

H.O.P.E. LIFELINE



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H.O.P.E. (Help for Oncology Problems & Emotional Support) is an all volunteer cancer support network that provides free assistance to cancer patients and their families facing the challenges of cancer. H.O.P.E. is a 501 (C)(3) non-profit funded through donations. Our office is located at 13275 Blymire Hollow Road, Stewartstown, PA. The official registration and financial information of Help for Oncology Problems and Emotional Support may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

H.O.P.E. does not receive funding and is not affiliated with the American Cancer Society. Funding comes from donations made by private individuals and the civic/business community. Phone: 717-244-2174 or 717-244-2161.

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Meet H.O.P.E.'s Best and Brightest High School Seniors!

Wednesday, May 8, at 7 p.m.



**At the Hope Haven
Four High School Seniors
Will be Recognized for
Their Outstanding
Academic and
Extra-curricular
Achievements.**

**Refreshments and
Camaraderie!**

H.O.P.E.'s Office Hours are Monday through Friday, 9:30–3. **Please call in advance** to set up an appointment for:

- Intake
- Wigs/hats/scarves
- Pantry

Please direct all calls to the H.O.P.E. office at **717-244-2174**.

Annual Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 8

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: H.O.P.E. Haven

Occasion: High School Seniors
Scholarship Awards

H.O.P.E.'S NEW ADDRESS

Physical Address:
13275 Blymire Hollow Rd.,
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P.O. Box 279,
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

May is one of those pivotal months. It's moving us into summer without the heat yet; it's the final full month of school for everyone except high school seniors (who shut down months ago); and it's the perfect month for planning and going to all kinds of events. HOPE's **Voices for Hope Banquet** has been taking place in May for the past 18 years (with a hiccup for Covid), and each one is an evening filled with good friends, delicious food, and moving speakers.

Each year we honor one or more people who have gone above and beyond to contribute to our mission of making life easier for cancer patients and their families. This year's honorees are three people near and dear to Barb's heart, people who have been with her step by step almost from the very beginning. **Marty Streett**, who has come to be known as the Head Christmas Elf, has volunteered in the office(s) alongside Barb almost daily for more than two decades. **Donna and Phil Franco** have been part of Barb's team for just as long, but their work has taken place in their kitchens and the kitchens of other places as they've baked and cooked and served hundreds to feed and fundraise. Our keynote speaker is **Nick Albert**, a husband and father of two young children, who received back-to-back devastating medical diagnoses over a year ago but is continuing to move forward with optimism and humor. His story is poignant and uplifting. (You can read a little more about Nick on page 5.)

Fortunately the Voices event ends at a reasonable hour so attendees can be refreshed the next day to turn their attention to **Give Local York**, which runs from 9 p.m. Thursday to 9 p.m. Friday. You can donate online at <https://www.givelocalyork.org/>, or you can come to the **Stewartstown Block Party** Friday night and donate there while you're enjoying the First Friday vendors and food and games. Check out the front page of the newsletter for details.

Also this month occurs one of Barb's favorite yearly events—the awarding of scholarship checks to four outstanding high school seniors. This year's impressive winners are **Ella Grace Benzel, Emerson Davis, Aiden Shepro, and Kiera Woods**. In next month's newsletter we'll tell you more about each of these remarkable young adults. If you're interested in meeting them, our award presentation will take place on Wednesday, May 8, at 7:00 at the Haven. Everyone is welcome to help us honor our winners.

A reminder of our new fundraising partner. **Arooga's Grille House and Sports Bar** is donating 15% of their patrons' guest checks to HOPE on Tuesday, June 4. Featuring classic bar food as well as a vegetarian menu, why not splurge on a Tuesday night for good cause. Make sure you take the voucher at the bottom of the next page so that HOPE will benefit from your fun.

