Wellness House for LIVING with CANCER

You'll feel better inside.

WELCOME TO WELLNESS HOUSE

Cancer changes more than your medical care. Wellness House offers **FREE** support for living with cancer, for you and the people beside you.

Feel Better.
Get Stronger.
Enjoy Community.



WELCOME TO WELLNESS HOUSE



YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGURE THIS OUT ALONE

A cancer diagnosis can make ordinary life feel unfamiliar. Questions pile up before you have had time to understand the first answer. Treatment may change how you eat, sleep, move, work, parent, or relate to the people you love. Those closest to you may be trying to find their footing, too.

Wellness House helps with the parts of cancer that happen outside the treatment room. Our oncology-trained experts provide reliable information, counseling, nutrition guidance, safe exercise, stress management, salon services, and programs for children and families.

Every program is offered for free and complements the care you receive from your medical team.

⟶ WHAT IS PSYCHOSOCIAL ONCOLOGY?

It is support for the emotional, physical, social, and practical effects of cancer. It recognizes that cancer happens to a whole person and often to a whole family.

⟶ WHETHER IN-TREATMENT, OUT OF TREATMENT, OR SUPPORTING SOMEONE THROUGH CANCER

You are welcome from diagnosis through treatment and into survivorship. We also support people living with recurrent or metastatic cancer, caregivers, children and teens, and those grieving a cancer-related loss. You are welcome no matter where you receive medical treatment.

> “We didn’t feel like patients. We felt like people.”
>
> — Lyle, participant



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START WHERE YOU ARE.

You do not need to understand our program areas or know what kind of support you need before contacting us. Tell us what is happening. We will help you find a place to begin.

TALK WITH US

Call **630.323.5150**. A member of our team can listen, answer questions, and help you find programs that fit what you need now.

PROGRAMS IN SPANISH

Programs are available in Spanish.
informacion@wellnesshouse.org
630.654.5529

LET US HELP YOU GET STARTED

Call us. You do not have to figure it out alone.

FIND WHAT YOU NEED

- Information & Education 4
- Support Groups & Counseling 6
- Nutrition 8
- Exercise 10
- Child & Family: L.I.G.H.T. House 12
- Stress Management 14
- Unique Boutique 15

WHERE YOU PARTICIPATE IS UP TO YOU

Join us at the Kay & Mike Birck Home of Hope in Hinsdale, at partner locations throughout metro Chicago, or through live online programs. If transportation is a challenge, phone consultations and virtual support are available. On-demand videos are also available when a scheduled program does not fit your day.



ATTEND AN ORIENTATION

Welcome to Wellness House Orientation offers an overview of our programs, a tour of our Hinsdale home, and time to meet staff. It is a helpful place to begin, but it is not required before joining most programs.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION

WHEN YOU NEED CLEAR ANSWERS

Cancer brings a new vocabulary, unfamiliar decisions and appointments that can move faster than your questions. Reliable information can help you understand what you are hearing, prepare for conversations with your medical team, and feel less disoriented by what comes next.

Wellness House connects you with physicians and other oncology professionals who explain current research, treatments, side effects, and survivorship concerns in language you can use. You do not need a scientific background or even a fully formed question. Come to listen, learn, and ask what is on your mind.

WHAT YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT

→ UNDERSTANDING CANCER

Learn about different cancer types, testing, treatment approaches, and terms you may hear during medical appointments.

→ TREATMENT AND SIDE EFFECTS

Explore common side effects and evidence-informed strategies that may help you manage daily life during treatment.

→ LIFE AFTER TREATMENT

Find guidance for navigating lingering side effects, fear of recurrence, changes in identity, and the transition away from frequent medical care.

→ LIVING WITH CANCER OVER TIME

Access information for recurrent, metastatic, or advanced cancer, including new treatment developments and ways to maintain quality of life.

Information provided through Wellness House is educational and does not replace advice from your medical team.

