

BERRIEN COUNTY CANCER SERVICE NEWSLETTER

www.bccancerservice.org

In honor of the committed service of Olove Colcord, R.N.

THE MISSION OF THE BERRIEN COUNTY CANCER SERVICE:

To provide free skilled home nursing services, equipment, information and supplies at cost for cancer patients and their families in Berrien County.



January 2011

(269) 429-3281

VOLUME XX ISSUE I

The **BERRIEN COUNTY CANCER SUPPORT GROUP** is a group for patients, family members and care givers. Come share successes, feelings, fears and practical methods of coping with the physical and emotional aspects of living with the diagnosis of cancer.

.....

RESOLVE

To strip the soul of all pretense,
To hold each day in reverence,
To keep the head and heart apace,
To make this world a worth-while place,
To share my bread with those in need,
To tolerate a neighbor's creed,
To keep a stride without a strut,
To make a home in manse or hut,
To have the grit to grin at loss,
To master life and be its boss.

Happy New Year!



what matters.™

Support Group

A group of people with similar disease who meet to discuss how better to cope with their disease and treatment.

The Support Groups Help the Recovery Process

UOAA UPATE 9/09 via Evansville IN

Years ago, support groups for people diagnosed with cancer or other conditions were often frowned upon or dismissed as “touchy feely”. Many believed that talking about their feelings or asking for help were signs of weakness, some even feared that meeting others with similar problems would fuel depression and self-pity. Times have changed, however, and so have theories about the value of talk. Today, more and more hospitals are offering emotional support via part of the standard treatment for rehabilitation. Earlier this year, the National Cancer Institute, together with two other groups, launched a national campaign to raise awareness of the vital role emotional support plays in enhancing the quality of life for people with cancer. Some research suggests that support may even increase longevity. It makes sense that emotional support from a caring circle of close friends or family would buffer the stress suffered. But many patients say they lack open communication within their families. As research and the experiences of many people have borne out, involvement in a support comprised of others in the same boat can fill a unique void. Among the most telling studies was a 1989 investigation led by Stanford University researchers. They evaluated 86 women with breast cancer that had spread to other parts of the body. Fifty attended weekly support group meetings for at least a year in addition to receiving standard medical treatment; 36 received only medical interventions. Not surprisingly, women in the support group reported feeling less anxious, less depressed and less bothered by pain than the women who had not participated. A more remarkable finding was discovered years later. The women in the support groups survived longer than the others. In fact, four years after the study began, one-third of the participants in the support groups were still alive, while all 36 of the other women died. This year, the investigators re-examined the medical records and death certificates of the women and found that such factors as differences in medical treatment did not account for the discrepancy in survival rates between the two groups. Some experts believe this strengthens the case for support groups. Experts also speculate that emotional assistance confers physical benefits by decreasing stress. Depression overworks the body’s stress response system, and it may be that participating in a support group helps lift depression. Thus, a group of peers can be a place where people can vent some of their feelings without suffering guilt about burdening an intimate partner or friend. Research on the mind-body connection and cancer is still preliminary; there is no doubt the emotional support can ease psychological stress. Support groups play an integral role in enhancing – and possibly prolonging – the lives of millions of people.

Footnote: While the above article deals primarily with cancer support groups, the same principles apply to other support groups for various diseases. That is particularly true with the UOAA and the support offered through hundreds of affiliated support groups all over the US and Ostomy groups all over the world. We, at the local level, should never lose sight of the fact that we are a support group first and foremost to those who need us and not a club or organization one just belongs to. Our greatest attribute should be our willingness to reach out in kindness, offering compassion, understanding and emotional support to our fellow ostomates.

Coping With Cancer Through Support Groups

For each person diagnosed, cancer is a unique experience. No two people will travel the same journey during and after cancer treatment. How people cope after being diagnosed, during treatment, and afterward is also different for each individual. One common thread in all people with cancer is the need for a good support system.

