

May/June 2025

Cancer Wellness

Newsletter

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...and more, inside!



For more information about the Loran Smith Center programs or to register for a class, please email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org or call **706.475.4900**.


This newsletter is made possible by the Thomas J. & Sara Cooney Endowment.

Empowering cancer care close to home.

LORAN SMITH CENTER
for cancer support



Real change lives here



At Piedmont Athens Regional, we treat the patient—not just the disease. Because cancer treatment involves more than medical care, free programs such as yoga, cooking demos, expressive art classes, and counseling are available to anyone affected by cancer at any phase in his or her journey. The Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support at Piedmont Athens Regional serves anyone regardless of where they received treatment.

What's Happening at the Loran Smith Center

Sandy Pyle, BSN, RN, ONN-CG

As we head into warm weather with spring marking the transition from winter to summer, we can be renewed with new beginnings and growth. We move from the dull browns and greys to the vibrant greens and the array of blooms, as I have said many times before, my favorite time of year!

On May 1, we will begin our new Mindfulness program - Hypnotherapy, with Melissa Yonce-Hayes. We were excited to have an introductory session with Melissa at our March Lunch and Learn and I believe everyone attending came away with a much greater understanding of the program. The sessions will be from 10–11:30 a.m., the first 15 minutes will be an intro, followed by an hour session and wrapping up with a chance to “debrief” and ask questions. We do ask that you arrive on time as it is important to not interrupt the sessions.

In May, our next bi-monthly Lunch & Learn will happen with Kate Morrissey-Stahl discussing intimacy. I hope you have a chance to join us for a great discussion and light lunch. Please RSVP no later than Friday, May 9 if you plan to attend.

We will wish our two interns – Eryn Marsh and Tanvi Reddy a fond farewell as they both graduate and move on to pursue their careers. We have enjoyed having them here! We will welcome our next dual degree intern Abbey Biehl, in May she will be with us through December of this year.

At The Loran Smith Center are preparing for the 4th annual Cancer Survivors Day Celebration and Block Party – this year, Sunday June 1 from 4–6 p.m. Join us for food, music, fun, raffles, face painting and games. This community focused event is meant to honor all who have faced a cancer diagnosis. Patients, caregivers, family, friends and healthcare providers, this event is for you, to celebrate, remember and continue the journey to inform, educate, reduce the risks and eliminate the misconceptions that are associated with cancer.

With peace and love,

Sandy

For more information about the LSCCS programs or to register for a class, please email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org or call **706.475.4900**.



Skin Cancer

Robin Black, RN

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer and develops when skin cells grow abnormally and uncontrollably. The most prevalent of skin cancers are squamous, basal cell, and melanoma. Squamous skin cancer can spread to lymph nodes and internal organs. Basal cell begins in the basal cells which are located at the deepest layer of the skin's outer layer. Melanoma is the most serious type and more deaths are attributed to this type. Skin cancer develops primarily on sun-exposed skin, including the scalp, face, lips, ears, neck, chest, arms and hands, and on women's legs. This cancer is caused by exposure to ultraviolet radiation from sun or tanning beds. People who have fair skin, blonde hair with blue or green eyes are more susceptible to skin cancer as well. Also, if there is a history of skin burns or a family history of basal cell carcinoma, these components become a factor. The symptoms most noted are ulcerated or scabbed skin, tendency to bleed easier, small blood vessels on skin surface, or a small pearly or flesh-colored bump or nodule. Primary prevention is sunscreen with a SPF of 30 or higher daily, not excluding cloudy days. The goal is to avoid sunburn with an addition of protective clothing such as hats, sunglasses and long sleeves to avoid exposure. It is recommended to take preventive measures a step further and see a dermatologist regularly for skin screenings.





