

# 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.



May 2014

(269) 429-3281

VOLUME XXIII

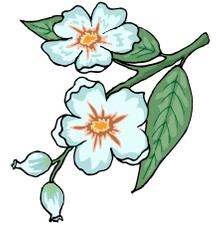
ISSUE V

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.

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### May

May, the melodious gift that ushers in as sweetly as a Mother's kiss whispering, "Yes, you may . . ."  
Now is the time to go barefoot once again,  
Pick a flower in a glen, go fishing with a friend.  
See the beauty of buds bursting into fragrant blossoms.  
Hear the twittering songbirds bursting with parental pride.  
Taste the richness of the morning mist  
As the lush grass carpet oozes its burst of  
Freshness beneath your feet.



Yes, you may go on a family fishing trip, forget  
The jacket you must zip, plan a picnic to sit and sip.  
Take in the beauty of the out of doors that can be  
Yours even if you must be still and  
See only from your windowsill.  
Yes, you may share in this lively month of May,  
Play your melody of work and leisure day by day  
And make this month last in a memorable way.



By Emma Walker

# BCCS Bulletin Board

## PENNIES FOR PATIENTS™

This year we will be celebrating our **25<sup>th</sup> Annual PENNIES FOR PATIENTS™ DAY!** Let's celebrate our silver anniversary with extra silver. **Come join us on Thursday, May 8, 2014.** Our office will be open from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. so if you are an early bird or not, we have a time for you! Come and see the excitement of tens of thousands of pennies along with refreshments and fun. There will also be a Niles location on Main and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. with cookies and punch. All the proceeds stay local to help those with cancer in our community. Bring your pennies, silver, and dollars and join us for our **25<sup>th</sup> Annual PENNIES FOR PATIENTS™ DAY!**



## Bike Ride



Our 19<sup>th</sup> annual Bike Ride through beautiful Southwestern Michigan will take place on **Sunday, June 22, 2014.** While it may be a little early to get your bike out, it is not too early to start planning or to register. **We are looking for volunteers to take our posters and brochures to the local businesses, photograph the riders as well as lending a helping hand on the day of the Bike Ride.** Call us at 269-429-3281 and if you can't ride a bike, find out how you can sponsor a rider for this fun event!

## RELAY FOR LIFE

This year's Relay for Life event, which benefits the *American Cancer Society* will take place on the Berrien County Youth Fairgrounds in Berrien Springs on June 28 and 29, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Saturday and ending at 10:00 a.m. Sunday.

The **Berrien County Cancer Service** will have a table under the Lakeland Regional Medical Center and Hospice for Home-Lakeland tent. If you would like to walk, please call our office at 269-429-3281 or send an e-mail to: [staff@bccancerservice.org](mailto:staff@bccancerservice.org) so that we can schedule a time for you. Participants will also receive a t-shirt.



## MAY – ONCOLOGY NURSES MONTH



Oncology nurses are there for those with cancer through one of the most challenging times of their lives. They help their patients and loved ones by caring, teaching, listening and simply being present. Take some time this spring to recognize the hard work they do each and every day. If you have a chance, say, "Thank You" to an Oncology Nurse.

## HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

We love to have testimonies of how we have help people in our community on our website. If you have a story to tell about how BCCS has helped you and would like to share it, please email [staff@bccancerservice.org](mailto:staff@bccancerservice.org) or mail us your story along with a statement giving us permission to post it on our website, [www.bccancerservice.org](http://www.bccancerservice.org)

## Newsletters available by email or online

If you would like to receive the email version of our newsletter, please send us an email at [staff@bccancerservice.org](mailto:staff@bccancerservice.org). You may also view our newsletters on our website: [www.bccancerservice.org](http://www.bccancerservice.org). We are also happy to send it to you through the mail.

## +Betsy's Story

Betsy's life was rich. Her three children were grown with homes of their own. The office she had been asked to open for her employer was doing well. This had been a challenge, moving her from her native St. Louis to North Carolina. It was all rewarding. Little did she know her life was about to change completely.

Betsy noticed blood in her urine. Although she had no pain or other symptoms, she decided to consult with her doctor. Tests indicated kidney cancer, and three days later she had surgery to remove the affected kidney. After surgery the doctor said that everything looked clear, and no follow up treatment was necessary. Betsy went back to the work she loved and put her cancer experience behind her.

One year later Betsy experienced an inexplicable weight gain. She had not changed her eating or exercise habits, yet her waistline was expanding. Her doctor drew fluid from her abdomen and had it biopsied. The tests revealed that the fluid was cancerous. Betsy decided to go to a major New York City cancer center. She chose the center because of its reputation and because her three children had settled in the Northeast. She knew that she would need family to help her.

