



Friends Together

Our newest van, at your service

we help people with cancer, and their loved ones too

WHAT'S INSIDE:



Your contribution matters - here is where some of the donations we receive go
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THE voice OF Friends

ISSUE NO. 4
WINTER
2024

making sense of it all support group options expand

Come explore your senses and how they work in tandem with the healing process. We are embarking on an exciting new approach to support.



Beginning in February, each Tuesday at 4:30pm will offer a unique look into our sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch. We will do this by introducing new ways to get in touch with the power with each of us to control our experiences a bit more than we may have thought we could.

The first Tuesday of each month will offer new techniques we can employ at home in the area of sound and hearing. Experience how different sounds and tones can impact our body and mind. By harnessing our hearing we can bring about a calmer sense of self and therefore a more fertile healing environment. Certain music and sounds can lead to reduced anxiety levels, lessen feelings of tension and sadness as well as diminished pain.

continued on page 5

SAVE THE DATE! Duelling Pianos

Are you ready to listen to some great music in a fun new atmosphere? Have we got the event for you!

Back again by popular demand, Comedy Night featuring Duelling Pianos!

This year's event will be held on **Friday, February 2, 2024**, and will be at the VFW Hall on Connon Street in Alpena.

Doors open at 6:00pm, with the show starting at 7:30pm.

We've worked hard to hold the ticket price at \$25. Reserve your table today! (989) 356-3231.



Journaling

Get ready to unleash your inner author and jot your life story with Melissa Burns!

This 6-week workshop is all about Legacy Journaling - putting your memories, beliefs, and life lessons down on paper. Not only is it a beautiful record of your journey, but it can also be a heartfelt gift to your loved ones.

Bring your favorite journal and pen, or use ours, and let's dive into creative ways to capture your life's adventures.

This program is free of charge and open to any adult who has been touched by cancer - whether you're a patient, caregiver, friend, or professional. Space is limited. Reserve your seat by reaching out to Friends Together: (989) 356-3231 or melissa@friendstogethermi.org.

Let's make your legacy sparkle!

Legacy Journaling

12pm - 1pm @

Friends Together

Thursdays

February 1 - March 7



MELISSA BURNS

YOUR CONTRIBUTION MATTERS

Thank you

Thanks to the tremendous support of our donors and community partners, Friends Together was able to assist over 200 people last quarter throughout our 6-county service area. Here are other ways donor dollars made an impact over the last 3 months:

- **\$14,140 in gas cards** were distributed to our Friends that must travel for cancer care.
- Friends Together vans transported our friends to **125 cancer care appointments** totaling **15,382 miles driven**.
- We were able to offer **59 hotel stays** for those needing a good night's sleep when traveling.
- **150 individuals** sought comfort, information, and understanding at our support groups. We even had some laughs!

Together, we remove the barriers to care that so many in northeast Michigan face. We are grateful that you chose to donate to our mission so those dealing with a cancer experience will get the support they need.

We provide wigs and breast forms/bras

Cancer treatment can make our hair fall out temporarily. While it will likely grow back, we don't think people should go bald if they don't want to.

Friends Together receives funding from Zonta Club of Alpena. We use these funds to purchase a variety of items that can make cancer treatment a little better for women. We are honored to offer free wigs, bras, and breast forms to those wanting them.

If treatment has caused your hair to



fall out, please contact us for a free wig of your choice.

If you have had chest surgery to remove cancer and are in need of a new bra or breast form, please contact us.

In either case we can refer you to professionals to help you, and we'll pick up the tab.

Thanks, Zonta!

Wigs are available for men, too!

crafty mondays

explore with us

Every Monday at 3:00 pm during the months of February, April, June, August, October, and December, men and women gather at Friends Together in Alpena for an afternoon of easy conversation and crafts. Bring your own or use our supplies. Here is what is coming up in February:



Feb 5: Birdseed feeders.

Supplies will be provided. If you'd like to make more than one feeder, please bring additional mason jar lids. We will be discussing goal setting (SMART goals).

Feb 16: Painted hearts. We will be doing paint pour projects. Please expect to leave your project to dry. Supplies will be provided.



We will be discussing coping mechanisms for depression, anxiety, and grief.

Feb 26: Felt Bird paper clip bookmarks. Supplies will be provided. We will be discussing Self-care strategies.



How to combat negative self-talk.

Friends Together

NEED A BRA OR FORM?

If you would like a new bra and breast form because of the effects of your cancer treatment, give Friends Together a call. We can help. (989) 356-3231



Funding for bra and form provided by Zonta Club of Alpena

Do you or someone you know have a cancer diagnosis? You do not need to walk the cancer journey alone. Call us 989.356.3231 or visit our website at www.friendstogethermi.org for support. Email us at talktous@friendstogethermi.org



5 Ways to Show your support

FEBRUARY 2, 2024

Dueling Pianos

Have a roaring good time listening to great music with friends. Buy a ticket, show up, play the games, and be sure to tip (all donations benefits those we help!)