Try this *Mindfulness Breathing Exercise*

Brooke Bidez, LMSW

Pursed-lip breathing is one of many breathing techniques that boasts many positive benefits. It can help reduce shortness of breath and improve oxygen exchange in the lungs. As with many breathing exercises, it also helps calm your nervous system, reduce blood pressure, and promote a feeling of relaxation. Start by sitting in a comfortable position and inhale slowly through your nose. Then, purse your lips as if you're about to whistle, and exhale slowly through pursed lips. Try to make the exhale longer than the inhale and practice this for several breaths. If it helps, you can also try counting to 2 on the inhale and counting to 4 on the exhale. Give it a try, and let us know what you think!

Farewell from Tanvi

Tanvi Reddy, MSW Intern/UGA

As a Health Promotion intern with the Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support, I've had the opportunity to connect with the dedicated team working to enhance the well-being of individuals impacted by cancer in our community. It has been a valuable experience participating in Loran Smith's programs and contributing to the creation of health communication materials. The insights I've gained about the importance of holistic care and support will stay with me as I continue to grow in my career. I'm grateful for the chance to be part of such an impactful organization.



Lettuce Wraps with Peanut Sauce

Sandy Pyle, BSN, RN, ONN-CG



While this recipe originally used marinated, grilled steak, I found that you can use any protein source you desire, I prefer leftover chicken (even use leftover rotisserie chicken sliced thin) or cooked shrimp.

Ingredients

Peanut Sauce:

- 5 Tbsp soy sauce (or coconut aminos)
- ¼ cup hoisin sauce
- 1 Tbsp chili-garlic sauce
- 1 Tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 1 Tbsp unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- ½ cup chunky peanut butter

Whisk ingredients together (through the sesame oil) in a large bowl, when combined, whisk in the peanut butter and ¼ cup hot water. Cover and set aside.

Remaining ingredients

- 2 oz thin rice noodles
- 2 heads butter lettuce, leaves separated
- 1½ cups matchstick cut carrots
- 1 English cucumber, sliced into matchsticks
- ½ cup fresh mint leaves (*I don't care for fresh mint and use cilantro instead*)

Cook the rice noodles according to package directions (drain once cooked). To serve, fill the lettuce leaves with the noodles, your protein source, carrots cucumber and mint or cilantro, drizzle with peanut sauce. Serve remaining peanut sauce on the side.

A quick, easy dinner that uses up leftovers – always a win in my book!

Let me know what you think!



Community and Social Support

Lauren Liverman, LCSW

The topic of community and social support has come up with a lot of frequency in my life these days. Many of my clients are talking about their desire for meaningful friendships and the challenges of building them during times of transition such as relocation and job changes. My aunt and I recently talked about starting a book club; we both love to read and talk about great books and drink wine with friends, so why not get a group together to enjoy these activities? Certainly people with cancer and their caregivers can speak to the importance of social connection and the perils of isolation when navigating stressful life events. I wanted to share some information about the impact of the absence of social support on our health, and some ideas on how to build and develop social supports.

An article from the National Institutes of Health entitled Social Support and Resilience to Stress shared that low social support can lead to elevated heart rate and increased blood pressure, which over time can contribute to the development of cardiac disease. The article also reported that “the effect of social support on life expectancy appears to be as strong as the effects of obesity, cigarette smoking, hypertension, or level of physical activity”. The article also referenced how social support can lead to the alleviation of depression in individuals. I’m sure none of this comes as a surprise: most all of us can remember a time with friends or family that left us feeling awash in good feelings (a nice oxytocin bath for the brain at work).

