

# Pancreatic Cancer Patient Support Groups

Living with pancreatic cancer can create an array of emotional and physical challenges. Fortunately, these new life difficulties can be greatly improved with the right support system in place. While family and friends can offer assistance there are many benefits to speaking with other pancreatic cancer patients and those with a shared experience. While not conventionally thought of as part of your medical team, support groups can provide a wealth of resources, tips and helpful information.

Participating in a support group online can make the difference between feeling alone and isolated versus feeling empowered and connected. Support groups can be beneficial for both the patient and the caregivers as it provides a safe space to connect with people going through comparable medical and psychological experiences. Not all support groups operate the same; some gather virtually while others are online forums where patients post questions, so take the time to find one that feels right for you.

Below are some of our partners and organizations that understand the importance of support groups for both pancreatic cancer patients and their loved ones.

- American Cancer Society provides free support services for anyone living with cancer and their loved ones. Search for [support programs and services](#) in your area.
- [CancerCare](#) provides free, professional support services for people living with cancer. They offer [counseling](#) with an oncology social worker to help cope with the emotional and practical challenges of pancreatic cancer. They also

provide free [online support groups](#) for both pancreatic cancer patient and caregivers.

- Cancer Support Community offers a [toll-free helpline and live web chat](#) where anyone affected by cancer can speak with licensed counselors. Through [MyLifeLine](#), you can create a private support webpage to stay connected with friends and family.
- WeSPARK offers an array of [free support groups](#), from a caregivers group to a singles support group as well as in-treatment and post-treatment groups. They also offer various supplemental programs such as acupuncture, reflexology and tai chi. They advise an [intake session](#) where they review your history to better recommend programs that may be a good fit.
- [Pancreatic Cancer Connections](#) is an online social community that provides a safe space for pancreatic cancer patients and their loved ones to share their experiences, get valuable coping resources, and support one another.
- If you're comfortable with social media, there's a Facebook group called the [Whipple Surgery Survivor Group](#). With patients from around the world, this vast community can be the right resource for those looking to connect with other patients on Facebook. This group does require you to have a Facebook account and posts may not be private.
- The [Smart Patients Pancreatic Cancer](#) discussion forum is an online support group for patients and caregivers dealing with pancreatic cancer. Members share help, advice and information about treatments, symptoms and side effects.
- [Cancer Support Community South Bay](#) offers a free, virtual group for pancreatic cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, and family members to build and maintain a

support community from diagnosis through treatment and recovery. (Available for California residents only)

- If you're looking to connect with other patients and caregivers, [ANCAN](#) offers a virtual peer-to-peer support group with the mission to provide all pancreatic cancer patients with a better quality of life.
- Another virtual peer-to-peer group is led by long-term survivor Tom. Tom facilitates a space for patient and caregivers to share experiences, knowledge and support. Zoom calls are every Friday from 9:00am until 10:30am PST, [contact Tom](#) for more details.

If you are a patient or caregiver with questions, contact [Patient & Family Support](#) today.

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## Messages of Hope for Cancer Survivors

June is National Cancer Survivor's Month and we are happy to share these heartfelt messages with all those facing cancer. All month long we celebrate survivorship and honor those in treatment as we work towards a cancer-free future.

Share your message of hope [here](#). Together, let's provide support, hope and love with all those facing pancreatic cancer!

*I am an 8 + year survivor of pancreatic cancer. I was diagnosed in 2012 and had a distal pancreatectomy in September, followed by chemo for six months. I am happy and blessed to say I am still here, cancer free, and thriving! There is hope and you can survive too!*

Barbara

*Be well informed but don't let anyone take away your hope. Hope gives us the power to endure what we think we can't, to heal. Remember to enjoy life, enjoy the little things. Be your own best advocate and keep fighting. It's ok to have bad days, to feel like you want to quit, but remember what or who you are fighting for and continue. Even the strongest of us get tired and need to lean on someone else for a bit, or have someone give us a hug and say it's okay.*

Roberta

*Thank you to all the researchers, the clinical trials, the doctors, pharmacists, scientists, oncologists and nurses working to cure pancreatic cancer patients each day.*

