

Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation

Spring 2015



About the Foundation

In February of 2006, we were founded in Akron, Ohio by the Comunale family and their close friends to honor the memory of Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. who fought a courageous battle against cancer. A year later, his aunt Amy Comunale Klein was diagnosed with cancer. Then in 2011, Stephen's mother Jane lost her courageous battle with cancer. The Foundation now lives in memory of Stephen, Amy and Jane.

Our Mission

The Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation is a nonprofit organization that endows an outreach program to provide comfort to cancer patients and their families by easing the ancillary financial burdens that confront them.

By partnering with social workers, community members, hospitals and other organizations, our efforts empower cancer patients while improving their quality of life.

Dear Friends

At the Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation, easing the financial burden of cancer patients and their families is our main purpose. We help so many that are impacted by cancer, but our reach extends beyond financial assistance. Personally, I love the newsletter because it allows us to spend some time talking about our programs, which are dear to my heart and really make a difference in the lives that are touched by them. We create smiles and experiences, provide comfort and opportunities, and, perhaps most importantly, put virtually all of the money we raise immediately back into the local community, where those navigating the various obstacles that cancer can present are provided the financial, emotional, or mental relief they need. As we at the Foundation always say, we aren't trying to find a cure for cancer, but we can help put a smile on someone's face during their journey and help make their battle a little easier. 2014 was the Foundation's best year yet, and with your support there is no reason that 2015 won't be even better.

Looking forward to a great year!
Stephen A. Comunale, Chairman

Healing Through Art

Akron General Medical Center McDowell Cancer Institute started an art therapy program for current patients receiving treatment, their family members, and survivors in April 2013. This wonderful program uses art therapy to decrease pain and anxiety, as well as allow these individuals to express their feelings through art. Every year patients and family members are invited to participate in a free group art therapy project sponsored in part by the Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation. This year the project features a lion, titled Ribbons of Courage. The ribbons on the lion's mane are being decorated by patients to represent the courage they have to persevere through their cancer journey. When the ribbons are completed, the art will be framed and displayed with patient artwork in the fall in the Cancer Center Lobby thanks to the annual support of the Comunale Foundation. Art



therapy is usually offered on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:40am - 3:00pm to patients during their treatment or by appointment. "You don't have to be an artist to participate and it is a great outlet," states board certified art therapist Amber Smith. "The thing I hear the most from the patients is the art is a great distraction and helps pass the time," stated Smith. If you are interested in participating in Ribbons of Courage, you can contact Amber at 330-344-7854.

2014 Accomplishments

Individual Grant Giving

There is no area in which the Foundation's true purpose is reflected like our individual grant giving. We give grants of financial assistance twice a week, every week of the year, and they are often awarded within 48 hours of receiving a completed application. They are provided to individuals and families in our local community who are battling cancer and struggling to meet their day-to-day financial burdens. These grants help ensure that these courageous people can continue to have a home, apartment, food, gas, heat, clothing, childcare, transportation and more, allowing them to focus on their treatment. We try to help ease the worry of paying for these necessities in the midst of a fight with cancer.

In 2014, due to the support of people like yourself, the Foundation was able to provide 285 grants. Thus far in 2015, the Foundation has given 110 grants, and the number will only continue to rise. The Foundation has budgeted \$225,000 for grant distributions in 2015, all of which will go into the local community to help alleviate financial concerns of those in need.

Holiday Meals

The holiday season of 2014 marked the sixth year of the Foundation's Holiday Meals Program. In an effort to provide one less thing to worry about, last year we served over 300 people by providing 100 complete meals to families that were dealing with a cancer battle during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Those that received Christmas meals also received a grocery gift card. The families are referred to the Foundation by local hospitals, agencies, and other organizations with which we collaborate. The Holiday Meals Program would not be possible without the generous donations of our sponsors – Gardner Pie Company, Hilton Akron/Fairlawn, Orlando Baking, and RDA Management Company. We also couldn't have done it without the assistance of the many volunteers that helped pack and deliver the meals. It truly was a team effort that helped the Foundation make a difference for many families.



THE EVENT

Every two years the Foundation holds THE EVENT, an amazing fundraiser that is our primary source of funds for grant giving. This past September 27th was nothing short of spectacular, as over 700 attendees were transported to South Beach when the Comunale home was transformed into Club C. An incredible performance by The Pointer Sisters brought the house down and everyone had an opportunity to sample the Cuban inspired food prepared by Beau of Beau's Grille. This year's EVENT was the most successful yet, with donations coming from corporate sponsors, local guests, and a live and silent auction. We were fortunate enough to have over 100 individuals and local businesses donate fantastic items to the silent auction, which really showed the support that THE EVENT has from the community. It was a magical evening under the stars and everyone had a great time.