Community cancer support groups are one of the best ways to actively get support and become more active in your cancer community. These types of support groups can be held in hospitals, churches, and community centers and are typically led by psychologists, social workers, and medical professionals. Most groups are free to participate, but some may require a small registration fee or dues. Your cancer treatment center should be able to provide you with the names of local support groups.

Cancer support groups provide a setting in which cancer patients can talk about living with cancer with others who may be having similar experiences. Much of the sociological construction of these groups is similar to other kinds of other types of support groups.

Apart from having to cope with the physical and medical challenges, people with cancer face many worries, feelings, and concerns unique to their situation. Cancer patients may find they need help coping with the emotional as well as the practical aspects of their disease. In fact, attention to the emotional burden of having cancer is often a part of a patient's treatment plan. The support of the health care team (doctors, nurses, and social workers), support groups, and patient-to-patient networks can help people feel less isolated and distressed, and improve the quality of their lives. Cancer support groups provide a setting in which cancer patients can talk about living with cancer with others who may be having similar experiences. Patients may want to speak to a member of their health care team about finding a support group. Many also find useful information in National Cancer Institute fact sheets and booklets, including "Taking Time and Facing Forward".

Apart from various improvements in confidence, wellbeing, stress, and interpersonal comfort, cancer support groups are being studied for their direct effects on improving health of people who attend them. Some small-scale tests have compared members of a breast cancer support group at Stanford against a control group and found significant benefits associated with group membership. These studies are currently being repeated on a larger scale. Some theories about these benefits ascribe health improvements to reduced stress from talking about emotional issues, the placebo effect, learning about treatment options through interaction with others with common issues.

Support groups are an informal resource that attempts to provide healing components to a variety of problems and challenges.

An informal support outside of family, friends, or professionals often provides greater understanding, more similarity (from individuals experiencing similar life events), an opportunity for empathy and altruism, and a sense of identity for participants. Learning new ways to handle challenges, cope with changes, and maintain new behaviors are all important aspects of the support group experience.

A characteristic unique to support groups is the mutual support members are able to provide one another. This support and validation from other group members help facilitate personal growth and change in a way that individual therapy cannot. Although experts and professionals can provide support and positive direction, the mutual exchange of information between group members is a powerful experience that often induces lasting change.

Most support groups are facilitated or led by lay persons, often in conjunction with existing organizations (such as NAMI, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, or AA, Alcoholics Anonymous). Support groups usually have a set meeting time (generally weekly or monthly), and an open format. Open format means that the groups are ongoing, and members have the option of attending when it is convenient for them. This is in contrast to other types of structured treatment or psycho-educational groups that may meet for a certain number of sessions, with the expectation that participants attend every meeting. The open format allows members to feel some degree of anonymity, and to participate as they are comfortable. For some people, simply attending meetings and listening to the experiences of others can be helpful.

The healing power of groups is well documented, and support groups offer many of the same therapeutic characteristics as more structured groups. These factors include: altruism (chance to help others), belongingness, universality (there are others who struggle with similar challenges), interpersonal learning, guidance, catharsis, identification, self-understanding, instillation of hope, and existential factors (such as the search for larger meaning in life). Each of these factors is directly related to the mutual support that members provide one another.

Support groups are generally less structured than psycho-educational groups or therapy groups; however, each group usually sets its own norms, rules, and schedules. Some groups, such as AA, traditionally reserve time for individual members to discuss their own challenges and progress in front of the group. Others bring in speakers periodically to provide information about disorders or specific coping skills. However, the strength of support groups lies in its members, and their willingness to share their own experiences, challenges, and solutions in the context of the group.

In addition to these traditional, face-to-face support groups, technology has had an impact on the functioning and availability of support groups. There are many list-serves, e-mail groups, and chat groups that provide information about specific life problems (adoption of children outside the United States, for example), certain types of mental

illness, and specific health problems. While there is always the risk of communicating with others who are not honest, many people benefit from these Internet interactions. Some individuals are actually more comfortable participating in Internet support groups due to the greater anonymity they offer.

