

# GILDA GRAM

News About Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee - Free Cancer Support for Anyone Impacted by Cancer

## Creating a Soft Landing Spot for Teens and Young Adults Impacted by Cancer

Teens and young adults who have been impacted by cancer have unique needs, which is why Gilda's Club has an Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Specialist on staff. What does this mean for our younger members and their families? We sat down with Megan Ingram Forshey, LCSW, to learn more.



Megan Ingram Forshey, LCSW

**Why is it important to program for these groups specifically?** Often times when adolescents and young adults walk into a medical setting, they're either the oldest or youngest in the room – older teens are treated in pediatric facilities that are geared toward young children, and those in their 20s or 30s are treated alongside people who are years and even decades older than they are. That 'I'm the only one' feeling that often comes with a cancer diagnosis can be confirmed and even compounded when none of the faces around you are anywhere near your age.

The AYA population also faces a number of challenges that are unique to their life stages. A few of the more common for young adults include gaining and maintaining independence from parents, even as they may be forced to move back home following a diagnosis; learning to manage employment post-diagnosis; and issues related to intimacy, sexuality, and fertility. And then there are the financial challenges that come when medical debt is piled on top of school debt, when savings are depleted, and when job prospects are limited because of benefits needs.

For those diagnosed in childhood and entering adolescence or young adulthood, there are also long-term effects from treatment and procedures that need to be addressed, including differences and challenges in social, emotional, and cognitive development.

**You've been a big part of Gilda's AYA program for more**

**than a decade now. Why these groups?** When I started this work, I was in my early 20s and the first group I sat in on was the Young Adults group. At that moment in my own life, I was working hard to figure out what I wanted to do, who I wanted to be, and what I wanted to give my time and energy to – to have meaning and purpose in my own life. As I began to hear people in their 20s and 30s talk about how this disease was impacting their lives and plans (plans much like the ones I was making at the time), I was repeatedly struck by the realization that it could be me. Any of those stories could be mine. Yet even though it could be me, I realized I had no clue what it was like to be living with cancer – and I wanted to understand, because those were my people. I also understood the importance of providing a soft spot for adolescents and young adults to land.

Additionally, I knew that few AYAs are equipped to support a friend or family member through their diagnosis. Young adults and teens are going through massive amounts of transition and self-discovery when everything is going as planned. When cancer enters the picture, it just turns everything upside down. And when you're going through something like that, you need to be around people who really get it. People your age.

**What does Gilda's Club offer specifically for AYAs?** Among other things, we offer several support groups especially for teens and young adults, including **Been There Done That**, a group for middle and high school-aged teens who have had a cancer diagnosis; **Teen Time**, a group for teens who have been impacted by a cancer diagnosis in any way; **Young Adults**, a group for those in their 20s and 30s who have had a cancer diagnosis; and **Young Adults Grieving the Loss of a Parent**.

*To learn more about these and other resources available for teens and young adults, connect with Megan at [megan@gildasclubmiddletn.org](mailto:megan@gildasclubmiddletn.org).*

# Join Us for a Night of Music

with Three Talented Songwriters and a Dazzling View of Nashville - Benefiting Gilda's



Save the date and join us Wednesday, April 17 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. for a songwriters night benefiting Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee's cancer support program. Co-hosted by our friends at SESAC on Music Row, you won't want to miss this evening of friends, food, and music by the wonderfully talented:

**Tony Arata**, best known for "The Dance," a chart-topping hit for artist Garth Brooks, and "Dreaming with My Eyes Open," which reached #1 for Clay Walker.

Long-time Gilda's Club friend and champion **Beth Nielsen Chapman**, whose songs have been performed by world-renowned artists including Faith Hill, Martina McBride, Willie Nelson, and Michael W. Smith.

**Rivers Rutherford**, who has co-written more than two dozen Top 40 singles with artists including Blake Shelton, Brad Paisley, Tim McGraw, Brooks and Dunn, and

Trace Adkins.

"We couldn't be more excited to be putting on our first songwriters benefit with this amazing group of artists," says Gilda's Club Director of Development Hayley Levy. "The evening promises to be spectacular – complete with a stunning view of Nashville from SESAC's spacious terrace."

Tickets to this special event are \$100 and include beer and wine, appetizers, and parking at the SESAC / CMA building located at 34 Music Square East in Nashville.

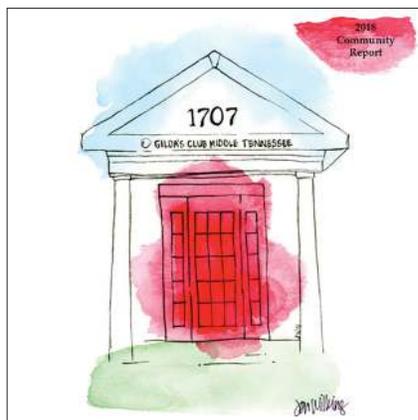
**Tickets can be purchased online at [www.gildasclubmiddletn.org/event-tickets](http://www.gildasclubmiddletn.org/event-tickets)** or via check mailed to: Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee, 1707 Division Street, Nashville, TN, 37203. Please note "songwriter night" in the memo line.

Music brings us together as a community. We hope to see you on April 17!