If you’re in a season of life where you are looking to build a new community, or strengthen an existing one, considering some of these ideas:

- Research activities in your community that interest you: OLLI is a great organization to find people (over 55) with similar interests. Check out the local lifestyle publications such as *Flagpole* and *Boom Magazine* for opportunities as well.
- Search for groups in virtual spaces, such as Facebook or Meet Up
- Call a friend you’d like to catch up with. Texting doesn’t have the same impact as hearing a friendly voice, and we all know that a lot gets lost in translation with words on a screen. Don’t let emojis to the talking – connect meaningfully with your words.
- Make plans: I have small but mighty group of cherished mom friends that I’m seeing for dinner in a few weeks. We’re busy working mothers, wives, etc., and yet all it took was a few minutes to coordinate a time to get together. Put it on the calendar and make it happen.
- Revisit an interest from the past: I used to go to live music events in town all the time, but got away from it when I became a mom. I can’t wait to attend an upcoming concert at the Botanical Garden and dance barefoot on the lawn like I used to. This time, my kiddo will be there to dance with me!

Let me know how you plan on connecting and strengthening your community – I’d delight in hearing from you!



Cancer and the LGBTQ+ Community

Brooke Bidez, LMSW

Research shows elevated rates of cancer and later stage diagnoses within the LGBTQ+ community. But why? The answer is complicated, and additional research is desperately needed to understand and address these disparities. One significant reason is discrimination and fear of discrimination. For example, a study by Montero et al. (2024) showed that “larger shares of LGBT adults compared to non-LGBT adults report having a negative health care experience in the past three years that caused their health to get worse (24% v. 9%), made them less likely to seek health care (39% v. 15%), or caused them to switch health care providers (36% v. 16%).” Another study showed “more than 1 in 5 LGBTQ+ adults reported postponing or avoiding medical care in the past year due to disrespect or discrimination by providers, including more than 1 in 3 transgender or nonbinary individuals” (Medina & Mahowald, 2022). This speaks to the importance of improved education and training among healthcare professionals to help mitigate these negative experiences.

Thankfully, there are resources available to help this community access healthcare from trusted professionals. For example, there are several online healthcare directories with lists of healthcare providers that are LGBTQ+ friendly. We know that a major key in diagnosing and treating cancer is by catching it early or preventing it entirely. Whether you identify as LGBTQ+ or not, it’s important to establish ongoing care with a healthcare provider that you trust and be sure you’re receiving routine physicals and testing.

Online Resources

- LGBTQ Healthcare Directory
lgbtqhealthcaredirectory.org
- OutCare Health Directory
outcarehealth.org/outlist/
- Human Rights Campaign
hrc.org/resources/patient-resources



Sources

Montero, Artiga, & Dawson (2024). *LGBT Adults’ Experiences with Discrimination and Health Care Disparities: Findings from the KFF Survey of Racism, Discrimination, and Health*. <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/poll-finding/lgbt-adults-experiences-with-discrimination-and-health-care-disparities-findings-from-the-kff-survey-of-racism-discrimination-and-health/>

Medina & Mahowald (2022). *Discrimination and Barriers to Well-Being: The State of the LGBTQI+ Community in 2022*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/discrimination-and-barriers-to-well-being-the-state-of-the-lgbtqi-community-in-2022/#:~:text=Jan%2012%2C%202023-,Discrimination%20and%20Barriers%20to%20Well%2DBeing%3A%20The%20State%20of%20the,as%20in%20the%20public%20sphere.>

Mirza & Rooney (2018). *Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People From Accessing Health Care*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/>

Health care *centered* in the
heart of your community.

CANCER SURVIVORS DAY BLOCK PARTY



Join us for free food and a celebration of hope!

- Hot dogs, hamburgers, & ice cream**
- Beer, wine, and soft drink**
- Face painting**
- Exciting raffle prizes- 3 free entries per person!**
- DJ, outdoor games, arts & crafts, and more!**

SUNDAY, JUNE 1ST 2025 • 4:00-6:00PM

Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support
240 Talmadge Dr., Athens, GA 30606

**Free Parking available in The Medical Services Building lot.*

Programs

Please keep in mind that all of our program dates and locations are subject to change.

