

VOICES OF THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Great Lakes Division, Inc.



Sharing Stories of Hope, Progress, and Answers Across Michigan and Indiana

v.10, July 2007

LOCAL AREA SPOTLIGHT

Northeast Indiana's Road to Recovery program is doing great things. Read their story in the local area spotlight.

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OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Volunteers are still needed for Young Adult Retreat (YAR), a free, four-day summer retreat for young adult cancer survivors and patients. YAR will be held July 12-15 at St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Katie Wilson at (517) 664-1314.

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

Your American Cancer Society offers several online tools to educate and inform. See what cancer.org has to offer you in this month's resource highlight.

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community focus and volunteerism

Elementary schools fight cancer with Mini Relays

Elementary students and faculty in Indiana have joined the fight against cancer with fundraisers to benefit Relay For Life. Mini Relays – 24-minute events – kick off a variety of fundraising activities while educating students about the early detection and prevention of cancer.

Lakeside Elementary School, Warren Township, IN

Lakeside Elementary held its first Mini Relay in support of Joni Vogt, a fourth grade teacher and breast cancer survivor. Students were encouraged to wear hats and sunglasses during the Mini Relay to “shade out cancer” after learning about sun safety. They also wore purple clothing and carried “Fight Cancer” signs as they walked. The Mini Relay launched a month of activities and educational announcements.

“All the little things we did gave all the children a chance to participate,” explained Pam Smith, an instructional assistant at Lakeside and the coordinator of the event.

Fundraisers included “Dessert with the Dean”, “Lunch with the Principal”, and spirit days. Kids also bought suns and moons to hang on their classroom doors in a contest to “make your teacher shine”.

Joni, whose cancer was found at an early stage after a mammogram, stresses the importance of early

detection. “We have a lot of students who have been touched by cancer in one way or another. Celebrating cancer survivorship with my students and colleagues and educating them about how they can fight back against this disease was such a joy.”

One of Joni’s students, Baylauna Shideler, was excited when she heard about the Mini Relay. “I thought because my teacher had cancer, raising money for cancer would be a nice thing. Supporting cancer is a worthy cause.”

Lakeside’s efforts raised \$1,865 to benefit the American Cancer Society. “The children really loved it,” said Pam. “Now that we see how we can do it and improve on it, next year we can have a bigger and better event.”

Laurel School, Franklin County, IN

Franklin County, though one of the poorest counties in Indiana, has raised more than \$342,000 in the past five years of Relay For Life. This year, students at Laurel School raised more than \$2,200 in their first Mini Relay to contribute to the difference the county has made in the fight against cancer.

“We raised the most out of our schools this year and I am very proud,” said Judy Drake, a special reading teacher at Laurel who is active in Relay For Life. “The com-



munity is very giving. It was a neat opportunity for the kids to start philanthropy very young.”

A penny war sparked friendly competition between the grades. Spirit days gave kids the chance to wear hats and flip flops. They also went into the community to sell Relay For Life feet. Students invited cancer survivors to walk the first lap of the opening ceremony at the school, and then joined them for a lap.

“It’s a wonderful way to do something positive when you feel helpless,” said Judy about Relay. “The driving force is seeing what the survivors can do. Seeing the fight they give is worth it.”

Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society’s signature event. Call us toll-free at 1-800-ACS-2345 to find a Relay For Life near you.

Pictured above: Students carry signs during the Mini Relay.

• community focus and volunteerism

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Giving hope a home in Grand Rapids, Michigan

Hope is taking shape in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The end of May marked a financial milestone for the American Cancer Society (ACS) Great Lakes Division, Inc. when it announced the achievement of the Grand Rapids' Hope Lodge hitting its initial \$6.8 million capital campaign goal.

"The generosity of local philanthropists and a \$650,000 Kresge Foundation grant helped to bring the capital campaign to the goal", said campaign co-chairs Frank Merlotti, Jr. and Alex DeYonker.

The Kresge Foundation's challenge grant is one of three grants awarded to an ACS Hope Lodge in the country. "The Kresge challenge served as a key motivator to many donors and we are grateful to all who stepped forward to help us meet the challenge and secure this generous Kresge Foundation grant," said DeYonker.

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3 billion national foundation that concentrates its programming on capital campaigns as a key opportunity for nonprofit growth. The American Cancer Society, Great Lakes Division was proud to be chosen to receive this award, following a stringent application and review process.

The 30,000-square-foot facility located at the corner of Jefferson Ave. SE and Cherry St. in downtown Grand

Rapids will provide complimentary overnight accommodations and transportation for cancer patients and their caregivers during treatment in Grand Rapids.

