



Cedar Valley Cancer Committee

Touch of Courage Connection

Newsletter

July 2020

Celebrating 30 years in the Cedar Valley

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Breast Cancer and COVID-19

Recommendations and Resources from BreastCancer.org

BreastCancer.org is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing the most reliable, complete, and up-to-date information about breast cancer and breast health as well as an active and supportive online community. This can be an extremely useful resource for patients and caregivers. They have recently published an article on their website regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19) and what people with breast cancer need to know.

The article notes that people being treated for breast cancer may have a higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19. It specifically states:

- "Some breast cancer treatments — including chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy, and radiation — can weaken the immune system and possibly cause lung problems."
- "People who have weakened immune systems or lung problems have a much higher risk of complications if they become infected with this virus."

- "For most people, the immune system recovers within a couple of months after completing these treatments, so those who have been treated for breast cancer in the past don't necessarily have a higher risk of severe illness."

To protect yourself and help reduce the spread of the virus, the article encourages breast cancer patients to listen to health experts who recommend staying at home, limiting contact with others, and following other precautions.

Additionally, the article shares what you need to know if you or a loved one are receiving treatment for breast cancer during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides background information on coronavirus, how COVID-19 spreads, symptoms, who is at risk, how to protect yourself, and what to do if you develop symptoms. Additionally, the authors address how breast cancer patients' treatment may be impacted during this time and how to manage anxiety and/or loneliness while isolated because of the pandemic. Resources include FAQs, videos, and podcasts as well as links to reliable information. Readers can also access the breastcancer.org Community Discussion Boards via a link provided in the article.

To read the complete article visit "**Coronavirus (COVID-19): What People With Breast Cancer Need to Know,**"

https://www.breastcancer.org/about_us/press_room/news/coronavirus.

Always a Teacher - Giving a Gentle Nudge

A Survivor Story by Laura Schmitz

My name is Laura Schmitz. I am a wife, a mother, a grandmother, and a retired elementary school teacher. I am also a breast cancer survivor.

Every August I would put up new bulletin boards in my classroom, design desk nametags, welcome a new group of third graders, AND schedule my mammogram. You might guess that I love order and routines!

I retired from teaching in 2019 after 44 years of doing my dream job! Though my routines changed, the one thing that did not change was scheduling my annual August mammogram.

On August 28, 2019 I received the phone call telling me that "something looked different than last year" on my mammogram. This was the beginning of my medical journey.

My sister had passed away from ovarian cancer on Feb 25, 2019. I immediately told my husband that I probably had breast cancer. At the age of 68, my turn had come...so I thought. You know how sometimes you just get that feeling? Sure enough, the nurse navigator met with me and told me that I had Stage 1 Breast Cancer and I would need surgery. I was given a list of upcoming appointments including one with the surgeon. Remember that I love organization and routine.

I told my husband and my adult children that we would take it one step at a time. I felt a sense of peace, but also fear. Would all the cancer be removed from my breast? Would I

need a mastectomy or a lumpectomy? Would I be around to watch our precious grandson begin kindergarten? Would I need chemo? Would I live to describe myself as a cancer survivor?

I reached out to my principal at school and my parish priest. Many prayers were said on the parish prayer line. Cards flooded my mailbox from friends, fellow parishioners, and students. A college friend mailed me a letter every day for a month! My support system was set in place!

I underwent the usual: ultrasound, MRI, biopsy, and genetic testing. On September 30, 2019 my supportive husband, daughter, son, and daughter-in-law waited while the surgeon used his skills to remove cancer once again from another patient. Later that beautiful unusually warm autumn day I was wheeled out to my car. I felt a sense of peace. Four weeks of radiation followed. No blistering of my skin and no fatigue. I was feeling grateful and fortunate for my body's strength and the care I received.

The pink heart-shaped pillow became my friend and constant companion. I once again felt a sense of peace, even hiding it under my blouse during a Sunday Mass. Sleeping with it under my arm allowed me to rest and heal.

So how has having breast cancer changed me? I share my story and encourage others to schedule a mammogram. Some stop me on the street to thank me for giving them a "gentle nudge" to take the time to get the screening. I do realize that



Heart-shaped pillows made by Touch of Courage Support Group

some women will not schedule the mammogram for various personal reasons. But for those who do make the appointment, I feel a sense of peace. Perhaps it is sharing my gratitude for being given a second chance on life and a purpose in continuing to help others...outside the classroom. I send notes of encouragement to those in my community who receive a breast cancer diagnosis. I plan to go on the local radio station in October-Breast Cancer Awareness Month- to tell my story to the listeners.

For you see, my story might just save a life.





Cedar Valley Cancer Committee

New Logo Same Mission

Beyond Pink TEAM has a new look! Even though the logo is simple, the mission of the Beyond Pink TEAM covers so much more.