Sunshine Fund

The fourth year of the Sunshine Fund was its biggest, and we plan on 2015 being even bigger. With a goal of putting smiles on faces through acts of kindness that could not otherwise be afforded, Jane Comunale's memory lives on by providing small grants to those with cancer. In 2014 the Foundation gave 130 Sunshine Fund grants, and through the first quarter of 2015 we have provided 35 more. Examples from the past year include movie tickets (over 300!), birthday cakes, themed bedroom for a young child, and a night out for a local getaway. The Sunshine Fund grants make a world of difference, and brighten the day of an individual or family that is struggling with everything surrounding a battle with cancer.



Sunshine Bags

Sunshine Bags – one of the Foundation's newer programs – continues to be a big success. These tote bags are given to Summa Health Systems and Akron General Medical Center McDowell Cancer Institute, who distribute them to cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy and radiation. The bags contain various comfort items, which help to provide some relief to patients during their treatment. In 2014 the Foundation delivered 250 Sunshine Bags to area hospitals, and so far we have provided 90 more in 2015.

Akron General Medical Center McDowell Cancer Institute Art Therapy Program

Though the program has already been discussed, the Foundation wanted to share the creation of last year's incredible theme – Pieces of Peace. Each square was designed by a cancer patient or their family member using felt buttons, gems, patterned scrapbook paper and other materials. Patients and their families were asked to decorate the square to represent what brings them peace in the journey through cancer. In addition to Pieces of Peace, the supplies provided by the Foundation were put to good use by 239 participants in 2014.



2014 Summer Horse Camp

The Foundation's Summer Horse Camp Program continued in 2014 with the help of our great partners. The Summer Horse Camps will always be special to the Foundation because of Stephen's lifelong love of horses, and the camps allow us to help spread his passion for horses to children touched by cancer, while also providing an amazing therapeutic environment. In June, Buffalo Therapeutic Riding Center in Buffalo, New York, held its 5th annual Stephen's Fun Day, where children from two partnering hospitals, Carly's Club at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo, spent the day learning and interacting with horses. In July, Victory Gallop in Bath, Ohio held its 6th annual four day camp, where children were able to groom, ride, and interact with the horses. Between these two wonderful camps, over 50 children were able to have a memorable experience.

2014 Accomplishments



The Polar Express

Last December the Foundation took another trip to the Akron Northside Station for a ride on the Polar Express. Each year the award-winning book comes to life on this magical journey to the North Pole and back. The tickets, distributed by local hospitals, organizations, and families we previously assisted, allowed 22 families affected by cancer to have a wonderful experience. 100 people filled two train cars that were graciously provided by the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad. Elves read the story on the way to the North Pole to pick up Santa, and while Santa visited each car the elves led the passengers in Christmas Carols! It was a special day for all that were involved.

Summa Screens

The Foundation is very excited about our involvement with Summa Screens, a cancer screening program that provides free mammograms, breast ultrasounds, and core biopsies to low-income, uninsured, or underinsured women. Through the Foundation's financial involvement last year, 50 women in our local community that would have otherwise been unable to obtain this care received the medical procedures that they needed. We look forward to our continued partnership with this great program.

Testimonials

We can talk about all of the wonderful things that the Foundation does, but there's no better way to truly understand the impact we have then by hearing from those we help. Below are some recent testimonials by our grant recipients.

"Just wanted to take a moment to thank you for paying our rent this month. You have no idea how much this helped! I was able to catch up on all the other bills because I had the extra money. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I feel like I can breathe now and focus on getting my husband better. Many many blessings to you."

"First I would like to thank you for your help with Thanksgiving dinner. Everything was so good. This is such a big help to us. I can't thank you enough for your help and most of all your concern and compassion for me and my family. You are all special angels to us."



"Once again, your kindness and generosity is so very much appreciated. Thank you doesn't quite cover how incredibly grateful we are to you and your staff for helping us with our mortgage this past month. It is very comforting to us to know that we have such an amazing support system around us. Thank you!"

A big thank you to our referring organizations: Akron Children's Hospital, Akron General Medical Center, Cleveland Clinic, Coleman Behavioral Health, Elegant Essentials, Falls Cancer Club, Gabrail Cancer Center, Head Start Program, Info Line, Inc., Robinson Memorial Hospital, Stewart's Caring Place, Summa Health System, and University Hospital Seidman Cancer Center.

We would also like to thank the wonderful team at TrAk Athletics for organizing a fundraiser benefitting the Foundation.

YOU CAN HELP!

Want to help but not sure how?

Interested in volunteering?

Please contact

Monica@stephencomunale.org

or at 330-835-5985 to find out

how you can get involved!



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Stephen A. Comunale, Jr.
Family Cancer Foundation
P.O. Box 13805
Akron, Ohio 44334
330-835-5985

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For life

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A premier indoor cycling Fundraiser to benefit the
Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation

Saturday, October 31, 2015
9 am to 3 pm at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn

Contact (330) 835-5985 or <http://www.stephencomunale.org>
For complete registration details and to learn
more about this charitable organization.

Stephen A Comunale Jr.
Family Cancer Foundation

Do you have an updated mailing address, email address, or wish to be removed from our mailings? Please let us know!
330.835.5985 or info@stephencomunale.com