

## Big and Little Gifts are All Important at RiverBend

Because of your generosity, RiverBend programs and services come at no cost to clients!

You can support survivors in so many ways.

Consider donating one of the following items that are distributed to clients:

- Fuzzy Socks
- Grocery Store Gift Cards
- XL and 2XL Depends
- Bottled Boost Drinks or Bottled Ensure Drinks
- Cottonelle Wipes
- Coffee
- Coffee Creamer
- Teabags or Tea K-Cups for Keurig
- Footed Canes
- Wheelchairs with Foot Rest
- Home Improvement Store Gift Cards
- Travel Sized Toiletries
- Baseball Caps
- Lip Balm and Chapstick
- Small Journals
- Wrapped Hard Candy

You can also contribute to RiverBend and help those living with cancer in the following ways:

- Become a member of The Anniversary Club
- Make a Tribute or Memorial Gift
- Consider an Employer Matching Gift
- Donate Gifts of Stock and Securities
- Consider making a gift from your estate
- Organize a small fundraising event with your business, church or social organization

Call 574-287-4197 or email [info@RiverBendCancerServices.org](mailto:info@RiverBendCancerServices.org) for more information!

## With Gratitude

Please join us in recognizing the following companies and individuals who have provided significant funding to RiverBend in the past year. Without these everyday heroes, we couldn't provide the services and programs we do:

Elizabeth Loof Adey • B100 • Barnes & Thornburg LLP • Beacon Community Impact • Beiger Mansion • Belmont Beverage • Big Idea Company • Busy Hands of Michiana • Family of Nancy Collins • Deputy Heritage Fund • Dan O'Day Studios • Florence V. Carroll Charitable Trust • Great Lakes Heating and Air Conditioning • GynaGirls • Harper Cancer Research Institute • Holly & Jim Harris • Martins Super Market • McDonald Physical Therapy • Erin & Sam McGrath • Michiana Hematology Oncology • Muessel Ellison Memorial Trust Foundation • Pam & Rich Mullin • Palmer Funeral Homes • Pennfield Capital Corporation • The PHP Foundation • Sue & Pat Ruskowski • SBN & Partners • Cari & Barry Shein • Stanley A. & Flora P. Clark Memorial Foundation • Thazer Raceway • Tire Rack • United Way of St. Joseph County • University of Notre Dame Rec Sports • Vera Z. Dwyer Charitable Trust • Linda Weaver

### RiverBend Cancer Services Board 2023

Harry Anderson • Susan Guibert • Robin Sue Ickes • Amanda Miller Kelley • Peggy King • John LaDue • Pam Mullin • Bryan Olund • Douglas Ostheimer • Melinda Pierce • Trish Ross • Dr. Michael Rotkis • Sue Ruskowski • Camilla Shaw • Dennis Slade • Mary Welsheimer • Kim Woofter

RiverBend Cancer Services improves the quality of life of cancer survivors and their families in our community through helpful advocacy, hopeful support and innovative educational programs. Our programs help those living with cancer feel more hopeful and empowered to manage their cancer treatment and survivorship.



### Regular Office Hours

Monday - Thursday, 9 am - 4:30 pm  
Friday, 9 am - 12 pm

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# Around the Bend

FALL 2023



## Expanding Programming

Wellness House is offering new options

## Celebrating 80 years of Hope & Healing

RiverBend Cancer Services marks a special milestone





## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT FALL 2023

Lately, I have wondered if Dr. Stanley Clark could have ever imagined the vast number and diverse nature of people he was about to help when he first created RiverBend Cancer Services 80 years ago. The Cancer Society of St. Joseph County was a bold idea in 1943, when people didn't speak of cancer in public, and most had no awareness of symptoms or the possible treatments available. There was pushback. Some in our community were not sure educating the public about cancer was a good idea; it seemed intrusive and a little too personal, but Dr. Clark, along with Dr. Alfred Giordano and Dr. Roscoe Sensenich, were steadfast in changing the way our community understood a disease they knew would increase among our neighbors.