Scan to learn more

"I immediately said, 'This is the place I need to come.' "

— Karina, after attending Hot Topics in Breast Cancer



Questions? Call **630.323.5150** or email **informationandeducation@wellnesshouse.org**



LEARN FROM TRUSTED ONCOLOGY EXPERTS

TOP DOC LECTURES

Physicians and specialists from leading cancer centers share current information about cancer care and answer participant questions. Topics range from new treatments and emerging research to side-effect management and concerns that arise during survivorship.

HOT TOPICS

These in-depth events bring together oncology experts for a closer look at developments affecting people with specific cancer diagnoses. Presentations help participants understand changes in treatment and prepare more informed questions for their own care teams.

SPECIAL PROGRAM EVENTS

Larger educational events offer opportunities to learn from multiple experts in one day. Programs such as the Taste of Wellness House Nutrition Fair and Mind Body Fest combine practical guidance with demonstrations, workshops, and conversation.

WHY IT MATTERS: Research on communication in cancer care shows that clear, patient-centered information can support understanding and more informed conversations with medical teams. **Knowing what questions to ask can help you take a more active role in your care.**

Evidence basis: National Cancer Institute, Communication in Cancer Care

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LEARN ON YOUR OWN TIME

Live programs are available in person and online. Wellness House also offers recorded webinars and videos that you can watch when your schedule, energy, or treatment routine makes attending difficult.

FOR CAREGIVERS

Information can build your confidence as a caregiver. Caregivers are welcome to attend educational programs to learn more about treatment, side effects, recovery, and ways to support someone they love. You may also bring questions of your own.



SUPPORT GROUPS & COUNSELING

WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SUPPORT

Cancer can leave you surrounded by people and still feeling alone. You may be protecting the people you love, struggling to explain what you are feeling, or wondering whether anyone else would understand. You do not have to wait until things become difficult to ask for support.

Our oncology support counselors offer short-term individual counseling and lead groups where people can speak honestly about living with cancer. Some participants come with a specific concern. Others simply need a place where they do not have to explain why an ordinary day feels difficult.

Support is available for people with cancer, caregivers, families, and those grieving a cancer-related loss.

→ INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Meet privately with an oncology support counselor to talk through fear, uncertainty, changing relationships, grief, or the strain cancer has placed on daily life. Counseling is available in person, by phone, or video, subject to professional licensing requirements.

→ SUPPORT GROUPS

Connect regularly with people living through experiences that may resemble your own. Groups are professionally facilitated and may focus on living with cancer, caregiving, survivorship, recurrence, metastatic disease, or bereavement.

> "Because of Wellness House, we learned how to carry our grief and still make room for joy."
>
> — Theresa, participant



Scan to learn more

Questions? Call **630.323.5150** or email **supportandcounseling@wellnesshouse.org**

FIND THE ROOM THAT FITS

ONGOING SUPPORT

- Cancer Support Groups
- Caregiver Support Groups
- Men's and Women's Support Groups
- Living with Recurrent or Metastatic Cancer
- Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer
- Survivorship Groups
- Young Adult Connections

CONNECTIONS BY DIAGNOSIS

Connections may be offered for people affected by bladder, brain, breast, colorectal, gynecologic, head and neck, lung, blood, melanoma, multiple myeloma, neuroendocrine, pancreatic, prostate, sarcoma, and other cancers. Offerings change throughout the year. If you do not see your diagnosis listed, an oncology support counselor can help you explore other options for group support.

GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT

Grief does not follow a timetable. Wellness House offers bereavement groups for adults and young people, including support for those who have lost a spouse or parent and for bereaved solo parents raising children or teens.

CONNECTIONS THROUGH SHARED EXPERIENCE

Some groups bring people together around age, identity, spirituality, or a particular experience of cancer.

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WHY IT MATTERS: Emotional distress is a recognized part of the cancer experience. **National oncology guidelines recommend identifying distress and connecting people with appropriate psychosocial support, including professional counseling.**

Evidence basis: NCCN Distress Management Guidelines



Caregiving can change your work, your relationships, and the shape of an ordinary day. Caregiver groups and counseling offer room to talk about what you are carrying.