FEBRUARY 17, 2024

Dave Hillert Memorial Fishing Tournament

Walleye and Perch Ice Fishing Tournament held the weekend after Superbowl Each Year Cash Pay out for the longest fish in each category.

MARCH 2024

Gas Card Challenge

The month of March is dedicated to folks who need support getting to and from their cancer appointments. Please help and challenge others to match your thoughtfulness.

MARCH 28, 2024

Mrs Roper's Round-Up

Ready for a fun time and some laughs? We are! Join us at at Players Pub & Grub for a good time.

MAY 4, 2024

"Derby After Dark" Gala

SAVE THE DATE for this exciting new event!

LIFE ISN'T A RACE



LESSLEE DORT

Twenty years ago, a friend and I completed a 60-mile walk. It was a 3-day breast cancer fundraiser organized by the Susan B Komen Foundation. On the surface it seemed as though it would be challenging, 20 miles a day for 3 days in a row, but nothing we couldn't do. Neither of us considered it overly demanding, physically. We walked from the Wisconsin border to Chicago's Lakeshore Drive. There were thousands of women in all shapes and sizes. Walkers who were undergoing cancer treatment walked beside those who finished treatment years ago. Loved ones walking in memory of someone who helped shape their lives.

If I remember correctly, the tagline for the walk was Race for the Cure. The main point of the walk was to raise money for cancer research. There were no prizes for first place at the end of this walk. We simply needed to cover 20 miles a day; 3 days in a row.

My friend and I had different ways to approach this event. What neither of us understood at the time was that the word 'race' in the title burrowed into my psyche. Once implanted, I was compelled by inner forces to go as fast as I was physically able. I was still at a point in my life where I needed to prove something. I required outside validation. I had nothing to measure myself against because I had never walked anything like this before, nor had anyone I knew. My friend wanted us to take the three days as a walking vacation. A time when we could deepen our relationship. Catch up our lives. Enjoy the scenery.

In the end, I did it my way and she did it her way. And while our friendship wasn't negatively impacted over the long run, it was strained a bit for a short time after that walk. Years later I realized how much I regretted not hearing what she was trying to teach me. I don't even know for sure if she knew.

Somewhere along the line, I stopped trying to prove how good I was. I realized I didn't need to be perfect, or better than others. All I ever needed was the approval of one, me. I just needed to do me.

I've since thought of that walk and how it could've gone. Had I taken my time and walked with my friend perhaps we could have even spread more awareness of the importance of monthly self-exams, raised more funds for research along the way, held conversations with

other women, or had a delightful picnic together along the lakeshore. Instead, I raced through till the end of each day, got to camp, often before my friend, and sat around with nothing to do because nothing was planned. It seems I was the only one who took the race part to heart. I had completely missed the point.

You see, I'm not fat, nor am I'm not skinny. I'm not brilliant, yet I'm not dumb. I am not off-the-wall-happy all the time, but I'm not depressed either. I'm not tall and I'm not unusually short. I'm average. And I'm okay with that. I used to dislike being average. For most of my life, I've disliked the average. But what is wrong with average? I still shine in my uniqueness. I finally like myself, regardless of whether the person next to me likes me. And if I want to improve on something about me? I work to change it. If I can't change it, I change how I think about it.

Today I celebrate contentedness and the everydayness of life. I work to focus on something other than measuring my accomplishments against others. I revel in time spent with people and in nature. I aim for inner peace with who I am and what I can do. Sure, we all want to make parts of our lives better, but let's stop focusing on the faults and outdoing our neighbor. Let's change the behavior, together.

As we venture into a new year, step back and give yourself a slow nod of approval for all you've done. Appreciate you. Instead of New Year's resolutions, write yourself a postcard of support. You are enough. Place it to find when you need it if you fall into the pit called external validation. Vow to stop trying to live up to society's comparative lens. Life isn't a race.

Can the activity of sensory nerves contribute to healing?



Our five senses provide us with the crucial information we need to interact with the world. On a physiological level, the sights, smells, sounds, tastes, and sensations we experience can help shape our personalities, connect us with loved ones, and alert us to potential threats.

On a biochemical level, the process of sensing begins when sensory nerves detect a stimulus from outside the body. The nerves translate this stimulus into electrical signals that are sent to the brain, which decodes the signals into meaningful information about our surroundings. As you read this sentence, the sensory nerves in your eyes allow you to visualize the words. Your skin feels the texture of (the paper) a mouse, screen, or touchpad as you scroll, and your ears translate sound waves into the soundtrack of your day.

