

CancerPartners Location

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

Phone & Fax

Phone: 760.770.5678
Fax: 442.666.3100

Hours

Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Other evening programs and events as scheduled

Website

www.cancerpartners.org

Media Contacts

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Supporting the Journey

Mission

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

What is CancerPartners?

CancerPartners is a welcoming place that offers emotional, social and educational support for everyone impacted by cancer in the desert communities. 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.

Formerly named Gilda's Desert Cities, CancerPartners grew as 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.

Institute of Medicine Report Cites Benefits of Emotional Support Programs Like CancerPartners

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 programs like that of CancerPartners have improved partnerships with their health care teams and a greater sense of wellbeing.

CancerPartners History

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

The organization was founded in 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 Gilda's Club 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, the organization relocated to Palm Desert, a more central location that allows even more Coachella Valley individuals and families to be served.

The new CancerPartners name was adopted on July 1, 2017 to signal the commitment to partnering with a coalition of individuals, foundations, the medical community and cancer service organizations. With the new name and established partnerships, the organization is able to support even more people on their cancer journey.

Governance

CancerPartners 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 CancerPartners President/CEO, and April Hanig, MA, is Program Director. The current Chairman of the 15-member Board of Directors is Paul D. Golden. CancerPartners is also guided by the Chairman's Council and a Medical Resource Council chaired by Janet K. Ihde, MD.

CancerPartners Programs

1. Emotional Support

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

CancerPartners support groups are offered weekly and monthly, some during the daytime and others in the evenings. The support groups include:

- Living with Cancer
- Friends and Family (caregivers)
- Bereavement
- Viviendo con Cáncer
(Spanish-language group for cancer patients)
- Cuidadores
(Spanish-language group for family and friends)
- ABC (All Blood Cancers), in partnership with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- Life After Treatment
- Life After Loss
- Children (ages 4-12)
- Teens (ages 13-17)

An important note regarding the role of CancerPartners support group facilitators: The support groups are not meant to serve as a form of psychotherapy nor an alternative to psychotherapy, and group facilitators do not provide therapeutic treatment. Support group participants are clients of CancerPartners, and not clients of the group facilitator.

2. Education

Lectures and workshops presented by physicians and other health care professionals

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

- The Role of Stress in Cancer Prevention and Treatment
- An Empowering Guide to Lung Cancer
- Return to Sex and Intimacy for Cancer Patients and Their Partners
- Take Charge of Your Health: Become the CEO of Your Healthcare

3. Healthy Living

Mind/body stress reduction and exercise classes such as yoga, tai chi, and meditation; expressive arts such as painting and writing; performing arts; and a hands-on nutrition education program for living with cancer and beyond

4. Social Activities

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

Traditions include holiday potluck dinners and special celebrations throughout the year.

5. Resources and Referrals

Library, community resources, online resources, personalized referrals

Resources include the organizations of the Better Together for Community collaborative, which work together to help people cope with cancer at no cost to them.

How to Join In

CancerPartners' no-cost 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 a New Client Orientation Meeting that includes a tour and overview of the program. A licensed professional helps each person select the support groups and activities best suited for them.

Orientation meetings are held weekly on Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. in English and on Tuesdays at 3:00 p.m. in Spanish. To schedule an appointment, please call 760.770.5678.

Major Fundraising Events

Several fundraising events are held each year in support of the CancerPartners mission. The three biggest are the CancerPartners Gala, held in November; an Entertainment Night held in the winter, and a springtime event, the Old Bags Luncheon. Other events are added from time to time.

Ways to Donate

The work of CancerPartners is made possible by generous contributions from individuals as well as sponsorships and grants from corporations and foundations. All donations stay 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. For more information, please contact President/CEO Maria Elena Geyer at 760.770.5678.

Volunteering

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

CancerPartners by the Numbers

Fiscal Year 2016-2017



5,630
Visits to CancerPartners
Programs

443
Support Groups

22
Education Lectures

310
Healthy
Lifestyle Classes

70
Social Events

136
New Clients Joined

9,000
Hours of Volunteer Service
(Many Volunteers are Themselves
Cancer Survivors)