

GILDA GRAM

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

Study reinforces Gilda's mission of *Cancer Support for the Whole Family, the Whole Time*

Beyond hospital visits and varied medical treatments lies a new groundbreaking report confirming the benefit of addressing cancer patients' emotional and psychological needs. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recently released a study that reinforces the Gilda's Club program philosophy that social and emotional support are as essential as medical treatment when cancer is in the family.

The IOM study calls for medical professionals to increase the standard of psychosocial care for all cancer patients, stating "it has been shown that cancer patients and their families are at increased risk for anxiety and depression related to the strain of the disease. These mental states can cause harmful health effects of their own, compounding the challenges of treatment."

Local cancer experts agree. "The Institute of Medicine Report is a welcome addition to the growing literature that documents the critical role of psychosocial support in treating cancer patients and their families," says Michael Zevon, PhD, chairman of the Department of Psychosocial Oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute. "While comprehensive cancer centers such as Roswell Park, in partnership with community agencies such as Gilda's Club, have been providing integrated psychosocial services to cancer patients for some time, this report sets a national agenda and offers a clear set of criteria for all cancer care providers." Dr. Zevon is a member of our Healthcare Advisory Council.

Since Gilda's Club Worldwide opened its first red door in 1995, it has been a leader in this area, offering a unique environment to share information and coping strategies through a variety of activities ranging from yoga, tai chi, nutrition and cooking classes to networking groups, workshops and lectures.

"No one is untouched emotionally when a loved one is diagnosed with cancer. Everyone is affected, not just the person diagnosed, but the entire family and even their friends," says Joanna Bull, Gilda Radner's psychotherapist during her illness and Gilda's Club founder. "We have incorporated this understanding of psychosocial health into all that Gilda's Club offers."

To learn more about the IOM findings, visit www.gildasclub.org.



The true artist comes out in Joan Effman (left) and Mickey Sheldon as they take part in a painting class in the art room.

New board chair aims for long-term financial stability

We thought you'd like the opportunity to get to know Mary Jo O'Sullivan, our new board chair. Currently supervisor for career development services at Erie 1 BOCES, Mary Jo has been involved with Gilda's Club for 10 years.

GG: *Why do you think Gilda's Club is so important to WNY?*

MJO: "I'm a two-time cancer survivor and never had anything like Gilda's Club to help me. From my own experience, I know that we have great cancer research facilities here, as well as excellent diagnostic, surgical and medical treatment facilities and wonderful end-of-life care. But something was missing: a place to sort out all the emotions that come with a cancer diagnosis."



Mary Jo O'Sullivan

GG: *Why is this type of support so important?*

MJO: "Many types of cancer are now labeled as chronic illnesses rather than terminal diseases, which means more people are living longer. Gilda's Club shows you how to *live* with cancer, how to celebrate life. A recent study done by the Institute of Medicine validates the importance of social and emotional support when there is a cancer diagnosis."

GG: *What's the one thing you'd like people to know about Gilda's Club?*

MJO: "That, unlike any other organization, it provides cancer support for the whole family, the whole time. Cancer doesn't just happen to the person diagnosed. It touches the family, friends, co-workers, etc. I would like Gilda's Club to be top of mind for its important role in a cancer diagnosis."

GG: *What is your priority this year for Gilda's Club?*

MJO: "We want to keep Gilda's Club free for members, but 'free' can be expensive. Achieving and maintaining long-term financial stability by broadening our circle of friends and funds is definitely a priority, since three out of four WNY families will be touched by cancer."

Funds earned through Coin Box benefit our members.

The Coin Box Project, a creative fundraising effort launched a little more than a year ago, continues to raise much-needed funds for Gilda's Club.

Remember to drop off your filled box at any WNY-area M&T Bank branch. Then, pick up a new box at any RealtyUSA office or Gilda's Club and start all over. Thank you for your support!



More than 50 people helped celebrate Valentine's Day at the clubhouse with a party that included food, fun, flowers and crafts. Special thanks to the Nardin Academy Service Club (pictured above) for hosting the event for the third year.

Celebration of Life with a twist!

This year, Gilda's Club WNY is taking a break from its annual *Celebration of Life* Luncheon. Instead, we encourage you to *celebrate life* by enjoying time with your family and friends. And, we invite you to show your support of Gilda's Club WNY by sending along a donation in the mailing coming your way this spring.

Trims to Treasures Sale to benefit Gilda's Club WNY

From antiques to drapery and upholstery fabric to decorative building materials and more, the Trims to Treasures sale, hosted by the Interior Design Association of WNY, will feature fabulous items at greatly-reduced costs (with a portion of the proceeds to benefit Gilda's Club WNY). Stop by the clubhouse and find your treasure!

Saturday, April 26 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 pm

Sunday, April 27 noon - 4:00 pm.

Free and open to the public!

Calling all Gilda's Volunteers!

It's been 10 years since the first meetings about bringing the Gilda's Club program to our area. On May 6 from 6:00-8:00 p.m., we're celebrating the countless volunteers – past and present – who helped establish Gilda's Club WNY and who keep it growing and thriving. If you are not currently receiving volunteer mailings, please contact Robin Vail at ext 207 so we can be sure your name is on the invitation list for this *Ten Years of Volunteers* reception.



