

Friend for Life News

*The keynote address delivered by Friend for Life volunteer **Charlotte Hay** was so well-received that we are providing it here, with Charlotte's permission. Thanks, Charlotte!*

In preparing for my talk, I tried to hone in on a couple of themes that I believe have defined my own cancer experience through time. As a cancer survivor and FFL volunteer, I thought about some guidance I can and have offered up to others going through their own cancer experiences.

For us as a family and for me personally, maintaining a sense of humor in the midst of our experiences has always been a fundamental part of our journey. Not only did humor help my own outlook, but it put others at ease with me, which was important to me. Humor breaks the ice, it helps us see things differently, and it makes us laugh!

I have to say this sense of cancer humor started developing early for me, following an amputation for osteosarcoma (bone cancer) at 16. I had a dad who helped pave the way, as he delighted in creatively using my spare leg prosthesis as a prop for practical jokes. He would tuck my leg under the bushes by the front porch on Halloween, in clear sight of innocent trick-or-treaters...or drive around with it hanging out of the trunk (this was in 1977, long before limbs became available for purchase in stores for this purpose). Our sense of humor morphed from there, as we fine-tuned our tactics.

I also married a man who followed in this same vein and found humor wherever there was humor to be had. So it was only natural that my kids and their friends grew up playing spare leg pranks on each other and on camp counselors at camp and church retreats. We hung fully dressed spare legs out of bus windows on our way to our various retreat destinations and hid it under kids' beds and behind the wheels of the bus drivers' buses. It was delightful. In time, people started caring more about whether my artificial leg was making the trip than whether I was making the trip!

After a breast cancer diagnosis a little later in life at 38, I added an artificial breast to my bag of tricks. The day I brought it home, I caught my kids playing toss with my new \$350 breast prosthesis, back and forth across the bedroom. This was just foreshadowing for what was to come. One year we actually gave that breast to our church youth minister in a pizza box as a "boobie" prize at summer camp. We had no pity or remorse. I won't even go into all the other pranks that were played with the fake breast, but they did include tucking it under people's pillows. As difficult as it was to part with that breast prosthesis, I finally donated it after I had reconstructive surgery as it was, after all, an expensive gag item.

I wrote an article for Friend for Life nearly two decades ago that talked about my journeys through cancer and focused quite a bit on the humorous aspects of our lives. I wrote about making our decision on picking my ideal cup size for my reconstruction surgery and described how going to bed for me at the time meant a leg propped in the corner, a wig on the nightstand and a breast on the dresser. Such was life!

But let's be clear....cancer is not all fun and games... [continued on page 7]



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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.

Our 30th Year In Snapshots



Top row: 2018 Volunteer Training Session
Next three rows: Friend for Life volunteers met with students in clinical fields, to share the lived experience of cancer to enhance empathy, improve communication and improve overall quality of care. Current schools include: the University of Louisville School of Medicine; University of Louisville School of Nursing; Galen College of Nursing; and the University of Kentucky School of Medicine





Friend for Life was honored last August at the Samaritan Awards hosted by Personal Counseling Services, Inc. FFL received the Nancy and John Keck Non-profit Samaritan Award. Deepest thanks to Carla Hermann for nominating us!



Teresa McCafferty, FFL Intern, then employee



Amy Shepp, current FFL practicum student



Friend for Life Volunteer **Colleen Johnson** worked with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) to create Patient Guidelines for Uterine Cancer, and is featured on the cover. She was also recently interviewed by CURE Magazine for their Voices section.



COLLEEN JOHNSON, PH.D., is a retired statistics professor and chicken farmer who helped beat endometrial cancer by losing 100 pounds and transforming herself — at age 58 — from a self-described couch potato to an ultramarathon runner. She is a peer navigator with the Friend for Life Cancer Support Network in Louisville, Kentucky, and advocated to get uterine cancer included in the National Comprehensive Cancer Network Guidelines for Patients, now available at nccn.org/patients.



**2018 Award Recipients
Presented at An Evening with Friends:
Celebrating 30 Years**

The Friend for Life Bramblette Award
The Sam Swope Family Foundation

The Friend for Life Sandmann Award
**Joan Steiner
Judy Sisk**

The Friend for Life Bobbi Marrs Daniels Award
**Kyle Bianconcini
Sara O'Neil**

Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, we don't have photos of the awardees.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Saturday, March 23, 9 am to 5 pm
 Saturday, August 24, 5:00
 Thursday, September 12 (all day)
 TBA

Annual Live Volunteer Training—Registration Required
 13th annual [An Evening with Friends](#) at the Audubon Country Club
[Give for Good Louisville](#)
[Kentucky Gives Day](#)

The 2018-2019 Friend for Life Cancer Support Network Board of Directors and Staff

Jason Howard, Chair
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In Grateful Remembrance

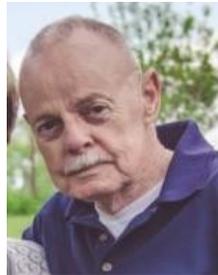
We treasure fond memories of these beloved volunteers who passed away since publication of our last newsletter.



