



2015

pathways

(Cancer Services Network)
providing gifts of hope

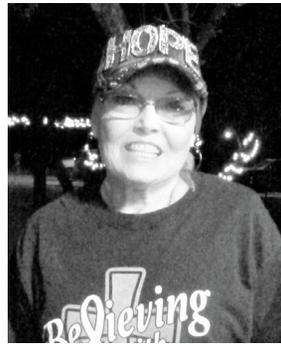


A Grateful Patient BLOW OF CANCER DIAGNOSIS EASED BY CARE FROM CSN

By Janlyn Thaxton

When Brenda Gerard was diagnosed with breast cancer after a routine mammogram in July 2015, she was still reeling from her husband's recent health problems.

Jerry Gerard had just finished rehabilitation after a devastating flesh-eating bacterial infection landed him in intensive care for three and a half months at Lubbock's University Medical Center. Jerry, a retired pharmaceutical representative, and Brenda, retired human resources director at U.S. Brass, were also enjoying raising two of their grandchildren when Brenda's diagnosis came—stage three breast cancer.



"It was just a scheduled mammogram; I had faithfully had one every year, at least I thought I had. Turns out I skipped my mammogram last year. I had never skipped one. I regret that so much," said Brenda. "Also, it turns out, I'm dealing with one of the worst kinds of breast cancer, triple negative; it's invasive and can jump to other organs quickly."

Brenda said one of her biggest fears is that the cancer will still spread, despite a radical double mastectomy less than a month after diagnosis and a very aggressive chemotherapy, Adriamycin.

"They call it 'The Red Devil,' a very nasty drug. It's a painful treatment and the side effects are absolutely dreadful," she said.

Brenda said she is one of the lucky ones, though, because her insurance will pay for a patch, a cost of \$2,900, to help with nausea. She said many others at the clinic experience even worse side effects during treatment because their insurance will not pay it and they cannot afford it out-of-pocket.

Now she is halfway through a milder treatment she takes every two weeks at a Weatherford clinic with a doctor specializing in her specific kind of cancer.

Brenda said making the frequent trips out of town is expensive. If it weren't for the financial support of Cancer Services Network the trips

would be much more of a hardship in her retirement, she said. CSN not only helps Brenda with travel, but also utilities, prescriptions, a stipend for continuing her health insurance, and they give her a vast amount of reassurance and emotional support.

"I can just call and someone there (at CSN) will inevitably know the answers to my questions because they have helped so many people before me with similar questions," said Brenda. "They are very patient and very kind, they help me with wigs and scarves, and they keep me updated about proper nutrition. They recently sent me a big bottle of protein to add to my diet."

Brenda, who serves as an elder at Brookhollow Christian Church and previously has served as a Redcoat, the Abilene Chamber of Commerce goodwill ambassador committee, said three things have helped her deal with her cancer: family, faith, and the support she receives from CSN.

"My children and grandchildren are pushing me through to get better. The grandkids we're raising are busy in their lives, so that gives me drive. They're involved in volleyball, baseball, Tai Kwon Do, and are in a play at ACT," said Brenda. "I can't go down."

Brenda said her 18-year-old granddaughter, a senior at Stephenville High School, recently came up with a phrase to put on about 100 t-shirts made for friends and family members. The shirts say, "Believing with Baggy," the name all of the grandkids call her. That message helps to keep Brenda positive and knowing that she has so many people pulling for her. Plus, Brenda said she also has a tremendous amount of faith and has made up her mind that she will not accept her prognosis.

"I am so thankful for the great support CSN provides financially, plus, they check on me, and they keep me positive. You can't dwell on the negative or those thoughts will eat you alive," she said. "It would have made this cancer thing so much harder without the care and support CSN gives me."

12th Annual FASHIONS for the *cure*



The 12th Annual Fashions for the Cure (FFTC) Style Show and Silent Auction was held on Tuesday, October 6, 2015 at the Abilene Civic Center. CSN board member Yanell Rieder volunteered to host “one more year” and produced a great fashion show and silent auction to benefit Cancer Services Network.

