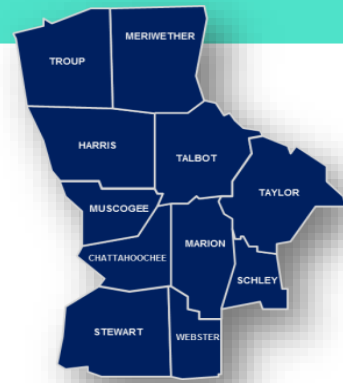


# WEST CENTRAL GEORGIA CANCER COALITION CANCER SURVIVORSHIP PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES



## SUMMARY

Through forged partnerships, West Central Georgia Cancer Coalition and West Georgia Health Oncology Services (WGH Oncology Services) offered participants who are living through, living with, and living beyond cancer a complementary set of strategies targeting symptoms associated with the disease. The intuitively designed program entitled *Cancer Survivorship Program* provided cancer patients, cancer survivors, caregivers, and family members with a safe place for healing as well as resources to help cope with the treatment and recovery process, as they continue their journey toward achieving better health and wellness. The program included aspects of mind, body, and soul techniques that allowed program participants an opportunity to build self-esteem through creative expression, develop cohesive support relationships, and become nutritionally versed.



Participants take part in Art therapy session

## CHALLENGE

Research has shown that there has been considerable progress toward reducing cancer incidence and mortality in the United States. Reports show that the number of cancer survivors continues to increase due to increased knowledge and awareness of the disease, improved treatment options, and discovering how to self-manage the condition. However, the constant challenge is meeting the felt needs of the vulnerable, uninsured/underinsured, and medically underserved populations in the West Central Georgia service area and beyond. Barriers to care hinders the population from receiving access to quality healthcare services that inevitably permits achieving quality of life. Access and availability of healthcare services are vital components to sustain life. However, access and availability shortages in many parts of the United States and the world has hindered the progression of many populations. Therefore, the attainment of optimal health for all has grown to become a public health concern. If access and availability of healthcare services aren't addressed among the at-risk population, it can be hypothesized that there will be a decrease in the number of individuals managing their health properly (i.e. nutrition and routine physical examinations). This will subsequently lead to an increased rate of mortality and immobility due to cancer and/or from the development of other health-related conditions. During the course of implementation, there were no reported challenges that hindered the success of the program.

*This class has been the one point in my life that has allowed me to find complete peace for just a few minutes a week. I move easier, I live easier, and I love easier because of it. To be in a place of complete love and acceptance with absolutely no judgement is a gift from God and I thank him for brining me and these wonderful people into my life.*

*- Program Participant*

## SOLUTION

Over the course of eight (8) months, WCGCC in collaboration with WGH Oncology Services and various institutions provided cancer patients, cancer survivors, caregivers, and family members with three complementary therapy programs to assist in reducing the burden of cancer (i.e. combat stress, reduce side effects of treatment, express and release emotions). Trained instructors assisted program participants in healing emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually through a series of *Curvy Yoga* and *Art therapy* sessions. These sessions helped to improve strength/mobility, self-efficacy, and modes of creative expression (i.e. form and crafts) among participants. In



Live, Laugh, Learn – A Nutrition Experience

addition to the aforementioned therapies, WGH Oncology Services implemented a new strategy that focused on healthy nutrition. The monthly series was entitled *Live, Laugh, Learn – A Nutrition Experience*. Registered Dietitians conducted “lunch and learn” sessions demonstrating how to manage one’s health through proper nutrition as well as demonstrating how to prepare healthy meals at home. By offering these programs, those on the road to recovery will have the ease of access to quality healthcare resources that helps individuals to take control over their disease/condition and not let the disease/condition take control of them.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### National Cancer Survivors Day

The first Sunday in June was recognized as National Cancer Survivors Day. West Central Georgia Cancer Coalition and partners celebrated the culmination of the *Cancer Survivorship Program* on June 7, 2015 with speakers, stories, demonstrations, and an exhibit of art projects created by program participants. The event (“Hawaiian Luau”) which took place at Camp Viola had 114 participants and 47 cancer survivors in attendance.

### Herb Garden

Cancer patients and cancer survivors constructed an herb garden on the grounds of Enoch Callaway Cancer Clinic.



## RESULTS

Complementary therapies offered participants access to available health-related services in an environment that allowed individuals to develop mental and physical support networks, release stress, and gain skills to maintain and improve overall health.

- 100% of surveyed respondents reported an increase in knowledge from information provided during the delivery of complementary therapies.
- Survey respondents noted that skills and techniques gained during sessions enhanced their ability to restore, maintain, and/or sustain overall health.
- Majority (73%) of surveyed respondents noted that participating in one or more of the therapy sessions has improved their access to health and/or support services.

## FUTURE DIRECTION

Future efforts will focus on securing additional funding resources as well as increase local and state partnerships to help sustain complementary therapies long-term. The additional resources will aide in increasing cancer survivorship activities in the West Central Georgia service area and throughout the state of Georgia.



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