Betsy had renal cell carcinoma, the most common type of kidney cancer. The cancer from the previous year had spread to five organs in her body. The fluid in her abdomen was from the cancer spreading to her stomach lining. Far more horrifying than the diagnosis was the doctor's statement that she was "too far gone to treat" and to Betsy's daughter's question of how long, he responded, "weeks."

Betsy's response was, "They have no idea how tough I am." She went for a second opinion. While not overly optimistic, the second doctor offered some hope. He told Betsy of a doctor who was doing interesting things with renal cell carcinoma and biological therapy using interferon at a medical center in North Carolina .

With nothing to lose, Betsy made an appointment with the doctor in North Carolina. Like the doctors before him, he did not think that things looked good for Betsy, but he wanted to try treatment. He prescribed high doses of Interferon. She returned to her local oncologist who followed the recommendation of the specialist. Betsy began taking Interferon and shortly thereafter, her CT scan was clear of signs of cancer.

Betsy continued the high dose Interferon for 2 years and continued at a lower dosage until Interferon therapy stopped. Betsy's main side effect from the Interferon was total exhaustion. Treatment took so much out of her that she was "knocked off of her feet and out of a job." The fatigue was very hard for Betsy but she still feels that she would go through it again if that is what she needed to do.

It took more than three years for Betsy to regain her strength. During her recovery, as she gradually grew stronger, she developed a new positive attitude towards her life. Her children, who were living in the Northeast, came down to North Carolina nearly every 3 weeks to see her. Two friends, Mary Jane and Fay, came by every day to check on Betsy and took her to weekly healing services. She feels that God had an enormous impact on her recovery.

Along with her family, friends and spirituality, Betsy has incorporated exercise into her routine. It lifts her energy level and promotes her cardiovascular and bone health and she encourages everyone to follow an exercise regimen of his/her own.

Betsy wanted to help others who might be going through the despair that she felt. She heard about Cancer Hope Network at her local hospital and called to volunteer. During the years since her training as a Cancer Hope Network support volunteer, she has been matched to many cancer patients including some of the most difficult cases that have come into the office. She helps them through the despair, proof that there is life after a cancer diagnosis.

Betsy did return to work with her former employer, as a recruiter of investment brokers. Today, Betsy has eleven grandchildren, consisting of 6 girls and 5 boys, ages 1 to 13 and an active life of work, volunteerism, exercise, and travel when she can.

### ***Definition of kidney cancer***

*Cancer that forms in the tissues of the kidneys. Kidney cancer includes renal cell carcinoma (cancer that forms in the lining of very small tubes in the kidney that filter the blood and remove waste products) and renal pelvis carcinoma (cancer that forms in the center of the kidney where urine collects). It also includes Wilms tumor, which is a type of kidney cancer that usually develops in children under the age of 5.*

**Estimated new cases and deaths** from kidney (renal cell and renal pelvis) cancer in the United States in 2013:

- New cases: 65,150
- Deaths: 13,680

## The Kidneys

Your kidneys are a pair of organs in your abdomen. Each kidney is about the size of a fist.

Your kidneys are part of the urinary tract. They make urine by removing wastes and extra water from your blood.

Urine collects in a hollow space (renal pelvis) in the middle of each kidney. Urine passes from your renal pelvis into your bladder through a long tube called a ureter. Urine leaves your bladder through a shorter tube (the urethra).

Kidney cancer cells can spread by breaking away from the kidney tumor. They can travel through lymph vessels to nearby lymph nodes. They can also spread through blood vessels to the lungs, bones, or liver. After spreading, kidney cancer cells may attach to other tissues and grow to form new tumors that may damage those tissues

## Symptoms

Common symptoms of kidney cancer include:

- Blood in your urine (which may make urine look rusty or darker red)
- Pain in your side that doesn't go away
- A lump or mass in your side or abdomen
- Weight loss for no known reason
- Fever
- Feeling very tired

These symptoms may be caused by kidney cancer or by other health problems, such as an infection or a kidney cyst. People with these symptoms should tell their doctor so that any problem can be diagnosed and treated as early as possible.

## Diagnosis

If you have symptoms that suggest kidney cancer, your doctor will try to find out what's causing the problems.

