

SUCCESS STORY

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Cancer Coalition of South Georgia hosts inaugural HOPE Cancer Survivorship Retreat

SUMMARY

The Georgia Department of Public Health Commissioned the Cancer Coalition of South Georgia to implement a regional project responsive to the needs of area cancer survivors. After reviewing a compilation of data collected over the past two years, it was determined that area cancer survivors expressed a growing interest in learning more about complementary therapies. Utilizing this data, organization staff planned and implemented the inaugural Heal.Overcome.Persevere.Educate (HOPE) Cancer Survivorship Retreat. This daylong retreat introduced cancer survivors to complementary techniques such as yoga, art therapy, and health eating.



GET INVOLVED

Survivors:

Get connected to the Cancer Coalition. Add your name to the survivorship database to stay up to date with projects and programs designed to benefit you.

Healthcare Providers:

Learn the concerns of survivors as reflected in the needs assessment data collected. Join the conversation as we search for solutions to improve quality of life for survivors.

Community Members:

Volunteer for future events. Visit www.sgacancer.org to get connected.

Feature Picture: HOPE retreat participants relaxing during the yoga breakout session

Pictured below: HOPE retreat volunteers

CHALLENGE

The number of cancer survivors in Georgia has increased in recent years. Advances in technology, treatment, and early detection are a few factors responsible for this increase. Survivors face unique circumstances and day to day challenges. In order to best serve the growing population, it is imperative to respond to needs as articulated by this group.





HOPE Retreat participants show off paintings created during the art therapy breakout session.

SOLUTION

During the 2016 fiscal year, a variety of cancer survivors were called upon to complete surveys assessing current knowledge, utilization, and openness to complementary therapies. Survey results reflected heightened interest in a variety of complementary techniques.

The HOPE Survivorship Retreat is the Cancer Coalition's response to the plea from area survivors. Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods consistently reflected an interest in complementary medicine and increased social interaction fellow survivors.

RESULTS

Twenty-four cancer survivors participated in the HOPE Cancer Survivorship Retreat held June 4, 2016. This daylong program included breakout sessions which allow participants to socialize and interact with Cancer Coalition staff and fellow survivors. Participants were provided resource guides and other useful information to help them better cope with their disease and manage side effects of treatment. Participants were also introduced to various complementary therapy techniques such as yoga, art therapy, and more.



Pictured are 2016 HOPE Retreat participants after completing art therapy breakout session.

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FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The positive feedback received from participating survivors and partners has encouraged continued work to offer quality survivorship programs. It is our hope that the strategies below can be addressed in future work:

- Disseminate results of cumulative survivorship efforts (2014-2016) to stakeholders such as healthcare providers, public health officials, survivors, and policymakers
- Use organization website and social media as platform for sharing accurate timely information regarding topics in cancer survivorship
- Offer HOPE Retreat annually to area cancer survivors
- Share resource list for cancer survivors on organization website
- Conduct ongoing data collection, assessment, and analysis to understand regional survivorship issues.