These three men knew that education and support were critical, and along with a committed group of community members, began an organization that has truly stood the test of time, continuing to educate, support, and most of all, be a welcoming place where people dealing with a diagnosis of cancer can find comfort and strength.

It might be easy to overlook RiverBend as a critical part of the community, but it would be a mistake to do so. The beauty of the organization is the simplicity and the ability to meet each person where they are, helping them with what they personally need. If you stop by, you won't see a lot of innovation or high-tech equipment, but you will see an army of dedicated individuals in and out of the building who daily embrace cancer survivors and make their lives a bit better than when they first walked through the door.

And so, it has been, for over 80 years, a community that comes together to support those with cancer. They do it as hands-on volunteers, educators, facilitators, donors, event participants and fundraising coordinators; they counsel, teach classes, give a hug, cook meals, fit a wig, deliver calendars, visit chemo rooms and prepare gifts for newly diagnosed patients. They do whatever is needed because they know it will matter.

Over the past few months, I have had the pleasure of looking through cherished leather-bound books with beautifully handwritten, organized minutes that document the historical successes and challenges of RiverBend throughout the years. As I read through, I realized that in 1943, just like today, the efforts to ensure cancer survivors are cared for is a mission that takes the whole community. For 80 years, dedicated individuals, businesses, local foundations and the medical community have worked together to make sure that cancer survivors are cared for without ever having to worry about how to pay for those services.

As you read through this newsletter, you will be introduced to some of the wonderful people and activities that keep RiverBend successful. We hope you enjoy learning about the ways both big and small that cancer survivors are supported, and most of all know how grateful we feel to live in a community that has continued to support those in need for 80 years.

Most grateful,  
Peggy

Board President,  
RiverBend Cancer Services

### *The Three Founders of The Cancer Society of St. Joseph County, which later became RiverBend Cancer Services*

*Photos Provided by The History Museum*



**Dr. Stanley Clark**  
1877-1962



**Dr. Alfred Giordano**  
1893-1958



**Dr. Roscoe Sensenich**  
1882-1963



## Celebrating 80 Years

### *of Hope and Healing Around the Bend*

In 1943, three dedicated doctors, in collaboration with a passionate group of community members, came together with a singular mission - to improve the lives of those affected by cancer in St. Joseph County. And so, the story of what would later become RiverBend Cancer Services began.

Fast forward eight decades, we're celebrating our 80th anniversary, and proud to say that our nonprofit organization is not only going strong; it's flourishing.

Our humble beginnings as The Cancer Society of St. Joseph County all started when Mrs. E.M. Morris made the first significant contribution to our organization by donating a station wagon. This simple yet profound gesture served a crucial purpose - providing survivors with free transportation, ensuring they could access their life-saving treatments without additional worry.

This initial act of community support was a catalyst for RiverBend's innovative approach to filling the gaps in cancer care, still fueling our mission to this day. As our founders had intended, RiverBend continues to support survivors and their families in areas where traditional cancer care cannot, offering everything from bras, wigs and prostheses, nutrition guidance, counseling, educational and fitness classes, wellness activities, massage therapy, art therapy, and more at absolutely no cost to our clients.

RiverBend could not do what we do without the generosity and kindness of our donors, community partners and volunteers. Our legacy of providing those affected by cancer Hope and Healing Around the Bend perseveres because of you.

## JOIN THE 80TH CLUB!

On any day of the week, if you happen to be in the halls of RiverBend, you will see remarkable moments of kindness, caring and genuine gratitude. A new wig and some scarves for a woman beginning to lose her hair, packages of ostomy supplies for a man in between insurance, counseling for a teenage girl whose parent is experiencing another bout of cancer and nutritional supplement for someone who can no longer eat due to treatment. You will also see determined survivors, physically compromised from their disease, yet carefully making their way to a yoga class or the art studio. You will see people smiling with relief from pain after a massage session and many chatting in a room during crafting or yarn work. You see people supporting one another and offering hope and friendship everywhere you look.

Daily, there is genuine gratitude from the many survivors who are now or who have in the past used RiverBend services and know they could not have lived their lives as well without them. You can be part of making sure these programs are here to stay!