~American Association for Cancer Research



MAKING SENSE

continued from pg 1



We are so excited about this offering! This whole series is open to a much wider cancer audience - patients, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, really anyone who wants to learn!

The second Tuesday of each month at 4:30pm will be time to learn something new. This night of education will bring interesting speakers helping us to understand important life topics; such as, organ donation, estate planning, the power of supplements, and how to reverse some of the effects of scar tissue.

Each third Tuesday will introduce attendees to the wonderful world of Art. Here participants will be taken on a journey through the

benefits of art in a therapeutic sense. You will be entertained and surprised to learn how art can influence relationships, feelings, and our health. All supplies will be provided.

Those attending on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 4:30pm will be treated to Food. We will explore taste, smell, and textures of the foods we eat. Guest chefs will help us learn skills and food prep to make meals better for us on many levels.

This new series of Tuesday programming will begin the first Tuesday of February and continue as long as there is interest.

All who have been impacted by cancer are invited. Whether you are currently in treatment, well past treatment, a friend of someone with cancer, or wanting to help those with cancer - this is the program for you. Each week we will introduce you to the wonders of the senses. Join us for on this journey to awaken and revive ourselves.

Have space will share

As a non-profit, we understand the need for more space. Our group room may be the perfect answer for your organization.

Remember that meeting you wanted with a client but didn't have a spare office? How about a committee or board meeting that needs to meet offsite?

Friends Together would like to be a good neighbor and share our space with you.

The availability of the room can vary. Our general scheduled usage can be seen on page 6.

If you are interested in borrowing our space, please give us a call at (989) 356-3231. We'd be happy to help you out if we can.

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 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.

Deep Breath - yoga & sound bath

Connect with your breath and gently move your body. Designed for women cancer survivors. Meets Tuesdays at noon during January, March, May, July, Sept., & Nov.

Making Sense of it All

Tuesdays @ 4:30pm, beginning in February - Engage all your senses to help heal. Designed for men and women, patient and loved ones. February's overall topic will be *home*; the first Tuesday will focus on sound, second Tuesday will be about education, third Tuesday will focus on art, and the fourth Tuesday will be about food. Come on a journey with us. See our Facebook page for more details.

Guys Like Us

For men with cancer. Meets Wednesdays 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. Call for next event date and to register.

Journaling

Meets Thursdays at 12pm. For men and women who want to explore themselves on another level.

*Begins in February 2024
Registration is required.

Group support off-site

Friends Together North

All meet on Mondays at the *Presque Isle Library in Rogers City* at 2:00pm.

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

When you decide to donate to a nonprofit organization you consider all your options. There are many valuable organizations in our area, alone. On behalf of those among us with cancer, Friends Together thanks you for choosing us.

Thank you for spreading the love

There is always joy here at Friends Together. Time and time again we get to witness the beauty that comes from support. Yet none of this would happen without you, our donors. It is because of our donors, who are often quietly in the background, that we can do what we do each day.

This is for you. Thank you.

- ♥ Thank you from the newly diagnosed mother of young children that is at a loss on how to manage it all.
- ♥ Thank you from the retired gentleman living outside of town. He wants so much to do it on his own and be able to afford to come into town 5 days a week for six weeks for radiation. But Medicare doesn't pay for his gas and his Social Security payments won't cover the additional bills that come from cancer treatment.
- ♥ Thank you from the adult children who live out of town and cannot relocate to see their parent gets to and from treatment safely.
- ♥ Thank you from the spouse whose partner has opened up since attending a weekly support group.
- ♥ Thank you from all of us here at Friends Together. We are the fortunate ones. We get to hand deliver your goodwill to those in need of support.

“ True value of one's life can be measured if the person is able to make a significant difference in someone's life. ”



5 Benefits of a support group

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/>

- 1 Community**
Feeling less lonely, isolated or judged while having a safe space to talk openly and honestly about your feelings.
- 2 Safety**
Reducing distress, depression, anxiety, or fatigue, all while improving skills to cope with challenges.
- 3 Independence**
Improving skills to cope with challenges and gaining a sense of empowerment, control or hope.
- 4 Education**
Getting practical feedback about treatment options and improving your understanding of a disease and your own experience.
- 5 Information**
Learn about health, economic or social resources.



TRANSPORTATION & LODGING

Cancer treatment and logistics

“Having support getting to treatment has taken this burden off my shoulders so I can focus on recovery.”

~ recent patient

SHELLY GIBBS

Friends Together assists patients and their families when traveling long distances for their critical cancer care.

Patients often find out that their surgery time is 6 a.m. If you live 3 or 4 hours away, we can get you there the night before by assisting with a gas card to help along the way. Plus, we can secure overnight lodging for you. Although we can't cover 100% of all your needs, we can help! Sometimes, the patient must stay overnight after a procedure – we can help then too by reserving a hotel stay for your family or caregiver.