Beyond Pink TEAM is a non-profit organization that **Takes Action – Educates – Advocates – Makes a Difference** to all breast cancer survivors in the Cedar Valley. How you ask? BPT:

Connects

Touch of Courage Breast Cancer Support Group

All Cancer Support Group

Touch of Courage Connection Newsletter

Ignite the Cancer Conversation

Cares

Heart Pillows

Care for Yourself

Beyond Pink Fund

Communicates

Speakers

Advocacy

Iowa Breast Cancer Advocacy Network

Facebook



Where They Are Now!

Diane Chandler, 7 Year Survivor

In 2012, at the age of 42, Diane Chandler was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer. The news came the day before her 16th wedding anniversary and a few short years after the passing of her mother-in-law (who had lost her 7-year breast cancer battle in 2008). Telling her five children was one of the most difficult conversations she remembers ever having as a family. They were all old enough to be aware of the challenges and potential outcomes in fighting this diagnosis.

"We responded together in the only way we knew how," she said. "We hit it head on with every ounce of strength we had, and we never lost our positive attitude."

Diane elected to take the most aggressive treatment presented and navigated the upcoming weeks with swift and decisive action. She was determined to not let cancer define her, and to live every day as "normal" as possible.

"I am forever grateful for my work family at Martin Bros. Distributing, who fully supported my desire to continue working," she said. She is also incredibly thankful for the overwhelming care and assistance she received from her support system comprised of amazing family and friends.

"They truly made a difference not only during my fight, but along this

entire lifelong journey. My life and my heart have been touched by others in ways I could never have imagined," Diane said.

Today, Diane is celebrating seven years cancer-free! She serves on a non-profit and pays it forward with acts of kindness & financial support to those in need – regardless of where or how the need originated.

Living Green

By Patty Wandschneider



Natural Ways to Fertilize Plants

Coffee grounds are filled with nitrogen and helps to increase the acidity in the soil. This is an especially good fertilizer for roses, hydrangeas, and magnolias, but you can also use it on your veggies to help them grow. This is also a simple recipe – just one ingredient - coffee grounds. You just work your grounds into the soil at the base of your plants, and the coffee will perk those plants right up!

If you prefer something a bit more simple, you can mix Epsom salt with water for a good fertilizer and it's really inexpensive. It is also a great source of magnesium and sulfur and is especially good for roses and tomatoes. This is a no-fail fertilizer. You just cannot get this one wrong. Just add a tablespoon of salt to a gallon of water and use this to feed your indoor and outdoor plants.



Businesses, Groups, and Individuals who support the Beyond Pink TEAM

Donors from March 1, 2019 through
May 31, 2020 – Thank you for all
your support!

Pat Buls
Carol Duffy
Paul and Patricia Homeister
Michael Howell
Lincoln Savings Bank
Foundation
UNI Women's Volleyball
Waterloo Police Dept.
Doris Webber
Rob Welter



14th ANNUAL
**PINK RIBBON
RUN** 2020



At this time, the 14th Annual Pink Ribbon Run will be held as planned on **Saturday, October 3, 2020**. GreenState Credit Union and Oakridge Realtors are the presenting sponsors. There will be the option to participate in person or virtually.

All breast cancer survivors will have their registration covered by Community Auto Group, the Survivor Sponsor. The Pink Heals fire truck will be in attendance, and is a great backdrop for photos. This year has been a tough year for cancer patients and non-profits, we appreciate your support of the Beyond Pink TEAM and our local breast cancer survivors.

Registration will be \$30 with on-line registration beginning in August on the Beyond Pink TEAM website, www.beyondpinkteam.org.

This will be a whole new year, with pre- and post-race programs shared virtually, staggered start times, reduced contact packet pick up, and more. Watch the Pink Ribbon Run, Beyond Pink TEAM, and Downtown Main Street Facebook pages for updates.





Fifth Annual

Ignite

THE CANCER CONVERSATION

Mind, Body & Soul

This event will educate patients, survivors, care givers, healthcare professionals (CEUs available), community members, leaders and advocates.

DR. SNEHA PHADKE

Oncologist and Professor

Will address "chemo brain"

ERIN SULLIVAN WAGNER

Certified Cancer Life Coach

Will discuss sexual health and intimacy after cancer

REVEREND CAROL TEARE

Associate Region Minister

Will speak on the topic of mindfulness

DR. MICHELE DEVLIN

UNI Professor of Global Public Health

Will cover health disparities in Iowa

TRACI MCCAUSLAND

Gallup-Certified Strengths Coach

Will explain the relevance of following your strengths when facing cancer

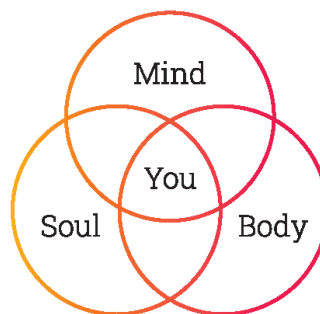
BEYONDPINKTEAM.ORG

**THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 12**

5 - 9 PM

LIVE VIA ZOOM

**TICKETS
\$15 - \$20**



**DUE TO THE COVID-19 VIRUS,
PLEASE CALL BEFORE ATTENDING
ANY SUPPORT GROUP**

Support Group Dates

July 6, 1:30 p.m.

