



Better equipped to enjoy life,
moment by moment.

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Wellness News

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well as we usher in the colorful season of Spring. The world comes alive with brilliant blossoms and explosions of green only because nature has been working behind the scenes even before it is visual to the eye. That's what your gifts do to help people live their best lives during cancer. We have been busy planting seeds and cultivating meaningful growth at Wellness House – together with you.

The blooms emerge in participants like Elizabeth Crewe (story on page 6), who has battled three different cancers and flourished through the support of Wellness House programs every step of the way. “Learning to live with cancer is in some ways just learning to live,” says Elizabeth. She found strength in support groups, nutrition, and exercise classes and how to navigate the emotional challenges that come with a cancer diagnosis. Cancer support and resource tools were available to her, no matter what she encountered, as she could choose from over 500 professionally led online and in-person programs.

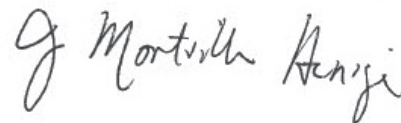
This year, Elizabeth will join one of the many teams at our annual **Walk for Wellness House** on Sunday, May 7, because she has seen and experienced the impact of each dollar raised. We hope you can join us, together – every step of the way.

Our sincerest thank you for being the force behind healing and hope for so many who are impacted by cancer.

In Friendship,



Lisa K. Kolavennu, MA, LCPC
Executive Director



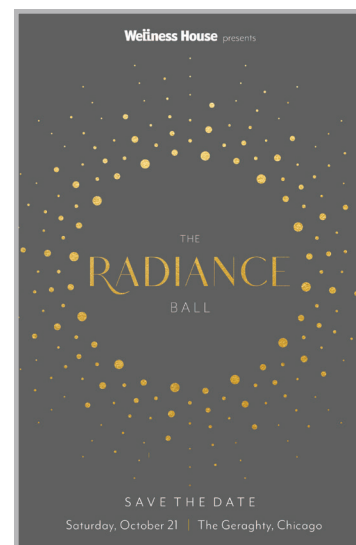
Monte Henige
Board Chair

“all in” Wellness House Ball



The annual Wellness House ball, ALL IN, took place on **Saturday, October 15, 2022**, at the Four Seasons Chicago. Approximately 400 guests dressed in ball gowns and tuxedos brought their passion and generosity to this annual event, critical to raising funds for individuals and families affected by cancer. The theme of the ALL IN ball celebrated the convergence of a passionate community, board, staff and ball chairs gathering once again in-person to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families. Guests enjoyed an inspiring evening featuring long community-style tables,

a meaningful live program of storytelling by Wellness House participants and a lively auction and paddle raise. **Co-Chairs Lauren and Matt Houder and Dottie and Todd Martin, and Wine Chairs Tina and Jeffrey Weller** presented a magical dinner followed by an expansive dessert and candy bardancing until midnight with music by Time Chicago.



SAVE THE DATE for the **Radiance Wellness House Ball** taking place **Saturday, October 21, 2023**, at The Geraghty (2520 S Hoyne Ave, Chicago, IL). The 2023 Radiance Ball Co-Chairs Briana & Peter Murray and Meaghan & Sean Daly are working hard to create a brilliant and beautiful evening. *Watch for details on wellnesshouse.org/events*

The Walk for Wellness House

Sunday, May 7, 2023

TOGETHER – EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

The annual 3K Walk/5K Run for Wellness House will take place on Sunday, May 7, 2023, bringing cancer survivors, families, friends, and volunteers together at Wellness House’s main location in Hinsdale. The theme of this year’s Walk, Together, Every Step of the Way embodies the spirit of joining as a community to support the Wellness House mission so that no one has to face cancer alone. This year, Walk co-chairs Arpi Thukral and Gina Pongetti Angeletti, members of Wellness House’s Board of Directors and both touched by cancer, lead the charge to inspire individuals and teams to support the Walk for Wellness House.

An inspirational program begins at 8:00 a.m. and the Walk at 8:30 a.m. with a 3K Walk, 5K Run, 5K Timed Run, “Walk Your Way” or 10-Step Walk. It’s easy to take part in the annual Walk which raises funds to ensure Wellness House can provide its critical emotional, spiritual and physical support all at no cost. Participate as an individual, as part of a greater team, or donate to the event. Our new registration system provides greater ease of use and a Text-to-Give feature that makes it easy to give. (text “Wellness” to 50155 and follow the prompts).