The facility, which is comprised of the Peter M. Wege Guest House and the Robert & Barbara Wood Service Center, is eyeing a late 2007 opening, beginning with the relocation of the Society's local service center, which is currently located at 400 Ann St. NW. The entire facility is expected to open, including the welcoming of its first guests, in February 2008.

Hope Lodge Grand Rapids, the only Hope Lodge in Michigan, will be the 23rd such facility in the country and expects to accommodate approximately 600 patients and provide 7,200 complimentary nights of lodging for cancer patients and caregivers annually. The facility will not only reduce the financial burden for patients and caregivers traveling to Grand Rapids for treatment, but also provide a much-needed supportive environment for healing.

"We are truly pleased that so many generous individuals, companies and foundations helped the campaign to reach yet another milestone and together, as a community, we have taken another step toward improving the quality of life of cancer patients and their families," said Merlotti. Approximately 3,800 patients receive



treatment at Grand Rapids-based cancer centers each year. Of these, more than 930 patients, or one in every four patients, travel from outside Kent County seeking treatment.

The facility will include 20 private guest suites, a great room, four kitchens, three living rooms, two conference rooms, two laundry rooms, an exercise room, a library offering Internet access, an outdoor garden area, and ACS staff offices.

The American Cancer Society, Great Lakes Division, has obtained favorable tax-exempt financing to cover the remaining costs associated with the facility's construction and is also working to establish an endowment to assist in covering the annual operational expenses. For more information on donor and volunteer opportunities, please call Teresa Schaal at (616) 364-2540.

Pictured above: Construction of the Hope Lodge Grand Rapids is underway.

• local area spotlight

Volunteer drivers in Indiana give patients hope one ride at a time

When Bonnie Dennis was diagnosed with cancer in 1984, there wasn't a local Road to Recovery program available. "There were times when I didn't have rides to the doctor, but I had a friend who took the time to drive me." Now Bonnie gives back to her community as a Road to Recovery volunteer driver, where she can be an encouragement to those who have cancer.

Road to Recovery provides transportation for cancer patients to and from their scheduled cancer-related medical appointments.

Transportation is provided according to the needs and available resources in the community.

Northeast Indiana has had a Road program for nearly 10 years, serving the following counties: Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wells, and Whitley. Huntington County recently had seven members of the Salamonie Church of the Brethren sign up during a campaign drive. Deb Davis was one of the new drivers and when she

heard there was a need for a coordinator for the area program, she leapt at the opportunity.

"I said I could coordinate the seven of us and after I heard they needed a coordinator, I thought, I can do that!" explained Deb. Now transportation needs are passed along to Deb, who then calls her volunteers to determine availability.

Janet Coomer is one of the cancer patients in Whitley County who has benefited from Road to Recovery. Her treatment is five days a week and 40 miles away. When Janet called for rides, Deb thought it would be a difficult request to fill, but it only took three calls to her volunteers.

"This has been a godsend," said Janet. "If it wasn't for them, I couldn't get back and forth for my radiation. The three couples have been absolutely marvelous people and I'd recommend them to anybody."

Road to Recovery volunteers provide an essential service because even the greatest medical advance is useless if patients can't get to treatment.

"I would have been hard pressed to get people to take me if it weren't for this program and my brother," said George Rentovich, a Whitley County resident who used Road to Recovery



to get to his first week of radiation treatments. "The drivers are outstanding. They drive very carefully and are courteous, always offering the use of their time if required in the near future."

Being a Road to Recovery volunteer only requires a safe driving record, a valid driver's license, some free time, a vehicle in good working condition, and the desire to help. If you would like to make a difference in the lives of people affected by cancer by becoming a Road to Recovery volunteer, please call your local American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345.

If you are in need of transportation, volunteers are ready to drive you. "I know how hard it is for people to ask for help, but there are so many of us that want to help so please let us," said Deb. To find a Road to Recovery program in your area, call us toll-free at 1-800-ACS-2345.

Pictured above: Bonnie Dennis.



Life after cancer

It was two days before Christmas in 2002 when John Alexander learned he had lung cancer. He had been sick with pneumonia for a few months, but it was a shock for the 41-year-old Indiana resident when a tissue biopsy came back cancerous. His response was to take action.

John turned to the Cancer Survivors Network® (CSN), an online community offered by the American Cancer Society that connects survivors and caregivers. He used the information he found online to generate questions for his doctors about his diagnosis and treatment. After surgery to remove tumors resulted in the removal of one of his lungs, John looked to the online community for answers.