Touch of Courage

Breast Cancer Support Group

2101 Kimball Ave., Bd Rm, Waterloo
Pat – 319-232-8691

Call Ahead

July 7, 1:30 p.m.

Care & Share Cancer Support Group

MercyOne Waterloo Cancer Center
200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
Jessica – 319-272-2816

Call Ahead

August 3, 1:30 p.m.

Touch of Courage

Breast Cancer Support Group

2101 Kimball Ave., Bd Rm, Waterloo
Pat – 319-232-8691

August 4, 1:30 p.m.

Care & Share Cancer Support Group

MercyOne Waterloo Cancer Center
200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
Jessica – 319-272-2816

August 13 - TBD

**Splash of Color – Women of Color
Breast Cancer Support Group**

Call Cathy Ketton - 319-504-2703 for details

September 1, 1:30 p.m.

Care & Share Cancer Support Group

MercyOne Waterloo Cancer Center
200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
Jessica – 319-272-2816

September 14, 1:30 p.m.

Touch of Courage

Breast Cancer Support Group

2101 Kimball Ave., Bd Rm, Waterloo
Pat – 319-232-8691

September 15, 4:30 p.m.

**BPT All Cancer Survivors Group -
Meet, Mingle and Learn**

Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalist
3912 Cedar Heights Dr., Cedar Falls
Gabbi – 319-292-2225

October 5, 1:30 p.m.

Touch of Courage

Breast Cancer Support Group

2101 Kimball Ave., Bd Rm, Waterloo
Pat – 319-232-8691

October 6, 1:30 p.m.

Care & Share Cancer Support Group

MercyOne Waterloo Cancer Center
200 E Ridgeway Ave., Waterloo
Jessica – 319-272-2816



The 2020 NBCC Advocate Leadership Summit went virtual due to COVID-19. Twelve Beyond Pink TEAM advocates participated in the Summit, virtually attending plenaries, workshops, and advocate networking sessions.

Session topics addressed information regarding progress in breast cancer research, including NBCC's Artemis Project, which focuses both on developing a vaccine to prevent breast cancer and better understanding tumor dormancy to prevent metastasis. Additional topics included perspectives on oncology drug approval, understanding and addressing disparities in breast cancer, changes needed to the U.S. Healthcare System, breast cancer subtypes and the unique biology of lobular breast cancer, research advocacy (involving patient/advocates in peer review of research proposals and projects), and effective public policy advocacy. Participants also had the opportunity to participate in live speaker meet-ups with research scientists who delivered plenary sessions.

The summit culminated in a Virtual Lobby Day, with our Beyond Pink TEAM advocates meeting via Zoom or teleconference with Iowa's members of the House of Representatives as well as Senators Grassley and Ernst. These

congressional meetings focused on NBCC's top priorities, requesting support for the DOD Breast Cancer Research Program and the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act. All four of Iowa's members of the House have supported both. We currently need you to contact Senator Grassley, (202) 224 - 3744 and Senator Ernst, (202) 224-3254 to ask them to co-sponsor S. 1374 the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act.

Beyond Pink FUND

Many going through breast cancer treatment find that there are more expenses, employment may not be full time and other issues that arise. Individuals are finding themselves wondering how to get through this. Beyond Pink TEAM understands this and has created the **Beyond Pink FUND** to provide financial assistance for breast health/breast cancer-related expenses to persons who live in Northeast Iowa and are not eligible for reimbursement from another source. Assistance is provided as payor of last resort and on a funds available basis only.

To Apply –

Go to www.beyondpinkteam.org and click on "Beyond Pink Fund" under the "Care" tab. Information on who is qualified and various forms for the application process are provided.

Check with your social worker for assistance for other resources.

For Questions about the Beyond Pink Fund and application process call:

Gabbi DeWitt or Jeanne Olson
319-292-2225 319-833-6100

COVID-19 and *CANCER Information*

Announcing Patient Transportation and Lodging Initiative

From Iowa Cancer Consortium

The need for transportation support for cancer patients undergoing treatment during this time is a big need. In alignment with the Consortium's mission and contract with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), the creation of the COVID-19 Cancer Patient Transportation and Lodging Initiative was supported. The Iowa Cancer Consortium will leverage the existing cancer patient support network and direct funds specifically towards cancer patient transportation and lodging. This will include:

- ▶ Gas cards (\$25 increments) to be distributed to cancer centers across the state for cancer patients based on need and ability to utilize them.
- ▶ Lodging voucher to support cancer patients with long stays.
- ▶ Funding agreement with public transit providers to provide free rides for cancer patients to/from their treatment facilities.