KNOWLEDGE

Hormone Therapy Class

This class is for women on hormone therapy for estrogen receptor positive breast cancer. In this class you will learn the science behind the treatment and discuss methods for managing side effects. **RSVP required. Call 706.475.4900 to reserve your spot.**

Mondays, 6/16, 8/18, 10/13; 4–5:30 p.m.

Lunch & Learn - Intimacy and Cancer

Cancer and its treatments can impact intimacy and sexuality, communication and seeking support can help navigate these changes. Join us to hear Kate Morrissey-Stahl, PhD, LCSW, CST, Clinical Associate Professor, School of Social Work, UGA and AASECT Certified Sex Therapist and Supervisor, discuss this important topic. **Call 706.475.4900 to reserve your spot.**

Thursday, May 15; 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

MOVEMENT

Tuesday Tai Chi: Deepen Your Practice

Warm up with gentle qigong exercises and practice forms from the Tai Chi for Health Institute. Forms are gentle but include some longer sequences with more complicated movements and direction changes. **Email katherine.calkin@piedmont.org or call 706.475.5633 with any questions.**

Drop-ins welcome, but some prior experience with tai chi suggested for best experience.

Tuesdays, 11–11:45 a.m.

Wednesday Tai Chi: Keep it Simple

Warm up with gentle qigong exercises and practice forms from the Tai Chi for Health Institute. Classes include plenty of review and cues for short forms with no direction changes.

Drop-ins welcome, no tai chi experience necessary.

Wednesdays, 11–11:30 a.m.

PEACE

Healing Touch and Reiki

Individual sessions that focus on the energy system of the body to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and minimize side effects.

By appointment only, 706.475.4900

Hypnotherapy

Facilitated by Melissa Yonce-Hayes

A safe, non-invasive process that helps individuals tap into their inner strength to navigate the challenges of cancer treatment and recovery. It is designed to reduce stress, manage pain, improve sleep and boost emotional resilience.

Every Thursday, 10–11:30 a.m.

Out of respect for others, we ask that you do not enter class after 10:05 a.m.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (Online)

Facilitated by Mike Healy, Ed.D.

Learn ways to reduce stress, lessen physical and emotional pain and cope better with everyday demands. **Call Mike at 706.248.8918 for more information.**

Second Friday of every month

SUPPORT

Breast Cancer Support Groups

Facilitated by Sandy Pyle, RN, BSN, ONN-CG, and Robin Black, RN Nurse Navigator

A group for women with a diagnosis of breast cancer to share information, resources, and experiences.

Second Thursday of every month, 5:30 p.m.

Women's Cancer Support Group

Facilitated by Robin Black, RN and Brooke Bidez, LMSW

A group for any woman with any type of cancer diagnosis. A group to discuss treatments, side-effects, coping, stress reduction and survivorship in a safe, confidential setting.

Second Tuesday each month 1–2:30 p.m.

Mondays for Men, Cancer Support Group

Facilitated by Joel Siebentritt, LCSW

A confidential setting for male cancer patients to discuss treatment, side-effects, and survivorship. Any man from any diagnosis, currently in treatment through long-term survivorship is welcome.

Mondays, 5/19, 6/23; 12–1:00 p.m.

Previvors Support Group for Women

Space for women ages 18–50, diagnosed with a genetic mutation for breast cancer but have not been diagnosed. A place to gather for peer support, discuss education and risk management and share unique challenges in relation to work and family life.

Third Thursday each month, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Illness Adjustment Counseling

Individual sessions to address issues such as stress, anxiety, treatment decisions, and family communication.

By appointment only, 706.475.4900

Individual Grief Support for Adults

By appointment only, 706.475.4900

SUSTENANCE

Nutrition Counseling and Side-Effect Management

Individual sessions by physician referral.

