



Introduction

Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting the emotional and non-medical needs of cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy and radiation therapy in our community. We are a small, grassroots organization supporting patients in cancer treatment at an individual level. Regardless of diagnosis, age, race, gender or socio-economic status, we believe that any cancer diagnosis is a greatest fear realized. Every day we help patients meet that fear with courage, friendship and kindness.

Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater (CCFOT) was founded at the intersection where medicine meets humanity. In 2001, Dr. Robert Berger, an oncologist with Virginia Oncology Associates (VOA), along with a dedicated circle of friends, observed that chemotherapy patients were having their medical, but not their emotional needs met. The group determined that food could be an effective vehicle to feed the emotional needs of patients – and so began Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater and our first sandwich cart. Through the distribution of tasty and comforting food to patients in the VOA infusion room, a handful of volunteers were able to connect with patients to create friendships, ease fears, reduce stress and instill hope.

Fast forward more than a decade and you'll find Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater is an organization still true to its founding mission to meet the emotional and non-medical needs of cancer patients in treatment in our community. Our volunteer ranks have grown by the hundreds in what is now called our Acts of Kindness program, and **we have supported hundreds of thousands of Tidewater residents and their caregivers in their battles against cancer.** Along the way we have learned that surrounding the devastating diagnosis of cancer is a front row seat to *humanity at its very best* – where fear meets kindness, frailty fosters nurturing and where loss reveals deep love.

Our Programs

Acts of Kindness

Our Acts of Kindness program provides volunteer support to meet the emotional needs of patients undergoing chemotherapy and radiation therapy at locations throughout the Tidewater region. This includes all 11 VOA infusion clinics and new partnerships with Bon Secours DePaul Medical Center and the Sidney M. Oman Cancer Center at Chesapeake Regional Medical Center on the horizon.

Presently, nearly 200 weekly volunteers deliver savory sandwiches, snacks and beverages as a vehicle to provide comfort, friendship and hope to approximately 1500 patients in treatment and their caregivers. A humble sandwich cart might seem quaint in the battle against cancer, but as one of our volunteers has pointed out – it just isn't that simple:

I consider the sandwich the most profound thing. It takes no millions of dollars of research, no huge grants. And it hits the cancer issue where it matters, at the belly, at the hunger, at the need for nourishment, both spiritually and physically -- directly, inexpensively, honestly.

The emotional support cancer patients and their caregivers receive through our Acts of Kindness program helps reduce the stress of treatment itself, provides morale in maintaining daily routines during treatment, and contributes to their quality of life.

Our Acts of Kindness volunteers meet patients and caregivers with open hearts, eager ears and kind words. While serving our famous pimento cheese sandwiches or an oven fresh brownie, our volunteers are ready to share a story, wipe a tear, play a song or read a book. Support also comes in the form of guidance with non-medical needs, such as how to get help with prescription costs, how to work with health insurance companies; or simple tricks to alleviating nausea or how to tie a fashionable headscarf. We have found that food can do more than just physically nourish. Food can start a conversation, calm a fear, foster a friendship, and restore dignity. Our volunteers know that a simple sandwich can change a heart and a mind.

Our partnership over the past decade with VOA has enabled us to touch the lives of hundreds of thousands of cancer patients in our community – and chances are you know someone who had benefitted from our support. The vast majority of our Acts of Kindness volunteers are cancer survivors or caregivers who donate their time and talent to “pay forward” the kindness and comfort they received from Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater. The reality is that many of our volunteers often fluctuate between their roles as volunteers and patients in treatment. Our “community” of volunteers motivates and encourages one another because the emotional support they provide to patients in treatment often comes directly from their own experiences.

