

Friend for Life News

Working Together

One of my favorite things about the nonprofit cancer world is the collaboration. Lori Beth and I work together with partners across Kentucky and the globe to best serve the needs of people facing cancer. Working *together* rather than competing makes our work more manageable, and connects patients and caregivers more efficiently with the resources they are seeking. Below is a list of our local, statewide and national partners – we couldn't do what we do without them.



Judy Kasey-Houlette
Executive Director

4th Angel, Taussig CC, Cleveland Clinic
American Brain Tumor Association
American Cancer Society
Baptist Health Network
CanCare
Cancer Hope Network
Cancer Support Now
CDMRP (Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program)
Dana-Farber Cancer Center
Firefly Sisterhood
Patient-to-Patient Network, Fox Chase Cancer Center
Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program
Gilda's Club Kentuckiana
Global Patients
GO² Foundation
Imerman Angels
Kentucky Cancer Consortium
Kentucky Cancer Link
Kentucky Cancer Program
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Levine Cancer Institute
Living Beyond Breast Cancer

MyCancerConnection, MD Anderson Cancer Center
National LGBT Cancer Network
Norton Cancer Institute
Ovarian Awareness of Kentucky
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Patient-to-Patient Program
Patient Resource LLC
SHARE Cancer Support
SPOHNC (Support for Persons with Oral, Head and Neck Cancers)
Stamford Health
Survivor Journeys
The James Cancer Center at The Ohio State University
Thomas Jefferson Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center
UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine
University of Louisville/Brown Cancer Center
University of Kentucky/Markey Cancer Center & MCCAN
Young Survival Coalition



FRIEND FOR LIFE CANCER SUPPORT NETWORK

OUR MISSION

To help persons diagnosed with cancer and their loved ones navigate the path through diagnosis, treatment and recovery by pairing them with a trained survivor of a similar experience so they can face cancer with someone who's been there.



Contact us!

• staff@friend4life.org
(502) 893-0643 Phone
(866) friend-4 Toll-free
www.friend4life.org


• Become a fan on
[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/friendforlife)

From LB's Corner of the Commonwealth...

Greetings from Lexington my Friends – I certainly hope this annual newsletter finds you well. As many of you know, since I joined the FFL staff over 20 months ago, I have been working remotely in Lexington, Kentucky. This remote position has been highly effective in expanding our outreach, increasing our networks throughout the region, and sharing our heart-felt mission to new friends, caregivers, and partners in the Commonwealth and beyond.

With the optimism Spring brings, I hope you recognize the difference we are making as a network. Though Judy and I can see the invaluable influence in our day-to-day operations, it is your willingness to reach out, make a phone call, drop an email or send a text that is really embodying our mission and the sweet legacy of our Founders, Phil and Chuck....and for this we say 'Thank You!'

While we celebrate our 35th year, take a moment to reflect how you discovered us. Are there individuals or organizations in your individual circle that need to know about us? Is there a spot that you visit regularly that could use a FFL poster, or a small stack of informational rack cards? If so, please give us a buzz or drop us an email so that together we can continue to serve and make a difference for someone else as a tribute to those who have made a difference for each of us. I look forward to hearing from you.

Take good care,

Lori Beth Miller, Assistant Director

Do you have a Friend for Life tee?

Look fabulous, be comfortable and support a great cause. Get a Friend for Life t-shirt for \$30 (includes shipping). Just let us know how many, what color(s) and what size(s).

Colors shown at right: blue, grey, red
Sizes S through XXXL

Order online: <http://bidpal.net/flswag>

**Friend for Life volunteers get one tee FREE!
Don't have one? Let Judy know!**

You can also order by calling or emailing us:
staff@friend4life.org 502.893.0643

On the back of the tee:
"Facing cancer, with someone who's been there."



2022 (and a bit of 2023) In Review

Clinical Conversations with University of Louisville Medical School



Out and about at events again!

New rack card designs by Jan Conradi!



Friend for Life Board of Directors annual retreat March 2023



An Evening with Friends 2022

Visit the Friend for Life Cancer Support Network YouTube Channel to view the [recording](#)

Friend for Life Cancer Support Network had one of our most successful fundraisers last August, raising \$66,000! We could not have done this first hybrid event without the amazing support of our Board of Directors, and technical/production wizardry provided by [RFX Technologies](#).