The articles in this month's newsletter are a mixed bag. Breast cancer awareness month isn't until October, but a story that has been making the rounds in the news lately concerns a new diagnosis tool that was used by a Hollywood actress to discover a potentially aggressive form of the disease. On page 4 we've given some online support groups that are more specialized, including groups for metastatic breast cancer, prostate cancer, young adults, and the LGBT community. Finally, on page five, you can meet our keynote speaker Nick Albert and read some hopeful news about a government crackdown on cancer-causing chemicals in our drinking water. Happy May!

H.O.P.E.'S ANGEL CORNER

BY BARB TITANISH, PRESIDENT & CO-FOUNDER H.O.P.E.

On April 7th we had our annual Spring Basket Bingo. We thank Chris Waltemyer and Sis Markle for doing an outstanding job putting all the baskets together. They always have a theme that doesn't disappoint. And thank you Daria Bernard who made over 30 door prizes for our event. We can't forget to thank our awesome caller Ira Walker. Ira is known to many because of his commitment to the community. Besides being a firefighter, Ira is the go to man to answer any questions about what is happening in the community and he is always willing to lend a helping hand.



"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

~ Winston Churchill

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter by email (and help us save postage), please send a note to our Assistant Director Carol Nelson, at assistant@hopeforcancerfamilies.org, and she'll put you on our list. (And it will have color!)
Thanks!

A New Online Tool in Breast Cancer Diagnosis

You may have heard or read last month that actress Olivia Munn revealed on social media she had used a breast cancer diagnostic risk assessment tool and discovered at age 43 she had breast cancer. Munn’s doctor used the online calculator to determine that she had a 37% lifetime risk for breast cancer. Normally the average risk for a woman in her 40s is 0.9% for five years and about 12% for her lifetime.

It all began a year ago in February when, after having a normal *mammogram, Munn took a genetic test that checked for 90 cancer genes. She tested negative for all of them, including BRCA. Even so, her doctor decided to calculate her breast cancer assessment score, and after recording a high score she had an **MRI and then got a biopsy, which found she had luminal B, an aggressive form of cancer, in both breasts. She had a double mastectomy 30 days after the biopsy and has had four surgeries in the past 10 months. She said she kept it private until recently because she ‘needed to catch [her] breath and get through some of the hardest parts before sharing.’

A breast cancer risk assessment tool uses a statistical model to estimate a woman’s risk of developing breast cancer over the next five years as well as over her lifetime, or up to about age 90, according to the National Cancer Institute. The tool typically asks for a patient’s age, the age of their first menstrual period, whether they’ve had a breast biopsy, the age at which they may have had a full-term pregnancy, and their family history of breast cancer, among other factors. These factors are entered into an algorithm that calculates the risk score. Some people may score high even if they don’t have known gene mutations associated with breast cancer risk, as was the case with Olivia Munn.

Although it’s used by health professionals, patients can also complete the assessment online. Two models are commonly used as breast cancer risk assessment tools: the Gail Model, available through the National Cancer Institute at <https://bcrisktool.cancer.gov> and the Tyrer Cuzick Risk Assessment Calculator, at <https://ibis-risk-calculator.magview.com>. The NCI posts this caveat on its website: “Although a woman’s risk may be accurately estimated, these predictions do not allow one to say precisely which woman will develop breast cancer. In fact, some women who do not develop breast cancer have higher risk estimates than some women who do develop breast cancer.”


If someone conducts they own risk assessment online, they should discuss the results with their doctor. According to Dr. Jennifer Plichta, director of the Breast Risk Assessment Clinic at the Duke Cancer Institute, “Anybody who does one of these risk assessments online should probably then follow it up with a conversation with their provider, just to make sure that they’re understanding the meaning of what they found out and to make sure that they did it correctly.”

In a draft recommendation last year, the US Preventive Services Task Force proposed that all women at average risk of breast cancer start screening with mammograms at age 40 to reduce their risk of dying from the disease. The American Cancer Society recommends that women who are at high risk of breast cancer based on certain factors get a breast MRI and a mammogram every year, starting at age 30. Risk factors include getting older, genetic mutations, having dense breasts, family history of breast or ovarian cancer, and the avoidable risk factors of being overweight or obese, consuming alcohol (even one drink a day), smoking, consuming too much sugar and fat, and a sedentary lifestyle.

