



QUICK FACTS ABOUT GILDA'S CLUB

Mission

The Gilda's Club mission is to ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community.

What is Gilda's Club Desert Cities?

Gilda's Club Desert Cities is an affiliate of the Cancer Support Community, the nation's largest nonprofit organization providing free cancer support services throughout the United States and worldwide for over 30 years.

Gilda's Club is a welcoming place that offers emotional, social and educational support for everyone living with cancer in the Coachella Valley. People of all ages, with any type and stage of cancer, as well as their caregivers, family members and loved ones, can come. They thrive in the nurturing environment and benefit from a full program that encompasses professionally led cancer support groups, fitness, nutrition and expressive arts classes, educational lectures and workshops, and social activities.

Institute of Medicine Report Cites Benefits of Participating in Gilda's Club Programs

In 2007, the Institute of Medicine issued a report that stated: "Today, it is not possible to deliver good-quality cancer care without addressing patients' psychosocial health needs." In fact, the Institute concluded that in the face of a cancer diagnosis, *social and emotional support is as important as medical care*. Research shows that those who participate in the Gilda's Club program have improved partnerships with their health care teams and a greater sense of wellbeing.

Gilda's Club History

Gilda's Club is named for the zany Saturday Night Live comedienne, Gilda Radner, who herself benefited from cancer support groups when she had ovarian cancer.

Gilda's Club Desert Cities was founded in the year 2000 as a grassroots effort led by Sun City Palm Desert residents Paula Berke, Phyllis Greene, Judy Wolfe and Estelle Cooper. Their dedicated efforts came to fruition when the Clubhouse opened its welcoming doors in Cathedral City in November of 2004. Paula Kennedy was the Founding President and CEO, serving through 2014. In December 2013, Gilda's Club relocated to a newly purchased building in Palm Desert, a more central location that allows even more Coachella Valley individuals and families to be served.

Governance

Gilda's Club is a 501c(3) non-profit organization (Federal Tax Number 33-0911108) that derives its funding principally from individuals, grants, corporations, and special events. All funds raised stay in the Desert Communities.

Maria Elena Geyer is Gilda's Club President and CEO, and Litsa Mitchell, MA, LMFT, is Program Director. The current Chairman of the 13-member Board of Directors is Paul D. Golden. Gilda's Club is also guided by a Chairman's Council, Medical Resource Council, and Planned Giving Advisory Council.

The Five Core Components of the Gilda's Club Program

1. CANCER SUPPORT

Professionally led support groups for newly diagnosed patients, those with chronic or long-term cancer, survivors, caregivers, loved ones, children, parents, and the bereaved

Gilda's Club support groups are offered weekly and monthly, some during the daytime and others in the evening or on weekends to accommodate working individuals and families. The support groups currently offered include:

- Newly Diagnosed
- Living with Cancer (metastatic and chronic cancers)
- Friends and Family (caregivers)
- Bereavement
- Viviendo con Cáncer (Spanish-language group for cancer patients)
- Familia y Amigos (Spanish-language group for caregivers)
- Duelo (Spanish-language bereavement group)
- ABC (All Blood Cancers), in partnership with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- Women's Group
- Life After Treatment
- Couples During Cancer
- Singles During Cancer

2. EDUCATION

Lectures and workshops presented by physicians and other health care professionals

Topics are varied and always relevant. Some recent examples are:

- How Diet Affects Cancer Prevention and Recurrence
- Role of Clinical Trials in Cancer Care
- Frankly Speaking About Advanced Skin Cancers
- Strategies for Reducing Stress During the Holidays (offered in Spanish)

3. HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Mind/body stress reduction classes such as yoga, tai chi, and meditation; expressive arts such as painting and writing; performing arts; and nutrition education

4. SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Potlucks, parties, family events, meals, entertainment, special events

Traditions include Thanksgiving and Holiday potluck dinners and the celebration of Gilda Radner's birthday, as well as new events such as a Friday afternoon Movie Matinée.

5. RESOURCES AND REFERRALS

Library, community resources, online resources, personalized referrals

Members are also offered a valuable Assessment and Distress Screening, which they can complete online at the Clubhouse or from home.

Getting Started (Membership)

Gilda's Club free programs of cancer support are open to all residents of the Desert Communities whose lives have been affected by cancer. All it takes to get started is to attend an Orientation Meeting that includes a tour and overview of the program. A qualified professional helps each person select the support groups and activities best suited for them.

Orientation meetings are held twice weekly in English and once a week in Spanish. Stop by or call to reserve a place: 760-770-5678.

Major Fundraising Events

A variety of fundraising events is held each year in support of the Gilda's Club mission. Traditionally, the three biggest are the Gilda's Gift of Giving boutique, silent auction, luncheon and fashion show, held in the fall; an Entertainment Night held in the spring; and a springtime event such as a luncheon held by Friends of Gilda's Club – Sun City. New events are added from time to time, and suggestions are always welcomed.

Ways to Donate

The work of Gilda's Club Desert Cities is made possible by generous contributions from individuals as well as sponsorships and grants from corporations and foundations. All donations stay here in the Desert Communities. There are many easy ways to donate, such as attending special events, making a tribute gift, or making a planned gift or gift of stock. For more information, please contact President and CEO Maria Elena Geyer at 760-770-5678, ext. 109.

Volunteering

Gilda's Club has volunteer opportunities of all kinds, ranging from providing office support to assisting with fundraising events to representing Gilda's Club at community health fairs and other outreach projects. Prospective volunteers consult with the volunteer coordinator to match their skills and interests with available opportunities.

GILDA'S BY THE NUMBERS

In the most recent Fiscal Year, 2014-2015

More than **3,237** people made **9,102** visits to Gilda's Club programs

Gilda's provided 693 Support Groups, 25 Lectures, and 329 Healthy Lifestyle Classes

262 people joined Gilda's, an average of **21** new members per month

More than **150** volunteers – many of them cancer survivors – contributed more than **8,500** hours of service

Gilda's Club Location

73555 Alessandro Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92260 (between San Pablo and San Carlos)

Phone: (760) 770-5678

Fax: (760) 770-5667

Hours

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday
Evening programs every Thursday and on select Mondays and Tuesdays
Daytime programs on select Saturdays

"Gilda's on the Go" Off-Site Programs

Palm Desert

Sun City, 38180 Del Webb Blvd. (For Sun City residents)

Indio

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, 45-299 Deglet Noor St. (Spanish-language support group)

Website

www.gildasclubdesertcities.org

Social Media

<http://www.facebook.com/gildasclubdc>
<http://twitter.com/GCDesertCities>

Media Contacts

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