



What is the Baltimore County Support Group?

My answer to this question is not simple. To start, I believe you have to re-phrase the question to “Who is the Baltimore County Support Group?” The answer to this is simple, but I will get to that later. It is a place where you can arrive as a stranger and at the end of the meeting you have a connection with everyone in the room. You become something more. I spent 8 years in the Marine Corps and had the pleasure of serving with some real heroes and I am honored to say that I get to sit with heroes every Thursday night. A hero is someone who looks into the face of danger or pain and says I have to keep going. Heroes must keep pushing forward no matter what the cost or pain they have to endure yet they have the grace to pick others up when they may fall. I meet heroes every week. These heroes, who even in their own pain and trials, had the grace and generosity to take me in as one of their own and console me in my time of sorrow.

My journey began after I lost my mother to lung cancer. As everyone knows grief is something that never goes away; you just learn to adjust to the dull pain of it. On my first meeting I was welcomed with hugs and open minds. I was new to this thing they call a “support group”. At first I was cautious and skeptical. From the first email I sent to inquire about the group, Karen welcomed me in with open arms. As I sat there on my first meeting, I began to realize that I wasn’t alone. There were other people sitting right in front of me who had so many similar experiences. This put everything into perspective for me. That night I met many new friends and a couple “angels” in my opinion. I was blown away at the compassion and friendship I was offered. After the meeting I called my sister on the way home and told her all about it. I was so excited and felt great for the first time since my Mom had passed. I was instantly hooked.

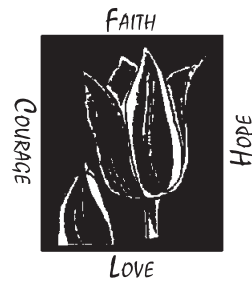
That night I met many heroes. Even more than that, I met family. I met complete strangers who cared about me and who I came to care about too. This group has gotten me through some of the darkest times I have had in my life. One of the things I have learned since being in the group is that you don’t need a Medal of Honor to be a hero. My heroes go by the names of Chuck, Karen, Barb, Ira, Cliff, Kirk, Danielle and many others that I have met in my months with the group. I can’t thank everyone enough for the love and compassion everyone has shown to me and my family.

So you ask me Who is the Baltimore County Support Group and I guess my answer would have to be “Family”. (It would have been a boring speech if I would have just came out and said that...)

Written By: Paul Hylenski

Baltimore Cancer Support Group, Inc

Conference Center
St. Peter's Lutheran Church
7910 Belair Rd.
Baltimore, Maryland 21236
410-668-1762



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I would like to say many thanks to all our board members, patients, caregivers, and facilitators. Without them the Baltimore Cancer Support Group could not exist. As the Director, I get the great pleasure in being a part of such a wonderful group. There are so many giving people who have touched my life through the years. It is good to be able to give back to our community and help those who are in need of support.

Geraldene Booker, Executive Director, Baltimore Cancer Support Group, Inc.

Baltimore Cancer Support Group

News

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Fall 2015 Vol. 25



2015 Second Annual BCSG Car Show

July 12, 2015 was the Second Annual BCSG Car Show that was held at Joppatowne Plaza, Joppa, Maryland. With the support of Sponsors such as Sears Auto Center at White Marsh, Napa Auto of Harford County, Advanced Auto, and Timonium Auto Parts, INC, BCSG was able to raise \$3,100. There were 135 entries and awards were presented for Best in Class for Imports, Classics, Bikes, 4X4, and Muscle cars. With the help of many volunteers and our proud sponsors, this event could not have been as successful.

Special thanks to Brad, Larry and Linda Delbridge, and the staff of the Towne Pub & Grill for all their support. They went above and beyond to help make this event a complete success. The Towne Pub & Grill served a variety of food to include pit beef, ham, and turkey, sausage, and more.

Next year the will be bigger and better!! Plan on more cars, vendors, and a live band. The third Annual Car Show is scheduled for Sunday, July 10, 2016. The rain date will be on Sunday, July 24, 2015.



2015 Westminster Relay for Life

On May 14th, 2015, a Survivor Dinner was held at the Westminster Moose to celebrate those who have survived cancer and those that continue to fight. The evening was capped off with a balloon ascension where each survivor and guest release a purple balloon in remembrance of those who have fought and those who continue to fight this disease. This event was followed by the actual Relay on Friday & Saturday, May 15th & 16th.

This year's Relay was held at the Carroll County Agricultural Center. Twenty-two teams participated and raised a total of \$93,891.51. Hart's Hope again represented the BCSG for the 9th consecutive year. The team had only 4 members but raised a total of \$2305.00. This placed the team in the “Rising Star” category. Dave Smith and Barbara Thorn were Grand Club members raising over \$1000 each.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

December 14, 2015 - Holiday Group Celebration - 7:00 pm.
Westminster United Methodist Church,
162 East Main Street, Westminster, Maryland 21157

December 17, 2015 - Holiday Feast - 7:00 pm.
St. Peter's, 7910 Belair Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21236

October 22, 2016 – Twenty Sixth Annual Charitable Fundraiser
7:00pm– Midnight
Columbus Gardens 4301 Klosterman Ave, Baltimore, MD
21236

Groups will not meet on Nov.26 (Thanksgiving holiday), and Dec. 21,through Jan. 1, 2016 (Christmas and New Year's holidays.)