*Mammograms evaluate two things: the density of the breast tissue and calcifications in the breast, which are calcium deposits within breast tissue.

**MRIs look for blood vessels, because one of the things that cancers do when they become cancerous is develop abnormal blood vessels.

Please hand voucher into your server or bartender to attach to your receipt to receive proper credit.



1211 Haines Rd.
York, Pa

YOUR LOCATION STAMP HERE

Funds for Friends

Help for Oncological Problems & Emotional Support

ORGANIZATION

June 4, 2024
DATE OF EVENT

Dine at this Arooga's Grille House & Sports Bar location on the above indicated date & 15% of your guest check will be donated to the above organization/charity.

15% donation not valid on specials. Coupons/Vouchers must be distributed prior to event date. Any solicitation on site will result in forfeit of all monies to your organization/charity.

Online Cancer Support Sites

Over two million people are predicted to be diagnosed with some form of cancer in 2024, according to the American Cancer Society. With an increase in rates for certain cancers, people diagnosed could benefit from talking to someone who knows what they're going through. Thanks to the internet and social media, that opportunity to reach out and connect is easier than ever. Following are some different resources where you might seek support.

- **Cancer Hope Network** (<https://cancerhopenetwork.org>)

Provides a one-on-one peer support service for both people with cancer and their caregivers. Through this program, nearly 500 trained mentors volunteer to pair up with someone who needs a compassionate listener and supporter. You can request a match through their website for free, and they'll connect you with a peer.

- **Friend for Life** (<https://www.friend4life.org>)

Helps you navigate cancer by pairing you with a survivor who has a similar experience to your own. These volunteers are trained to help you through diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. You can fill out an online questionnaire to get the process started, and Friend for Life will match you with a volunteer who understands your situation.

- **Malecare** (<https://malecare.org>)

Offers a wide range of peer support groups, both in-person and digital, for those diagnosed with prostate cancer. Depending on your circumstance, you can choose to join their Advanced Stage Prostate Cancer, Early Stage Prostate Cancer, or Gay Men's Prostate Cancer group.

- **METAvivor** (<https://www.metavivor.org>)

Dedicated to people diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, as well as funding research on the disease. Offers peer-to-peer support groups across the country, all led by other people with metastatic breast cancer.

- **National LGBT Cancer Network** (<https://cancer-network.org>)

Focuses on support, education, and advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community. Hosts peer support groups via Zoom three times a week, where you can talk about your diagnosis, life in general, or just say 'hi.' Also provides guidance on how to find LGBTQIA+ friendly providers, caregiver resources, and a resource library full of valuable cancer information.

- **Sisters Network, Inc.** (<https://www.sistersnetworkinc.org/index.html>)

The first and only national organization in the US focused on supporting and educating Black and African-American women with breast cancer. Provides peer-to-peer support through monthly meetings and in-person community outreach programs all over the country, on top of providing breast health resources to local communities.

- **Young Adult Survivors United (YASU)** (<https://yasurvivors.org>)

Enhances quality of life for young adults during cancer treatment and recovery. Provides nationwide virtual support groups where young survivors can talk about their diagnosis and lean on one another in a safe place. Has free respite trips and an annual Young Adult Cancer Camp, as well as providing financial assistance for young people with cancer.

Camp Dragonfly is a free weekend camp for grieving children. Sponsored by Hospice of Central PA, it takes place the weekend of June 7-9, 2024, at Camp Hebron in Halifax, PA. Only an hour away.

The camp is for children ages 6 to 15 and features group sessions to help children learn healthy ways to cope with loss. Other features include:

- Adult buddies
- A horsemanship program
- Other typical, fun camp activities ("It's ok to smile or laugh when you are grieving.")

Free to attend. Registration is required. Email bereavementinfo@hospiceofcentralpa.org or call 717-732-1000.