“What the doctors and medical information don’t give you is what people are feeling,” explained John. “Is it ok to feel like you can’t breathe at a certain stage, or how’s life after you’ve had one lung removed? What can I do, what can’t I do?”



When John heard that his son Chuck’s Boy Scout troop was planning a high adventure trip to the boundary waters in Northern Wisconsin, he had the motivation he needed to test his ability. The five-day, 50-mile trip would require him to carry his own 75-pound pack or a 60-pound canoe for up to a mile at a time.

“I wanted to get well enough and have enough capability to go on that trip with him”, said John. “I really thought that I was going to have to stand there and watch him go off on the trip by himself, and that would have been a huge loss.”

John credits his pulmonary rehab program with getting him into shape. “I was really complimented when the guys told me at the end of the trip, ‘you didn’t slow us down one bit. You kept right up, sometimes leading the pack!’” Finishing the trip with the troop was a great accomplishment for John, but it was even more rewarding to be with his son. “That was a really great thing for me, to be able to do that with my son. It was really positive.”

John’s next mission was to join the fight against cancer. When he couldn’t find a fundraiser specifically for lung



cancer, he turned to Relay For Life. “I found out it was the American Cancer Society and I thought that was the best way to go, to support cancer in general for the organization that has helped me the most.” This is John’s second year participating in the Relay For Life of Warren Township. He is the survivorship chair and has his own team.

Now approaching five years as a cancer survivor, John continues to set goals. His son’s troop is planning another high adventure trip for 2008 and John plans to be there. “It’s important to let people know that you can work towards whatever you want to do.”

To learn more about the Cancer Survivors Network®, visit www.cancer.org/csn. For volunteer opportunities with your local Relay For Life, visit www.cancer.org/relay.

Pictured: John carries a canoe during the trip (above); son Chuck and John (left).

Our challenge: funding research, saving lives

The American Cancer Society, the largest non-government, not-for-profit source of cancer research funding in the United States, has recently announced the second of its two grant cycles for 2007. In the Great Lakes Division, six new term grants valued at over \$2.3 million begin with the July 2007 cycle. This brings the grand total of Great Lakes Division research grants to over \$29 million at eight research facilities in Indiana and Michigan. Those eight institutions include: Purdue University, Indiana University at Indianapolis, Indiana University at Bloomington, University of Notre Dame, University of Michigan, Wayne State University, Van Andel Research Institute, and Michigan State University. Nationally, the Society is funding 887 multi-year grants worth \$446 million.

Since its inception, the ACS Research and Training Program has funded 40 Nobel Prize laureates and invested \$3.1 billion in cancer research. The Society is committed to funding beginning investigators, a



niche overlooked by many organizations. The work conducted by these trailblazing researchers has most likely had an impact on your life or someone close to you. Consider that women who receive mammograms or Pap tests, men who receive the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test, children who have been cured of leukemia with the use of chemotherapy, and those who quit smoking or never started because cigarettes are linked to lung cancer, all are living better lives because of research funded by the American Cancer Society.

Grant applications are ranked on the basis of merit by one of several discipline-specific peer review committees. Each year, the committees meet to select the most promising proposals from researchers at top medical and scientific institutions across the nation. Unfortunately, the number of promising grant requests always exceeds the funds to support those projects. The Society has the resources to fund only about 60% of the grant requests it approves each year. As a result, a list is created of top-ranked cancer research projects that have been approved for funding but for which dollars are not available. This list is known as the Pay-If Research Application List, and these research projects will be funded only if the additional dollars can be



raised. Currently, 89 “pay-if” research grants have passed the multi-disciplinary review process, but go beyond the Society’s current funding resources.

We invite you to join us in the fight to eliminate cancer by investing in research to detect cancer earlier, discover new and more effective treatments, and dramatically improve the quality of life for cancer patients and their loved ones. For more information on how to make a gift, please contact Lynn Borg, Major Gifts Officer, at (248) 483-4334.

Breast Cancer Screening and MRI Usage

The American Cancer Society recently released updated breast cancer screening guidelines that talk about the use of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). This change marks the first time in four years that the Society has updated its recommendations on the early detection of breast cancer.

What does this mean for women seeking mammograms?

Mammography is highly effective in detecting breast cancer at an early stage and, when followed up with appropriate diagnosis and treatment, reducing mortality from breast cancer. For women at an increased risk of breast cancer, other screening technologies also may contribute to the earlier detection of breast cancer.

