

## Rising Trends in Young Adult Cancer Diagnoses Leads to New Safe Spaces to Connect and Find Hope

Because of your support, Cancer Services is adding new programs like **Compass** to meet emerging needs

Receiving a cancer diagnosis in your 20s or 30s brings different challenges and struggles than getting a diagnosis in your 60s or 70s. Young adults who are building a career or starting a family and still finding their place in the world often have a very different experience with cancer.

According to the National Cancer Institute, nearly 85,000 adolescents and young adults will be diagnosed with cancer this year. This number has grown alarmingly within the past thirty years; a research study in *BMJ Oncology* found that cancer rates in people under 50 years old increased by 79.1% between 1990 and 2019.

Kaitlyn Pozorski, LCSW, who worked with many young adults at Cancer Services, noticed this concerning upward trend. "I was seeing an increase in young adults seeking counseling support and heard from my colleagues that they were working with more young adults too. In interactions with young adult clients, I kept hearing them express similar things - feeling alone, worried about how they were going to continue to work, finances, childcare, and body image."

It was important to Cancer Services to dig deeper and hear directly from young adults with cancer. To accomplish this, Cancer Services conducted a comprehensive young adult needs assessment. The process started with a survey asking young adults who have been impacted by cancer to answer questions about their experience, concerns, and unmet needs.

### The survey results found:

- Young adults with cancer were primarily concerned with their physical health, finances, and mental health, in that order.
- Survey participants reported facing lack of childcare, struggling with the possibility of the end of their life and how their passing would impact their family, and not finding support groups that tackled the challenges in their stage of life.
- Over 60% of respondents wanted to participate in a program so they could connect with others in their situation.

Cancer Services followed up with a focus group of young adults to discuss their needs in greater detail. Connecting with others repeatedly came up during the conversation. They wanted a chance to talk to others who "get it," learn from each other, and help their peers who are just starting their journey.

Based on these findings, Cancer Services developed **Compass**, a series of programs developed for young adults touched by cancer. The first program, **Empowered Travelers**, provides a safe space for young adults to meet, connect, and help each other. Pozorski will facilitate the group.

"Our goal is that this will feel like a safe space for community and connection," Pozorski said about **Empowered Travelers** and other upcoming **Compass** offerings. "I hope young adults do not feel as alone during their cancer experience and feel they have others to connect with when navigating life after cancer."

**Empowered Travelers** will launch in June. Young adults who have been diagnosed with cancer are invited to attend.

### **Compass: Empowered Travelers**

A guided conversation with emotional support that helps you process how cancer is affecting your life

WHEN: First Wednesdays (starting June 5) | 6-8 p.m.

WHERE: Cancer Services, 6316 Mutual Drive  
(Virtual attendance available)



**Cancer is hard. On first Wednesdays, young adults gather to discuss, receive emotional support, and process the struggles and challenges of having cancer at a young age.**

A fun and relaxed social gathering with peers who "get it".

WHEN: Third Saturdays (starting June 15) | 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

WHERE: The Firefly Coffee House, 3523 N. Anthony Blvd.



**On third Saturdays at Firefly Coffee House, have fun and relax with other young adults who "get it." This is purely a social time to take a break.**

Photo by Priscilla Du Preez

View all upcoming events and register online:



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## JUNE

### The Power of a Plant-Based Diet

Thursday, June 27

Facilitated by Abigail Creigh, Registered Dietitian

**1-2 p.m.** at Cancer Services Southeast  
3420 E. Paulding Rd (Impact Center)  
Fort Wayne, IN 46816

OR

**6:30-7:30 p.m.** at Healing Arts Center  
6316 Mutual Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46825

### NEW! Compass: Empowered Travelers

A safe space for young adults who have been diagnosed with cancer  
Facilitated by Kaitlyn Pozorski, MSW, LCSW

**First Wednesday (starting June 5)**

**6-8 p.m.** at Healing Arts Center  
6316 Mutual Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46825

**Third Saturday (starting June 15)**

**11 a.m. – 1 p.m.** at The Firefly Coffee Shop  
3523 N. Anthony Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46805

The support group

### Nourishment for Cancer Support Givers

(meeting on the 3rd Wednesday at Cancer Services Southeast) is on hiatus until further notice.

## JULY

### From Sound Baths to Singing Bowls: Experience and Explore the Healing Properties of Sound

Facilitated by Jenny Young, Prana Yoga  
**Wednesday, July 17**

**6:30-8 p.m.** at Healing Arts Center  
6316 Mutual Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46825

OR

**Thursday, July 18**

**6:30-8 p.m.** at Cancer Services West  
2190 North Pointe Dr., Warsaw, IN 46582

### Family Art for the Heart - A Creative Workshop

Facilitated by Nancy Rhee and Lauren Vanderhorst

Open for children and adolescents ages 6-18 who have cancer, are cancer survivors, or have a loved one with cancer. Each child's adult caretaker is invited to participate fully in the workshop. Lunch and all art materials will be provided.

**Thursday, July 18th**

**9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.** at Healing Arts Center  
6316 Mutual Drive, Fort Wayne, IN, 46825  
Register by contacting Sandra Thomas at [SThomas@cancer-services.org](mailto:SThomas@cancer-services.org) or 260-484-9560.