There are a variety of problems and challenges that are addressed in support groups. Generally speaking, the severity of the symptom, as well as the phase of the illness or disorder, will determine whether participation in a support group is appropriate. For more severe types of mental illness, such as schizophrenia, or depression with psychotic episodes, a support group is probably not the optimal intervention, particularly at initial onset. After stabilization through therapy and medication (as appropriate), a support group may offer an important addition to more formal treatment. In these cases, the socialization, interpersonal relationships, and social support that can be gained through the group may not be available elsewhere, and as such, it can be a very positive experience for the participant. In a group situation, a participant can learn how to express feelings in a healthy and positive way, practice assertive communication, receive feedback about appropriate and inappropriate content for conversation, receive feedback about nonverbal communication, learn new ways to ask for help from others, be able to help others, learn how to form friendships, and learn new coping skills and behaviors.

Group experiences can be very powerful in changing behavior and maintaining that change. The support group becomes part of the individual's daily life, and promotes healthy functioning by providing reminders about change and support when he or she is feeling down or is drawn toward old patterns. It also provides opportunities to own one's change by helping others. These factors contribute to the positive prognosis for most who participate in a group experience. However, a person could be harmed by a group experience as well. Much of this risk is dependent on the characteristics of individual members, particularly in support groups that operate without professional guidance. For example, if certain individuals dominate the group with their own agenda, perhaps at the expense of other group members, then the experience may have a negative impact on more vulnerable individuals.

There are many support groups for cancers for patients, friends, and family. Battling cancer can be one of the most stressful, hard and challenging times for anyone involved with the disease. Even though friends and family have excellent intentions to help you, sometimes you may need additional source of help from outside. Getting help quickly after the diagnosis is most advisable.

Most hospitals, clinics, medical centers, oncologists, and caregivers that treat cancer patients can give information to support groups that provide additional counseling. You can find brochures and pamphlets that clarify the conventional treatments, side effects, cancer diet, alternative therapy, and how to cope with cancer.

The directory of government and private resources for women with cancer and families provide information. Some groups address to specific types of cancers such as breast, colon, skin, stomach, lung, prostate, and uterus cancers.

The American Cancer Society has several programs designed to help all stages of disease. The Cancer Survivors Network is an online support group to help patients and their families. Active members can participate in the discussion boards, private messages, chat rooms, and blogs. The I Can Cope Program provides classes for adult patients and families.

You can also visit All-Natural-Cancer-Cures.com where you can participate in our forum. Our website provides wealth of information on natural cures for cancer, benefits of raw food diet, anti cancer diets, lists of raw foods, success tales, and concerns.

It is vital to know that getting emotional support is just as vital as receiving other types of treatment. You are not alone in battling cancer and can be reassured that you can get help. Start sharing, asking, questioning, giving, and finding answers to your needs.

Many people who participate in groups and forums overcome most of their fears, concerns, and options for treatments. When you see some people posting their excellent results after the doctor's visit, you can get encouragement and know that there are other natural cures to cancer. One of the most vital benefits for patients, friends, and family is finding support groups for cancer that meets your needs.

We have Plenty to be Thankful for...

During the holidays, we received a lot of help from many different sources.

Food and/or gifts were provided by:

Chapel Hill United Methodist Church Missions, Sodus
The Adult Choir of Christ Lutheran Church, Stevensville, and friends
Christ Lutheran Church Youth Group, Stevensville
First Apostolic Church, Bridgman
Jerry and Julie Koch, St. Joseph
Mary Martha Circle of St. Joseph Congregational Church
Pathfinders of the Village Seventh Day Adventist Church, Berrien Springs
Southwest Michigan Chapter of Oncology Nursing Society
Stevensville American Legion Post 568
Stevensville Station and Friends

Financial gifts were given by:

Gregory Hulen
Kathy Karnik – In Honor of Curt and Karla VonKoenig

BCCS Staff – in lieu of a gift exchange:

Claudia Brister
Nancy Church
Connie Demler
Henrietta Hein
Kathy Karnik
Barbara Lane
JoAnn Pullen-Bruni

We thank everyone for your unselfish way of helping those in need. Many families' holidays were brightened by your generosity. We wish everyone a healthy and prosperous New Year!