## In Case You Missed It...

Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee celebrated a momentous year in 2018 with the help and support of our community and friends. We opened a new location in Williamson County and held a smashing 20th Anniversary Bash – voted Best Anniversary Party by readers of *nFocus* magazine. And those are just two of the big headlines from this special year!

Read more about what was accomplished in our 2018 Community Report. Download it at [www.gildasclubmiddletn.org/2018-community-report](http://www.gildasclubmiddletn.org/2018-community-report)



Presented by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

## It's Almost Time for the #BigPayBack

The Big Payback is May 2, so save the date and help secure our free cancer support program for generations to come. The Big Payback is a community-wide, 24-hour online giving challenge hosted by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. Its purpose is to help area nonprofits, like Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee, raise much-needed dollars and bring awareness to pressing needs in our community. And, this year, if we raise \$5,000, we have a partner who will match the amount. **Can we count on your support?** On May 2, just visit [www.thebigpayback.org](http://www.thebigpayback.org) and keyword search "Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee."

# Volunteer Spotlight: Samantha Saturn

## How did you become involved with Gilda's Club?

My mother, Nancy Saturn, was a founding board member of Gilda's Club Nashville. She was so passionate and committed to the idea of bringing a chapter to this community. At the time, I was living in New York City and walked by the original Gilda's Club regularly. I even visited a few times with friends who wanted to learn more about the support available there. Personally, I was able to connect with Gilda's directly about resources for BRCA genetic testing, which became something I wanted to learn more about.



**Some 20 years later, why do you remain involved?** I have always felt a real connection to Gilda's, because of my mother's passion for the organization and my connection with the Gilda's community here, but also because, when I was caring for both of my parents at the end of their lives with cancer, I relied heavily on the team at Gilda's – specifically Felice – to get me through it. There is so much to prepare for that is specific to the mindset of those in hospice care that I was unaware of... The Gilda's team educated me, all the while supporting my emotional needs. I can't imagine how I would have gotten through that year without the love and support of the Gilda's Club community. I promised myself if I ever moved back, I would do whatever I could to ensure others know about and support their incredible, free resources.

## What value do organizations like Gilda's Club bring to Middle TN?

Beating cancer is tough. Surviving cancer is another thing altogether. That's where Gilda's Club comes in. Gilda's elevates the human experience through its social and emotional support program. Having a place where you can just come and sit and learn and be and feel comfortable with others is about being human, and that's what Gilda's brings to Middle Tennessee.

**Why does your American Artisan Festival support Gilda's Club?** The American Artisan Festival is celebrating its 45th year June 14-16, and it is truly a labor of love and an important legacy for me and my sisters, Rachel and Jacqueline. My mother believed that art can transform and elevate the human experience, and when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1994, she wanted the American Artisan Festival to not only support the artists, but also Gilda's Club. She began by asking the 150 artists who participate to donate just one item that could later be auctioned off at a Gilda's event. Over the course of 10 years, Festival artists donated enough beautiful handcrafts, jewelry items, and works of art to generate over \$1 million for Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee. This year, I will work with our artists again to donate a wide range of works that can be auctioned off for Gilda's – in my mom's memory.

**What do you wish people knew about Gilda's Club that they may not already know?** I want people to know that it's free. Cancer treatment is so expensive, and insurance is so overwhelming, but Gilda's Club is completely free. I also want people to visit [www.gildasclubmiddletn.org](http://www.gildasclubmiddletn.org) and check out the program calendar to learn that "cancer support" has so many definitions. It could be that you need a support group, or that you just want to take a yoga class with someone who understands what you're going through. Or perhaps you want to learn guitar just because you can. You can't imagine the range of possibilities that exist behind that red door.

*Join Samantha in supporting Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee by attending this year's American Artisan Festival, June 14-16 at Centennial Park.*

## Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee

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# A Look Back at 20 Years of Gilda's Club in Middle Tennessee



## Flashback to 1998: Monthly Mailings

Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee, then known as Gilda's Club Nashville, opened its red door for the first time on August 3, 1998. Located at 1033 18th Ave. South, the organization was just as reliant on the time and talents of volunteers then as we are now. Pictured here: Kathy Wunder, Sandra Hooper, Becky Sohr, Linda Ezell, and Fred Branch.



1707 Division Street  
Nashville, TN 37203

NEWSLETTER

## We Depend on Donors and Partners, Like You.

There are a variety of ways you can help bring Gilda's free support program to those facing cancer throughout Middle Tennessee. Contact Hayley Levy at [hayley@gildasclubmiddletn.org](mailto:hayley@gildasclubmiddletn.org) to learn more.

**Join The Red Door Society** with a gift of \$1,000 or more annually.

**Planned Giving**

**Fundraise on Behalf of Gilda's Club**

**Sponsor a Gilda's Club Event.** We are hosting several throughout 2019, including the annual Gilda's Club Classic on September 23.

**Employee Giving / Corporate Match Programs**

**Donate Goods and Services,** such as printing, postage, or ad space

## Become a Monthly Sustainer!

Monthly donors provide consistent funding. This ensures Gilda's Club can quickly meet our members' support needs. For example:

Your \$20/month (annual gift of \$240) provides a child access to expressive art activities that teach relaxation techniques and ways to improve family communication.

Your \$83/month (annual gift of \$1,000) provides 24 free counseling sessions.

**Contact [hayley@gildasclubmiddletn.org](mailto:hayley@gildasclubmiddletn.org) to learn more.**