The Walk will take place along a route on the streets around Hinsdale and end at the Wellness House, Home of Hope with refreshments and family activities. There’s still time to register or donate to the walk. Join us for a meaningful day and one of our largest fundraisers of the year! Visit walk.wellnesshouse.org.





Better Equipped to Enjoy Life moment *by* moment.

“I just knew I needed to do this,” said Elizabeth, who had heard of Wellness House from a neighbor who turned to the facility for grief support after the loss of her husband.

Wellness House, like cancer, would become part of Elizabeth’s life for years to come. Her initial bout with breast cancer in 2016 was followed in 2017 with the discovery of early signs of uterine cancer that required surgery. Then, in June 2022, came a diagnosis of melanoma. Throughout all three cancer experiences, Elizabeth said Wellness House has been there for her.

Like anyone with a new diagnosis, Elizabeth Crewe was faced with countless questions and uncertainties upon learning that she had cancer. But one thing she knew from the start was that she would turn to Wellness House for help and support.

Even before her initial treatment for breast cancer, Elizabeth sought help by attending a cancer support group at Wellness House and almost instantly felt better about the journey ahead.

“I thought, these people aren’t crying all the time,” she said. “They’re living life and enjoying it.”

Members of the group shared experiences, information and advice, all of which Elizabeth put to use. Talking with and hearing from others helped her to select her care team, to know what questions to ask and what to expect in her treatment and recovery.

She was empowered with information and questions that she might not have had if she had not attended the group.

“You don’t know what you don’t know. Being in a group helps you to gain that information, not just medical information like what tests to ask for or what treatment options you have, but care recommendations like tips on how to deal with the bone-crushing fatigue of radiation, how to manage nausea from chemo, etc.,” she said.

Little did she know then the role the members of her Wednesday night cancer group would play in the years to come. They, and Wellness House, have remained a valuable source

of support throughout the last seven years.

“We enjoy just laughing together,” Elizabeth said of the friends she has made at Wellness House. She said many gather outside of their meetings, text each other throughout the week, and spill out into the parking lot for post-meeting conversation.

Just one week before her breast cancer surgery in 2016, Elizabeth joined some members of the Wednesday night group in the Walk for Wellness House - something she still looks forward to every year as she marks another year of being free of breast cancer.

Elizabeth still attends the Wednesday night group, as well as two exercise classes each week, along with Drop-In Yoga and Pink Ribbon Fitness. She turned to Wellness House for guidance in her efforts to achieve a healthy weight, and for nutritional support. Soon, she will add the Melanoma Support Group to her Wellness House schedule.

While Elizabeth certainly hopes she’s seen the last in her string of cancer diagnoses, she has no plans to stop visiting Wellness House. Regardless of what the future holds, Wellness House will always be part of her life.

“I’ve made so many dear friends here,” she said.

Many of those friends will gather on May 7 to once gain take part in the Walk for Wellness. Members of THECROWNROYALSTEAM, named for the team founder’s fondness for the purple-bagged whiskey, will don special t-shirts as they stroll the streets of Hinsdale in support of Wellness House.

“Most people don’t believe they are group therapy people. They think they don’t need it, and that it would be uncomfortable and awkward to be in a group of strangers discussing such personal issues. I felt the same way. And then this group of strangers became my friends and fellow travelers on an all-too-common road,” Elizabeth said.

Each followup screening brings up anxiety and worry, but Elizabeth knows she never has to face a screening, or the results of a screening, alone.

“Each time I go through a scan and it comes out clean, it feels like my prognosis is brighter,” she said. She celebrates each anniversary of her initial breast cancer surgery not only with the Walk for Wellness, but by adding a balloon to the tattoo on her chest.

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Happy Hearts for All Ages

There were many smiling faces at the annual Wellness House Happy Hearts party held on the Sunday before Valentine's Day. Teens from the Hinsdale Assembly, were paired up with young participants to provide encouragement, support, and leadership. The event's activities consisted of a magician, snacks, giveaways, cookie decorating, arts & crafts, and board games, and culminated with a fun and energizing dance party!

This event allowed parents to leave their kids in Wellness House's care and enjoy a couple of hours on their own. They also were welcome to join in the Happy Hearts festivities or stay and connect with one another in a separate space. The parents were provided water, tea, snacks and adult coloring options for connecting and conversation.



