a look at these numbers, our hearts are overcome with gratitude for the financial support from our community through donations and fundraisers throughout the year.

We could not do this alone or without the many hours that our volunteers put in to help us.

We Can Help

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

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

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

Shelly Gibbs, Transportation Coordinator

Bowling kick-off

We are kicking off the 2023 season with our annual bowling event! This year's event will be held on January 13, 2023, at Thunder Bowl Lanes. We're calling it

F R I E N D S F R I D A Y

Gather up your 4-person bowling team and start getting your pledge dollars, because your money raised counts toward your handicap. Bowlers who raise the most win prizes!

Minimum of \$80/team of 4 (any team-collected donations boost your team's score!). Includes two games, shoes, pizza, & door prizes. Limited to 24 teams. Call today to secure your team!

Sponsoring Us helps others

Friends Together helps people with cancer. We can do this, in part, because of our sponsors. Our sponsors help to underwrite our events/fundraisers. This, in turn, reduces how much we need to spend administratively. Translation: more of your donations go directly to patients in need. Our sponsorship campaign begins now. If you or your business would like to be a sponsor, call us for details at (989) 356-3231.

In a way, hope
is a type of
Courage too.

~W. Scott

Events coming up

January

13th - Bowling Kick-off Event
@ Thunder Bowl Lanes

February

17th - Dueling Pianos @ APLEX

March

Gas Card Challenge



Shelly Gibbs

dueling pianos

Hey Daddy-O! Don't be a party pooper. Join us for a night of 50s fun! All the cool cats will be there. Dig out those poodle skirts and letter jackets. We are going to have a rockin' good time!

Grab your best guy or gal and sock-hop over to the APLEX on Friday, February 17, 2023. This fantabulous night will again feature the comedic musical talent of Dueling Pianos. We'll have pizza, cash bar, a 50/50 and raffles. Tickets are only \$25 each. Doors open at 6pm and show starts at 7:30pm. Must be 21 to enter.

Weekly Support Groups

Please note: Support groups meet in-person at Friends Together and via Zoom.

Please call the office for Zoom link and more information.

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

Friends Together North - Rogers City

For men and women. Meets each Monday at 5:00pm at the Presque Isle Library. Note: Meets at Kortman's Restaurant on the 2nd Monday of each month.

Friends Think Together

Strategies to overcome 'chemobrain'. Meets the first Monday of the first full week of each month at 2:00pm. 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 the first full week of each month at 4:00 pm,.

Good Grief

Learn to live with your grief and beyond. Tuesdays at 10am at Friends Together.

Mindful Movement for Healing

Meets on Tuesdays at 12pm in January and March. For women only. Whole body slow movement to improve balance and overall health during and after treatment.

Tawas Friends

Men and women meet on Tuesdays at Barnacle Bills in Tawas at 5:00pm.

Tuesday Night with Friends

This group is suspended until further notice. If you have questions, or would like to know about another group call (989) 356-3231 or (313) 770-8813

Guys Like Us

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

Women on Wednesday

Need a dose of hope and real-talk? Join other women who are living with cancer Wednesdays at 4:30pm.

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, swallowing, and cognitive function following treatment.

Friends Eat Together

For both men and women 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. Call for monthly restaurant location.

Friends Together programs are offered in partnership with:



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Resources, resources

Next time you are looking for a good resource, think of Friends Together. We have a library full of materials from all facets of our whole health.

Listed below are just a few of the title of books and pamphlets we have for your use:

What Helped Get Me Through Cancer *Survivors Share Wisdom and Hope*, from the American Cancer Society

Breast Cancer *The Comprehensive Patient Navigation Guide*, by Judy C Kneece, RN, OCN

Journeying through Grief *A set of four short books outlining four crucial times during the first year after loss*, by Kenneth Hauck

Eating Well Through Cancer *Easy Recipes & Recommendations During and After Treatment*, by Holly Clegg & Gerald Miletello, MD

Life After Cancer Treatment, by NIH National Cancer Institute

Radiation Therapy and You, *Support for People with Cancer*, by NIH National Cancer Institute

Pamphlets

from Quality Life Publishing Co

Quality of Life Matters

Managing Your Pain

What is Private Duty Home Care

What is Palliative Care

Hospice Can Help

COURAGE
doesn't always ROAR.
Sometimes courage is that
quiet voice at the end
of the day saying,
"I will try again tomorrow."

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 Monday - Thursday from 9am to 4pm, on Friday 9am-3pm. Plus, we have different ongoing support groups each week. One is sure to fit your needs. See page 8 for a full list.

**Where there
is HOPE
there is LIFE**

Pepsi helps us stay hydrated along the way



Thanks to Pepsi, our patients and volunteer drivers will be well hydrated while on the road.

Each of our vans have been stocked with coolers and water bottles to help us stay as healthy as possible during our journey to and from cancer care.

Every little bit helps. Whether it's a donated gas card for us to pass along, some hand-written notecards to place in comfort bags, or bottles of water. Each kindness makes the cancer journey a little less alone.

Thank you.

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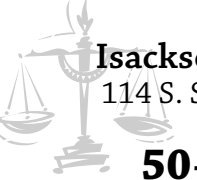




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 Dial-A-Ride is a curb-to-curb service within the City of Alpena & adjacent locations. Reduced fares for seniors and disabled riders.



Business and Family Sponsorships Available
 Did you know your business or family can be an annual sponsor of the Friends Together fundraising efforts? **You can!** Your donated dollars are put to work to help us raise more money to help those with cancer in NE Michigan. Call us for more details. (989) 356-3231

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

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Moore
 Mr. and Mrs. Leo Tolzdorf
 Irvin Crow
 Wayne Helinski
 Wayne Pake
 Tami Townsned
 Connie Wieschowski
 Tom Carroll
 Dave Hillert
 Darlene Robarge
 Herbert Wilcox
 Brad Bhom
 Doug and Pat MacKenzie and Gib
 and Charlotte McClellan
 Dell J Robbins
 Clements Modrzyński

Cyndi LeDuc
 Janice Seavers Krueger
 Gerald Donakowski
 Bob Hunt
 Deb Rouleau
 Amy Buckman Bouchard
 Vincent Filarski
 Linda Ruffert
 John Nemeth
 Marian Carrasco
 Jim Dietlin
 Carl Klee
 Bill Collins and Gordy Montroy
 Brad Birmingham
 Roy Sommerfield
 Linda Blasky
 J. Bobolz

David Frary
 James Bobo Goodrich
 Betty Smigelski
 Tom Garber
 Randy Donajkowski
 Tom Kaminski
 Mary Hincka
 Diane Faris (Schaffer)
 Grace Lobel
 Pat Richards

In Honor

Mark LaCross and
 Rob Simmons
 Janis Smolinski
 Sharon Huitema



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Mindful Movement for Healing

Join us at Friends Together on Tuesdays at noon in January and March for slow stretching. Especially designed for female cancer survivors. All women who've had a cancer diagnosis are welcome, free.

Cancer Support Groups

Monday through Thursday, Friends Together has a variety of support groups available to help you and your family emotionally navigate through a cancer diagnosis. See page 8 for a full listing or call us (989) 356-3231

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HAPPY DAYS & COMEDY NIGHTS

February 17, 2023
@ the APLEX
Doors open at 6pm
Show starts at 7:30pm
Must be 21 to enter
Tickets \$25

DUELING PIANOS

A Friends Together Fundraiser