George

*The greatest gift I have received from my recent stage IV pancreatic cancer diagnosis is the deeper appreciation of each day of life and the deeper connections I have with each person, object and experience in my life. It is the gratitude and connections that give me strength and purpose to get through each step of this journey. Life is so much more beautiful when I focus on the wonderful things I have and not on what I don't have.*

*I am so thankful for the treatment options available for me, only made possible by incredible foundations such as the wonderful team at Hirshberg Foundation, generous donations from supporters and believers in the amazing scientists and doctors*

*working hard to give us reasons for greater hope each day.*

*Esther*

*I remember hearing that the tumor on my husband's pancreas could be cancer and that the 5-year survival rate less than 5%. Boom! He was 50, and our kids were still too young. When I told my hubby's brother that the survival rate was only 5% (and I was shaking) he said this to me,*

*"So, why can't he be in the 5% ?" HOPE. Those words let light in and we began the fight! We formed our team of family, medical experts, support people and HOPE was restored. That was 11 years ago. He was in that 5%!*

*In this pancreatic cancer journey, it's hard and scary and so sad. But I KNOW that hardwork is happening and progress is happening and numbers are changing in a better direction. I KNOW that there is HOPE to increase them further. I KNOW! And so does my husband! Eleven years, what a gift! So thankful and full of gratitude and HOPE.*

*Cyndy*

*We are all individuals. Focus on surviving and positive energy instead of looking at stats or educating yourself on survival. Educate yourself in health and what that means instead. Maybe explore Ayurveda or cannabis if you are looking for gentle plant medicine. I was diagnosed in 2010 and I am a survivor.*

*Christina*

*I am a 16 year survivor, Blessed Be! My motto was "leave no stone unturned." I did everything the doctor told me to do, and everything meditative and spiritual my heart and hospice counselor suggested. Hospice was so supportive. I exercised and walked daily and ate healthy as much as I could. It was so long ago and I'm so healthy now, I can only thank heaven. I tell everyone who is interested about my story because there IS hope and there ARE angels.*

*Julie*

*Hang in there! Every new day brings a chance for hope, more treatments and cures. Thank you to the Hirshberg Foundation for all the information and support, you are so helpful and inspiring! Appreciate it all!*

*Joanne*

*Each morning is a new day- live, love, experience...cherish each moment!*

*Kevin*

*Hang in there, be strong, have resilience. You are not alone, relatives, patients and the pancreatic cancer community is here to support you.*

*Ana*

*Happy National Cancer Survivors Day! I would just like to*

*celebrate all cancer survivors perseverance, strength, passion and enthusiasm in each day, your spirit inspires all of us! It's been an honor being able to support this amazing foundation and be around such a great atmosphere of people!*

*Brandon*

*I am a 1 year Pancreatic Cancer survivor! My journey has had so many different emotions of fear, tears, pain, the unknown, but most importantly HOPE! Knowing that my medical teams and organizations like Hirshberg are doing everything they can to keep this mean cancer away and that research continues to progress gives me hope that I will continue to live a beautiful life, cancer free! I will win and beat this cancer! I am Dawnie Strong!!!*

*Dawnie*

*I am a 7 1/2 year pancreatic cancer survivor! A positive attitude is key to your recovery with the love and support of those around you.*

*Barbara*

*I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the year 2000. A state-of-the-art clinical trial saved my life. Twenty years later the treatments and therapies have advanced to such an extent that the protocol I received is seldom used. The past two decades of breathtaking research can truly bring hope to you who have been recently diagnosed.*

*Helping hands and hearts are waiting to help you. Be strong and*

*know that you are not alone!*

*Lee*

*Never give up hope! There is ALWAYS reason to believe!*

*Margie*

*To all those fighting and surviving every day...this is a new day. We have significantly progressed in the search for a cure. Don't give up hope and keep fighting because there are people you don't even know praying for you, and prayer is enormous! God Bless you and keep you healthy. You were given this life because you are strong enough to live it!!!*

*Noël*

*We will never give up! You deserve to be celebrated every day!*

*Lisa*

*What a beautiful thing it is, to be able to stand tall and say;  
" I survived"*

*Rocio*

*Wishing you years of health, happiness and a cancer-free future spent with loved ones!*



Sarah

*With love and encouragement to all who are working and educating themselves about pancreatic cancer and everything being done to support those who are affected by pancreatic cancer. We need this now and on into future when there will finally be a cure! Never give up!!*