Some Enchanted Evening

This year, Some Enchanted Evening returned in-person with a special theme of Fiesta in February. Participants enjoyed live acoustic guitar music while they mingled with one another and made a take-home bouquet through the DIY Flower Bar. Heading into the kitchen, participants were taught how to make festive guacamole and healthier churros by culinary creative, Sarah Beth Tanner. Wellness House's own nutrition program manager Angela Denison, RD, LDN also cooked up some homemade vegetarian enchiladas for everyone to take home! Participants called it "such a delightful evening" and shared that they enjoyed relaxing and cooking with the others they met.

"We both can't thank you enough and everyone else who put together Some Enchanting Evening, for such a delightful evening. And an added thank you to Chef Sarah Beth Tanner for her instructions and tips in making delicious guacamole and churros!"
-Participant

Wellness House featured in Special NBC5 Chicago Nutrition Series



2 Simple Diet Changes That Can Help Fight and Prevent Cancer, According to An Expert

When health reporter Lauren Petty was looking for the experts in oncology nutrition, she reached out to Wellness House. NBC5 Chicago presented a special series called "Food for Thought" where they investigated the role that nutrition plays in fighting chronic conditions and disease. Lauren Petty and crew spent the morning at Wellness House filming a nutrition class presented by Angela Dennison RD, LDN, Nutrition Program Manager, that demonstrated how to incorporate cancer-fighting foods into a diet. More than 25 participants took part in the filming of the class and enjoyed a full cooking demonstration with delicious samples after. The segment also featured two Wellness House participants, an interview with Angela Dennison, and an interview with Wellness House partner, Dr. Sritlata Gundala. *The segment aired in late February and can be viewed on the Wellness House website news section.*

Volunteer Needs

Volunteers are vital to Wellness House. They make it possible for Wellness House participants to enjoy outstanding support during their cancer journey.

Zoom Class Hosting: Zoom hosting includes providing hospitality in online programs, including opening the meeting, admitting and welcoming the class facilitator and participants, and taking accurate attendance. This can be done from home or at Wellness House. If hosting from home, a brief meeting with the Wellness House IT consultant to ensure your device includes all security measures including anti-virus software is necessary.

Front Desk Volunteers: We are always looking for individuals who are interested in providing exceptional customer service by being warm, welcoming, and relationship-focused to all of our participants, staff, and the Wellness House community. Please reach out if you are interested in greeting and assisting participants and visitors when they enter the house and programs.

- The following shifts are open if you have availability to volunteer weekly or 1-2 times a month:
Tuesdays or Wednesdays: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Fridays: 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Saturdays: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Wellness House Ambassador: Promote awareness of Wellness House/ The Courtyard and help achieve revenue and participation goals. As a Wellness House Ambassador, you are an extension of staff and an integral part of the Wellness House community.

Program Facilitators: Help us empower and support Wellness House participants. We're looking for professional Massage Therapists, Reiki/Healing Touch Healers, and Yoga and Tai Chi instructors.

An ability to listen provides a safe place to be heard



- Marci Goldberg
Participation
Engagement
Manager

“Wellness House became an absolute haven for me. They became a part of my treatment,” she said, and a part of her life.

Marci Goldberg

Meet Our Experts — Marci Goldberg

Participation Engagement Manager

Marci Goldberg first walked through the doors of Wellness House in search of support on her own cancer journey. The experience she had here kept her coming back, first as a participant, then as a volunteer ambassador, and now as a member of the Wellness House staff.

While embarking on her personal battle with cancer, Marci said she drew strength and knowledge from the many programs at Wellness House.

A staff member since August 2022, Marci was serving as a volunteer when presented with the opportunity to join the staff.

“I jumped at the chance,” said Marci, whose job is to create and maintain a welcoming environment for everyone who walks through the door. Her time is divided between managing the front desk and welcoming new participants, and no two days are ever the same.

As Participation Engagement Manager, Marci said it’s important that she remembers the fear and uncertainty she felt while walking through the door for the first time. Whether she greets a new participant on the phone or in person, Marci said it’s important to help every person feel comfortable and to share with them everything that Wellness House can do to make their journey easier.

Marci holds a bachelor of arts degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She’s also a certified life coach. Marci said both experiences lend themselves well to her current position.

“People come in confused, overwhelmed,” she said. She uses her skills and experiences to relieve their stress and ease their uncertainty.

Above all, Marci said her ability to listen is key to her Wellness House role. She wants every person to know that she and Wellness House provide a safe place to talk, and to be heard.

As a participant, Marci took part in support groups, nutrition programs, exercise programs, meditation, education sessions and special events. But it wasn’t until her doctor mentioned Wellness House that she even knew it existed. Now, it’s a part of her life she can’t imagine being without.

“I truly believe it’s an amazing organization,” she said.

