



GILDA GRAM

A free, non-profit support community for anyone touched by cancer.

For one member, G is definitely for “gratitude.”

One of the first things Betsey Pankewycz did after being diagnosed with colon cancer in 2005 was to read everything she could get her hands on, which included Gilda Radner’s book, “It’s Always Something.” When she finished the book, Betsey wanted to find a support group locally, and her doctors at Roswell Park Cancer Institute referred her to Gilda’s Club.

“I attended a new member meeting and knew right away this was for me,” says Betsey. “I think it’s phenomenal that Gilda’s Club exists at all here in Buffalo, and that those people who don’t have cancer seem to care so much about those of us who do and want to help in so many ways. Those moments of support are incredibly important, because nobody survives cancer alone.”

In addition to the regular Wednesday wellness group meetings and the occasional potluck dinner or yoga class, Betsey decided to take part in *Snapshot of Survival*. This national art contest was conducted by Gilda’s Club Worldwide and sponsored by sanofi-aventis, and was created for those affected by colorectal cancer to illustrate and visualize the emotions related to their cancer experience. Betsey created her piece, “G is for Gratitude,” a collage of photos showing her with family members, friends and fellow Gilda’s Club members in about three weeks, between rounds seven and eight of chemotherapy. “I wanted to illustrate my journey over these two years,” says Betsey. “And I wanted to show my gratitude for being given a new life.”

Expression through art is thought to improve overall health and is considered an important part of the healing process. A study published in the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* found that art therapy reduces a broad spectrum of symptoms related to pain and anxiety in cancer patients, and that’s one of the main reasons Gilda’s Club Worldwide has participated in this contest for the past two years.

Betsey’s work was recently rewarded with first place honors (second and third place winners came from Gilda’s Club Rochester) in the national *Snapshot of Survival* contest at a special celebration in the lobby of Roswell Park, where the works of art were on display for several weeks before heading for Florida and Seattle.

Our congratulations to Betsey!



Mary Beth Karr, Gilda’s Club WNY executive director (left), chats with Betsey Pankewycz, Gilda’s Club WNY member, at the *Snapshot* reception at Roswell Park.

In April, Gilda’s Club WNY hosted the annual Gilda’s Club national conference, at which some of our local members were asked to share their personal reflections on being a member.

We asked one of those speakers, Lu Woodward – who joined Gilda’s Club with her husband, Scott, who has cancer – to speak at our *Celebration of Life Luncheon* in May. Here is what Lu had to say:

“Imagine you are driving and, suddenly, your car is enveloped in dense fog. You can see nothing. You are afraid to slow down because someone might crash into you. You grip the steering wheel with white knuckles and you begin to sweat. You don’t know what to do because nothing like this has ever happened to you. You are alone and afraid. Suddenly, ahead of you, tail lights from another car appear. You immediately relax. You are not in this alone. There is someone with you in the same predicament and, together, you will make it through. That is what it’s like to be a member of Gilda’s Club.”

What a wonderful way to explain how Gilda’s Club members benefit from each other’s experiences and support. We understand our members are the real cancer experts. They are our greatest asset.

There is no charge for Gilda’s Club membership. Our costs, therefore, must be covered by fundraising. We hope you will consider making a donation. Better yet, I invite you to attend our fundraising breakfast on October 25th. Call the clubhouse for more details.

On behalf of the board of directors and our wonderful staff, I would like to thank everyone for your continued friendship and support. Gilda’s Club would not be here without you.

Jock Mitchell
Chair, Board of Directors
Gilda’s Club WNY



“We were impressed and wanted to help out.”

When a colleague was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, a group of M&T Bank employees decided to honor her by focusing their volunteer efforts into an organization that benefits people with cancer. M&T Vice President, Lou Maiolo, who heads up the volunteer group, had driven by the Gilda’s clubhouse many times, and placed a call to “see what it was all about.”

After learning more about the Gilda’s mission and visiting the clubhouse, Lou and his group very much liked what they saw and decided to get involved.

“Gilda’s Club really does provide valuable support to its members,” says Lou. “They provide an outlet for people living with cancer, and they definitely prove there is hope – and plenty of reasons to smile! We are excited to be a part of it by volunteering.”