Dawne Gee was once again our gracious Emcee



Corky Miller, Kentucky Peerless Distillers



Joan Scales accepted the Bramlette Award for UK/Markey Cancer Center



Lee Cybulski accepted the Bobbi Daniels Award

Awardees unable to attend: **Larry Roberts** for the Sandmann Award; **Elaine Jacobs** and **Vera Stuart** for the Bobbi Daniels Award



Ann Jones, Friend for Life Board Member and Peer Navigator was our keynote speaker



Bart Bushong, Friend for Life Board member, entertained the crowd

The Impact of Peer Support

Conveying the value of matched peer to peer support for people facing cancer can be difficult. Thankfully there is now more research being done on the value of peer support for cancer. While data appeals to some; heartfelt accounts appeal to others. Here we present both perspectives to you, a combination of peer-reviewed research (**bold text**) and personal accounts shared with us. ~ Friend for Life Staff

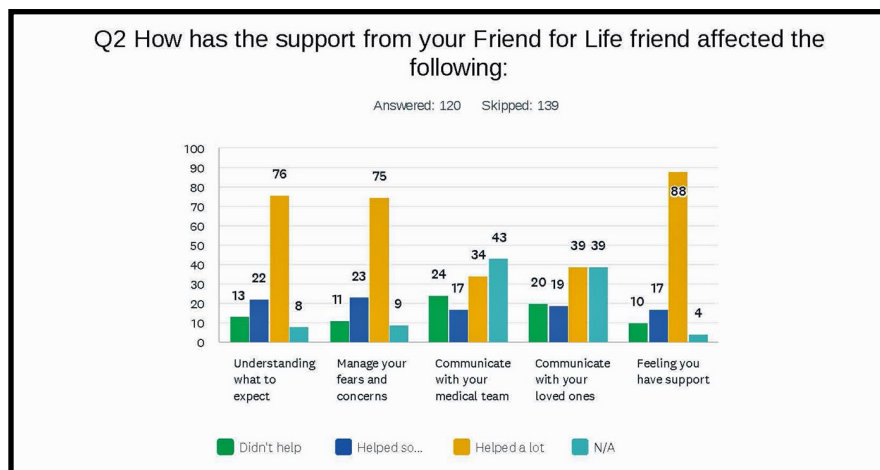
“Peer support does not compete with or replace the role of others. Instead, it complements and enhances health care delivery to assist people through the emotional, social, and practical assistance necessary to manage the disease and stay healthy.”

“Out of all the services offered to me during my diagnosis, this was by far the most beneficial one.”

“In today’s often overwhelmed healthcare system, patient barriers frequently go unaddressed. Many patients don’t understand their cancer diagnosis or treatment plan. There may be additional stressors, such as having to take time off from work, the need for childcare, and the costs of treatment. Without answers or resources to help, some patients just give up.”

“I didn’t know whether your volunteer and she ever connected before her surgery, but yesterday her brother thanked me and told me that [she] DID talk with the FFL volunteer, and that she was "a whole new person" after that... she felt more confident, knowledgeable and hopeful...far less worried. He said it really made a world of difference in her spirits.... and he was so thankful for the FFL support.”

“...you don’t know how much your calls mean to me, my wife doesn’t even understand the issues I am going through.”



“Your emails may have saved my life.”

“my friend for life has been a true blessing. She has helped me stay positive through my treatment and continues to help me understand what's going on with my cancer.”

“The oncologist said she had a patient she wanted me to talk with, someone who had just gone through what I was facing.”

I reluctantly agreed thinking it would only make me more fearful of what was to come. Instead, the conversation gave me insights into “what was to come” and she changed much of my fear into gratitude, gratitude that there is treatment, support and that my fears were overblown. Yes, there would be side effects and difficulties but nothing insurmountable especially if you were willing to put in some effort. I will be forever grateful to this complete stranger.”

“...research has established that cancer survivors who help others face treatment experience a range of psychosocial and health-related benefits as a result of peer helping.”