Rev. Donald Beutel

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the retirement of Rev. Don Beutel after 27 years of dedication and commitment to the group. He has been with the group since its inception in 1988, serving as Board member, performing memorial services, MC at the yearly fundraisers, providing spiritual and emotional support to group members as well as the staff, and assisting with donations. He has been the one constant in our group, always going above and beyond our expectations and will be sorely

missed. He has agreed to be on standby when he is needed. (we will always need him).

The entire Board and Staff would like to say thank you Rev. Don Beutel for all of the love and life lessons you have provided to The Baltimore Cancer Support Group.

Baltimore Cancer Support Group

This non-profit community service organization is supported by fundraisers and donations. Participants contribute to support the group according to their means.

Need an idea for a gift for the person who has everything? Make a donation in honor of them to the Baltimore Cancer Support Group.

WWW.BALTIMORECANCERSUPPORTGROUP.ORG

BCSG MEETINGS

- > **Patient Groups** – Focus is on dealing with the physical and emotional challenges facing patients coping with cancer.

Westminster United Methodist Church
Monday evenings, 7:00-8:30

St. Peter's Church
Thursday evenings, 7:00- 8:30

- > **Caregiver Groups** – The stresses experienced by caregivers in meeting patient's needs, as well as their own, are addressed.

Westminster United Methodist Church
Monday evenings, 7:00-8:30

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Thursday evenings, 7:00 – 8:30

- > **Bereavement Groups** – Supports those working through the grieving process.

Westminster United Methodist Church
Monday evenings, 7:00-8:30

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Thursday evenings, 7:00 – 8:30



BCSG MEETING LOCATIONS

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
7910 Belair Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21236

Westminster United Methodist Church,
162 East Main Street
Westminster, Maryland 21157



FOR INFORMATION CALL:
410-668-1762

WEB PAGE

WWW.BALTIMORECANCERSUPPORTGROUP.ORG

Care, Concern, Compassion & Comfort Through Candid Communication Defines The Baltimore Cancer Support Group

What is the Baltimore Cancer Support Group (BCSG) and why do we support it?

I only became familiar with BCSG because of my mother, Gail Hart, who put her heart and soul into the organization for many years. I can remember my Mom going to "group" weekly. She spent countless hours on the telephone as she talked with individuals from the various support groups on a nearly daily basis or attended other, less formal, gatherings with the individual members as needed. I knew my mother was quite active with BCSG, first as a group facilitator and eventually as the executive director; but, I had no idea why she was dedicating so much time to it. Whatever was drawing her, I could tell it was a "calling" because she eagerly greeted every opportunity to lend assistance to "the group," by any means necessary, with never-ending energy, enthusiasm and passion. It was obvious that, whatever my mother was doing, it was making a significant difference in someone's life as it positively impacted her own as well. It was understood that my entire family would attend or support the BCSG Annual Fundraiser-- just ask my Dad! It was expected that everyone, family or not, was to get "onboard" and contribute to that event in one way or another. So, that was my informal introduction to BCSG.

Nearly two years ago, I was somehow wrangled into the mix with BCSG and landed a position on the board of directors. This has allowed me to interact with responsible, committed and good-hearted people entrusted with maintaining the integrity of the organization from a managerial perspective. Topics of discussion focus on sustainability, marketing and funding. As a non-profit, BCSG is always seeking ways to garner support through charitable contributions from business leaders, private organizations and individuals within the community. After attending several board meetings, I thought to myself, "when people make donations to BCSC, what, exactly, are they supporting?" For me, there was only one way to find out...get in the trenches and see what actually occurs at a cancer support group on Thursday evenings.

I attended a weekly support group as someone who has experienced significant losses of family members and friends due to cancer, not as a board member. I was welcomed by those in the room and somehow didn't feel like an "outsider" due their welcoming words and actions. Once those in the room started sharing their various experiences with cancer (patient, survivor, caregiver, grieving a loss, etc.), I was touched by what was being communicated verbally, as well as by non-verbal means. I witnessed a range of emotions that included sadness, fear, anger, confusion and frustration.... to share just a few. On the other hand, hope, encouragement, understanding, smiles and laughter were also present. More importantly, I witnessed **Care, Concern, Compassion & Comfort** being projected through words and physical embrace. I saw the release of pent-up frustration, anger and anxiety greeted with acceptance without judgment. Thoughts and emotions were validated, personal experiences were conveyed and coping methods were discussed. It had such a powerful influence on me that I voluntarily shared some of my own experiences, which I was not accustomed to doing, especially in a group setting. I immediately felt a sigh of relief after releasing feelings that were obviously suppressed for years. It was as though I was removing "cinder blocks" from a weighted "backpack" that I had been carrying around for a long time. In fact, it felt so good, I now attend the group sessions on a regular basis, for a multitude of reasons, and I look forward to it. I finally understand why my mother put so much energy toward "the group" and was always so excited about it. It makes a huge difference!

Why does BCSG ask for your monetary support?

It is because this group subscribes to the very fundamentals our nation was founded upon - caring for one another and community. BCSG remains committed to **Care, Concern, Compassion and Comfort** for those confronting cancer-related challenges and situations. It provides a confidential safe haven that allows for personal thoughts, emotions and experiences to be shared, insight to be gained, and development of healthy ways to cope. Your support permits BCSG to function independently, remain community-based, and not be influenced by larger institutions or organizations. The foundation and principles upon which BCSG was formed remains intact, strong and free-standing.... able to support those in need.

"What is important is family, friends; giving back to your community and finding meaning in life." ~ Adrian Grenier

C. W. Hart, Jr.