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Changes to the Foundation Staff

As the new year approaches, we are excited to share with you some changes to the Foundation’s Staff.

Marisa Hoffmann, who joined the Foundation in 2008, happily steps into the newly created position of Program Director. She will be overseeing the Individual Grant Giving, Summer Horse Camps, Back to School Programs, the Holiday Meals Programs and any future programs. This position will allow Marisa the flexibility to spend more time with her nine month old daughter, Abigail.

As Marisa assumes her new role with the Foundation, it is with great pleasure that we welcome Monica Stevens as the Foundation’s Associate Director. Monica has served on the Board since it’s inception in 2006 and has been actively involved in our day-to-day activities. She will do a great job helping us continue to move forward as she assumes her new role in January of 2013.

Please join us in welcoming Associate Director, Monica Stevens and Program Director, Marisa Hoffmann. With their leadership, the Foundation will surely continue to grow.

BOARD MEMBERS

Rennick Andreoli - *Chairman*

Amanda Comunale – *Vice Chrmn*

John A. Comunale - *President*

Steve A. Comunale

Julie Deane

Kevin H. Fink

Nicholas George

Ruthie R. George – *Secretary*

Dennis C. McCluskey, MD

– *Medical Advisor*

Dale Ruther - *Treasurer*

Susan B. Schoellkopf

Monica Stevens

STAFF

Marisa Hoffmann - *Program Director*

Monica Stevens - *Associate Director*

*Wishing You and Yours
a Happy and Safe Holiday!!*

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Stephen A. Comunale, Jr.
Family Cancer Foundation
P.O. Box 13805
Akron, Ohio 44333

Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation

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WINTER 2012

UNIQUE... THAT’S WHAT WE ARE!

Ruthie George - *Secretary*

The Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation is a one-of-a-kind organization for so many unique reasons. Our story began in 2006 out of personal sadness and tragedy and continues and evolves because of that kernel. However, what is planted in pain grows alleviating help for many in our community facing a cancer diagnosis.

When the Comunale family tragically lost their son Stephen, they and their friends searched for ways to honor his life, to raise awareness and to find a path to help others. Many ideas were explored. Should we partner with other organizations? Should we raise money for research or just what should or could we do? During theses brainstorming sessions, the family and board kept going back to the people and faces they encountered during the many months of finding the diagnosis, receiving treatment, going from doctor to doctor and hospital to hospital. In too many waiting rooms they met patients and family members struggling with missing work, getting transportation, filling up gas tanks, buying food, getting behind in house or utility payments...making difficult choices while trying to stay positive in light of devastating circumstances. While the Comunale family felt incredibly grateful to be able to deal with the challenges of cancer, without also having the stress of financial burdens, they met too many families who weren’t so fortunate. As we listened to theses stories, a picture began to emerge of a foundation that could help fill the gap.

After many meetings with the board, social workers, oncology doctors and facilitators a plan was carved out. We did our due diligence. Our mission was defined.

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.

To get going we hired a director and began to plan a fundraiser. After receiving donations, how were we going to distribute the money and help? How were we going to structure the

process? How much were we going to give away? How were we going to reach many people in need and let them know we were ready and willing to immediately help? We all agreed that folks in turmoil didn’t need to fill out lengthy forms and wait for answers. We wanted to vet the grant requests quickly and respond within 24-36 hours.

How does it work, you may be asking yourself! There are seven board members that comprise the Grant Committee. Twice a week Marisa, our Program Director, emails all grant requests. She has received the grants from our website, from social workers, from Jewell Cardwell’s Beacon Journal column, from Stewart’s Caring Place or friends of the foundation. She follows up by checking facts with patients and their families, referral people or, even, in some cases doctors. Once all the facts are verified the Grant Committee reads the synopsis of information, emails back and forth and votes as to how we can help. This year to date we have helped over 160 families granting over \$120,000.

Sometimes we do extra special things with Jane’s Sunshine Fund, a fund named in memory of Jane Comunale set up to go the extra mile by treating families with dinners, entertainment, holiday gifts, tickets to museums or aquarium and such. For instance, one family was driving an ailing child to Disney and we provided a gas card and food gift certificates. This year we have distributed 45 grants through this fund.

Out of the grant giving process, the need for other help came into focus. Kids who have some summer fun have hours of carefree happiness. We hold 2 sessions of horseback riding camp at Victory Gallop for 20 children. There they are taught to ride, groom horses, participate in making a craft and enjoy snacks and lunch! We heard about the lack of extra money when back to school time rolled around. Now we provide 65 backpacks jammed with school supplies and gift cards for shoes in our Back to School Program. For Thanksgiving and Christmas we will be gathering meals of turkeys, breads, vegetables, stuffing, deserts and all the fixings and delivering 50 “feasts” to families we have helped The foundation is about to launch a new project to provide Chemo Day Packages to patients at their

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.

The Foundation now lives in memory of both Amy and Stephen.

Read more about these wonderful people at:
www.stephencomunale.org

UNIQUE... THAT’S WHAT WE ARE! (Continued from Page 1)

treatment appointments. We continue to examine the gaps and respond in innovative and helpful ways.