By appointment only, 706.475.4900

Introducing Abigail Biehl

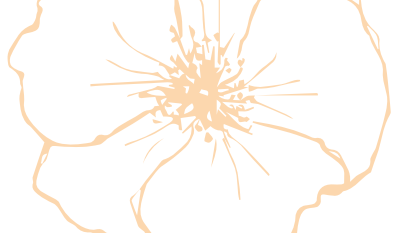
Abigail Biehl, MSW / MPH Dual Degree Intern

Hi everyone, I'm Abbey! I'm originally from Detroit, Michigan, and I'm a dual-degree graduate student at the University of Georgia, pursuing a Master of Social Work with a clinical focus and a Master of Public Health with a concentration in Health Promotion and Behavior. I'm passionate about supporting individuals affected by cancer and other health conditions as they adjust to the emotional and psychological challenges that come with their diagnosis. My goal is to provide compassionate, evidence-based care to help people and their families cope and maintain their well-being. In my free time, I love to read, spend time with family and friends, cook new recipes, and figure skate!



May 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m. Healing Touch, by appt.	2	3 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.
4	5 Healing Touch, by appt.	6 Healing Touch, by appt. Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	7 Beginner Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	8 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m. Healing Touch, by appt. Breast Cancer Support Group, 5:30 p.m.	9	10 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.
11	12 Healing Touch, by appt.	13 Healing Touch, by appt. Tai Chi, 11 a.m. Women's Cancer Support Group, 1 p.m.	14 Beginner Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	15 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m. Lunch & Learn, 11:30 a.m. Previvors Support Group, 5:30 p.m.	16	17 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.
18	19 Healing Touch, by appt. Men's Cancer Support Group, 12 p.m.	20 Healing Touch, by appt. Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	21 Beginner Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	22 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m.	23	24 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.
25	26 <i>Memorial Day</i>	27 Healing Touch, by appt. Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	28 Beginner Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	29 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m.	30	31 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.



June 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Cancer Survivor's Day Block Party	2 Healing Touch, by appt.	3 Healing Touch, by appt. Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	4 Beginner Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	5 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m. Healing Touch, by appt.	6	7 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.
8	9 Healing Touch, by appt.	10 Healing Touch, by appt. Tai Chi, 11 a.m. Women's Cancer Support Group, 1 p.m.	11 Beginner Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	12 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m. Healing Touch, by appt. Breast Cancer Support Group, 5:30 p.m.	13	14 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.
15	16 Healing Touch, by appt.	17 Healing Touch, by appt. Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	18 Beginner Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	19 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m. Healing Touch, by appt. Previvors Support Group, 5:30 p.m.	20	21 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.
22	23 Healing Touch, by appt. Men's Cancer Support Group, 12 p.m. Hormone Therapy Class, 4 p.m.	24 Healing Touch, by appt. Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	25 Beginner Tai Chi, 11 a.m.	26 Hypnotherapy, 10 a.m.	27	28 Mindfulness Practice Group, 8:30 a.m.
29	30 Healing Touch, by appt.					

Thank you to our donors!

Gifts in support of Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support guide patients and their families through their cancer journey. To make a donation and help continue to make these programs possible, checks may be made out to The Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support or visit give.piedmont.org/lscs.

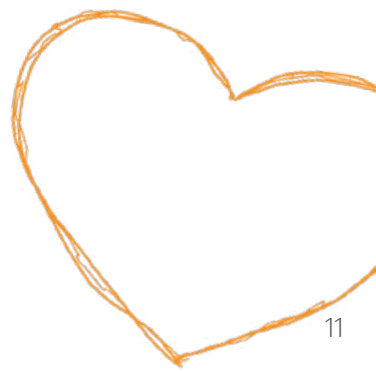
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*"Hope and encouragement through
support and information"*



BEAUTIFUL Y♡U BOUTIQUE

*Beautiful You is a cancer wellness boutique
specializing in products for women who have
had or are going to have breast surgery.*

For more information and to learn more about all
that we offer, please visit our website!

piedmont.org



706.475.4811



Piedmont Athens Regional
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BeautifulYou@piedmont.org