You may have a physical exam. Also, you may have one or more of the following tests:

- **Urine tests:** The lab checks your urine for blood and other signs of disease.
- **Blood tests:** The lab checks your blood for several substances, such as creatinine. A high level of creatinine may mean the kidneys aren't doing their job.
- **Ultrasound:** An ultrasound device uses sound waves that can't be heard by humans. The sound waves make a pattern of echoes as they bounce off organs inside your abdomen. The echoes create a picture of your kidney and nearby tissues. The picture can show a kidney tumor.
- **CT scan:** An x-ray machine linked to a computer takes a series of detailed pictures of your abdomen. You may receive an injection of contrast material so your urinary tract and lymph nodes show up clearly in the pictures. The CT scan can show cancer in the kidneys, lymph nodes, or elsewhere in the abdomen.
- **MRI:** A large machine with a strong magnet linked to a computer is used to make detailed pictures of your urinary tract and lymph nodes. You may receive an injection of contrast material. MRI can show cancer in your kidneys, lymph nodes, or other tissues in the abdomen.
- **IVP:** You'll receive an injection of dye into a vein in your arm. The dye travels through the body and collects in your kidneys. The dye makes them show up on x-rays. A series of x-rays then tracks the dye as it moves through your kidneys to your ureters and bladder. The x-rays can show a kidney tumor or other problems. (IVP is not used as commonly as CT or MRI for the detection of kidney cancer.)
- **Biopsy:** The removal of tissue to look for cancer cells is a biopsy. In some cases, your doctor will do a biopsy to diagnose kidney cancer. Your doctor inserts a thin needle through your skin into the kidney to remove a small sample of tissue. Your doctor may use ultrasound or a CT scan to guide the needle. A pathologist uses a microscope to check for cancer cells in the tissue.
- **Surgery:** After surgery to remove part or all of a kidney tumor, a pathologist can make the final diagnosis by checking the tissue under a microscope for cancer cells.

## Treatment

Surgery  
Targeted Therapy  
Biological Therapy

Common treatment options for people with kidney cancer are surgery, targeted therapy, and biological therapy. You may receive more than one type of treatment.

The treatment that's right for you depends mainly on the following:

- The size of the tumor
- Whether the tumor has invaded tissues outside the kidney
- Whether the tumor has spread to other parts of the body
- Your age and general health

You may have a team of specialists to help plan your treatment. Your doctor may refer you to a specialist, or you may ask for a referral.

You may want to see a urologist, a surgeon who specializes in treating problems of the urinary tract. Other specialists who treat kidney cancer include urologic oncologists (surgeons who specialize in cancers of the urinary tract), medical oncologists, and radiation oncologists. Your health care team may also include an oncology nurse and a registered dietitian.

Your health care team can describe your treatment choices, the expected results of each, and the possible side effects. Because cancer therapy often damages healthy cells and tissues, side effects are common. Before treatment starts, ask your health care team about possible side effects and how treatment may change your normal activities. You and your health care team can work together to develop a treatment plan that meets your needs.

At any stage of disease, supportive care is available to control pain and other symptoms, to relieve the side effects of treatment, and to ease emotional concerns. Information about such care is available on NCI's Web site at <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/coping>. For example, some people with kidney cancer may need to have radiation therapy to relieve pain or certain other problems. Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays to kill cancer cells.

## Staging

If kidney cancer is diagnosed, your doctor needs to learn the extent (stage) of the disease to help you choose the best treatment. The stage is based on the size of the kidney tumor and whether the cancer has invaded nearby tissues or spread to other parts of the body.

Your doctor may order one or more tests:

- **Blood tests:** Your doctor can check for substances in your blood. Some people with kidney cancer have high levels of calcium or LDH. A blood test can also show how well your liver is working.
- **Chest x-ray:** An x-ray of the chest can show a tumor in your lung.
- **CT scan:** CT scans of your chest and abdomen can show cancer in your lymph nodes, lungs, or elsewhere.
- **MRI:** MRI can show cancer in your blood vessels, lymph nodes, or other tissues in the abdomen.

When cancer spreads from its original place to another part of the body, the new tumor has the same kind of abnormal cells and the same name as the primary (original) tumor. For example, if kidney cancer spreads to a lung, the cancer cells in the lung are actually kidney cancer cells. The disease is metastatic kidney cancer, not lung cancer. It's treated as kidney cancer, not as lung cancer. Doctors sometimes call the new tumor "distant" disease.