“Being able to encourage many others has given me real purpose and reason to carry on. Thank you, Friend4Life!”

Research citations: Global Evidence for Peer Support: Humanizing Health Care; Report from an International Conference; Hosted by Peers for Progress (a program of the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation) and the National Council of La Raza, 2014.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities: Mark your calendars!

- [Kentucky Gives Day: May 9, 2023—online, ALL DAY!](#)
- **An Evening with Friends 2023 Saturday, August 26, 2023, Audubon Country Club, 3265 Robin Road, Louisville, KY 40213**

The 2023 Friend for Life Cancer Support Network Board of Directors

Kristen Mellinger, Chair
Karen Donahue, Treasurer
Bart Bushong, Nominating Chair
Jason Howard, Past Chair
Mary Dickman
Scott DeGaris
Jim Gaffney, MD
Tara Gnau
Amy Holthouser, MD
Tom Jecker
Ann S. Jones
Haleh Karimi
Laura Mitchell
JoAnne Morris
Joan Scales
Janell Seeger, MD

Thank you, Board members!

We welcome Kristen Mellinger as our new Board Chair. Kristen has served as a FFL Peer Navigator since 2018. We also welcome new board members Haleh Karimi, (Bellarmine University), Mary Dickman (Baptist Health), and Amy Holthouser, (University of Louisville School of Medicine).

Thank you Jason Howard for your leadership as Board President for the past several years, to Ben Ruley for your service and for continuing to assist as a member of our financial oversight committee. We hope you'll also continue to be our fabulous auction facilitator! We thank David Collins for bringing us wise counsel and several amazing Bellarmine business students to assist with projects over the years.

Anam is the Irish Gaelic word for “soul” and cara is “friend.” The literal translated meaning of anam cara is soul friend

In Grateful Remembrance

We treasure fond memories of these beloved volunteers who passed away since publication of our last newsletter.



From top left to bottom right by row: Jim Gresham, Jan Siler Lira, Jay Burton, Grace Levitan, Rick Newell, Greg Friedmann, Alana Auslander-Price, Tamara Perkins, Joan Walters, Linda Shircliff, “Uncle Norm” Lytle, Amanda Wilson, Mohammad “Masoud” Mahdavi, “Big John” Richardson, Bob Adelberg

What We've Been Up To...

Friend for Life volunteers are cancer survivors and caregivers trained by healthcare professionals to prepare them to support others as they confront the emotional, psychological and practical uncertainties posed by cancer. We refer to our volunteers as Peer Navigators. Support seekers are matched with Peer Navigators by diagnosis, course of treatment and, to the extent possible, age and gender. No other organization in our region offers matched one-to-one support for all types of cancer. At the end of 2021, Peer Navigators numbered 420. They range in age at diagnosis from 6 to 84 and represent survival of a wide range of cancer types.

During 2022, Friend for Life Cancer Support Network:

- * Staff responded to 1,353 requests for support and matched 429 individuals
- * Peer Navigators donated over 5,500 hours
- * Peer Navigators spoke with over 150 students and their faculty mentors at the University of Louisville School of Medicine and for the first time, students of Osteopathic Medicine in Pikeville, Kentucky. Peer Navigators have shared the cancer patient perspective with over 7,000 future healthcare practitioners since 2007.
- * Staff partnered with other one-to-one cancer support organizations across the country in order to provide peer support for persons diagnosed with rare forms of cancer or recently developed treatments

Friend for Life seeks to:

- * continue to provide cost-free peer support to persons diagnosed with cancer and to their loved ones.
- * continue to provide quality training and ongoing support and education to volunteers.
- * enhance outreach to minority and underserved populations, with special focus on Kentucky.
- * reflect advances in cancer knowledge and treatment through ongoing recruitment of survivors who have benefited from these advances.

“Many thanks to you for your highly skilled work getting folks together. It’s as good as medicine and sometimes it is even better. “

~ Crystal Labbato, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Baptist Health

Our Fabulous Sponsors



NORTON
CANCER INSTITUTE



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FRIEND FOR LIFE CANCER
SUPPORT NETWORK



35 years of providing peer-to-peer support