

Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation

Summer 2014



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.

One Smile at a Time

As we finally put this long winter and wet spring behind us and move into summer, the Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation is hitting its stride in what is shaping up to be a fantastic year. First and foremost, I would like to thank each and every one of you that has donated to the Foundation during our year-end appeal. With your help, we were able to close out a strong 2013, using that momentum to get 2014 off to a great start. Our amazing supporters have allowed us to continue our grant giving and complimentary programs to better help the lives of those with cancer, *one smile at a time*.

This year the Foundation has reached an amazing milestone, crossing the \$1,000,000 mark in grants given. Wow! When I read the past and present grant applications, I am so happy that we are able to do what we do. My son Stephen Jr. and wife Jane would be so proud of what the Foundation has accomplished and we could not have achieved this without the support of people like you.

I'm excited to report that our programs had a banner year as we continue to expand our reach touching more families, *one smile at a time*. Jane's Sunshine Fund is a program that also put a smile on children and their families, but it goes year round. 2013 saw the Sunshine Fund really take off, providing 130 small grants that provided big smiles for the recipients. Now that we're half way through 2014, we continue to successfully grow the program.

Last summer the Foundation, alongside S.A. Comunale Co., Inc., brought over 500 people to Canal Park for a great evening of baseball, camaraderie, and spreading the word about the Foundation. Another fabulous event that stands out in my mind was the Foundation's role in helping children and their families ride the famous Polar Express. Each holiday season, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad is transformed into the Polar Express, taking ticketholders on a trip to the North Pole, where the riders meet Santa Claus after traveling on the train with his elves. Last year the Foundation received 80 tickets from the organizers and distributed them to families with either a child or a parent battling cancer. We filled up an entire railroad car, and seeing the looks on everyone's faces as they experienced the journey showed just how special this event truly was.

Our goal for 2014 is to help more cancer patients and their families, with the hope of expanding the Foundation's reach beyond Summit County. We've crossed the \$1,000,000 barrier and we're not looking back. We need your help and support more than ever as we look to bring *one smile at a time* to more and more families.

One smile at a time!

Stephen A. Comunale, Chairman

2013 Accomplishments

Holiday Meals

Last year's holiday season marked the fifth year of the Foundation's Holiday Meals Program. We provided 100 complete holiday meals to local individuals and families who are battling cancer during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The families are referred by local hospitals, agencies, or other cancer related organizations with which we collaborate. With every Christmas meal we also provide a grocery gift card. Thank you so very much to each of our holiday meals sponsors, the Jacob and Clara Faber Foundation, Gardner Pie Company, Hilton Akron/Fairlawn, Ivan's Deli, Orlando Baking, RDA Management Company, and Sandridge Food Corporation, as well as the many volunteers who helped pack and deliver the meals. This was a group effort that helped make the holidays extra special for many families!



2013 Summer Horse Camp

Horses were a lifelong passion of Stephen's; he spent his summers riding and training in Buffalo, New York from an early age, and continued to give his time there even as an adult.



So it is a part of the Foundation's mission to share that passion with other children to help foster their growth and development. In partnership with Victory Gallop in Bath, Ohio, and Buffalo Therapeutic Riding Center in Buffalo,

New York, along with many volunteers, the Foundation was able to send 40 children to camp last summer. This summer on June 22, BTRC hosted Stephen's Fun Day where 40 children affected by cancer had the opportunity to spend an afternoon taking part in various activities designed for a day of fun and celebration of survivorship. Many thanks to BTRC, Carly's Club, and Guiding for Hope who make this event possible.

In addition, Victory Gallop, a nonprofit therapeutic riding



center for children who face behavioral or emotional challenges or life threatening illnesses, also host a summer camp for children affected by cancer. These amazing organizations are an integral part of bringing this wonderful therapeutic experience to children touched by cancer.

Sunshine Fund

This fund was established in 2012 in memory of Jane Comunale to help put smiles on faces through small grants. In 2013/2014, thus far we have distributed 130 grants for items such as movie theater passes, a camera for use on a family getaway for a terminally ill family member, prepared meals, zoo passes, birthday cakes, and flowers.

The Polar Express

On December 4, 2013 it was all aboard at the Akron Northside Station for an exciting ride on The Polar Express. Each



year at Christmas, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad is transformed into the Polar Express, transporting riders to the North Pole, where Santa Claus is there to greet them. Thanks to the generosity of the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad who

provided a charity car ride to the Foundation, 80 tickets were distributed among families affected by cancer who were referred by local hospitals, organizations, and other families we have previously assisted. It was a fun and magical experience to see the children's faces light up with joy and wonder as the train transported pajama-clad passengers on their journey. Thank you CVSR!

Aeros Night

Last summer the Foundation, alongside S.A. Comunale Co., Inc., brought over 500 people to an Akron Aeros game at Canal Park for a great evening of baseball and to bring awareness to the Foundation. The event allowed ticketholders entrance to the park two hours before opening, participation in on-field batting practice, a picnic with hot dogs, hamburgers, and other goodies, and to top the evening off, a fireworks show. Proceeds from donations as well as a 50/50 raffle, ticket sales, and selling Diamond Balls at the game went to the Foundation.

2013 Accomplishments



Sunshine Bags

A new program in 2013 inspired by Amanda Comunale, Sunshine Bags are tote bags containing various comfort items that are given to newly diagnosed cancer patients. To date, over 200 totes have been distributed between Akron General Medical Center McDowell Cancer Institute and Summa Health Systems.

Akron General Medical Center McDowell Cancer Institute Art Therapy Program

This is a new program open to patients and their families who've received or are receiving treatment at the McDowell Cancer Institute. Last year's theme "Wings of Hope" was a collaboration of various pieces of artwork that were integrated into one large butterfly that is now on display at the Institute. The Foundation provides this wonderful program with supplies so that patients and their families can use art therapy to decrease pain and anxiety, as well as allow them to express their feelings through art. This year's theme is "Peace Dove."



Spin for Life

Held last November at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn, our third "Spin for Life" event was a huge success. Under the guidance and motivation of cyclist Jackie Banyan, nearly 200 riders took part in one-hour sessions on station-



ary bikes in order to raise funds for the Foundation's various programs to assist cancer patients and their families. Thank you to our sponsors who helped make this event a success!

Individual Grant Giving

Our grants of financial assistance are offered twice a week every week of the year and often awarded within 24 hours of a completed application. They are provided to local families in our community who are battling cancer in order to assist with day-to-day financial burdens to ensure that they continue to have a home, food, gas, heat, clothing, childcare, transportation, and more. We try to ease the worry that can accompany paying for necessities such as these in the wake of a cancer diagnosis. To date we've distributed approximately 340 grants of financial assistance for 2013 and into 2014.

A big thank you to our referring organizations, Akron Children's Hospital, Akron General Medical Center, American Cancer Society, Cleveland Clinic, Coleman Behavioral Health, Elegant Essentials, Gabrail Cancer Center, Info Line, Inc., Stewart's Caring Place, Summa Health System and University Hospital Seidman Cancer Center.

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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