As we celebrate this significant 80-year milestone, we invite you to become a member of the RiverBend Anniversary Club and ensure services continue through a monthly commitment of support.

It's easy to become a member of RiverBend's 80th Anniversary Club:

Go to [RiverBendCancerServices.org](https://RiverBendCancerServices.org) and click on Anniversary Club, or call (574) 287-4197 to learn more!



# Summer FUNdraising

We are grateful to every sponsor and everyone who participated in fundraising events that supported RiverBend this past summer. Your generosity allows us to continually grow our programming to meet the evolving needs of survivors in St. Joseph County, but most importantly, it gives those affected by cancer the opportunity to access our resources and services for absolutely FREE!



## Jazz Around the Bend

On Thursday, July 20, RiverBend's Jazz Around the Bend returned to Mishawaka's Beiger Mansion for an evening of music, cocktails and friendship. This year, RiverBend honored Kate Voelker for her vision and leadership, which were essential in turning the dream of a Wellness House into a reality. Pictured: Honoree Kate Voelker with friend Dennis Slade, Pat Flynn and Jim Kelly.



## Golf Around the Bend

On Monday, August 14, Golf Around the Bend took place at Harbor Shores Golf Course in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Golfers old and new came to support cancer survivors through a day on the links at one of the Midwest's premier courses. The rain was scattered, but spirits were high as the day culminated with a reception full of food, prizes and a lot of great camaraderie. Special thanks to Harper Cancer Research, Palmer Funeral Homes and Pennfield Capital Corporation for their generous underwriting.



## Dance for the Cure

On Saturday, August 26, community partner Dan O'Day Dance Studio hosted their annual Dance for the Cure fundraiser benefiting RiverBend Cancer Services. This year, they raised a record-setting \$6,800! We are beyond grateful to those who work so hard to make this event successful and everyone who participates.



## Tennis Around the Bend

On Friday, September 8, the 9th Annual Tennis Around the Bend returned to Leeper Park in South Bend. Participants took the court to compete in a doubles tournament, raising funds to improve cancer survivors' and their families' quality of life in our community. Special thanks to board members Trish Ross and Pam Mullin. Trish whose hand painted bench encouraged significant donations through a silent auction, and Pam who has served as Event Creator & Coordinator for nine years!

## Crafting Compassion for Cancer Patients

Busy Hands of Michiana's incredible team of volunteers, with their nimble fingers and generous hearts, has been helping RiverBend Cancer Services provide specialized, handcrafted items to cancer patients in our community, supplying breastpillows and aprons for patients who have mastectomy surgeries, seatbelt covers for patients who have ports, and the tote bags RiverBend uses to distribute wigs and necessity items.

Busy Hands' compassionate creations are hand-delivered by RiverBend staff and volunteers to patients undergoing treatment at Memorial Hospital, St.

Joseph Regional Medical Center and Michiana Hematology Oncology's Mishawaka location. They're a community partner we can always count on, and clients can feel their love in every stitch!



## A Gift from South Bend International Airport

Special Thanks to Friends of SBN who sold beautiful bright pink t-shirts supporting breast cancer survivors and donated the proceeds to RiverBend.

# ART AROUND THE BEND IS BACK

at the Wellness House

Nov.16, 5 PM - 7 PM

We are thrilled to announce the return of one of RiverBend's beloved fundraisers, Art Around the Bend! Join us on Thursday, November 16, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Wellness House as we welcome back an evening of creativity, community and compassion.

Admission is \$10.00 at the door, and the event will include a silent auction featuring art pieces donated by talented local artists, exciting gift baskets and more! Stop by to enjoy refreshments, original artwork and friendship while experiencing the healing qualities of art. We can't wait to see you there!





# What's new at the Wellness House?



Over the past several months, RiverBend has witnessed incredible growth in survivors seeking our free services and programs, and we're excited to share that we've expanded our programming in response to their diverse needs! The new additions to our regular programming represent our commitment to continuously improve our services to ensure we meet the evolving needs of those affected by cancer in our community.