Lou and his group, which includes Sue Gangi, Lori Noblett, Jeanne Fisher and Jackie Thompson, have all been through volunteer training at Gilda’s Club, and all say they really enjoy helping out such a great organization.

“We’ve done everything from sponsoring potluck dinners to cleaning the basement, washing windows, labeling paint cans and organizing the storage room,” says Lou. “When we see members smiling and laughing at our potluck dinners or the staff expresses its gratefulness, it makes it all worthwhile. It’s a great feeling to help, and we’ll do anything we can for Gilda’s Club!”



Susan Lichtblau, Gilda’s Club WNY program director (far left), hoists the hot sauce in honor of M&T volunteers (left to right) Lori Noblett, Jeanne Fisher, Lou Maiolo, Jackie Thompson and Sue Gangi at the June potluck dinner at the clubhouse.

While Lou’s group donates time and money on their own, M&T Bank has also provided cash and in-kind donations to Gilda’s Club for several years.

Currently, M&T is a major sponsor of our Coin Box Project.

If you are interested in learning more about volunteering at Gilda’s Club, please call Susan Lichtblau at 332.5900, ext. 201.

Journaling through cancer.

Putting words to paper can be a powerful tool when facing the challenges of cancer. Several Gilda’s Club members have discovered how writing can be helpful in improving communication with family and medical staff, reducing anxiety and gaining insight by their participation in *Journaling Through Cancer*, a six-week group workshop sponsored by Roche Pharmaceuticals. Using the self-guided journal entitled, “My Healing Companion,” participants have discovered how writing can help improve communication with family and medical staff, reduce anxiety and provide insight.

“I found journaling to be liberating and positive,” says one participant who wished to remain anonymous. “It was a safe haven in which to express my feelings and not feel judged, criticized or analyzed. Journaling helped me express myself more clearly, accept my emotions and experience an inner peace.”

Our thanks to Roche for bringing this insightful program to Gilda’s Club WNY.



First place costume recipient, Dan (center), poses with fellow penguins Diamond (left) and Isabel. Diamond’s creative creature also won a prize.

The Penguins went marching...in July!

Did you know the penguin is one of the few birds that cannot fly? Or that the Emperor penguin is the largest penguin species? Well, if you’d attended the Penguin Night potluck supper at Gilda’s Club WNY on July 19, you would have learned several fascinating facts about these cute little creatures and enjoyed a fun evening! Penguin Night included penguin coloring sheets, penguin trivia quizzes, a penguin egg-carrying contest and penguin costume prize awards. Penguin movies *March of the Penguins* and *Happy Feet* were also screened. To top off the night, members were treated to an ice cream sundae bar. Our thanks to our members and volunteers who made this event so enjoyable for adults and kids alike.

Purchase a lasting tribute to someone special.

Have you, your family or your company ordered your Gilda’s Garden brick yet? If not, be sure to place your order today, as Galle Memorial will be doing another engraving soon. Prices range from \$250 for a 6” x 9” Heritage Brick Blend Paver to \$1,000 for a 12” x 12” Rose Pink Granite Brick to \$2,500 for a Bluestone Stepping Stone. What a wonderful way to acknowledge someone you care about! For more information, contact Robin Vail at 332.5900, ext. 207.

As we remember them...

"It is not the length of a life, but the impact of a life which, in the end, is the most important thing." Viktor Frankl, MD

On Thursday, June 28, members, staff, volunteers and friends of Gilda's Club gathered at the clubhouse for a special evening to pay tribute to those members who have died during the past year. Candles were lit as special poems and prayers were recited, followed by a reception. We thank those who helped make this evening very special, especially the afternoon wellness group, whose inspiring poem honored those from their group who died.

Celebrate Life. Cultivate Memories.

"Friends forever."

"Happy birthday."

"In celebration of."