These are the stages of kidney cancer:

- **Stage I:** The tumor is no bigger than a tennis ball (almost 3 inches or about 7 centimeters). Cancer cells are found only in the kidney.
- **Stage II:** The tumor is bigger than a tennis ball. But cancer cells are found only in the kidney.
- **Stage III:** The tumor can be any size. It has spread to at least one nearby lymph node. Or it has grown through the kidney to reach nearby blood vessels.
- **Stage IV:** The tumor has grown through the layer of fatty tissue and the outer layer of fibrous tissue that surrounds the kidney. Or cancer cells have spread to nearby lymph nodes or to the lungs, liver, bones, or other tissues.

# *In Loving Memory*

During March 2014, Memorial Donations were generously made by and for the following people

**In Memory of Ernest & Minnie (Plumley) Arent**

Alma Arent, St. Joseph

**In Memory of Lisa Marie Daniel**

Laurie Lewis, Coloma  
Jason & Kate Beckrow, Stevensville  
Barbara & Sarah Hagadorn, Stevensville  
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Darlene Kolenko & Family, Coloma  
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Suzan Sarabyn, Coloma

**In Memory of Berta Elsner**

Kappa Theta Chi Sorority, St. Joseph

**In Memory of Clara Gast**

Auxiliary Unit 568 Stevensville American Legion

**In Memory of Roland Hambleton**

Ken & Carol Spoerl, Coloma  
John & Shirley Gilman, Bridgman  
C. A. Marshall, Stevensville  
SW Michigan Car Collectors, St. Joseph  
Nancy Wuszke, Eau Claire

**In Memory of Paul Koehler**

Richard Lawrick, St. Joseph

**In Memory of Frances Shuck Laughlin**

Roselind Dohm, Eau Claire

**In Memory of Danie Pahl**

Bruno Pahl, Benton Harbor

**In Memory of Marjean Sauser**

Barbara Lane, Benton Harbor

**In Memory of Thomas Sharai**

Harry & Doris Case, Sodus

**In Memory of Robert Shembarger**

Harry & Doris Case, Sodus

**In Memory of Brenda Stineman**

John Schramm, Benton Harbor  
Deborah & Bruce Becker, Coloma

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.

## **Thought for Today**

You will find that if you share  
Your friend's burden,  
Both of you will walk a little straighter



*Please Consider...*

Looking Ahead

**BCCS SUPPORT GROUP – Stevensville**

May 6 & 20 – 1:30 p.m.

June 3 & 17 – 1:30 p.m.

**BCCS SUPPORT GROUP – Niles**

May 13 & 27 – 1:30 p.m.

June 10 & 24 – 1:30 p.m.

**OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP – Stevensville**

May 20 – 1:30 P.M.

June 17 – 1:30 p.m.

**RAINBOWS OF HOPE– St. Joseph**

Marie Yeager Cancer Center

May 8 – 5:30 p.m.

June 12 – 5:30 p.m.

**Ostomy Support Group**

Lakeland Regional Medical Center

May 8 – 6:00 p.m.

June 12 – 6:00 p.m.

**DATES TO REMEMBER IN MAY**

May 1 - May Day!!

May 3 – Bladder Cancer Awareness Day

May 4 – International Respect for Chickens Day

May 6 – National Teacher’s Day

May 7 – Great American Grump Out Day

May 10 - World Belly Dance Day

May 11 - Mother’s Day

May 12 - International Nurse’s Day

May 14 – National Chicken Dance Day

May 17 – Armed Forces Day

May 18 – International Museum Day

May 21 – National Endangered Species Day

May 23 – National Taffy Day

May 26 – Memorial Day

May 28 – World M S Day

May 31 – Hug Your Cat Day

**Newsletters available online**

Our newsletters are available on our website:  
[www.bccancerservice.org](http://www.bccancerservice.org). If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please call our office at 269-429-3281 or send us an e-mail: [staff@bccancerservice.org](mailto:staff@bccancerservice.org).

Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc., is a non-profit organization funded primarily by the United Way, private donations and fund-raisers. 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OR

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Please send notification of my gift to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your generosity!*

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

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Help us save postage, call 269-429-3281  
or email us at  
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not reading the newsletter, you may  
contact us to be removed also. We value  
our readers & hope you enjoy it.

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**CANCER SUPPORT GROUP** – Stevensville Office  
1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

**RAINBOWS OF HOPE GROUP- St. Joseph**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month – 5:30 p.m.  
**Marie Yeager Cancer Center**  
Ward and Kinney Room  
3900 Hollywood Road  
St. Joseph, MI 49085  
Phone: (269) 556-7114

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

**OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month – 6:00 p.m.  
**Lakeland Regional Medical Center**  
Community Room  
1234 Napier Ave.  
St. Joseph, MI 49085  
Phone: (269) 983-8804