Pat and Mike Dunnahoo, serving as honorary chairs, opened the style show by telling attendees that battling cancer is hard even under the best of circumstances, and coping with a cancer diagnosis can be challenging. Mike encouraged everyone to give generously to support CSN’s mission of improving the lives of those living with cancer by meeting the financial, emotional and educational needs that arise during cancer treatment.

In addition to seeing the latest in fall fashions, attendees were able to bid on over 100 items generously donated by local businesses for the silent auction. Raffle tickets were sold for a Louis Vuitton purse and wallet donated by Yanell Rieder and friends, a pink Rugar 380 pistol donated by friends of CSN, and a Prism statement ring donated by LAGOS.

On behalf of the cancer patients we serve,

THANK YOU

TO ALL OUR DONORS, VOLUNTEERS & GUESTS!

Suzanne Starr served as event emcee. The style show began with cancer survivors modeling clothing from the Joseph Ribkoff line, who gifted the outfits being modeled to the cancer survivors, followed by models who are well-connected women in the Abilene community showing off the latest in fashions from Casa Authentique. Always a high point, at the conclusion of the show, all cancer survivors in the audience were asked to join the models on stage to be honored as cancer survivors.

Marci Cole, CSN Board Chair, presented Yanell Rieder with a token of appreciation for serving as Fashions for the Cure Chair and for all the years of support she has provided CSN through her efforts. After receiving her award, Yanell got the chance to walk the runway amidst applause from all those in attendance.

Yanell’s legacy will live on. A new Fashions for the Cure committee is being formed to begin planning next year’s event. You may call the CSN office if you would like to volunteer to be on the Fashions for the Cure Committee. Save the date—Tuesday, October 4, 2016 for Fashions for the Cure 2016!

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FOR THOSE WHO FIGHT, FOUGHT & HOPE

An early morning start time, blisters and a weather forecast of a heavy chance for rain didn't stop the nearly 200 people determined to walk, waddle and run through downtown Abilene in the 8th Annual 5K Run Together benefitting CSN on Saturday, October 24th at Frontier Texas! Knowing that the money raised will be used to directly benefit local cancer patients while they are battling cancer was the best motivation to get them out early on a Saturday morning.

Individuals, families and teams assembled as dawn was breaking. It was a cool, overcast morning, which turned out to be just the perfect weather for bringing cancer survivors, fighters and supporters together for a run. Most participants walked in support of survivors or in memory of loved ones who had fought a good fight but lost their battle against cancer. Several had special t-shirts made or had photos, buttons and signs to pay tribute to them.

Winning the award for the largest team was the "Winters Warriors" lead by Cheryl Sneed. The Abilene Runners Club offered chip-timing for the more serious runners. Receiving the first place trophy for the fastest time in the male division was Andrew Striley. Marsha Moreland took the fastest female title. Tessa Jones, 7, was the youngest timed runner, and Kathy Mashburn was the oldest at 69.

CSN is grateful to all the participants, sponsors and volunteers that helped make this event possible.



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Every day of survivorship is a day to be celebrated! We love to see cancer survivors come together to share stories and celebrate life. On Saturday, October 17th, it was a boot-scootin' celebration with Jody Nix and the Texas Cowboys playing until midnight at Lytle Bend Ranch for the 7th Annual SurvivorFEST, this year benefitting

Cancer Services Network. In addition to dancing the night away, there were donations from local businesses and individuals of food, drinks and silent auction items.

Event founder Barbara Pointer, a breast cancer survivor, began this event to educate and encourage all women to have breast cancer screenings so that if a cancer diagnosis is in their future, it can be found early, when cancer is most treatable. Last year she asked to partner with Cancer Services Network.



Proceeds from this event will provide hope and help to the cancer patients, survivors, their family members and caregivers that CSN serves. Through CSN's direct financial assistance, emotional and spiritual support programs, social programs and activities, and educational sessions, those with all types of cancer will be encouraged and blessed.

