

GILDA GRAM

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

Facilitating Community **One Workshop at a Time**

Since its inception, Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee has relied heavily on volunteers. From help with mailings and community outreach to special event and fundraising support, our free cancer support program wouldn't be what it is today without people from the community sharing their time, energy, and talents with us. Being able to offer more than 80 activities and workshops each month, in particular, wouldn't be possible without volunteers.



Allison Yonker, LMSW

"Our volunteer facilitators make it possible for us to offer a variety of events each and every month from two locations," says Program Manager and Volunteer Coordinator Allison Yonker, LMSW. "Thankfully, as awareness of Gilda's Club has grown over the years, it's become easier to find people to contribute to our program in this important way. In fact, many of our facilitators come to us proactively – generously offering for free to Gilda's Club members what they make money offering elsewhere in the world."

A number of Gilda's Club's volunteer facilitators are also former members, Allison says.

"Some of our most dedicated facilitators were initially members who came to Gilda's Club for support," she says. "Now they're giving back. Volunteering also creates a wonderful way for them to stay involved in our cancer support community."

In 2018 alone, there were 1,090 volunteer visits to Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee locations in Nashville and Williamson County.

When deciding what's offered on Gilda's Club's program calendar from month to month, Allison says the needs of members and ideas of volunteers both play a big role.

"There's no one-size-fits-all approach to creating support. So, we listen to our members and volunteers and do our best to offer lots of options – hoping that something will resonate with everyone who considers Gilda's Club, inspiring them to check us out.

"One thing we've learned is, when it comes to programming, sometimes you've just got to give things a chance. Some activities will be a hit – others less so – but you don't know until you try," Allison adds. "I'll never forget when we began offering private music lessons a few years ago. Everything we'd done before that was group based, so I wasn't sure about the one-on-one approach, but our members love it."

How will Gilda's Club's program calendar evolve over the coming months and years? Allison can't say, but she does stress how vital the workshops are to the calendar.

"Workshops are such an important part of the community building that takes place at Gilda's Club. They give members a place to learn and practice something, while being with others who 'get it,'" she says. "When folks see the same faces week after week, they come to look for one another and lean on one another. And that's everything."

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee, visit <https://www.gildasclubmiddletn.org/ways-to-give/volunteer/>.

Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee

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Member Spotlight:

Cindy Hamilton

Before Cindy Hamilton was diagnosed with cancer, she was a “typical Williamson County mom” with a husband, two kids, and busy days spent coordinating after-school activities, overseeing homework, and keeping the household running smoothly. When she was unexpectedly diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2017, everything changed.

“Our community rallied around us, but we still felt alone,” Cindy says. “During one of my treatment sessions, a fellow patient told us about Gilda’s Club in Franklin. It was scary to admit that we needed Gilda’s Club... My husband actually went first and then convinced me to go.”

According to Cindy, the primary reason she gave Gilda’s a try was because she wanted to learn to talk to her children about her cancer. She wanted them to understand without scaring them.



Gilda’s Club member Cindy Hamilton with her husband and children.

“Leslie [Gilda’s Club’s children’s wellness consultant] was so reassuring. She acknowledged the reality – that’s it’s not always ‘rah rah!’” Cindy says. “She offered great advice and even offered to have the entire family in to help facilitate the conversation with our kids.”

Over the next several months – and to this day – Gilda’s Club provided the Hamilton family with much of the support they were looking for. This support came in the form of emotional counseling sessions for both Cindy and her husband; ongoing conversations with Gilda’s Club’s children’s wellness specialist; regular Pilates classes geared toward cancer patients; and a weekly support group to help Cindy connect with others on a deeper level.

“I love that what we need can vary from week to week,” Cindy says. “I participate in a support group on Fridays. Some Fridays, we’re cheering each other on – and other Fridays, when someone has gotten bad news, we’re just quietly there for each other.”

“Gilda’s is a place where it’s okay to not be okay...a place where you can share without judgement. Sometimes you don’t have to say a thing – people just know. They’re there with you. They’re going through it, too,” she adds. “Gilda’s is a place you can celebrate the highs and grieve the lows with people who understand. It has been a shelter in our storm.”

Save the date and join us for our **Red Door Bash!**

October 16 at Omni Nashville.

More details coming soon.

Sept. 23: Annual Gilda's Club Classic Returns to Golf Club of Tennessee

Gilda's Club will host the annual Gilda's Club Classic on September 23 at the prestigious Golf Club of Tennessee in Kingston Springs. The event – now in its thirteenth year – remains one of our cancer support organization's biggest annual fundraisers.

"Every year, I really look forward to this event. The course is magnificent. The camaraderie among the players is fun. And the cause couldn't be a better one," said Gilda's Club Classic Committee Member (and Board Member) Allen Huggins, owner of WH Properties.

Gilda's Club Classic will kick-off at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, September 23 with player check-in, the opening of the driving range, and a barbecue lunch. The shotgun start will follow at noon, along with a post-tournament cocktail reception at 4:30 p.m. and an awards dinner and short program at 5 p.m.

To learn more about hole and team sponsorship opportunities, contact Hayley Levy at 615-329-1124 or hayley@gildasclubmiddletn.org.

Thank you to our Gilda's Club Classic Platinum Sponsors:



Gilda's Club Welcomes New Board Members

On July 1, we welcomed four new members to the Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee Board of Directors, including:

Jessica Averbuch, CEO at Zeitlin | Sotheby's International Realty

Ken Bryant, partner at Burr + Forman

Dr. Steven Hecklin, owner of Steven R. Hecklin, DMD

Samantha Saturn, Chief Marketing Officer at SESAC Rights Management

"We are excited to have these individuals join our Board. In addition to bringing



Jessica Averbuch



Ken Bryant

professional expertise in their respective fields, each also brings passion, energy and determination – to both expanding awareness of our free cancer support program and improving access to it," Interim President and CEO Denise Alper said. "As Middle Tennessee continues to grow and change at a rapid pace, awareness and access are among our areas of strategic focus. This means continually re-imagining how we do things – a process that is much more powerful when new ideas and perspectives are shared."

Welcome, Jessica, Ken, Steven and Samantha!



Dr. Steven Hecklin



Samantha Saturn

From the Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee Archives



Flashback to 2000: Spirit of Gilda Awards

Dr. Paul A. Rosenblatt, M.D. (center), currently of Tennessee Oncology and a long-time member of Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee's Medical Resource Council, received the Spirit of Gilda Award on the same evening that Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center was recognized with the Corporate Vision Award. Photographed with Dr. Rosenblatt are Vali Forrister (left) and long-standing Medical Resource Council member and St. Thomas/Ascension Genetics Counselor Susan Caro (right).



1707 Division Street
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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 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 to learn more.