Humanitarian Assistance

Our Humanitarian Assistance program provides grants to individuals undergoing treatment who have inadequate financial means to meet pressing non-medical needs. Although our assistance grants are relatively small, the immediacy and flexibility of our program is unique. All grants are limited to a maximum of \$250 per patient, per quarter, and can be considered and granted within two weeks. Individuals may request assistance up to four times per year. This program model is designed to be timely and efficient in order to allow low-income patients to focus on their treatment, rather than their financial shortcomings. Examples of short-term patient needs met by our program include utility bills, food cards and transportation vouchers. Some grants provide more intangible support, such as the birthday party thrown for a 7 year old boy, whose mother lost her terminal battle with cancer just months later. **Our humanitarian assistance grants are a vehicle to provide emotional support and peace of mind to patients in treatment by alleviating temporary financial concerns.** This program allows Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater to reach patients beyond our VOA partnership, by providing financial assistance to any patient in treatment, at any facility in our region.

Community Wellness and Awareness

At Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater, we believe in the power of community. Through partnerships and innovative programming, we strive to inspire, celebrate and educate. Many of our events encourage groups and individuals touched by cancer to channel the intense emotion surrounding the disease into unique events that provide community awareness, interpersonal bonds and financial support for Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater. Examples of our events include Mistletoe Merriment Racquetball Tournament, Marie Hadley Memorial Bake Sale, Dive for a Cure, and the Turtle Open.

Our signature community awareness event is Just Walk For Liz. Since 2004, thousands of Tidewater residents have joined us in early June for a 2-mile walk along the Elizabeth River to celebrate the life of our dear friend Liz Kollmansperger, who lost her battle with ovarian cancer in 2003. The legacy of this

event, and of Liz's life, is to provide education and awareness about the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer – often called the silent killer.

In 2011, we launched our Whole Life Series, a program of events designed to raise awareness of our work, outside the cancer community. Our concept is simple – in your whole life, we hope you are never touched by cancer, but if you are we'll be there for you. Our signature program is the Whole Life Market, an open air farmers-style market featuring organic, whole-food, and farm-fresh produce and products in a family-friendly atmosphere featuring live music and entertainment. **Our goal is to celebrate good health, good food and good company – all for a good cause.** The program takes place throughout the summer and fall in the historic Ghent neighborhood of Norfolk.

Our most recent community effort is a new partnership with the Eastern Virginia Medical School B.E.A.C.H. Buddies Program. This unique program encourages medical students to Be A Cancer and Hematology Buddy to provide children in the oncology clinic at Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters with a fun outlet to relieve the stress of treatment. More than 50 medical students participate in this year-round program providing support to hundreds of children and their families.

Acts Of Kindness Clubs

In order to sow the seeds of volunteerism, awareness and compassion in our youth, we support Acts of Kindness Clubs (AOK Clubs) at several schools in our community. These student-led clubs conduct fundraising and awareness activities, and many students provide direct volunteer support for CCFOT programs and patients. Examples of AOK Club contributions include bake and craft sales, staffing for CCFOT community events, and direct volunteering with patients in treatment. Additionally, AOK club members create Cancer Care Packages throughout the year for use during the summer, when we find many patients bringing their children to chemotherapy. These packages include a coloring book addressing childhood fears of medical treatment, crayons, a deck of cards, notepads and pencils, puzzles and hard candy. Cancer Care Packages help to calm fears and keep children occupied during their parent or caregiver's treatment.

Our Financial Model

Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater is a grassroots organization with a tremendous impact on the lives of cancer patients in our community. We strive to keep our "administrative footprint" as small as possible, with minimal staff (one full-time and two hourly employees) and free office space through our partnership with VOA. Despite our size, we coordinate programs that directly impact the lives of more than 100,000 individual cancer patients annually. Our Board of Directors, staff and volunteers raise funds in the community through corporate and individual donations, community events, memorials, and grants from private and community foundations. **Our goal is to stay focused on our mission in order to leverage our financial and volunteer support to the maximum benefit for patients in cancer treatment in our community.**

Conclusion

The way we respond to people in their time of need defines us as a community. Chemotherapy is literally that "hour of need," where we find people at their most vulnerable. *At Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater, we've helped hundreds of thousands of local cancer patients and their caregivers face that challenge with dignity and grace.* We strive to create a kinder, gentler community where something as simple as a sandwich really does make a difference. **Your support of Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater will directly impact the lives of patients battling cancer in our community.** We invite you to join us.