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Fur, Fowl & Fin

The 1st Annual Fur, Fowl & Fin Wild Game Dinner was held on Tuesday, April 28, 2015 with a maximum capacity crowd.

This men's event provided a fun-filled evening for those who enjoy eating wild game, the great outdoors, hunting, fishing and the sporting life. A feast of wild game including elk tenderloin, deer sausage, venison steak, chicken, quail, catfish and plenty of sides made sure no man left hungry. An open bar and plenty of raffle items made for a fun evening for those attending. An auction with a South Texas bay fishing trip, area hunts, Colorado stays, custom knives and sporting event tickets, among other items, were a hit among the men bidding on donated auction items.



Brad Schoonmaker, Clyde ISD football coach and cancer survivor, put the event purpose into perspective by sharing his story of how cancer affected his life. Proceeds from this event will enable CSN to continue providing services for local cancer patients in need. Our thanks to gracious hosts Shea and Larry Hall for donating the use of the event venue at their ranch. Plans are underway for the 2nd Annual Fur, Fowl & Fin in Spring of 2016!



Merry Christmas!

Cancer Services Network (CSN) is providing our Christmas Card Honorarium Program again this year. Maybe you know someone who has lost a friend or family member to cancer who would be deeply moved to know that you have made a gift in memory of that person. Perhaps there is someone in your life who is fighting a fierce battle against cancer right now and they would be honored to learn you have made a donation to CSN in their name. Or sometimes it's just hard to know what to get for that person who has everything! Celebrate them by donating to CSN in honor of them while helping support CSN's efforts to assist over 1,600 cancer patients, family members, and caregivers in the coming year.

Send your list of honorees (your Christmas card list) complete with their full names and addresses and the exact name(s) as you want your name to appear on the card signature line to:

CANCER SERVICES NETWORK
 Christmas Card Program
 P.O. Box 2026 | Abilene, Texas 79604

or bring your list of names and addresses by the CSN office at 100 Chestnut, Suite 100, Abilene and we'll take care of the rest! Please enclose a donation sufficient to cover the cost of the printing and postage, which we estimate to be \$5.00 per card. For more information please call CSN at 325.672.0040.

By the Numbers

- CSN served **315 cancer patients** through the end of October 2015.
- CSN has had **176 new clients** year to date in 2015.
- CSN allocates **.83 of every dollar** for specific assistance for cancer patients living right here in West Texas.
- Cancer Services Network receives **no state or federal funding**.
- 85% of the cancer patients CSN helps financially live at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.
- **83% of our annual budget comes from community support—individuals like you!**
- As of November 1, 2015, CSN has **helped provide gas for 3,026 trips to treatment** for the cancer patients and **helped fill 978 prescriptions for cancer-related medication** this year.
- No other local cancer organization offers as much financial, emotional, and social post-diagnosis support to cancer patients in West Central Texas as Cancer Services Network.

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 Stephens Processing
 United Supermarkets
 Ben E. Keith Beverages

DONORS:

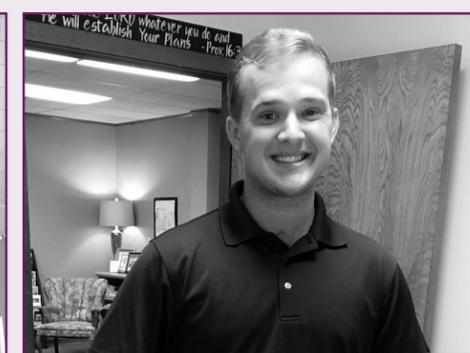
Absolute Perfection Day Spa
 Justin Allen
 Jill Atwood
 Barr Roofing
 Batjer and Associates, Inc.
 Mr. and Mrs. Mark Beale
 Dean Berry
 James Bishop
 Bixby Holdings
 Denise and Jason Blake
 Terri Bloodgood
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 Buffalo Gap I. and E.
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 C-K Aneffer Enterprises
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 The Crowe Group
 Nathan Tomlin
 Nancy Tyler
 Waldrop Construction Co., Inc.
 Whiteco Concepts, LLC
 Greg and Jane Yost



Board members Judy Garner, Angela Childress, Marci Cole, and Kris Southward joined CSN staff to volunteer during the United Way of Abilene's Key City Rhythm and Blues Festival on June 6, 2015.



