

# CANCER WELLNESS CENTER IMPACT REPORT

Helping people live better while  
living with cancer.

20  
22



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**Together we  
can ensure the  
Center will be  
here to support  
our community  
when they  
need it most.**

Reflecting on 2022, we are overwhelmed with gratitude to our donor community which continued to support the Center's mission to improve the emotional and physical well-being of those impacted by cancer. Our expert clinical staff continued to innovate new services and deepen our existing support services. In response to the ever-changing environment, we welcomed participants back for in-person programming, while maintaining robust remote options to further our reach and access.

We expanded our child-focused services by hiring a Certified Child Life Specialist and a child and teen therapist to help our youngest participants mitigate fear and anxiety, and foster resiliency as they navigate the complexities of a cancer diagnosis. Our work with families led to the launch of our Family Grief Program which provides bereaved parents and their children an opportunity to connect with other families facing similar challenges. We are incredibly proud of the breadth of family services, including counseling, support groups and specialized programs to create a safe space for healing at such a critical time in their lives.

As demand for support services grew, we created programming to address the interests and specific needs of various populations affected by cancer. Our men's support groups and programs continue to grow and participation in our Spanish-speaking community has doubled. This past year we were able to hire an additional therapist to broaden the services available to our Latinx community.

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing essential cancer support care, free of charge, to children, individuals, and families. We are proud of the stories and information shared in the pages of this report as they are representative of the impact our dedicated staff, volunteers, leaders, and donors have on our community every day.

Thank you for joining us in this important work. We are grateful for all that you do.



*Nancy Bulzoni*  
Nancy Bulzoni



*Scott Winicour*  
Scott Winicour



*Art Mollenhauer*  
Art Mollenhauer



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## Our History

The Cancer Wellness Center was started in 1989 in Skokie, Illinois, by three friends who were determined to build a reliable source of information and support for those living with cancer.

The Center opened in a small donated space in Skokie and later moved to its present location in Northbrook. Founders Patsy Winicour, Judy Brannon, RN, and Mary DeJager, LCSW, began with a telephone hotline and three support groups – the first of their kind in the state.

The Center has grown and expanded its services to provide education, nutrition, wellness programs, counseling and support groups to those impacted by cancer. Today the Center offers services in English and Spanish and provides over 100 educational programs a year, 25 support and networking groups and therapeutic counseling to more than 1,400 individuals each year.

## No One Should Have to Face Cancer Alone

The National Cancer Institute reports that of the estimated 1,958,310 new cancer cases expected in 2023 in the United States, 74,580 will be located in Illinois.

The Cancer Wellness Center is committed to providing the support needed, free of charge, so that no one will have to face cancer alone.

**Look what we accomplished together.**



**1,459**

**Participants received cancer support services at no charge.**

In 2022, 870 participants engaged in clinical support services, resulting in an increase of 5% from the previous year.

**13,023**

**Hours spent sharing meaningful conversations and gaining valuable skills through programming.**

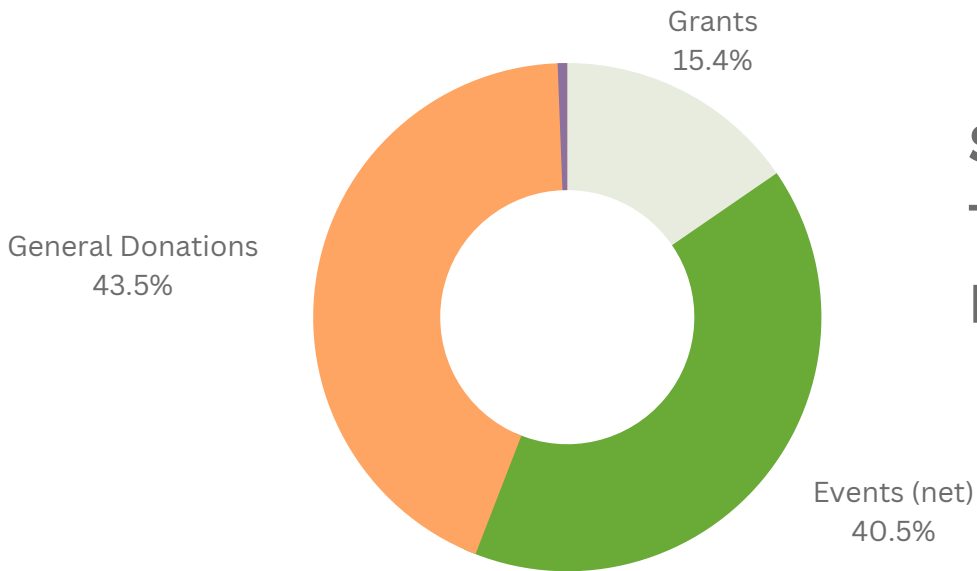
As the demand for support services grows, CWC continues to innovate ways to engage participants.

**99%**

**Would recommend CWC programs and services.**

- 97% reported decreased distress
- 98% felt they could better manage distress
- 96% reported improved communications with family and their healthcare team
- 91% felt lower physical symptoms of stress
- 95% reported a better understanding of the cancer experience
- 99% experienced social support

## Every Gift Counts



**\$1,705,476**  
Total Donations  
Received

We are committed to efficient spending that enables the Center to broaden our reach and increase access to all those in need of our cancer support services.



**67%**

Program Services

**21%**

Development

**12%**

Management and  
General

# Participant Stories

## Tori, CWC Participant



When I first heard the word 'cancer', it felt like my knees were kicked out from under me and I didn't know what to do.