NUTRITION

NOURISHING YOUR BODY THROUGH CANCER

Cancer and its treatment can change your appetite, digestion, energy, and the way food tastes. At the same time, advice about what you should or should not eat can become overwhelming.

Our oncology dietitians offer evidence-based guidance shaped around your diagnosis, treatment, side effects, preferences, and daily life. You will find practical help without judgement.

Nutrition programs welcome people living with cancer and those caring for them, with guidance tailored to changing needs during treatment and beyond.

→ INDIVIDUAL NUTRITION CONSULTATIONS

Meet one-on-one with an oncology dietitian to talk about what you are experiencing and what may help. Consultations can address treatment side effects, changing nutritional needs, meal planning, and the transition into survivorship.

→ MANAGING TREATMENT SIDE EFFECTS

Learn strategies for eating when nausea, fatigue, poor appetite, taste changes, diarrhea, constipation, or other side effects make meals difficult. Sometimes the immediate goal is simply finding something you can tolerate. We can help you begin there.

Cooking demonstrations offer practical strategies, adaptable recipes, and foods designed with common treatment concerns in mind. Programs may include **Cooking for Cancer**, **Cooking Strategies for Cancer Treatments**, **Meatless Mondays**, or seasonal cooking classes.

Scan to learn more

> “We’ve been given so much knowledge and love here.”
>
> —Maria and Felipe, participants



Questions? Call 630.323.5150 or email nutrition@wellnesshouse.org





FOOD THAT FITS THE LIFE YOU ARE LIVING

BUILDING EVERYDAY SKILLS

Learn how to adjust recipes, prepare smaller portions, use nutrient-dense ingredients, and make cooking more manageable when energy is limited. Classes range from foundational kitchen skills to plant-forward meals and familiar favorites.

LOOKING BEYOND TREATMENT

Nutrition needs continue to change in survivorship. Programs can help you develop an approach to eating that supports long-term health without turning every meal into another source of anxiety.

LEARN, TASTE, AND ASK QUESTIONS

Presentations, informal meals with an oncology dietitian, and special events such as the Taste of Wellness House Nutrition Fair create opportunities to learn from experts and experience new foods firsthand.

Preparing food can become one of the most persistent responsibilities of caregiving. Caregivers are welcome at nutrition programs and consultations to learn what may help, ask questions, and find realistic approaches to meals.

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WHY IT MATTERS: Good nutrition helps maintain strength and supports the body's needs during cancer treatment. **The American Cancer Society recommends early nutrition assessment and personalized guidance to help manage treatment side effects and prevent nutritional problems.**

Evidence basis: American Cancer Society, Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Cancer Survivors

EXERCISE

BUILDING STRENGTH, ONE STEP AT A TIME

Treatment, surgery, fatigue, neuropathy, balance changes, and the fear of injury can make movement feel uncertain. You may not know what is safe or how to begin again.

Wellness House exercise programs are developed for people affected by cancer and led by oncology exercise specialists. No prior experience is required. Classes can be adapted to your current strength, mobility, and comfort.

Programs are available for people living with cancer and beyond treatment, with select movement classes also welcoming caregivers and family members.

WHAT YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT

→ MOVEMENT DURING TREATMENT

Exercise can help you remain active while your body is managing the demands of treatment. Our specialists can help you choose an appropriate class and modify movement around fatigue, balance concerns, or physical limitations.

→ MOVEMENT AFTER TREATMENT

Recovery rarely happens all at once. Progressive classes help participants rebuild strength and confidence while adjusting to a body that may work or feel different than it did before cancer.

→ FITNESS ASSESSMENTS AND CONSULTATIONS

An individual consultation or fitness assessment can help determine where to begin. Some exercise programs require staff registration so that participants can be placed in a class suited to their needs.

> "I never would have imagined it, but the community carried me."
>
> —Laima, who began with gentle movement and Tai Chi and later completed the Wellness House 3K



Scan to learn more

Questions? Call 630.323.5150 or email exerciseprograms@wellnesshouse.org



Many movement classes are open to caregivers. Check the current program guide for details.