Kelley

*You are examples of strength and we honor you for that!*

Matt

*I am doing very well after my Whipple in April of 2020. New survivors should hold on to hope, no matter what happens. I am working with research doctors to update protocols by educating both patients and doctors to signs, symptoms and risks of this cancer. Early detection is the goal! Please support my efforts by letting the associations associated with pancreatic cancer know you agree that this is important for future survivors. God bless you all!*

Laura

*I am a 23+ years survivor of pancreatic cancer. I was diagnosed and had the Whipple surgery in January, 1998, followed by chemo and radiation therapy. I am happy to say that I am still here, cancer free, being checked by my original surgeon and oncologist at least once a year with scans and blood tests. So far, so good!!!*

*Ruth*

*Wishing everyone suffering from this horrible cancer the very best and always look at what options are available to you. I am so very thankful to have some more time and hoping it stays away. Glad I had doctors that were looking out for me and offered me options for the liver metastasis. Thankful for all the researchers and doctors and caregivers who are there for us.*

*Kay*

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## **Participate this November to Help Raise Pancreatic Cancer Awareness**

“Participate” is one of our three key calls-to-action for November’s Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month and a great way to get involved with making a difference. Join us to help raise awareness and funds for pancreatic cancer research and crucial patient & family support programs. Participation, by attending an event or hosting one yourself, by fundraising and giving, or by raising awareness allows us to help thousands of patients year-round while driving research towards a cure.

Get started by telling your family and friends how important our cause is to you. Hearing first-hand how this disease has

affected you can make all the difference and inspire others to action. Whether you start a Facebook Fundraiser, create a You Can H.E.L.P. Fund or share how pancreatic cancer has touched your life, telling your story is the first step. Next, invite your community to become a part of this journey towards curing cancer. Give your loved ones an opportunity to donate and show their support.

Find great ways to ***participate*** this November!



On November 8th, join us and Wendy Conlon to discuss the benefits and implications of genetic counseling and testing for you and your family. A great opportunity to educate yourself and loved ones.

[Register Today →](#)



Love a good party, 5K or yard sale as much as we do? Host your own in-person or virtual event. We've made it easy with guidance and ideas to get you started.

[Be a Host →](#)



Looking for an even bigger challenge? Register today to run a full or half-marathon with the Hirshberg Training Team! Wherever you are, you can sport your purple while running and get personalized coaching to help you cross the finish line.

[Hirshberg Training Team →](#)

However you choose to **participate** in Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, let's make it fun and meaningful!

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## Celebrate this November to Help Raise Pancreatic Cancer Awareness

“Celebrate” is one of our three key calls-to-action for November’s Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. This month we invite you to get involved in events and activities, engage with your community, and find fun ways to color the world purple as we to raise awareness.

We have resources to help you create awareness events, large or small, in-person or virtually, in your community. It’s the perfect time to connect with local businesses and community partners inviting them to raise awareness, donate a portion of

their sales, create a unique purple item to sell throughout the month or host an event. Reach out if you need any help or suggestions!

Let's ***celebrate*** Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month!



Shop gifts that do good. From cute purple beanies to cozy awareness socks, shirts to jewelry, we've got something for everyone on your list, and it all helps raise awareness.

[eStore →](#)



It's easy to raise awareness – and support – with a Bonfire campaign. Design a shirt and share with your community; when someone buys a shirt, they not only spread awareness, they help you fundraise. Plus, custom shirts make great gifts!

[Bonfire Shirts →](#)



Engage with us through our diverse range of events. Allow these opportunities to inspire you to initiate similar initiatives in your community and help us raise awareness.

[Calendar of Events →](#)

However you choose to celebrate, you can join us in making a difference for the pancreatic cancer community!

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## **Dedicate this November to Help Raise Pancreatic Cancer Awareness**

“Dedicate” is the heart of our campaign and asks you to share how this disease has touched your life for Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. Making a dedication this November represents our commitment to raise awareness, educate our communities and share our stories to inspire others to join the fight for a cure.

Our stories express the devastating impact this disease can have but they can also inspire hope and show the resilience and courage of the human spirit. We dedicate our time and effort to fighting for a cancer-free future and our stories help share

that journey. Join us by sharing your story, reading the inspiring tributes from others, and making a dedication that will make a difference. November is a month to celebrate our long-term survivors and lend strength to those who are currently battling this disease.