Marci’s Professional Highlights

- Holds a bachelor of arts degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from the University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Certified Life Coach
- As a Wellness House participant, Marci took part in support groups, nutrition programs, exercise programs, meditation, education sessions and special events

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While she’s no longer in active treatment and her prognosis is good, Elizabeth knows that cancer, and Wellness House, will be with her and her family for the rest of their lives.

She said Wellness House helped her children to cope with her illness while also teaching them things that will help them throughout their lives. Years after Elizabeth’s diagnosis, when her son began experiencing anxiety unrelated to his mother’s

health, he had tools on board to help himself, thanks to what he learned at Wellness House.

“Learning to live with cancer is in some ways just learning to live,” Elizabeth said. Through her own journey, and with help from Wellness House, she is more relaxed now, less worried about life’s small annoyances and better equipped to enjoy life, moment by moment.

“You can live with this illness,” Elizabeth said. And that’s just what Wellness House is helping her to do.



Unique Ways to Give

A Celebration of Quilts fundraiser for Wellness House.

A quilt is made by sewing together a collection of patterns and colors and results in a unique finished product created with care – many times through a community of people coming together with purpose. Wellness House receives donations much like a quilt, a patchwork of generosity from people like you and the Salt Creek Quilters Guild.



The Salt Creek Quilters Guild meets just outside of Chicago in Hinsdale and Countryside. It has a strong commitment to giving back to the community by making and donating quilts to many nonprofits and hospitals. We're proud to have been chosen to receive a portion of proceeds from the Celebration of Quilts, a bi-annual event Happening on April 21-22, 2023, at Union Church, 137, South Garfield, Hinsdale, IL. Over 200 quilts will be on display with special exhibits and a bake sale. Learn more about the Celebration of Quilts at www.saltcreekqg.org

Why a Donor-Advised Fund may be right for you!



David Blaydes and his team may be reached at info@rpiplan.com or 630.778.8100 x100.
www.rpiplan.com

Donor Advised Funds (DAFs) are popular charitable giving vehicles—known for their tax savings, ease and flexibility. Through a Donor Advised Fund, you can make a charitable contribution and receive an immediate tax deduction! There are many benefits to establishing a DAF.

- 1. Simplified tax season:** You're able to make one gift into your Fund and have just one tax receipt come tax time. You can then use your DAF to donate to the charities of your choice.
- 2. Ability to donate appreciated assets:** You can contribute to your fund using a broad range of assets, including cash, stocks, mutual funds and real estate. If the asset you fund the DAF with has gone up in value, such as stock, you avoid the capital gains tax when you use it to fund a DAF!
- 3. Charitable dollars can be invested and grown:** The assets in our DAF grow tax free.
- 4. Streamlined giving:** By centralizing your charitable giving, you can manage all of your giving from one convenient account.
- 5. Ability to engage your family in philanthropy:** DAFs are a great tool for individuals who want to involve

family in charitable giving. Children or grandchildren can participate in grantmaking by serving as Fund Advisors. What a great way to pass on the value of giving!

- 6. Leave a legacy:** Everyone has a special place that has positively impacted their life. A DAF can show your appreciation to that place by having some of the funds directed there as long as it is a charity.
- 7. Easy to establish:** Setting up your DAF is quick and simple.

You may wonder if there's anything holding charitably inclined families from using a DAF. Many firms have initial contribution minimums, which we've seen start around \$5,000. There are also administrative costs from the custodian of the assets that come out of the amount donated, so it's helpful to compare firms that offer the solution. While you continue to have access to make grant recommendations, the contribution to a DAF is irrevocable which is also how you obtain a potentially greater tax benefit in the year contributed. Talk with your local Financial and/or Tax Advisor to better understand whether it's right for you.

Questions? Please email David at davidb@rpiplan.com or call him at 630-778-8100 x100.

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Wellness House | Main Location
The Kay & Mike Birck Home of Hope
131 North County Line Road
Hinsdale, Illinois 60521

Have you included Wellness House in your will or estate plan?



“The bottom fell out when I was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. The stress was almost unbearable. Handling it alone was unthinkable. Thankfully, that’s when I found Wellness House.”

– Sara, Wellness House Participant

When you include Wellness House in your will or estate plan, you help ensure we will always be here for people like Sara and their families.

To learn more, contact
Development@wellnesshouse.org

Monthly donations change lives all year long.

A monthly gift of any amount can help people with cancer thrive. Visit URL today [wellnesshouse.org/donate](https://www.wellnesshouse.org/donate)

Thank you to our generous grantors:

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