### Spiritual Forest Therapy Walk

Facilitated by Christy Knecht, CFTG, Director of Wild Communion

**Monday, July 22**

**10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** at Wildwood  
409 E. SR 14, Silver Lake, IN 46982

### Precision Genomics and the Future of Personalized Treatment

Facilitated by Emily Powell, PhD, ACRP-CP, Senior Research Scientist, Precision Genomics

**Tuesday, July 23**

**6-7 p.m.** at Healing Arts Center  
6316 Mutual Dr.  
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

OR

**Wednesday, July 24**

**1-2 p.m.** at Cancer Services Southeast  
3420 E. Paulding Rd, Fort Wayne, IN 46816

### Financial Support Series

Facilitated by Sarah Rippe, Fire Police City County Federal Credit Union

Dates: **July 11 & 25, August 8, 22 & 29**  
All sessions are at the following times:

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m.** at Cancer Services Southeast  
3420 E. Paulding Rd., Fort Wayne

**6-7 p.m.** at Healing Arts Center  
6316 Mutual Dr., Fort Wayne

Topics will include budgeting, debt management, identity theft, recovering from a financial emergency, and more!  
You do not need to attend all sessions.

Register for any session by contacting Lauren Richwine at (260) 484-9560 or [LRichwine@cancer-services.org](mailto:LRichwine@cancer-services.org)

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## Data from 2023 Shows Increased Need

Your support ensures that Cancer Services is here to help, this year and every year.

Do you think it feels like a year passes in the blink of an eye?

It certainly felt that way to us here at Cancer Services. Last year, 4,977 people in Northeast Indiana who were affected by cancer found help at Cancer Services. All year-round, your gifts are making sure that families affected by cancer don't walk their journey alone.

Although the year went by in a rush, it is still important to look back and take a deeper dive into what people needed most.

As a generous supporter of the work done here, you should know too.

**This is what your gifts make possible.**



12.6% increase in number of clients served compared to 2022



More than 20% of clients report a household income of less than \$20,000.



41% increase in the amount of direct financial assistance provided to help families with co-pays, transportation and other cancer-related costs



14.6% of the clients reported their ethnicity as non-white



564 families dealing with cancer included children



30% more wigs and head coverings were provided compared to 2022



543 Individuals received one or more individualized wellness sessions like massage

## New Location in Warsaw Picking Up Speed

You've made this location possible so people in and around Warsaw can more easily get help.



Representatives from the Kosciusko County Chamber of Commerce joined Cancer Services in celebrating the opening of the West location. You helped make it possible for help to come closer to home for people in Kosciusko, Noble, Wabash, and Whitley.

*Photo Credit: Lauren Klusman, Kosciusko County Chamber of Commerce*

In February, Cancer Services opened an additional location in Warsaw. This location has proven more convenient for people living in Kosciusko and some areas of Noble, Wabash, and Whitley counties. Meeting with an advocate face-to-face, having access to equipment and personal care supplies, and being able to attend group sessions closer to home are all benefits with cancer need who live beyond Allen County.

Julia is one of those people. She was in the middle of her first chemotherapy treatment when her husband Dan saw in InkFreeNews that Cancer Services had just opened a new location in Warsaw. The couple had never heard of us before but wanted to see how we could help. Julia and Dan visited on opening day and sat down with Client Advocate Taylor. Taylor listened as Julia shared her journey so far. She gave Julia a safe space to talk about her challenges and fears. That day, Julia received a cane, nutritional drink supplements, and a wig. Now she knows where to go when she needs help or some extra emotional support.

Since the location's opening, 56 people affected by cancer have been helped. In addition to emotional support from their client advocate, they have received practical assistance including equipment, personal care supplies, wigs, and financial help. Starting May 22, the first group sessions will begin on site with weekly Chair Yoga classes.

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Estate of W. Patricia Dean

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## Side-by-Side Fundraisers

Giving between 1/1/2024 and 3/31/2024

### Auburn Shifters Car Club Cancer Fundraiser

Auburn Shifters Car Club, Inc.  
In memory of Margo Taylor, Dan Cade,  
Douglas Helms, Ed Kase,  
Dave Wildeson and Gary Ferris.

### Columbia City High School Girls Basketball Fundraiser

Mrs. Adelle Baker  
Ms. Kristy Dittmer  
Mr. Dennis McCoy

### Fireside Craft Burgers & Brews Cancer Fundraiser

Fireside Craft Burgers & Brews

### FMC Children's Clothing Resale

Fellowship Missionary Church

### Fort Wayne Youth Hockey Cancer Night Fundraiser

Fort Wayne Area High School Hockey  
Association, Inc.

### Heritage High School Girls Basketball Cancer Fundraiser

Heritage Girls Basketball Team

*Cancer Services is entirely supported by charitable contributions. Some support comes from local foundations, but it is the individual donors who make the most impact - sending regular checks, buying tickets to fundraising events, and walking to raise money with friends. These gifts come with "no strings attached," which means we are able to fund innovative new programming and balance resources so that people can get what they need when they need it.*

*Without donors like you and the other amazing people and organizations on this list, this organization would not exist.*

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**Thank you for a successful Ribbon Walk.**  
**All donors who supported the celebration**  
**will be recognized in the next issue.**

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*If we have misspelled your name  
or inadvertently left it off our list,  
please call 484-9560 and ask  
for Audrey Mumma so we can  
make a correction.*

# Surviving Together



**Saturday, June 22, 2024 | 11a-1p**

K21 Health Services Pavilion  
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**First Annual Cancer Survivors Celebration**



Cancer Services of Northeast Indiana Inc.  
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