The Society recommends the addition of MRI screening to mammography for women at high risk of breast cancer, which includes those who:

- have a known BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation
- have a first-degree relative (mother, father, brother, sister, or child) with a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, and have not had genetic testing themselves
- have a lifetime risk of breast cancer of 20%-25% or greater,

according to risk assessment tools that are based mainly on family history

- had radiation therapy to the chest when they were between the ages of 10 and 30 years
- have Li-Fraumeni syndrome, Cowden syndrome, or Bannayan-Riley-Ruvalcaba syndrome, or have one of these syndromes in first-degree relatives

It is also recommended that women at moderately increased risk talk with their doctors about the benefits and limitations of adding MRI screening to their yearly mammogram. Women at moderately increased risk include those who:

- have a lifetime risk of breast cancer of 15%-20%, according to risk assessment tools that are based mainly on family history
- have a personal history of breast cancer, ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS), atypical ductal hyperplasia (ADH), or atypical lobular hyperplasia (ALH)
- have extremely dense breasts or unevenly dense breasts when viewed by mammograms

While MRI is more sensitive in detecting cancers than mammograms, it also has a higher false-positive rate (where the test finds something that turns out not to be



cancer), which results in more recalls and biopsies. This is why it is not recommended as a screening test for women at average risk of breast cancer, as it would result in unneeded biopsies and other tests in a large portion of these women.

The use of regular mammograms, MRI (in women at high risk), clinical breast exams, and finding and reporting breast changes early offers women the best opportunity for reducing the breast cancer death rate through early detection. This combined approach is clearly better than any one test for early detection.

If you are a woman who is 40 or older, remember to schedule your yearly mammogram. For more information about the American Cancer Society's screening guidelines, visit www.cancer.org or call 1-800-ACS-2345 anytime, day or night. No matter who you are, we can help.

Michigan business leaders join volunteers for largest ever Celebration at the State Capitol

“Don’t be afraid to talk to your legislator. We have to keep plugging away until they realize that smokefree laws are good for business.”

Renee Shull of Design Ware in Kalamazoo echoed the sentiments of many of her business colleagues during the 2007 American Cancer Society’s Celebration at the State Capitol. Nearly 600 volunteers from around the state participated, making it the largest crowd in the event’s four-year history.

On June 13, during their annual trek to Lansing, volunteers met with lawmakers on the lawn of the State Capitol to rally around cancer-related issues. Volunteers met with 96 out of 110 state Representatives and 35 out of 38 Senators.

Health initiatives such as funding for cancer prevention and treatment, as well as passing statewide smokefree legislation were discussed with lawmakers. Volunteers asked for funding of programs such as the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (BCCCP) and a colorectal screening program, among others.

Smokefree laws are good for business

Part of the day’s agenda was designed to build awareness that smokefree laws offer tremendous financial benefits to the state’s businesses.

The day kicked off with a press conference spotlighting 39 businesses that participated in the American Cancer Society’s Workplace Solutions program, a slate of health-related initiatives created to improve workers’ health. As part of the Workplace Solutions initiative, organizations are encouraged to make their workplaces smokefree.

After the press conference, business leaders were recognized during a reception where they received an award for being a smokefree Five Star Investor in the Workplace Solutions program. They then joined ACS volunteers in meetings with lawmakers.

Smokefree legislation was a prominent topic at the Capitol. One day earlier, the House Commerce Committee held a hearing on HB 4163, a bill that would make all Michigan workplaces smokefree. Such legislation, already law in 31 states, would help Michigan businesses reduce health expenses and become more competitive.

Business gets personal

Renee Shull had no history of cancer in her family. She encouraged Design Ware, Inc. to go smokefree because she believed it would save her company money.

“When we first started participating, my branch had the highest amount of catastrophic (insurance) claims, among our affiliates. Since we went



smokefree and began participating in Workplace Solutions, we have gone from the highest to lowest. It has saved us about \$3,000 per covered life (or about \$300,000) during the two years we’ve participated in the program.”

Later, Renee found that cancer had unexpectedly touched her own life. “I gave my speech today (during Celebration at the State Capitol) knowing that my step-mom was experiencing 2nd stage breast cancer. Initially, I participated in Workplace Solutions because I thought it would help business-wise. But now it’s much more personal.”

Tom Devine, a five-time cancer survivor and the day’s emcee, thinks that’s why advocacy events like Celebration at the State Capitol are so important. “It’s important to educate politicians on the health aspects of cancer. They really need to understand that cancer touches everyone, including themselves.”

Pictured above: Representatives from 39 Workplace Solutions businesses attended the event.