Reaching out to Friends Together is your first step. Let us know what your needs are – our staff is here to assist you in many ways, including referring you to

additional non-profit services. Here are a few things to consider when traveling out of town for your cancer care:

- Make sure your vehicle has a maintenance check including tires, oil, and a full tank of gas before leaving town.
- Take your medication (and a list of your medications) with you in case you need to stay overnight.
- Take a change of clothes and all necessities.
- Always travel with paper plates, napkins, paper towels, toilet paper, garbage bags, salt/pepper & healthy snacks.

Bill LaMarre

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 us.

Bill LaMarre lives in Alpena and retired from the Alpena City Fire Department in 2014. Bill has been a dedicated volunteer for Friends Together for 2 years. When asked why he chose to volunteer, he stated, “Part of my career was long distance transport. I decided to volunteer as a driver for Friends Together after I had been driving a buddy to and from his cancer care appointments and saw how important this need is for many cancer patients. I wanted to “pay it forward” by honoring my friend and continuing to assist cancer patients during their time of need.”

Friends Together relies on all volunteer drivers to give their personal time, without compensation, to help us fulfill one of our major services, transportation! We are grateful for Bill and all of our drivers for all that they do, including transporting patients locally and out of town. If you or anyone you know could benefit from our services, please reach out to us today 989-356-3231.



Bill LaMarre

enter to win: help us update our information



Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?

Martin Luther King, Jr.



*Friends Together is working to update our address list. Plus, we are hoping to add more ways in which we can communicate. *Contact information must be filled out completely to enter for gift card*

As you may know, Friends Together recently installed new software designed to help us keep up-to-date records on all those we serve.

Not only are we trying to keep our records current and informative, but safe from outside eyes as well.

We understand the need for privacy as much as you understand the need for support.

To help us, and yourself, please fill out the contact information below. Once you have completed filling in the information, please send it to us.

You can fax it to (989) 354-8013, or email it to talktous@friendstogehtermi.org, or simply mail it to or drop it off to us -

Friends Together
105 Prentiss Street,
Alpena MI 49707

Please send the information by February 29, 2024.

If we receive your new/updated contact information by that date, you will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Visa Gift Card! The drawing will take place on Friday, March 1, 2024.

The lucky winner will be announced on Facebook by close of business Friday, March 1, 2024.

New to Friends Together or simply would like to receive our information? You, too, can send us your contact information and enter the drawing!

Please Print

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ (County): _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Check here if you would like the newsletter emailed to you, instead of mailed.

Relationship to Cancer: Patient/Survivor / Caregiver / Family / Friend / Other

Type of Cancer: _____

wish list

by helping us, you are helping others

Every day we use consumables. We try to recycle and wash items, but there are some things that are simply single use. If you can, help us out. It'll mean a lot to someone who needs a smile.

Office Supplies

- All purpose white copy/printer paper, 8.5x11"
- Premium white cardstock, 8.5x11"
- 13 gallon unscented, white garbage bags

Daily Needs

- Toilet paper / Facial tissues
- Paper towels
- Napkins
- Paper plates/bowls
- Plastic utensils
- Dish Soap

Special Treats

- Individually wrapped snacks
- Bottled water
- Ground coffee - regular

Unique Items

- Crossword, word search, puzzle books
- Travel-sized lotion, hand sanitizer
- Chapstick, lip balm
- Small handwritten notecards of encouragement
- Forever stamps
- Fleece fabric yardage



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Call for out-of-town appts. & contracted services.

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gifts: in memory and in honor

We remember friends who have been honored or memorialized 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 honor them by doing 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.



The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you'll learn to live with it. You will heal, and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.



~Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Barb Jacobs | Don Kerr | Leroy Schude |
| Donald Bartz | Janet Grochowski | Pat Mackenzie |
| Carla Skiba | Donald Jones | Doug Mackenzie |
| Sandra Wozniak | Gerald Weis | Charlotte McClellan |
| Eddie Ranke | Mary Ann Smith | Gilbert McClellan |
| Kenneth Clark | Norma Holmes | Carrie Wiseley |
| Larry Bishop | Deana Holmes | Theresa White |
| Dave Hillert | Don Holmes | Ken Isley |
| Joseph Bleau | Pete Peterson | John Nemeth |
| Steven Lee | Ervin | |
| Brian Scott Brooks | Amy (Bouchard) Buckman | |
| Larry Kuznicki | | |



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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

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Help up raise money to help area cancer patients
get the support they need during treatment.

Call us at (989) 356-3231

February 2, 2024
Doors open at 6pm - Show starts at 7:30pm
Tickets are \$25/each