Susan Dickerson



Mary Faltin



Ralph Gasaway



Ann Wise



Bess Borden



Kathy Johnson



Carla Logan



Kathy Willinger



Tazzie Bailey



Jackie Hatcher

Thank you to our Donors

In Honor of

Margaret Armelin

Margaret Armelin

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Duncan Strauss

Erica Strauss

Nancy Tietge

Susan and John Treitz

Bob and Cindy Adelberg

Friend for Life's 30th Anniversary

Awakenings Oncology Boutique

Jenna Bushong

Alan and Janice Glaubinger

Ruby Gordon and Si Wolf

William A. Houlette

Ralph M. Hughes

Scott and Barbara Jones

Mark and Barb Lechner

Jim and Kathy Jo Pullen

Alex Rohleder

Jamie L. Studts

In Honor of the Volunteers who enlighten and brighten the lives of those they touch

Judie G. Sherman

In Grateful Memory

Pallie Bland

Deb Copeland*

Phil Emerson Bramblette

Natalie Bramblette DeNardo and

Salvator DeNardo

Aunt Catharine

Larry D. Barnett

Kay Armstrong

Michele Asbury

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Beth Adams

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Jim and Anne Hickey

Ruth K. Hodges

Weldon and Sue Maisch

Mildred V. Mikas

Eleanor Ramos

Reveille United Methodist Church

Sharon L. Snyder

Bill Stevens

My Father

Nikita Jackson*

David Slater Gauss

Eric and Michiko Nielsen

Ann Savage

Eli George, Jr.

Martin and Joan Steiner

Karin Pahlke Hennessey

Tim and Sandy Forden*

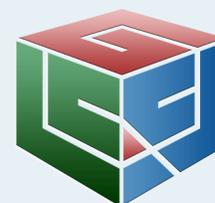
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**I do thank your
organization for all the
help I received - it truly
makes a difference and I
will be grateful forever.**

~ Cheryl

Forrest Thomas Houlette

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 William A. Houlette
 Arthur R. Kasey, III
 Judie Sherman

Arthur Kasey, Jr.

Arthur R. Kasey, III

Ruth Prinz Kasey

Arthur R. Kasey, III

Betty McLellan

Patrick L. Vaughan

Anita Murphy

Charlie and Sharon Guthrie

Sidney M. Paul

Shirley Paul

Charles Prewitt

Jim and Linda Bennett

Charles I. Sandmann

Major General Dulaney L. O'Roark, Jr.

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[continued from page 1]

So for tonight, I also tried to figure out one word I could share with you that would describe the emotional impact of being diagnosed with cancer.

The word I came up with is **PANIC**... I believe that word embodies many sentiments, including fear, uncertainty, dismay, and despair, all of which describe potential emotions that follow a cancer diagnosis. I chose that word, I believe, because it best describes how I felt when I was diagnosed with breast cancer. It's my most vivid memory of what I felt at that time.

I recognize, too, that this word is different for different people and even for the same person in different places in life. A person's age, stage in life, support system, faith, and an abundance of other factors will define that word for a cancer patient.

Case in point, when I was first diagnosed with cancer I was 16. A bone cancer diagnosis of osteosarcoma and the loss of my right leg above the knee at that age were traumatic, but looking back I can honestly say the loss of my hair may have been equally as traumatic. I had just perfected my Farrah Fawcett hairdo, and when that started falling out, it was a shock. The cancer part at that age was something I just figured the doctors would fix. My issues at 16 became going to high school and college with an artificial leg, having an artificial leg and meeting & dating guys, and the self-esteem and self-image issues that went along with being a teenager and having one leg. My focus at that age was not on my cancer and my **mortality** but was on living my life under these new **circumstances**.

Fast forward to age 38 when I was diagnosed with breast cancer....That's where my word I chose, PANIC, came into play. At that stage of my life, I was in a different place. I was married with two young children, ages four and seven, and my first thought was that I would not live to see them grow up. I was a little older, a little wiser, and a little more knowledgeable about cancer, so I didn't have the same assumption that the doctors would just fix me. Unlike me at 16, my **circumstances** were not my focus, but the **cancer and my mortality** were.

Fast forward again, to age 40, when I received a second breast cancer diagnosis. My reaction that time involved more peace and calm. Although I have been a lifelong Christian, I can only attribute this peace the third time around to an even stronger faith that I believe developed after my 2nd cancer diagnosis. My faith calmed me, and I placed my trust in God. Here again, different place in life, different circumstances, same person, but a much different reaction to cancer.

I share all of this to simply point out that cancer is a very individual experience, depending upon countless factors. But I believe in that individuality there are common needs across cancer patients. Two of those needs are for **hope** and **support**. **Hope** comes from, among other things, seeing others who have survived the very same thing you're going through. As a young mother with breast cancer and 2 small children, survival stories became my hope to which I would cling. **Support** comes in many different ways...Family, friends, church, faith, work. But the support that comes from the credibility of someone who has walked in your shoes cannot be undervalued. I also believe that God allows us to experience what we do so that our life journeys can be useful to others.

As strong as the need is for cancer patients to **HAVE** hope and support, I believe that equally as strong for the cancer **SURVIVOR** is the need to **BE** that Hope and Support.

This is where Friend for Life comes into play. Friend for Life is the intersection and the catalyst for satisfying those two needs....The need of the survivor and the need of the new cancer patient are both so richly satisfied by the work of Friend for Life.

Friend for Life is offering the opportunity for hope and support every day. In 2017 FFL achieved over 650 matches of cancer survivors and new cancer patients, with nearly 370 volunteers....This is such a worthwhile undertaking, and it has been an honor to be associated with this organization for nearly 20 years.

FFL is equipping us to be what I believe God intended us to be....**Hope** and **Support** for each other.

~ Charlotte Hay

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SAVE THE DATE!

An Evening with Friends 2019

An event to support the work and mission of Friend for Life Cancer Support Network

Saturday, August 24, 2019

Audubon Country Club, 3265 Robin Road, 40213

New this year: Meet Chopped! winner Chef Josh Moore of Volare restaurant; includes special preview of auction items, special appetizers and 2 drink vouchers. \$100 per person - starts at 4:45 pm

General admission: Begins at 5:30 pm, includes cash bar, buffet dinner, live and silent auctions, \$75 per person

