

HOPE QUARTERLY

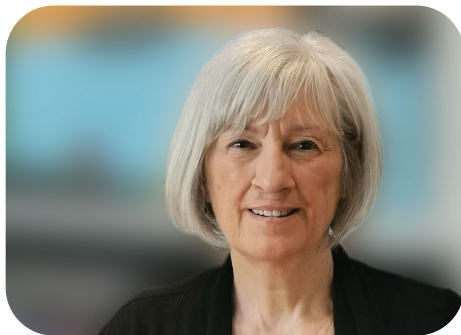
Sharing the stories and celebrating the work of the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre

AUGUST 2024

MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR

The one thing I have marvelled at since being a part of the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre (GBCSC) Board of Directors, is how so many through their generosity allow us to provide the support to our growing membership.

Since this spring, our many supporters have donated tens of thousands of dollars. Some of it has come from fundraising events. Other funds have come through individual donations, such as during our record-breaking Cancer Awareness Month Campaign in April.



Beyond support through funds, we've been truly blessed by so many amazing volunteers giving their time and energy. They help do everything from greet members when they arrive at the GBCSC to

baking sweet treats for everyone to enjoy. If you have dropped by the GBCSC recently, you'll see that our new Garden of Hope is flourishing with 1,500 plants, shrubs, and trees that were planted thanks to over 40 volunteers. I'll add that several generous donors helped make it come to life as well.

Our Centre has become a beacon of hope for so many over the past decade thanks to all our supporters. We are truly grateful for your ongoing support and generosity.

Kathy Wolfer

How has your perspective changed on your cancer diagnosis since becoming a GBCSC member?



"Because of the programs and support, my diagnosis was a little less daunting to accept and I felt less overwhelmed. Once I became aware of all that the Centre offers, along with meeting the staff and volunteers who are so warm and welcoming, it gave me a sense of reassurance that I truly have a newfound circle of hope and strength. I am so very thankful for the care and supports I have accessed from the GBCSC."

Rachelle Brunelle

"In the very first meeting I chose to attend, I felt my feelings surrounding my experience with Cancer were validated. I was blessed with so much support during my journey, yet psychological side effects kept overriding the physical. I am so grateful for the ongoing safe environment they provide."

Shelly Ironside



"My introduction to the GBCSC was from my girlfriend. She mentioned your building and what was available. I came in, introduced myself, and was informed of all the services that the Centre has to offer. My perspective has evolved since becoming a member. I have no doubt I will beat this disease. The GBCSC has helped provide both financial and educational resources that are helping me remain positive and resolute in my fight."

Derrick Jones

MEMBERSPEAK

FEEDING THE MIND, THE BODY, AND THE SOUL

Two programs provide nutritional education and a social opportunity for Members



One of the GBCSC's most popular programs in its early days was **Soup for the Soul**. Members gathered for a bowl of soup and so much more. Unfortunately, the pandemic put this program on hiatus. Over the past year, thanks in part from support from the Huronia Community Foundation and now the Rotary Club of Midland, it's back, along with a new companion program, **Cooking for Cancer**. This program offers nutritional information and cooking instructions to support a member's health and recovery.

Lyndsey Laurin, a longtime member and volunteer who is helping to lead the programs, fondly recalls Soup for the Soul at the old GBCSC location. To her, its continued popularity is due to the social aspect.

"It's no pressure socialization. Many members often take part in only one-to-one programs, so this is a great chance to meet others and get that much needed socialization."

Charlotte Hall, a local registered dietitian, is providing her expertise about nutritional food options for Cooking for Cancer. According to her, the right diet can make all the difference for someone dealing with cancer.

"Eating can be a real challenge when you have cancer. Cancer and treatment can cause all kinds of side effects that do not make us feel like eating. A good goal is to eat as well as you can during and following treatment."

The recipes that Charlotte creates are not complicated. She adds there are lots of simple tips and tricks to help someone meet their nutritional needs.

"Every Cooking for Cancer recipe I have tried at home are definitely easy to make. Each recipe highlights at least one benefit when we are thinking about cancer, whether it be packing in the calories and protein to carry you through treatment or increasing fibre for cancer prevention."

Salads are now being served during these lunch time gatherings over the summer instead of soup. Lyndsey suggested the idea and Charlotte was happy to come up with some appropriate recipes.

Member Eileen Wallace has participated in the Cooking for Cancer program to give back for all the help that the GBCSC has given her.

"The recipes we've made have been great and very tasteful. Plus, I've gotten to know a few people since coming out to help."

She adds Soup for the Soul is ideal for members who often don't get out much to socialize.



"It certainly provides an opportunity to meet new and wonderful people going through or who have been through the same cancer journey."

For member Vicky Babando, caregiver for her husband and a cancer survivor, she's enjoyed the comradery of making soup and sharing it with everyone.

"It's great when everyone arrives later for Soup for the Soul and sits down to enjoy a beautiful bowl of soup. It's such an amazing program."