WHY IT MATTERS: Staying active during cancer treatment can make a meaningful difference in how you feel. Even short periods of gentle movement can help reduce cancer-related fatigue, maintain muscle strength and ease some of the physical and emotional effects of treatment.

Evidence basis: American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), Exercise Guidelines for Cancer Survivors: Consensus Statement from International Multidisciplinary Roundtable.

FIND YOUR WAY TO MOVE

CLASSES FOR DIFFERENT NEEDS

Programs may include:

- Exercise During Cancer Treatment
- Exercise After Cancer Treatment
- Breast Cancer Exercise
- Prostate Cancer Exercise
- Stretching Through Cancer
- Strength and Balance
- Restore Your Core After Cancer

GENTLE AND MIND-BODY MOVEMENT

Chair and mat yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, Pilates, Nia, and other adaptable classes offer ways to move while also supporting balance, body awareness, and confidence.

OPEN GYM

Use the Wellness House Fitness space independently, during designated hours, upon completing required paperwork.

START SMALL

Movement does not have to be strenuous to matter. Your beginning may be a few careful stretches, a seated class, or learning to trust your balance again. An exercise specialist can help you build from there.



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CHILD & FAMILY: L.I.G.H.T. HOUSE

Scan to learn more

WHEN CANCER BECOMES PART OF CHILDHOOD, WE HELP FAMILIES THROUGH IT.

Children often notice that something has changed before they understand what cancer means. They may worry silently, ask the same question repeatedly, struggle at school, or express fear through changes in behavior. Parents are trying to help while managing their own uncertainty.

That's where L.I.G.H.T. House, Wellness House's Child & Family program, can help. L.I.G.H.T. stands for Learn, Inspire, Gather, Heal, Together, reflecting the support and sense of community we provide for children, teens, and families navigating cancer. Our child and family specialists create developmentally appropriate ways for children, teens, and parents to talk about what is happening. Programs make room for difficult feelings while protecting the ordinary experiences of childhood.

→ FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS WITH CANCER

The Brave Kids and Brave Teens groups bring young people with cancer together with peers who understand treatment, uncertainty, and the desire to be treated like themselves.

→ FOR CHILDREN WITH AN AFFECTED LOVED ONE

Kids and teen groups help young people understand a loved one's diagnosis and express feelings they may not know how to bring into family conversations.

→ FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Parent programs and family counseling help adults communicate with children, respond to difficult questions, and understand how cancer may be affecting the family.

> "We talk about the hard stuff, and then we talk about normal teen stuff."
>
> —Finn, Brave Teens participant



Questions? Call **630.323.5150** or email **childandfamily@wellnesshouse.org**



Programs are available for children and teens who have cancer, those affected by a loved one's diagnosis, and families grieving a cancer-related death.

WHY IT MATTERS: Children cope better with cancer in the family when they receive honest, age-appropriate information and opportunities to ask questions. **Supportive conversations can help children understand what is happening and reduce fear and uncertainty.**

Evidence basis: National Cancer Institute, Communication in Cancer Care

ROOM FOR SERIOUS CONVERSATIONS AND ORDINARY JOY

GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT

Children do not grieve in the same way adults do, and their understanding changes as they grow. Turtles bereavement groups give children and teens a safe place to remember someone who died from cancer and connect with others who have experienced a similar loss.

Support is also available for parents raising children after the death of a spouse or partner.



WELLNESS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Art, movement, cooking, and stress-management programs give families ways to spend time together without requiring cancer to be the center of every conversation.

FAMILY EVENTS

Kids Kamp, Spooky Spectacular, and monthly gatherings allow children and parents to meet other families while making room for play, celebration, and new memories.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE ALL THE RIGHT WORDS

A child and family specialist can help you think through what your child understands, what they may be worried about, and how to begin a conversation.

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STRESS MANAGEMENT

QUIETING THE MIND



Cancer can keep the mind moving even when the body is still. Appointments end, but the questions continue. Scans approach. Sleep becomes difficult, and uncertainty follows you into places that once felt ordinary.

