Cancer Support at Piedmont Athens Regional

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 class, 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.

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

This newsletter is made possible by the Thomas J. & Sara Cooney Endowment.
Joel’s Journal: You Give Us Hope!

Joel Siebentritt, Manager, Cancer Support Services

Some people read tea leaves. I read rocks like the one on our cover with its simple, precisely painted message. I spotted this one on my daily walk in the Healing Garden. I almost cried. Thank you for reminding me: There is always HOPE! It is up to me to find it, accept it and share it with others.

Here are other places I’ve found HOPE since I last saw you:

The Loran Smith Center turns 20 years old in August! More Center history from founding nurse navigator, Susan Nemetz in the pages ahead.

COVID didn’t keep hundreds of you from sending checks to support the Loran Smith Center over the last 2 months. Thank you for sending HOPE!

A virtual In Their Shoes 10K brought out more than 350 participants and helped us raise over $60,000 for the Center. Not only that, but our sponsors didn’t even blink at the change. Thank you for remaining HOPE-FUL! Check out our new video at intheirshoesathens.org

John Davis called to share a quote that captures the idea of integrative health: “Be careful what you think, your body is listening.” (Olivia Newton-John interview) Here’s to HOPE AND WHOLENESS!

An online support group attendee wrote their phone number in the “Chat” screen for another participant. Thank you for sharing HOPE!

Piedmont Healthcare has joined 60+ corporations across Georgia in taking a stand against hate crimes. Thank you for being a beacon of HOPE in a country shrouded by racial strife.

Please join me in finding HOPE in every garden, on every street in every neighborhood and in everyone.

Be Well, Joel

Food for the Food Pantry

In this difficult time, we have seen our community come together to help those who need it most. We’d like to thank the many people who have donated food and supplies for our food pantry in the past couple of weeks.

We are still accepting food donations: Peanut butter, canned chicken, canned tuna, oatmeal, cereal, rice, soup, crackers, and canned fruits and veggies would be great additions to our supplies.
Thank you to our donors!

To make a donation to the Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support and help continue to make these programs possible, checks can be made out to the Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support or go to piedmont.org/locations/piedmont-athens/foundation.

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For more information about the LSCCS programs or to register for a class, please call 706. 475.4900 or email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org.
July and August Awareness Months

**JULY UV Safety Awareness**

COVID-19 has caused many of us to stay indoors – resulting in some Vitamin D withdrawals. With summer here, many of us can’t wait to absorb some of that sun we’ve been missing out on but it is important that we take the necessary precautions to protect our skin and health from the UV rays. Too much sun can have negative effects, such as dehydration, heat exhaustion, sunburn, and in some cases skin cancer. Fear not! There are ways to protect yourself AND enjoy the summer sunshine! Following these recommendations can minimize the risks that come with sun exposure:

- **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER**
- **COVER UP** (hat, sleeves, pants, sunglasses)
- **STAY IN THE SHADE**
- **WEAR SUNSCREEN**

**JULY Sarcoma Awareness**

A sarcoma is a rare type of cancer that occurs in the connective tissues of the body such as fat, muscle, blood vessels, bone, and cartilage. They can begin anywhere in the body and although they are rare across all age groups they are relatively more common among children. Sarcomas account for about 20 percent of all childhood cancers and 1 percent of adult cancers. It’s not clear what causes sarcomas and they can be difficult to detect in early stages but it is important to know the signs and symptoms of sarcoma.

**SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:**

- A lump that can be felt through the skin that may or may not be painful
- Abdominal pain
- A limited range of motion in a joint
- A fever of unknown origin
- Bone pain
- A bone that breaks for no apparent reason

**AUGUST Immunization Awareness**

*Sandy Pyle, BSN, RN, Oncology Nurse Navigator*

National Immunization Awareness Month is an annual observance to highlight the importance of vaccinations for all ages. Vaccines improve health and save lives, through control and elimination of many life-threatening illnesses. Vaccines work by fooling our bodies into thinking that we’ve been infected by a virus, causing our bodies to mount an immune response and build a memory of the virus that enables us to recognize and fight the virus in the future.

Vaccine development is a complete and lengthy process that typically takes 10-15 years. The first step is lab research that identifies the antigens needed in the vaccine. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) defines antigens as: any substance that causes the body to make an immune response against that substance. Antigens include toxins, chemicals, bacteria, viruses or other substances that come from outside the body. Antibodies are proteins produced in response to exposure to antigens. Antibodies bind to only one specific antigen and either destroy the antigen directly or make it easier for white blood cells to destroy it.

Step 2 is pre-clinical safety and efficacy. Researchers test the vaccine candidate’s ability to elicit the desired immune response (immunogenicity). Step 3 Clinical Safety and Efficacy contains 3 phases that begins testing on small groups to determine its safety and ends with a blinded study of thousands of people to test the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. This phase also monitors side effects. Once this testing is complete, step 4 begins regulatory review and licensure through the FDA who conducts its own testing, inspects production and monitors the vaccines potency, safety and purity. The final two steps involve the scaling up of production and continued quality control for the lifetime of production.

With worldwide focus on development of an effective vaccine for COVID-19, I’m both hopeful and concerned that we will have a vaccine in the next year. When this happens, it is important to educate ourselves by looking at the production research and testing to determine the safety and efficacy of this vaccine.
For more information about the LSCCS programs or to register for a class, please call 706.475.4900 or email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org.