Yesterday, I received a call with happy news that your Foundation had gotten my application and wanted to help. I could hardly believe what I was hearing. And, when I was told all the ways you would help, I was just amazed. For November, our home payment and water bill would be paid. I would receive a gift card for prescriptions and even all the food for our Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. Wow! I really don’t know where to begin to thank you. To help us in this manner will go such a long way for us in dealing with so many issues. I just want you to know how grateful I am and how very much it is appreciated. The Comunale Foundation is a true blessing. Thank you!
~ 2012 grant recipient

We strive to be good stewards of your donations. Our overhead is minimal...only ten cents on the dollar. After our successful

Event, Vegas Nights, we have over \$250,000 to put toward our endowment and grants. With your help we pledge to continue to offer assistance and to invest in our community with our bi-weekly grant giving, programs for kids, meals for families... addressing the everyday needs of families facing cancer. Partnerships with all the major hospitals in the area and other organizations, like Stewart’s Caring Place, will help assure our collective success.

Please contact us if you have any suggestions or questions. We are constantly trying to improve. We are grateful for your support and hope you will continue to keep us in mind when you plan your yearend contributions. Your donations reflect the original impulse the Comunale family felt...to do whatever they could to alleviate stress in the lives of fellow patients and families battling cancer. Help the Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation offer an immediate leg up during a critical time!

2012 Foundation Programs

Individual Grant Giving

Grants offered twice a week every week of the year! As of December 1, 2012, 180 grants of financial assistance have been provided to local individuals and families in our community who are battling cancer. This program provides day-to-day financial assistance to ensure families continue to have a roof over their head, heat in their home, food on their table, gas in their car, clothes on their back, childcare for children and more. Paying for necessities such as these can sometimes become difficult when faced with a cancer diagnosis.

2012 Summer Horse Camp for Kids Touched By Cancer

In partnership with Victory Gallop, Buffalo Therapeutic Riding Center and many wonderful volunteers, the Foundation was able to send 30 children to horse camp this summer. Horses were a passion of Stephen’s so it is now part of the Foundation’s mission to share that same love of horses with many other children to help foster their growth and development.



2012 Back-to-School with Confidence Program

This past August 65 local children touched by cancer received a new backpack filled with school supplies and a gift card to get a new pair of school shoes. We were able to assist 18 more children than last year and we hope to increase the number of children that we help in 2013.



Holiday Meals Program

This holiday season marks the fourth year of the Foundation’s Holiday Meals Program. We’re providing 100 complete holiday meals to local individuals and families who are battling cancer during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays (50 meals for each holiday). The families are identified by our Foundation, local hospitals, or other cancer related organizations with which we collaborate. With every Christmas meal we also are providing wrapped Christmas gifts for any children that live in

the home. The Christmas gifts were hand selected and donated for each and every child by community members and local business Dental Ceramics. Thank you so very much to each of our holiday meals sponsors and to all volunteers who packed meals, delivered meals or purchased and wrapped Christmas gifts! This was a group effort that made so many Thanksgivings and Christmases extra special.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2012 HOLIDAY MEALS PROGRAM SPONSORS!



Jacob and Clara Faber Foundation

Jane’s Sunshine Fund

This fund was established in 2012 in memory of Jane Comunale to help put smiles on faces through extra grants. As an example, we helped parents throw a birthday party for their daughter, we purchased an Xbox for a terminally ill child and we sent a family to the Cleveland Aquarium through this fund. As of December 1st the Foundation provided 53 grants through Jane’s Sunshine Fund.



THE EVENT Flash Mob

THE EVENT, Vegas Nights – A Great Success! THANK YOU!

THE EVENT, Vegas Nights, took place Saturday, October 6 and everything about it was truly magnificent. We have so many to thank for that. The tent was decorated to the nines with the help of Eileen Benson and many talented vendors, the food by Beau’s Grille was scrumptious, the performance by The Scintas was rockin’ and most importantly, the support from the community was astounding. We also can’t go without mentioning the kids from ETC Dance, along with the handful of guests who were in on the secret, really wowed as they performed a Flash Mob dance to the song Dynamite prior to the live auction.



We are extremely happy to share that this year’s event had over 700 guests in attendance and net over \$250,000 to help sustain and grow the Foundation. It was a record breaking evening that will allow the Foundation to help many more individuals and families who are going through treatment for cancer in our community. We would like to extend a special thank you to each and every person who played a part in making THE EVENT the successful night that it was. We could not have done this without each and every one of you.



Mike Swiatkowski

The Foundation is specially grateful to all of THE EVENT sponsors.
Please see the special insert included with this newsletter for a complete list of sponsors.

2012 Community Events Supporting
The Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation

Thank you to all sponsors and volunteers who organized, participated in and/or donated proceeds in the following 2012 Foundation Community Events!

- Thirty One Fundraiser** by Megan Beck and Rachel Paulus, March 31st
- Lemonade Day** recipients by Seton Catholic School
- Montrose Chick-fil-A**, June 28th
- Akron Aeros ~ Italian Heritage Night**, July 14th
- PGA Tour’s Bridgestone Invitational ~ Tickets Fore Charity**, August 1st – 5th
- Akron Aeros ~ Foundation Night** at the Aeros Game, August 18th
- Savoir ~ Faire ~ Sweetest Day Flowers** the entire month of October
- J. McLaughlin ~ Grand Opening** in Hudson, OH, December 7th
- Holiday Boutique** by Christine Fiocca and Lindsay Jean Marie, December 12th from 12 noon – 6 p.m. at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn



OUR MISSION

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The Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation is a 501c3 organization.

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