## Cooking Classes and Nutrition Education

Nutrition plays a vital role in cancer prevention and recovery, and understanding how to nourish the body during and after treatment is essential. These additional classes are designed to empower survivors and their families with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed dietary choices that support their health and well-being.

Our expert guest instructors provide practical advice, cooking demonstrations, gardening education and delicious recipes that make incorporating nutritious foods into everyday life accessible and enjoyable. We love seeing how much fun our clients have when participating in them!



## Healing Arts

Cancer treatment can take a toll not only on the body but also on the mind and spirit. Recognizing the importance of holistic healing, RiverBend Cancer Services has introduced Healing Arts into our mix of free programming. This includes massage therapy and Reiki, both of which have been shown to provide physical and emotional relief to cancer survivors.

Massage therapy offers relaxation, pain relief, and improved circulation, while Reiki promotes energy balance and emotional healing. Our skilled practitioners work closely with individuals to tailor each session to their unique needs, ensuring a personalized and therapeutic experience. Clients have expressed how good they feel after attending these appointments.

## A chair-itable donation

Over the summer months, the Wellness House received a wonderful gift of gently used furnishings thanks to the incredible generosity of our friends at Michiana Hematology Oncology.

"Some of our older pieces have seen their fair share of love, and thanks to this donation, we were able to replace them with like-new, cozy seating," said Mary Welsheimer, Board Member. "The generous gift makes the wellness house a little more comfortable and helps our guests to better connect with one another during programming." Thank you, Michiana Hematology Oncology, we are grateful for your generosity!



# Community Partners Offer Amazing Experiences for Survivors

## YMCA of Greater Michiana

Physical activity is so important yet it can be challenging to navigate, especially for those dealing with the effects of treatment. RiverBend Cancer Services is proud to announce a new partnership with the YMCA of Greater Michiana, whose instructors come to the Wellness House to provide an array of fitness and stress relieving programs throughout each week. From Seated Strength to Breathworks! YMCA offers programs for survivors on every level of their journey.

## Unity Gardens

Digging in the dirt can be good for the soul, and we know healthy food can change the way people feel. Unity Gardens of South Bend has stepped up to teach those living with cancer some great techniques in home gardening. Additionally, they will soon help create a new raised bed garden at the Wellness House kicking off RiverBend's Garden Club early next spring. Unity Garden's mission to improve community health has been well received, and sessions have become a favorite at RiverBend as cancer survivors gain a better understanding of the connection between health and nature.

## Community Foundation of St. Joseph County

Not everyone has the resources to fulfill a special wish at the end of life, but through the kindness of donors at the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County, the One Wish Fund has provided RiverBend financial resources to help terminal cancer patients make some special memories at a difficult time. Each request is as unique as the individual; a visit with family in another state, a unique bucket list experience, or a simple day of beauty and photos with family providing lasting memories. The One Wish Fund helps RiverBend offer dignity and kindness as people near the end of their journey.

## 100 Black Men of Greater South Bend

Sometimes you just need a little encouragement to take better care of yourself. This past summer RiverBend worked alongside 100 Black Men to encourage prostate exams among men in our community, focusing on African American men who suffer a disproportionate rate of diagnosis. Together the two organizations helped local men receive free screenings through the generosity of doctors at The South Bend Clinic. The successful pilot fostered a new relationship between two organizations both dedicated to making life better for our community.

# Join us in welcoming Allison Westerink to RiverBend

We are thrilled to introduce you to our newest RiverBend team member, Allison Westerink, who will be supporting clients and their families through our counseling services! Allison brings with her an abundance of compassion and a deep commitment to helping those affected by cancer.

Allison shared, "I am absolutely thrilled to be here at RiverBend! The sense

of community here is truly special, and I am honored to be a part of it. I felt a warmth and welcoming spirit from the moment I walked in. It's clear that everyone at RiverBend is deeply dedicated to improving the lives of survivors and their families, and I am excited to contribute to this mission."

*If you or someone you know could benefit from our counseling services, please get in touch with Allison at 574-287-4197 or email her at [Counseling@RiverBendCancerServices.org](mailto:Counseling@RiverBendCancerServices.org)*