**Modified Program Schedule**

Virtual support groups require a web link to participate.
Please contact the Loran Smith Center at **706.475.4900** for more details.

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**JULY**

- **2**
  - Virtual Prostate Cancer Support Group
  - 7 p.m.

- **9**
  - Virtual Breast Cancer Support Group
  - 5:30 p.m.

- **14**
  - Virtual Gynecological Support Group
  - 1 p.m.

- **15**
  - Virtual Love & Laughter Open Support Group
    - Noon (See access info below)

- **22**
  - Virtual Hormone Therapy Class
  - 5:30 p.m.

**AUGUST**

- **6**
  - Virtual Prostate Cancer Support Group
  - 7 p.m.

- **11**
  - Virtual Gynecological Support Group
  - 1 p.m.

- **13**
  - Virtual US Too Prostate Cancer Support Group
    - 7 p.m.

- **19**
  - Virtual Love & Laughter Open Support Group
    - Noon (See access info below)

- **22**
  - Virtual Hormone Therapy Class
  - 11 a.m.

**Virtual Love & Laughter Open Support Group**

Click [here](#) to join; Access Code: 717 949 316

Or join by phone: +1-415-655-0002

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For more information about the LSCCS programs or to register for a class, please call **706.475.4900** or email loransmithcenter@piedmont.org.
Survivorship Series for Young Women Affected by Breast Cancer

As a young woman with breast cancer, you have unique needs and questions. The Survivorship Series for Young Women Affected by Breast Cancer will provide answers and resources on some of the most common concerns for young women diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 45. Topics include sex and intimacy, early menopause, the long-term effects of treatment and self-care after breast cancer. Register by calling 706-475-4900. Space is limited both onsite and virtually via Webex.

Sessions:

- **Wednesday, July 1, 2020 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm**
  - Long-Term Side Effects
  - Registration Deadline: June 24, 2020

- **Saturday, July 18, 2020 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm**
  - Hot and Bothered
  - Registration Deadline: July 10, 2020

- **Wednesday, July 29, 2020 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm**
  - Let’s Talk About Sex
  - Registration Deadline: July 22, 2020

- **Saturday, August 8, 2020 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm**
  - Self-Care
  - Registration Deadline: July 31, 2020

Free Gift at Your First Session!

Presented by:

Piedmont Athens Regional
Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support

Living Beyond Breast Cancer Young Women’s Initiative
The Gift That Keeps Giving Back

Susan Nemetz, RN, BSN, Retired

Twenty years ago! It seems like yesterday to me. I was blessed to be a part of the development of the Loran Smith Center.

The members of the support group, Facing Cancer with Love and Laughter had convinced the Athens Regional Medical Center administration, with the help of wonderful ARMC Foundation Volunteers, of the need for a place to receive emotional support and accurate information after a cancer diagnosis. The administration agreed to support staff salary for a few years if the Foundation would take on the challenge of raising funds for a physical structure. The goal would be for the Foundation to eventually provide the funds needed to support the facility’s total budget. This facility was to provide support and information to anyone with a cancer diagnosis or their family at no cost regardless of where they received treatment. Helene Schwartz, Director of the Foundation, accepted this challenge along with the Foundation’s volunteers including Joy Elder and Mary Beth McDonald who were extremely supportive. Through personal experiences they knew the need was there for reliable information and support.

Mona Taylor, LCSW, was hired to make this dream come true with Helene. Mona was well aware of the need as she had been facilitating the Love and Laughter group. Mona had a very clear vision which eventually became The Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support. I was fortunate to be hired 6 months later to help build this dream. Not only did we need a safe welcoming space to house programs, we needed to build programming that met our community’s needs – providing reliable information and evidence-based support opportunities.

Ultimately the challenge was for the larger community to fund the space, develop ideas and find facilitators who our participants could trust with their vulnerabilities. Our community accepted this challenge and the Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support was dedicated and opened in 2000. A gift the community gave to itself; the gift that keeps giving back.

During these 20 years things have changed. The way cancer is treated now is changing all the time, requiring staff to stay up to date. Also, the way people like to receive or gather information has changed with more advanced technology. We now have telemedicine and ways to meet each other online (Zoom anyone?). Not to mention the current pandemic we are facing. The Center’s staff is constantly adapting programs and ways of accessing programs to meet our community’s current needs.

However, 20 years later, the goals are still the same. To provide cancer support at no charge and to be accessible to someone who has been diagnosed with cancer (or to their families), no matter when or where treated, are still the goals. The mission to provide courage and hope through support and information is still our mission. Moving forward, the Center’s staff will continue to find ways to meet you where you are. They need to hear from you so that as processes change the mission never will.

Susan Nemetz, the Center’s founding nurse navigator, was a pioneer in oncology care and genetic risk assessment and touched thousands of lives. She retired in 2015.
Thank you for the pillows & keep ‘em coming!

Thank you to the wonderful people who have been making and delivering pillows for our patients in the past weeks! It is because of your kindness and your eagerness to help that we are able to provide the best care to those in our community! Keep ‘em coming!

A big THANK YOU to Janis Hanna for working diligently on making the garden a sanctuary for healing and tranquility. Stop by and take a stroll through our beautiful garden. Don’t forget to stop and smell the roses!