Indiana Increases State Tobacco Tax

On the last day of session, the State Senate and House of Representatives passed a 44 cent cigarette tax increase, which will help fund many important health initiatives in Indiana.

According to Patty Avery, an ACS volunteer from Evansville, the tobacco tax increase was not a sure thing until very late in the day on the very last day of session.

“It was about 10 minutes to 12 p.m. and we were still sweating bullets. It really did come down to the last minute.”

ACS and its partners executed several statewide initiatives to build support for the tobacco tax increase. These included a statewide poll; press conferences; several letters to legislators; creation and distribution of fact sheets; meetings with hundreds of legislators; two call programs including an ACS call program that resulted in over 1,200 calls and emails to legislators; press releases; distribution of Letters to Editors; town hall meetings; multi-organizational action alerts; and much more.

Patty is not a smoker, but she believes increasing the tobacco tax will benefit all Hoosiers, including those in her own family.

“It’s not going to affect me personally, but I hope it helps my son to quit.



He picked up some bad habits while he was in college,” she laughed.

The state tobacco tax is now 99.5 cents. As a result of our efforts, Indiana’s tobacco tax went from the 37th highest in the nation to the 24th highest.

Patty believes ACS’s hard work getting the bill passed will pay off.

“Besides the correlation between higher tobacco taxes and lower smoking rates, the bill applies the money (generated from the tax increase) directly to health care. It’s going to make health care available to folks who may not have had any or access to screening previously. Ultimately, this may be the biggest benefit to fighting cancer in the long run.”

In addition to the tobacco tax victory, the legislature also increased funding to the state tobacco prevention and cessation program. The program has been funded at \$10.8 million annually, but through increased allocation in this budget and the cigarette tax increase, it will be funded for \$16.2 million for the next two years. The Indiana Cancer Registry also received increased funding. It will be funded at \$648,739 annually, which represents a \$395,088 annual increase.

For more information on how you can get involved in advocacy at your local or state level, visit www.acscan.org.

Online Enhancements

The American Cancer Society has released some free, online resources to help you and your loved ones cope with cancer, reduce your risk of cancer, and learn about prevention and early detection.

I Can Cope® Online Classes

I Can Cope is an educational program for people facing cancer—either personally, or as a friend or family caregiver. Living with cancer can be one of the greatest challenges a person can face. I Can Cope offers help so that you can meet this challenge.

Traditionally, I Can Cope classes have been delivered in a community setting by trained facilitators. In an effort to reach more people, ACS is now also providing interactive online classes. Cancer survivors and caregivers can take the classes in a location and at a time that is convenient for them.

I Can Cope online classes are self-paced and feature voice-overs, videos, quizzes with feedback, and links to more in-depth information. The classes are free, but registration is required.

The following classes are currently available:

- Communicating Concerns and Feelings
- Exploring Self-Esteem and Intimacy
- Learning About Cancer

- Managing Cancer-Related Fatigue
- Managing the Effects of Illness and Treatment
- Nutrition During Cancer Treatment: Nutrition Basics
- Nutrition During Cancer Treatment: Managing Side Effects
- Relieving Cancer Pain
- Understanding Cancer Treatments

Visit www.cancer.org/onlineclasses to learn more about how these classes can help you or a loved one cope with cancer.

Health Messaging Assistant

Good health is a product of many small, daily decisions. What we decide to eat and drink, the lifestyle choices we make, and the health and safety risks we take all impact our overall health and our risk for cancer.

To help you make the best health decisions, ACS now offers the free Health Messaging Assistant program. This program provides a series of weekly e-mail messages with information to help you achieve and maintain good health and reduce your risk for cancer.

This free program is available on our web site, www.cancer.org. All web site visitors who take a moment to register will be e-mailed an invitation to join the Health Messaging Assistant program. Once you receive this invitation, you can choose to receive



weekly message or opt out of the program. Visit www.cancer.org/messaging to start receiving your health messages today.

Health Reminder Assistant

Prevention and early detection are two of the most powerful tools for achieving and maintaining good health and reducing your risk for cancer. But sometimes, people forget to get a screening or vaccination or make an appointment for a check-up. According to the American Association of Health Plans, one of the seven barriers to health care access is the lack of reminder systems.

To help you keep up to date, ACS has launched the Health Reminder Assistant. This free program lets you schedule what messages you want to receive and if you want them via e-mail, telephone, or your favorite Instant Messenger (IM) program. To set up your personalized Health Reminder Assistant, visit www.cancer.org/remindme.