A special thank you to our colleagues at the American Cancer Society (ACS) who have played a large role in developing this network.

Coronavirus:

What People with Cancer Should Know?

From National Cancer Institute website – www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/coronavirus/coronavirus-cancer-patient-information

What is coronavirus, or COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals. CDC is responding to a pandemic of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that spreads from person to person. The virus has been named SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it causes has been named **coronavirus disease 2019, which is abbreviated COVID-19.**

Other questions included in this article are:

- ▶ **If I have cancer, am I at higher risk of getting COVID-19?**
- ▶ **I am a cancer survivor. Am I at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19?**
- ▶ **If I have cancer now or had it in the past, how can I protect myself?**
- ▶ **I receive cancer treatment at a medical facility. What should I do about getting treatment?**
- ▶ **I participated in a clinical trial at a medical facility. What should I do?**

▶ **What should I do if I have symptoms of an infection?**

▶ **This is a stressful time. How do I cope?**

Having cancer changes your life and the lives of those around you. The symptoms and side effects of the disease and its treatment may cause certain physical changes, but they can also affect the way you feel and how you live. Coping with cancer in the face of the coronavirus can bring up a wide range of feelings you are not used to dealing with.

Just as cancer affects your physical health, it can bring up a wide range of feelings you are not used to dealing with. It can also make existing feelings seem more intense. They may change daily, hourly, or even minute to minute. This is true whether you are currently in treatment, done with treatment, or a friend or family member. These feelings are all normal.

▶ **What if I have additional questions?**

Talk with your doctor, nurse, or social worker.



MISSION – Beyond Pink TEAM is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide breast cancer prevention, education, support, and advocacy for comprehensive, quality health care for ALL in the Cedar Valley and surrounding communities.

Resources – Information, support, counseling, and educational materials are available from the following:

Beyond Pink TEAM is a local breast cancer organization providing a variety of services. Our website lists services we provide as well as other services available in the Cedar Valley. www.beyondpinkTEAM.org

Living Beyond Breast Cancer includes a helpline, newsletter, and information. Survivors Helpline: 888-753-5222 www.LBBC.org

Young Survival Coalition connects with other young women diagnosed with breast cancer. www.youngsurvival.org

Cancer Care is a national nonprofit organization offering counseling, support, financial assistance, and education to individuals with cancer and their families. www.cancer.org

Iowa Cancer Consortium offers cancer information and links to resources in Iowa. www.canceriowa.org

American Cancer Society offers cancer information and services. www.cancer.org.

National Breast Cancer Coalition the NBCC's mission is to eradicate breast cancer by focusing the government, research institutions, and consumer advocates on breast cancer. It encourages advocacy for action and change. www.stopbreastcancer.org.

National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN) provides state-of-the-art treatment information in easy-to-understand language to people with cancer and their caregivers. NCCN.org/patients

National LGBT Cancer Network works to improve the lives of LGBT cancer survivors and those at risk. www.cancer-network.org

National Cancer Institute offers information about cancer, breast cancer, clinical trials, cancer statistics, research and funding, and the latest news. They will also answer your questions by calling 1-800-4CANCER. www.cancer.gov

National Cancer Institute for NCI dictionaries of cancer terms, genetics terms, and cancer drugs. www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries

Connect with us . . . Your support financially or through volunteering is both needed and appreciated. Please feel free to complete the following and forward to Cedar Valley Cancer Committee at the address listed below.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

I would like to participate with the Beyond Pink TEAM by:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing a survivor story for the newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Making phone calls and sending emails to policy makers for breast cancer issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Become part of the Breast Cancer Advocacy Network | <input type="checkbox"/> Become a member of the Beyond Pink TEAM -Complete this form, send with a check for \$5 to Jeanne Olson, BPT Treasurer, to address at bottom of this page. Meetings are 3 rd Thurs days each month (except December) at 7:00 a.m. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering: ((check all that apply)) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with Support Groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Education (Health Fairs/Presentations, Newsletters) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development (Publicity) | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy – Deadline 2020/Ignite the Cancer Conversation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events (Fundraisers, Projects and More) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a donation. Make checks payable to Beyond Pink TEAM. (All donations are tax deductible) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BPT Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy Fund |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Area of Need |

Touch of Courage . . . Connection

Cedar Valley Cancer Committee
1753 W Ridgeway Ave, Suite 104
Waterloo, IA 50701
www.beyondpinkteam.org