Gilda's Garden has come to mean different things to different people. It's a place to sit and reflect, to enjoy the wonders of nature and to remember friends and family. Our team of dedicated volunteers has worked hard to keep Gilda's Garden blooming and growing, and their efforts have certainly paid off this summer (so much so that we were able to participate in this year's Garden Walk Buffalo!). From trees and shrubs to perennials and annuals, our garden is colorful and relaxing and, if you take a moment to sit and relax in the garden, you just might see a Monarch butterfly or a hummingbird also enjoying this serene spot. Have you seen our recently-planted garden around our sign at the corner of Delaware and North Ferry? Be sure to stop by and visit the garden, and make sure you check out the engraved bricks and pavers purchased to remember or acknowledge loved ones.



Visitors to Gilda's Garden can enjoy the riot of color and scents from the vantage point of the granite bench that is dedicated to our co-founders.

I went to a garden party...

July 11 turned out to be a perfect day to reminisce with old friends and meet new ones at a garden party in Gilda's Garden. Gilda's Club WNY held the event to honor and thank those who have supported the garden through the purchase of engraved bricks and stones. Some attendees were seeing their bricks for the first time, and were truly impressed with the beauty of the garden, which overlooks Delaware Avenue. Our thanks to those who have purchased bricks and stones to date. For information on purchasing Gilda's Garden bricks, see the ad in this newsletter or call Robin Vail at Gilda's Club at 332.5900, ext. 207.



Christy Castner (right), Gilda's Club WNY program coordinator, and volunteer Nancy Wilcox both enjoyed the garden party festivities.

Save The Dates!

Join us for our festive gingerbread competition and auction as well as a holiday gift sale by local artists. All events will be held at the Gilda's Clubhouse and the proceeds will benefit Gilda's Club WNY.

Friday, November 30
Cocktail Party and Preview Sale

Saturday, December 1
Sunday, December 2
Holiday Gift Sale and Gingerbread House Auction (open to the public)

For more information about the gingerbread competition, sponsorships and volunteers, contact Gilda's Club, 332.5900.

We love our volunteers!

Lectures, social events and classes. Delicious potluck dinners. A leisurely stroll through Gilda's Garden. A friendly voice when you call the clubhouse. Noogie Nights.

We at Gilda's Club WNY are so grateful for the many people who volunteer their time, energy and talents to help keep our club running and beneficial to our members. And that's why we held our second annual Volunteer Recognition Event at the clubhouse on May 24. We just wanted to say, "Thanks so much for all you do – we very much appreciate you!" Special thanks to Shetece Newell for the fabulous food she catered for this event! And if you are interested in becoming a Gilda's Club volunteer – no matter how little or how much time you can donate – we'd love to hear from you! Please call Susan Lichtblau at 332.5900, ext. 201. Maybe next year we'll be honoring you!

"I have been a volunteer for a year now and I am thrilled the members now know me by name. I very much feel a part of this extended Gilda's family. Gilda's Club gives me much more joy than I can possibly ever return and I feel honored to be part of such a tremendous organization."

Pamela A. DiGrace
Relationship Manager, Financial Planning Associate,
The Arthurs Group at Smith Barney

How Can I Help Sustain Gilda's Club WNY?

So glad you asked! There are several ways you can help:

Gilda's Garden: You, your family or your company can be a part of this relaxing outdoor space by purchasing a terrace brick with a unique message to honor someone special.

Personal Donation: Every dollar given will help sustain Gilda's Club. You can also make a donation in honor or memory of a family member or friend. This can include gifts of stock.

Event Support: Purchase a ticket or organize a table for one of our two fundraising events.

Corporate Gift or Sponsorship: Your company can help Gilda's Club WNY serve your community, employees and clients.

Planned Giving: Consider including Gilda's Club WNY in your estate plan. A bequest to Gilda's Club WNY is an ideal way to ensure we can continue to offer support groups, lectures, workshops and social events to anyone touched by cancer.

Charitable IRA Rollover: If you are over age 70-1/2, you can transfer your IRA distribution to Gilda's Club WNY. The gift must be made on or before December 31, 2007. Ask your tax adviser for more information.

Third-party Event: Be creative! Organize a fundraiser with the proceeds going to Gilda's Club WNY.

For more information on how you can help Gilda's Club WNY, contact Robin Vail, 716.332.5900, ext. 207 or rvail@gildasclubwny.org.

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For more information on Gilda's Club Worldwide, or to locate other Gilda's clubhouses, go to www.gildasclub.org

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