Stress-management programs offer practical ways to slow down, notice what you are carrying, and find moments of steadiness. You do not need to empty your mind, feel positive, or arrive knowing how to relax.

Programs are open to people with cancer, caregivers, and those grieving a cancer-related loss. No previous experience is needed.

→ MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

Guided meditation, mindfulness practice, self-compassion, and deep relaxation can help you become more aware of thoughts and physical sensations without being consumed by them.

→ BREATH AND BODY-BASED PRACTICES

Breathwork, sound meditation, hypnosis, Reiki, and gentle somatic practices offer different ways to settle the nervous system and reconnect with the body.

→ EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Painting, mixed media, art journaling, drawing, music, and other creative programs make room for feelings that are difficult to express in conversation.

→ NATURE AND RESTORATION

Garden and forest therapy walks invite participants to slow down, engage their senses, and spend time in the natural world.

WHY IT MATTERS: Mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression in people with cancer.

Evidence basis: Society for Integrative Oncology–ASCO Guideline on Anxiety and Depression.

> "I had a good cry. It helped me understand that I was carrying a lot more than I realized."
>
> —Justine, describing a Wellness House mindfulness session



Scan to learn more

Questions? Call **630.323.5150** or email **stressmanagement@wellnesshouse.org**

FEEL MORE LIKE YOURSELF

Hair loss and other physical changes can make cancer visible before you are ready to explain it. The Unique Boutique offers private, compassionate care for your hair, skin, and body from professionals who understand the effects of cancer treatment.

Appointments are limited and provided at no cost.



→ SALON SERVICES

Licensed professional stylists provide haircuts, shaving, shaping, and support as hair begins to grow back.

→ WIG BOUTIQUE

Receive personalized help choosing, fitting, styling, and caring for a wig. One free wig is available to participants experiencing hair loss due to treatment.

→ BEAUTY WORKSHOPS

Learn practical approaches to eyebrows, scarves, makeup, skin care, and other appearance-related changes during treatment.

→ WELLNESS TUNE-UPS

Massage therapy, Reiki, Healing Touch, and community acupuncture offer time for relaxation and restorative care. Medical clearance is required for massage therapy and acupuncture.

WHY IT MATTERS: Changes in appearance during cancer treatment can affect how people feel about themselves. Personalized support with hair loss and other visible changes gives participants practical ways to navigate these experiences with greater comfort and confidence.

> "Wellness House helped me reclaim the part of myself cancer tried to silence."
>
> —Carmen, participant



Questions? Call 630.323.5150 or email uniqueboutique@wellnesshouse.org

UNIQUE BOUTIQUE

Scan to learn more



FREE CANCER SUPPORT IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Join us at the Kay & Mike Birck Home of Hope in Hinsdale, through live online programs, or at partner locations across metro Chicago.

Every program is provided at no cost to people affected by cancer and the people who care for them. You are welcome regardless of where you receive medical treatment.

LET US HELP YOU GET STARTED
Call **630.323.5150**
Visit wellnesshouse.org

THE KAY & MIKE BIRCK HOME OF HOPE
131 N. County Line Road
Hinsdale, Illinois 60521

JOIN FROM HOME

PROGRAMAS EN ESPAÑOL
630.654.5529 y
informacion@wellnesshouse.org

FOLLOW US

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FIND PROGRAMS NEAR YOU

Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital
Advocates for Community Wellness — A Wholistic Approach to Wellness
ALAS WINGS
COOK COUNTY HEALTH
Countryside Church — UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
LEMONS OF LOVE
LOYOLA MEDICINE
CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY — McKinley Park
MOSAIC — COUNSELING & WELLNESS
OAK PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
OSF HEALTHCARE — Little Company of Mary Medical Center
the YMCA — PAV YMCA
Prostate Cancer Foundation of Chicago
RUSH OAK PARK HOSPITAL
UChicago Medicine | AdventHealth Hinsdale
UI Health — MILE SQUARE HEALTH CENTER
Stickney-Forest View Public Library District
YAAS — YOUNG AND A SURVIVOR / JOVEN Y SOBREVIVIENTE

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