Tori considers herself a “put together” person that is capable of handling problems as they arise. But when she heard about her cancer diagnosis – after her initial shock and fear - her first thought was, *“What am I going to tell the kids?”*

In large part, that was the reason Tori first reached out to the Cancer Wellness Center. Knowing that there was an organization that had resources to help navigate the conversations and communications with the kids meant the world.

My side effects from chemotherapy were really bad. I was worried that the kids were seeing me not feel good and I was at a point that I couldn't hide the sickness from them. I thought it would be very scary for them, but my daughter started saying “It's not you, it's the medicine. And we know the medicine is working because if it's making you feel sick, it's also killing the cancer.”

She's 9, she learned this language from her counseling sessions at CWC.

# Participant Stories

## Bixy and Gideon, CWC Participants



I was scared and then she (Elyssa) read a book so it was less scary. It was called "Cancer Party" and it was about all of the cancer cells having a party.

At CWC, Bixy and Gideon worked with Elyssa Siegel, Certified Child Life Specialist where they did fun activities like making Calming Jars, playing with therapy dogs, and making watermelon pizzas in their CWC cooking class. But what they were also doing was:

"We talked about different emotions and stuff...making us calm instead of angry."

Bixy says she wants to be calm, and "not a ferocious beast."

An effective coping mechanism is the Worry Monster Box. Bixy explains, that you place your worries inside the box and the Worry Monster "eats the worries so they won't be stuck in your head."

"The Worry Monster Box lets you let go of the worry. You don't want to keep it in your head, you want to get it out so you can be calm."

# Participant Stories

To have a space where survivors can come together and help each other, overseen by a trained facilitator - all at no cost - is rare and unique. When I see the members of the group on my screen, I feel as if I am with my community, one where whatever I am feeling is not judged, but accepted and explored. The fact that CWC is able to do this for any number of communities is a valuable public resource that must be sustained.

**- Luis, CWC Participant**  
Men's Services

Each time I meet with my therapist, it feels good to talk about regular stuff. Sometimes the sessions are updates on life; what has happened in the past few weeks. But sometimes you talk about things that are stressful in your life. That's what really happens when you are diagnosed with cancer. The stress, anxiety and depression really come in waves. Some days you feel amazing and some days you feel like the world is going to end and you don't really know how to handle it. So when I meet with my therapist, it's easy to let it out with her.

**-Liam, CWC Participant**  
Children and Adolescent Services

When I am going through my different treatments, I embrace the anger that I have about my condition, my situation. I feel like it motivates me to deal with whatever awfulness I have to deal with. Being able to talk about it with other people who have gone through it, gives you a sense of perspective that what you are dealing with is a tough fight. The ups and downs of my cancer and the way it has affected me makes having the support and the people around me really beneficial.

**-Mike, CWC Participant**  
Men's Support Group

## Thank You to our Supporters

Community is at the heart of our work to help people affected by cancer live better lives. We thank the more than 4,700 individual donors, foundations, corporations, and organizations that supported CWC's work in 2022.

### Corporate Partners

AbbVie, Inc.  
AbbVie Foundation Employee Engagement Fund  
Avenue Logistics, LLC  
Bank of America  
Bristol Myers Squibb  
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Northbrook Woman's Club Foundation  
Northfield Township  
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The Zall Family Fund

## Staff

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Nancy Bulzoni  
Executive Director

Savina Chacheva  
Program Director

Michelle Maer  
Director of Development

Megan McMahon, PhD  
Clinical Director

Susie Rosenbaum  
Chief Financial Officer

### Administrative Team

Doris Downing  
Data and Analytics Manager

Gail Fradin  
Development Manager

Mary Jayaraman  
Client Services Associate

Deanna Novak  
Accounting Associate

Dymond Redd  
Marketing and Communications  
Associate

Lisa Roudabush  
Program Associate

Lauren Tenenbaum  
Client Services Associate

### Clinical Team

Stephanie Aaron, MA, LCSW  
Clinical Associate

Priscilla Andrews, MA, LCPC  
Clinical Manager

Melissa Avila, MS, MA, LPC, NCC  
Clinical Associate

Nora Barquin, LCSW  
Clinical Associate

Heidi Brockstein, LCSW  
Clinical Associate

Lori Bumbaco, MS, RDN, CSO, LDN  
Oncology Dietitian

Dominique James, MS, LPC  
Clinical Associate

Alana Lebovitz, MSW  
Intake Coordinator

Mark Livshots, MA, LPC  
Clinical Associate

Kimberly Matthews, MA, LCPC  
Support Programs Coordinator

Elyssa Siegel, CCLS  
Child Life Specialist

Gabrielle Wolk, PsyD  
Clinical Associate

### Clinical Externs

Caroline Campbell

Sabrina Levitas

Rebecca Skinner

## Board of Directors

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Scott Winicour  
Co-Chairman

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Molly Westfall

Ryan Carey  
Shan Dass  
Adam Kriska  
Carolyn Morris  
Emma Westfall  
Michael Whartnaby



In order to address both the physical and emotional components of distress, the Cancer Wellness Center provides evidence-based programs and services designed to educate participants, develop their coping strategies, and strengthen their support network.

The Center offers a wide variety of programs.

[Click here to view our calendar.](#)

Thank you for helping us continue providing essential services to thousands of people impacted by cancer. Together we can make a difference.

The Cancer Wellness Center embraces diversity. Our commitment to inclusivity is woven throughout our services, programs, and welcoming workplace.

[To read our full DEI statement, click here.](#)

## Contact

215 Revere Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062  
(847)-509-9595

[www.cancerwellness.org](http://www.cancerwellness.org)



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