Left: Brian Nesline, Faces of Buffalo Community Art Mosaics, has participated in the gingerbread holiday sale for three years and says, "The event is a nice balance of art and charity, and I am glad to be part of it." Right: Sue Tallmadge won third prize in the professional division for this gingerbread replica of Gilda's Club WNY.

A sweet way to end the year!

Prizes were awarded to amateur, professional and student bakers in the sixth annual gingerbread contest, which was part of the 2007 Gingerbread...Gifts...Glitz fundraising event held at the clubhouse in December. Our thanks to those who entered the contest, and our congratulations to all the winners! (For a complete list, visit our website.)

Special thanks, too, to Anne Bliss and Mary Czajkowski of Bliss & Bejewelled, who organized the 20 local artists who participated in the holiday show and sale and donated 20% of their proceeds to Gilda's Club. Thank you also to Ann Swan and her committee for making this year's event a great success!

Recent grants will help Gilda's thrive.

Gilda's Club WNY recently received a generous grant of \$300,000, payable over three years, from The John R. Oishei Foundation. The funds will be used for special activities in the areas of financial sustainability and community awareness.

A \$10,000 grant from the Teammates for Kids Foundation (founded in 1999 by Garth Brooks) will be used to fund new activities and events in Noogieland.

We gratefully acknowledge both organizations for their support of Gilda's Club WNY.

"The Oishei Foundation has been very impressed with the progress Gilda's Club has made in a relatively short time." Foundation President Robert D. Gioia



Erin, Gigi, Stanley and Josie use building blocks creatively at a recent Noogie Night in Noogieland.

Writing contest reveals teens' innermost thoughts about cancer.

"I walk into school and no one knows. No one knows what has happened. How can something so catastrophic in my life appear invisible to them? If you're wondering what happened, my dad just passed away from cancer."

This is how the first-place entry in our recent Teen Writing Contest begins.

Students in grades 7-12 were eligible to enter, regardless of whether they are Gilda's Club members. The idea was to let teens express their thoughts and feelings around their personal experiences with cancer in a poem or essay of 500 words or less.

"Whether they have cancer or someone close to them has it, teenagers have very intense feelings and emotions," says Kathy Kurtz MSW, program manager and Noogieland coordinator. "We thought they might respond favorably to putting their thoughts on paper. We received some very powerful entries."

Five judges scored each entry. Those scores were then averaged for each submission. The students received cash prizes and certificates at a reception hosted by the Teen Program at the clubhouse in February.

Our thanks to Ingrid Short of Smyrna, GA for underwriting this event with a generous cash donation.

Congratulations to our winners:

First place (\$75): 12th grader Erin Herman with "Out of Sight, Not Out of Mind"

Second place (\$50): 12th grader Kelsey Hodkin with "Preparing for Battle"

Third place (\$25): 11th grader Samantha Cook with "Live Life, Love Life"

Please consider including Gilda's Club WNY in your estate plan. Contact our Development Office at 716.332.5900, x207 for more information.

Help us win a \$10,000 room makeover!

Your vote could make the difference.

We are honored to be selected as one of five participating charities in the Ethan Allen 2nd Annual Community Challenge, sponsored by Ethan Allen Design Center, Buffalo Spree Publishing, Fox 29 and WJYE. The \$10,000 grand prize would be utilized to make over our current Cattaraugus Room to accommodate the needs of our growing membership. We need your help! **Stop by Ethan Allen at 3875 Sheridan Drive in Amherst during the month of May and vote for Gilda's Club!** You can vote once per day, every day during May. (Psst...tell your friends and family members, too!)

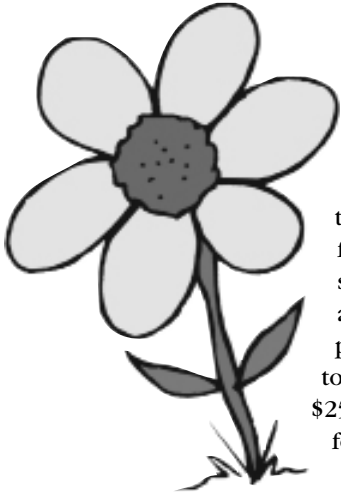
Our Wish List

Gift Cards for Target, BJ's, Wegmans and Tops

Food Items

- Individual sealed packets of snack items (pretzels, nuts, crackers, granola bars etc.)
- Coffee (vacuum sealed)
- Water (individual bottles and/or gallon jugs)
- Hard candy (individually wrapped)

A wonderful gift idea!



A brick in the Gilda's Garden is a great way to honor someone you care about, and they make great gifts for special occasions such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthdays or anniversaries. Have you, your family or your company placed your order yet? If not, be sure to do so by **May 1** to be included in our next engraving. Prices range from \$250 for a 6" x 9" Heritage Brick Blend Paver to \$1,000 for a 12" a 12" Rose Pink Granite Brick to \$2,500 for a Bluestone Stepping Stone. For more information, contact Robin Vail at 332.5900, ext. 207.



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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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