Nick Albert – Voices for Hope’s Keynote Speaker

A little over a year ago, Seven Valleys resident Nick Albert was making the hour-long drive from work to home and thinking how tired he was of his long commutes to and from a job he was ready to move on from. He was hoping for some kind of nudge in a different direction. This nudge happened, though not in a way he ever would have expected. A seizure the next morning, as he was saying goodbye to his family before he left for work, led to scans, which led to discovery of a tumor, which led to later scans and a cancer diagnosis.

The following year was painful and exhausting for Nick and his wife Kim and their two children, son Max, age nine, and daughter Mikayla, age six. But then Nick received another sign, this from a Facebook friend of his wife’s, who told her about H.O.P.E. and Barb, and a lifeline was thrown to the family. This lifeline included the pantry, monthly support group meetings, and a Christmas to end all Christmases. Nick said he can’t wait to meet Marty, the Head Elf, to thank her for what she and H.O.P.E. put together for his children.

Last summer the Albert family had another surprise, a four-day stay at the Hope Haven. It truly was a temporary escape from cancer for Mom and Dad and the kids. Nick said it was the first real break from the everyday stresses; he spent the days watching his kids play in the pool, observing the wildlife that you can see from the house and grounds, and enjoying sunsets. His son, a budding photographer, took tons of photos of wildlife.

When he gains more strength through treatments, Nick wants to give back to HOPE however he can. In the meantime, we’re looking forward to hearing more details about our keynote speaker’s background and his story and prognosis.

Some ‘Forever Chemicals’ May Soon be Gone Forever

A year ago we published an article about PFAS, the per- and polyfluorinated substances also known as ‘forever chemicals’ because they never fully degrade and can accumulate in the body and the environment. These chemicals are commonly found in everything from dental floss to firefighting foams to children’s toys to nonstick cookware because of their ability to repel water, oil, and grease. They have also been found in nearly half the tap water in the United States. Use of PFAS is so widespread that nearly every American has detectable levels of these human-made chemicals in their blood. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), high levels of PFAS may increase the risk of prostate, testicular and kidney cancers. They also may lead to high cholesterol and lower birth rates, developmental delays in children, and decreased effectiveness of vaccines in children.

The Environmental Protection Agency has finally said enough is enough. The federal government is mandating that water providers reduce PFAS to near-zero levels. Under the new rule from the EPA, water utilities must monitor supplies for PFAS chemicals and would be required to notify the public and reduce contamination if levels exceeded the new standard of 4 parts per trillion. Previously the agency had advised that drinking water contain no more than 70 parts per trillion of the chemicals.

Public health advocates and scientists said the new regulation was overdue. In just the past year, more than a dozen studies have found evidence of additional health effects of PFAS exposure, including a delay in the onset of puberty in girls, leading to a higher incidence of breast cancer, renal disease, and thyroid disease; a decrease in bone density in teenagers, potentially leading to osteoporosis; and an increased risk of Type 2 diabetes in women.

Needless to say, this cannot happen overnight. Public water systems have three years to complete their monitoring. If those samples show that levels of PFAS exceed the new EPA standards, the utilities would have another two years to purchase and install equipment designed to filter out the chemicals.

Utility companies and many mayors and county executives are pushing back at the new regulations citing expense. The American Water Works Association and other groups representing utilities estimated that the cost of monitoring and remediation of PFAS could be as much as \$3.2 billion annually. The EPA estimated it would cost water utilities about \$1.5 billion annually to comply with the rule. A 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law provides \$9 billion to help communities address PFAS contamination and the EPA said \$1 billion of that money would be set aside to help states with initial testing and treatment.

The EPA calculated the health benefits of the new regulation at about \$1.5 billion annually from reductions in cancer, heart attacks and strokes, and birth complications.

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"Of all the forces that make for a better world, none is so powerful as hope. With hope, one can think, one can work, one can dream. If you have hope, you have everything."

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