PROVIDING MUTUAL SUPPORT

Couple supports The Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre through fundraiser while receiving support during their cancer journey

Husband and wife Cam and Colleen Taylor run Tailored Pickleball Academy (TPA) in Simcoe County. It offers developmental clinics and lessons while also hosting charity pickleball events. They connected with GBCSC Board Chair Kathy Wolfer during a pickleball event and talked about TPA hosting a pickleball tournament to benefit the GBCSC.

Colleen, TPA's tournament director, was actively involved in helping the GBCSC organize the first Butter Tart Classic in 2023. As it turned out, just weeks before that tournament, Colleen had to reach out for support... she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

"My focus shifted from organizing the event to seeking support from the Centre and exploring how it could assist my family and me during this challenging time," recalls Colleen. For her, this diagnosis was even more challenging as they had two young daughters, Colbie, 5, and Clarke, 4.

A place to turn to for support

Colleen says the support provided by the GBCSC during her cancer journey was simple but very impactful.

"Just knowing it was there, attending a few programs, and meeting the staff and members reassured me that I had a place to turn to for support whenever we needed it," says Colleen. *"It has been a tremendous source of confidence. They connected me with others who have navigated their own cancer journeys, allowing us to share stories and support each other."*

She adds she took advantage of lymphatic massage services offered by the GBCSC, which were both informative and physically helpful during her mastectomy recovery.

Connecting with someone who understood

Colleen's most significant GBCSC memory happened at the first Butter Tart Classic. She had a PICC line in her



arm and had just lost her hair. She was feeling scared, tired, and overwhelmed with emotions. Colleen met a GBCSC member who related her journey as a two-time breast cancer survivor.

"She gave me the space to ask questions and share my feelings without judgment, offering a listening ear and, most importantly, a sense of understanding rather than fear. Hearing her story and seeing her standing there, healthy, gave me the hope and strength I needed to face another day, week, and month."

A personal cause

Colleen says she and Cam felt a strong alignment in values to the GBCSC. The couple was eager to raise funds to help the GBCSC provide valuable programs and services. It aligns with their core values, both as individuals and as a company.

"When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, our commitment to supporting the Centre became even more personal."

Colleen admits her journey has made the annual fundraiser a personal cause.

"Having experienced the impact of cancer personally and received support from the Centre, we are even more committed to our mission. This journey has reinforced the importance of our efforts and why we do what we do."

Did You Know...

Over half of all funds supporting the GBCSC come from donations. In fiscal 2023, we received **over \$248,000 from generous supporters like you.**

That generosity is a huge reason we can provide free programs and services to those impacted by cancer in our community.

Thank You!

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL *with*

The GBCSC is a Community to Be With Others on the Same Journey

When Hillary Glass was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, she had some idea of what lay ahead. Her father had lost a tough battle with pancreatic cancer. He taught her to find some normalcy in the craziness that ensues when fighting cancer. The GBCSC offered her some normalcy along with the additional support she needed.

"The Centre was a beacon of hope in the heart my community. It helped me find that grounding I needed during a difficult time."

For Hillary, the treatment process wasn't easy. It involved months of both chemotherapy and radiation. She admits it took a lot out of her. Even doing the simplest task was a huge challenge.

"That's something that you don't expect. You think you can manage and then you're in it, and it's just such a different world."

Strong support network

Having a strong support network around her was crucial to get through it all. Along with her family and friends, the GBCSC's programs and services were a big part of her network.

"It meant so much to me to be able to walk in and be embraced when you're feeling the absolute worst. They're the ones that get you through this difficult time. We're so fortunate to have this place in our community."

Hillary admits she really didn't know what she needed until she walked through the GBCSC's doors. That's when she realized this was the place she needed during her challenging journey.

"You're exposed to all the incredible programming and the incredible people... all that warmth and friendliness. The openness to be able to have those conversations that you didn't even know you needed."

HILLARY GLASS

Home Community: *Tiny*
Member Since: *2023*



Members offered advice

The group programs such as Journey of Hope were extremely useful to Hillary. Fellow members, who had travelled a similar road, offered advice she couldn't get from medical professionals.

"Listening to other people's stories and the conversations and experiences that they've had taught me things that I didn't even know I needed to know."

Get what you need, when you need it

Hillary loves how the GBCSC offers flexibility for members. They can partake in programs or service when it works best for them.

"Days that you're feeling strong and have the energy, you can participate in an exercise program. The other times when you're in need of a spiritual boost, you can attend a group session. Other times, you can just come and have that warm bowl of soup or a cup of coffee when you need the company."

She adds it made all the difference to have support close to home without the need to drive to Barrie or beyond to get what she needed.

"The Centre for me is a community... being with people who have walked the same walk. I think that makes such a difference."



The mission of the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre is to provide emotional, physical, social, spiritual support, education and information as a complement to the medical system for people living with cancer, their families and caregivers.

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