*Thank
You*

In Loving Memory

During November 2009, Memorial Donations were generously made by and for the following people:

In Memory of Hilda Berndt
Loren & Gertrude Berndt, Bridgman

In Memory of Oline Edge
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

In Memory of Timothy Glossinger
Judith Bohne, Three Oaks

In Memory of William (Bill) Gobert
Joseph & Lucille Vyzral, Stevensville

In Memory Uncle Jack & Aunt Virginia Harroff
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

In Memory of Richard Harroff
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

In Memory of Ralph & Ruth (Muesbeck) Hess
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

In Memory of Eunice Iannone
Ruth & Bill Arnold, Bridgman

In Memory of Madeline Anne Klitchman
Passaro & Kahne Law Office P.L.L.C., St Joseph

In Memory of David Maki
Thelma M Payne, St Joseph

In Memory of Bernice Mengel
Diana Gallup, South Haven

In Memory of Uncle Bill & Aunt Maxine (Miney) Neidlinger
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

In Memory of Sandra Pirri
Mrs. Mary Lawrick, St Joseph

In Memory of Aunt Christine (Miney) Schubering
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

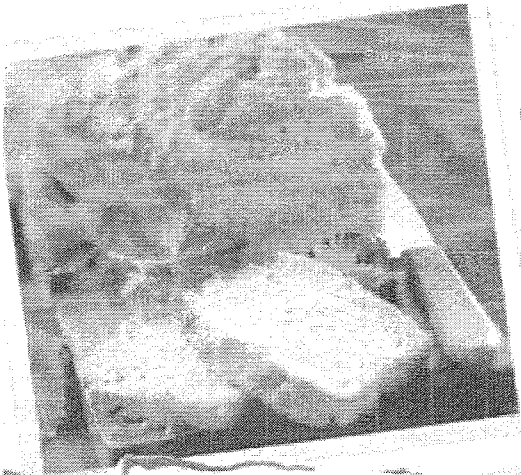
In Memory of Uncle Norb & Aunt Marge (Miney) Strzvnski
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

In Memory of Bessie Thompson
Patricia Shafer, Benton Harbor

In Memory of Lucille Yetzke
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

In Memory of Aunt Millie Zink
Marge & John Yetzke, Watervliet

Berrien County Cancer Service sends our sincere sympathy to all those who have recently lost loved ones. We thank all of our generous donors. Your donations are very much appreciated and will help cancer patients in Berrien County. Thank you.



Great Food & A GREAT CAUSE

Support the Berrien County
Cancer Service!

Taste many of our delicious, easy-to-prepare
foods and raise funds for this special cause!



Judy Christner ID#17287
Tastefully Simple Team Mentor
(269) 471-9483 or (269) 208-7578
Simplyjudye@comcast.net
www.tastefullysimple.com/web/jchristner

Hello Berrien County Readers,

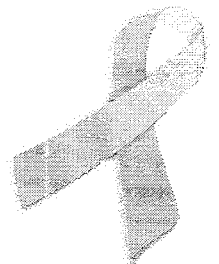
My name is Ashley Weber of Stevensville, and I'm Southwest Michigan's Pre-Teen 2010. My platform is childhood cancer and I have partnered with the Berrien County Cancer Service. For the month of January, I will be hosting a Tastefully Simple book party to help support BCCS. Tastefully Simple will donate 25% of all sales and will give a gift basket away for each \$1,000 of sales. Anyone who orders, their name will be placed in the drawing.

Please follow the instructions below when ordering and if you should have any questions, please call Judy Christner.