Brennan Ballew, ACU student, assistant to the Executive Director

Brewster Barbecue

DONORS:

Mickie Bearden
 Johnny Cope
 R.H. Eledge
 Tony Fade
 Gregg Goodall
 Elaine Goswick
 Jackie Grissom

Donna Hargrave
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 K.C. Jones
 Martha Leonard
 Deborah Martens
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 Michael Parsons
 Steve Patterson
 Sarah Satterwhite
 Elizabeth Schwarz
 James Shelton

Darrell Shortes
 Connie Snyder
 Roye Stephens
 Barbara Thornton
 Jason and Jo Weir
 Robert Williams

Volunteers

are so important to our agency. Our small staff could never do all that we do without the hard work and dedication of our volunteers. Thanks for making us and our clients smile.



Alejandra Perez, a Hardin-Simmons University student, volunteered 70 hours during the summer months at CSN. She was dedicated and excited to work with our staff to do whatever was necessary to help our clients through their cancer journey.

St. John's Episcopal School chose Cancer Services Network for a back-to-school community service project. Faculty and staff helped assemble snack bags for Fashions for the Cure, stuffed envelopes for sponsor mailings, and sorted our inventory of bras used by mastectomy clients.



Volunteers **Cortni Breen, Alec Longoria,** and board member **Erica Beard** take tickets at Fashions for the Cure.



During a springtime Facts and Snacks educational session in March, six students from the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Pharmacy made presentations on cancer related prescriptions—common interactions, when and how to discard medications, and questions to ask your pharmacist.

Pictured are **Tram Nguyen, Krystal Romero, Heather Paz, Dyanna Oru, Sehrish Panjwani, Tim Janusz.**



Hundreds of volunteers assisted with our fundraising events—from help organizing, tying bows, set up, decorating, hauling equipment, tear down, check-in/check-out, selling tickets, gathering auction items, the list goes on and on! Many hands make light work. Thanks!

WE APPRECIATE YOU!



100 Chestnut Street
Suite 100

P.O. Box 2026
Abilene, Texas 79604

(325) 672-0040
(325) 672-6169 Fax

www.CancerServicesNetwork.org

Return Service Requested

If you prefer to receive *pathways*
electronically, please let us know by
emailing info@cancerservicesnetwork.org

Change of address?

Need to be removed
from our mailing list?

Please contact CSN at
(325) 672-0040 or email
info@cancerservicesnetwork.org

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Amanda McKee, *Director of Operations*
Judy Patty, *BSW, Social Worker*
Brennan Ballew, *Assistant*

Did you know?

- In addition to financial assistance for those who need it the most, CSN loans medical equipment and provides nutritional supplements to help ease the high cost of a cancer diagnosis.
- CSN has a broad selection of wigs to try on in a private and comfortable atmosphere. We also provide a variety of hats, turbans, and scarves, along with mastectomy bras and prostheses for breast cancer survivors.
- We offer medical supplies related to a cancer diagnosis such as incontinence supplies, wound care supplies, ostomy supplies, and oral hygiene products for cancer patients who have a need.
- Our library of information on current, accurate and educational information on cancer-related topics is open to the general public, all clients and their families, friends and caregivers.
- Although many cancer survivors have a strong network of family and friends eager to provide support, they may not fully understand what it is like to cope with a cancer diagnosis. That's why CSN offers support groups for cancer patients and survivors to share their stories with one another and connect with others who have similar challenges.
- All the services provided by CSN are free of charge.
- Cancer Services Network is dedicated to continually find the best ways to serve individuals affected by cancer.