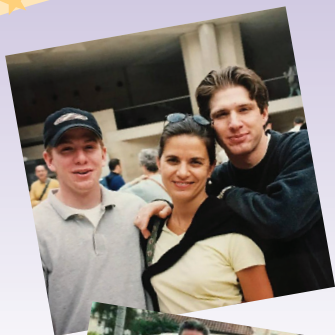


# The Ray

FALL 2019

## Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation



### DEAR FRIENDS,

The Foundation is firing on all cylinders in 2019. Our mission, to help cancer patients and their families, is working. So far this year, we have given out a record number of grants to help people in our community. We are excited to be involved with some organizations that are holding fundraisers and donating part of their proceeds to our cause. By getting the word out and continuing to grow, we can help so many more people.

Our mission is not to find a cure for cancer. A lot of other people are doing that. Ours is to relieve families of everyday financial burdens – mortgage, rent, utilities, groceries, daycare, etc -- and it's working. There are so many more people that we can help, and that is our goal.

Sincerely,

*Steve*

### ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

In February 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 member, hospitals and other organizations, our efforts empower cancer patients while improving their quality of life.

### OUR IMPACT



18,000 people have received assistance since 2006.



8,000 Sunshine bags distributed to oncology centers in local hospitals since 2006.

\$2.3 Million given in assistance since 2006.



## NEW ROUND OF GRANTS ANNOUNCED

The Foundation recently announced a new round of grants to help families faced with financial difficulties as a result of cancer. With grants of financial assistance and support programs, the Comunale Foundation assisted over 4,000 individuals in the Akron area in 2018 and awarded over \$350,000 to cancer patients in need.

After 13 years and \$2 million in assistance, the Foundation supports families and individuals needing fast relief to cover rent, mortgages, groceries, utilities, child care, transportation and more. In 2019, the Foundation will distribute \$375,000, mainly to help families keep up with these day-to-day expenses while coping with cancer:

- **Grants of Financial Assistance:** \$280,000 to provide assistance with living expenses for individuals being treated for cancer in Summit and Medina County
- **Jane's Sunshine Fund:** \$22,000 for random acts of kindness for cancer patients
- **Sunshine Bags:** \$20,000 for reusable totes containing comfort items distributed to patients in the hospital undergoing chemotherapy and radiation

- **Art Therapy:** \$4,000 to the Art Therapy Fund at McDowell Cancer Institute Cleveland Clinic/Akron General Medical Center for Projects and Supplies
- **Holiday Meals:** \$10,000 for meals at Thanksgiving and December holidays to area families touched by cancer
- **Project Ed Bear Take 'Me' Home Bookshelf:** \$3,500 toward new books distributed in Oncology Units in partnership with Project Ed Bear, Akron Children's Hospital and UH Rainbow Babies
- **Summa Screens:** \$12,000 for free diagnostic mammograms for women who qualify at Summa Health
- **Summer Camp:** \$12,000 to continue several partnerships providing horse camp experiences for children whose lives are touched by cancer. Programs included are Victory Gallop, Buffalo Therapeutic Riding Center and Stewart's Caring Place
- **Stewart's Caring Place Food Pantry:** \$11,500 will help supply food for families in need

*If you would like to make a contribution to support any of these areas, please visit our website. Thank you.*



## FEATURED FOUNDATION SUPPORTER: SA COMUNALE COMPANY

The SA Comunale Company is a generous supporter of the Foundation. They host several fundraisers and employees volunteer many hours. Amy Hendricks, HR Manager, said "The Foundation is at the heart of many of our people. We would do anything for the Foundation."

And they do. The company hosts company breakfasts and bake sales. Amy said the employees are very generous. "If someone purchases an item for \$5, they will give a \$20 and say keep the change." She also said employees enjoy volunteering their time for The Event, which is the community-wide fundraiser for the foundation.

Amy said an important part of the dedication is because employees see the Foundation help family, neighbors and friends. "The Foundation is an amazing cause...it really helps people that our employees know." Amy added that the Foundation recently assisted with her husband's best friend. "The Foundation did so many little things to help the family and it means so much."



### Thank You Foundation Supporters:

- Air Enterprises
- The employees of S. A. Comunale Co.
- Mark Comunale Birthday Celebration
- Dewey's Pizza
- DJ Naeno
- Four Leaf Clover Run, Ed Sutter
- Lone Star Fraternity, The University of Akron
- Network for Good
- Shulan's Jewelers
- TrAk Athletics





## MEET AMBER GANO, ATR-BC, PC ART THERAPIST AT CLEVELAND CLINIC

Since Amber was a teenager, she had a dream of being an Art Therapist and today she brings her kindness, caring, understanding and of course art to the cancer patients at all locations of the Cleveland Clinic in the Akron area.

Amber leads patients in one main group art project each year and daily individual projects. This year the group project is entitled "Elephant in the Room".

In between work on the annual main project, patients can work on survivor t-shirts, paint, collage, and adult coloring book projects. During the holidays, they create Halloween pumpkins and Christmas goodie bags. The program hosts an annual art show where patient's art projects and painting are displayed. The Comunale Foundation financially supports the Art Therapy programs by providing the materials for the large group projects, framing of the main project as well as the individual supplies. The Art Therapy Program also raises money during a bake sale in October. Amber said local bakeries donate items for the sale and all proceeds go toward art supplies for the program.

So, how does art therapy and cancer treatments work? Amber often sits chair-side during patient treatments. It is

a nice distraction to the long and difficult days of treatment, when patients can "think about" something other than being ill. "Patients talk about the disease with all the doctors and by the time they are with me, it is nice to know they don't have to talk about the disease. They can pass the time talking and thinking about something else," Amber said.

"The first day in the centers are very emotional for patients. They are bombarded with information about the illness, medications and treatments. I am here to support them with an opportunity to get their minds off the illness, work with their hands and get a new mindset." Amber said, adding caregivers and

family are welcome to participate too – understanding that this is a difficult time for them as well.

She studied Art Therapy and received her undergraduate degree at Kent State, a Fine Arts Degree with a minor in psychology at Akron University and a master's degree at Ursuline College.



*Amber has led the Art Therapy Program at the McDowell Cancer Center since 2013.*



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***The Comunale Foundation is pleased to feature Amber and would like to thank her for her dedication to the many cancer patients that benefit from her service. If you would like more information regarding Art Therapy at Cleveland Clinic, please contact Monica Stevens.***



**HELP IS A  
PHONE CALL AWAY  
330-835-5985**



**Stephen A. Comunale, Jr.  
Family Cancer Foundation**

P.O. Box 13805 • Akron, OH 44334

*Please enjoy this edition  
of The Ray*

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**Working together to help those battling cancer.  
Thank you to our referring organizations:**

**Akron Children's Hospital**

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**Elegant Essentials**

**Falls Cancer Club**

**Gabrail Cancer Center**

**Info Line, Inc.**

**Stewart's Caring Place**

**Summa Health**

**University Hospital Seidman  
Cancer Center**

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 **330-835-5985**

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Family Cancer Foundation**

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