- 1.) Go to www.tastefullysimple.com/web/jchristner
- 2.) Click on "shop our products" at the top of the page.
- 3.) Click on "Host/Event search" under searching for a Host or Party?
- 4.) Type in "Ashley" for first name and "Weber" for last name. Pick "Michigan" for the state and "January 1" for the event date. Then click on "search".
- 5.) Place your order.

Don't forget to spread the news to your friends and family and as always, thank you for your support of our local Berrien County Cancer Service.

Ashley Weber ~ Southwest Michigan's Pre-Teen 2010



Looking Ahead

BCCS SUPPORT GROUP – Stevensville

January 4 & 18 – 1:30 p.m.
February 1 & 15 – 1:30 p.m.

BCCS SUPPORT GROUP – Niles

January 11 & 25 – 1:30 p.m.
February 8 & 22 – 1:30 p.m.

UOA SUPPORT GROUP – Stevensville

January 25 - 1:30 p.m.
February 22 - 1:30 p.m.

RAINBOWS OF HOPE– Stevensville

January 13 - 5:30 p.m.
February 10 – 5:30 p.m.

HELP, HOPE, BELIEVE

DATES TO REMEMBER IN JANUARY

*January 1st – New Years Day
January 10th – United Nations Day
January 15th – Humanitarian Day
January 18th – Martin Luther Day
January 24th – Belly Laugh Day
January 29th – Fun At Work Day*

Why do doctors leave the room while you change?

They're going to see you naked anyway.

Do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune, also Baa Baa Black Sheep.

Why did you try singing those three songs above?

Please Consider...

Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc., is a non-profit organization funded primarily by the United Way, private donations and fundraisers. We receive no Medicare, Medicaid or other insurance payments. To continue our free services to Berrien County cancer patients, we need your help. Any donation is greatly appreciated.

Donations to our General Fund will help balance our current budget. Donations to our Endowment Fund will help guarantee that the Cancer Service will be available for as long as needed. Your contribution to our non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation is tax deductible – an acknowledgment and receipt for tax purposes will be sent.

Donations can be made in honor of someone or in memory of a loved one. In these instances, we would also like to send acknowledgment to the honoree or next-of-kin so please provide that information when making your donation.

_____ General Fund _____ Endowment Fund

Your Name _____

Your Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Donation Amount \$ _____

In Honor of _____

Honoree's Address _____

OR

In Memory of _____

Please send notification of my gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

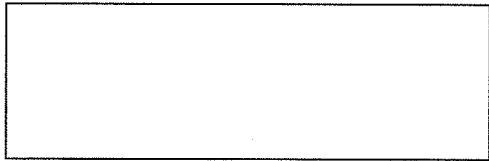
How would you like the card to be signed?

Thank you for your generosity!

Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc.
7301 Red Arrow Highway
Stevensville, MI 49127

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
STEVENSVILLE, MI
PERMIT NO. 129

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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OFFICE STAFF: Kathy Karnik (Office Manager) Claudia Brister (Stevensville) Henrietta Hein

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP – Stevensville Office
 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month - 1:30 p.m.
Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc.
 7301 Red Arrow Highway
 Stevensville, MI 49127
 Phone: (269) 429-3281 or (269) 465-5257

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP – Niles
 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month – 1:30 p.m.
Niles Senior Center
 1109 Bell Road
 Niles, MI 49120
 Phone: (269) 429-3281

RAINBOWS OF HOPE GROUP – Stevensville Office
 2nd Thursday of each month – 5:30 p.m.
Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc.
 7301 Red Arrow Highway
 Stevensville MI 49127
 Phone: (269) 429-3281 or (269) 465-5257

THE CANCER CONNECTION CAFÉ
 1st Wednesday of each month
First United Methodist Church
 132 S. Oak Street
 Buchanan, MI 49107
 Phone: (269) 695-2706

MAN TO MAN – Prostate Support Group
 3rd Tuesday of each month – 6:00 p.m.
Trinity Center
 619 Main Street
 St. Joseph, MI 49085
 Phone: (800) 227-2345