

The Ray

Summer 2024



The **Comunale Cancer Foundation** Newsletter

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on our journey, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible support we've received since our inception. Your generosity has enabled us to make a significant impact, helping countless individuals in need in our community.

This year, we are excited to announce the expansion of our outreach by extending our services into neighboring Stark County. We aim to touch even more lives and bring hope to those that need it the most. This ambitious goal is only possible with your continued support.

In light of our non-event fundraiser year, we are reaching out to you with an earnest appeal for donations. Your contributions are crucial in sustaining our programs and ensuring that we can continue our mission of making a difference. Every donation, no matter the size, helps us move closer to our vision of a better world for cancer patients and their families.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Together, we can achieve remarkable things.

With heartfelt thanks,

Steve Comunale

About the Foundation

The Stephen A. Comunale, Jr. Family Cancer Foundation was founded in 2006 by friends and family to honor the memory of Stephen Comunale, Jr. who lost his courageous battle against cancer. The Foundation continues strongly in its mission after experiencing further loss of Stephen's Aunt Amy Comunale Klein, and his mother Jane Comunale.

Our Mission

The Foundation is a nonprofit 501c3 organization which endows outreach efforts to provide comfort to cancer patients in order to ease the burden of financial stress and allow them to focus on their journey. The Foundation partners with area hospitals and cancer organizations to offer supportive programming to help improve the quality of life for those facing a cancer diagnosis.

\$417,000
in Total 2023
Community Impact

"When the Comunale Foundation paid a month's worth of rent and utilities... it was such a weight off my shoulders."

— Deidra

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COMUNALE
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Broadway's Akron Debut: The Event 2023

Under a cool September sky Akron welcomed "The Midtown Men" — cast of the original Jersey Boys, amongst 800 other close family and friends. The Event, a biennial celebration, supports the Foundation's grant giving and partner programming through sponsorships, ticket sales, and a live auction. The 2023 Event, Broadway Nights, lived up to its reputation. Guests were greeted by golden stilt walkers and a dramatic and daring aerial performer. Cocktails, mingling, and photo op moments lead to gourmet dinner provided by none other than Beau's Grille. The evening was topped off with a showstopping performance by The Midtown Men and late night bites including from Foundation partner, Ed Sutter with Eddie's Cheesesteaks. Guests danced alongside gold mirrored performers to "Let's Hang On," "The Tears of a Clown," "Working My Way Back to You," many other Motown favorites.



The Event would not be a success were it not for the incredibly generous premier sponsors Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc.; RDA Management/Fairlawn Associates LLC; Steve Comunale; Underwood Fire Equipment Inc.; Beacon Marshall Companies; Wheatland Tube Company; and Sarah Rayburn.

Join us at The Event 2025, Saturday September 27th at the home of Founder and Chairman, Steve Comunale.



New Wig Salon Opens Doors

In June of this year, Cleveland Clinic Akron General opened a long awaited wig boutique. The boutique is volunteer run and offers patients a free wig (available in a variety of textures, cuts, and colors), a hat, and other accessories.

Wigs are more than just a cosmetic solution to hair loss due to treatment. They can be a powerful tool in restoring self-esteem and promoting mental health during treatment. The sense of normalcy it can bring to a patient, even for just a few hours a day, can help patients better navigate the emotional toll of their journey.

"We are fortunate to have other wig options available to our patients in Summit County but not everyone has transportation, or they don't feel well enough to go to yet another appointment. This was our way of making it as convenient and accessible as possible."

— **Dena Hunt**
Resource Counselor/Social Worker
Cleveland Clinic Akron General

Special Thanks to the
Individuals and Groups
Who Hosted Fundraisers
Throughout 2023

Air Enterprises

Arco

**Big Mike #Mackostrong
Golf Outing**

Employees of S.A. Comunale

Four Leaf Clover Run, Ed Sutter

Rockin BTown Fightin' Cancer

Shulan's Fairlawn Jewelers

Students of the King CLC

Student Council

Summit County Sheriff's Office

Support Expands into Stark County

Since the Foundation's inception, financial grants and partner programming has been focused within Summit County. Staying close to the Foundation's roots has been pivotal to ensure neighbors in their own backyard receive the most comprehensive support.

"The need for financial support in the cancer community continues to grow and grow each year. As the Foundation has strengthened in partnerships, and the need was seen, we had the capacity to say yes to expand our geographic footprint," shared Executive Director, Monica Stevens.

After 18 years of targeted and localized support, the Comunale Family Foundation has expanded into Stark County by partnering with social workers within Cleveland Clinic Mercy Health and Aultman hospital systems.

"Patients are always so grateful for the help and support and feel overwhelmed to know that there is such a kind caring organization fighting for them. I am thrilled that the Foundation has expanded to Stark County as they will be able to help so many more patients during this very crucial stressful time."

— Rachel Elek
Oncology Social Worker
Aultman Health System



2023

By the Numbers

\$295,000

in Direct Financial Assistance
to **750** Individuals

\$23,000

in Sunshine
Fund Grants to **200** Individuals

660 Sunshine Bags



1,300 Art Therapy Patients



710 Grocery & Gas Gift Cards

120 Summa Screens

40 Back to School Packs

240 Wigs & Wig Care Kits



1,000 Food Pantry Bags



250 Holiday Treat Bags

435 Integrative Therapies

455 Holiday Meals



40 Brightness Boxes

200 Chemo Snack Bags

50 Summit Metro Bus Passes

40 Taste of Health Meal Kits



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please join us and help us celebrate

THE EVENT

09.27.25

mark your calendars and look for more information to come on this wonderful event.

for more information about our foundation, call 234.706.2052 or visit stephencomunale.org