***Dedicate*** yourself to making an impact for Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month!



Read [inspiring tributes](#) from our supporters, doctors, participants, and survivors. These accounts show the resilience and courage of the human spirit while helping raise awareness. Let their stories inspire you to share your own.

[Share your story →](#)



Read inspiring tributes from our supporters, doctors, participants and survivors. Let their stories inspire you to share your own

[Never Give Up →](#)





Dedicate a You Can H.E.L.P. Fund to a loved one. Our Fund pages allow you to share your story of remembrance, celebration, or tribute while you fundraise. Plus, it'll be available for you to return to year after year.

[Learn More →](#)



Make a bequest in your will and you ensure a legacy of giving that continues beyond your lifetime. A planned gift provides future funding for critical pancreatic cancer research and patient services.

[Planned Giving →](#)

Join us in our ***dedication*** to finding a cure for pancreatic cancer and we will never give up.

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# A Superhuman Dad's Life & Legacy Live on Through his Son

By: Scott Meller

I'll never forget the day, it was May 5, 2015, the day before my 39th birthday. I was at work at Feldmar Watch Company with my father, as had been the case 6 days a week for the past 22 years of my life. My father had been feeling ill with a stomachache for about a week. He had gone in for a gastroenterologist appointment but there was no reason to believe it was anything serious, it was a stomachache. His doctor called and requested that he come into the office at 3:00pm. When he returned to our store at around 5pm he asked me to join him in our private office.

We sat down and he proceeded to tell me that he had just been told he had pancreatic cancer. I sat there, stunned by the news, while he explained that he didn't know much yet, but that we'd learn more in the coming days as he began his battle with pancreatic cancer. He finished what he was telling me and left for home. I sat alone in our office, holding my head in my hands, tears running down my cheeks and a million thoughts swirling through my mind. Nothing was clear other than the distinct feeling that the lifelong security blanket my dad created by always being there for me was suddenly yanked away. It wasn't the pain that he was gone, or that he had given up hope, it was the overwhelming sadness that nothing would be the same, ever again.

Over the following days, he had procedures to prepare him for his cancer treatments. He began his first round of chemotherapy, and after 8 weeks, we received news that the tumor had shrunk. The doctor tempered our enthusiasm about this news with the fact

that shrinkage, while always good news in reference to tumors, is common during the first round of treatment, but not necessarily a sign of things to come. Sure enough, after completing the second round of chemotherapy, we received news that the tumor was no longer reacting positively to that treatment and that a more aggressive type of chemotherapy would be needed.

Looking back, I can see this was the beginning of the end. My father began his more aggressive treatment and really struggled. After each session he would become exceptionally sick and weak, requiring three to four days just to return to a mere shadow of himself. After a few sessions, he became so sick and weak that the cancer treatments were postponed until his "health" and strength improved. I remember one specific day when he asked me to join him and his wife for a doctor's visit. He needed extra help getting in and out of the car, and a strong hand to hold while walking for balance. During the chat with the doctor, he told my father that he needed to eat in order to build up his strength or he would die. The visit concluded and we returned to their house. I was helping my father out of his car, holding onto him with him holding onto me so he wouldn't fall. We were face to face so I took the opportunity to tell him, "dad, you need to eat." He replied, "I can't." He loved food! It wasn't that he didn't want to eat, it was that eating made him so sick.

Over the next few weeks his condition continued to deteriorate. In just six short months after he was diagnosed, my dad, the superhuman, perfectly healthy and incredibly strong man, had been reduced to a mere shadow of himself by this horrific disease. In the early evening of November 30th, I played his favorite song for him, held my phone on the pillow close to his ear so he could hopefully hear, I held his hand, and I spoke the words, "dad, it's okay, go ahead and go." And he did, he took

his last breath at 6:25pm.

After some time had passed, having spent many months thinking about him, remembering and recalling so many memories, there was one thought that came to mind and has stuck with me ever since. The day he uttered the words, *I can't* to me. It was the only time, in my entire life, that I ever heard him say those two words. Pancreatic cancer had broken the unbreakable, it had taken my superhuman dad.

Scott connected with the Hirshberg's Patient & Family Support Coordinator, sharing a story of heartbreak followed by steady resolve to help find a cure for pancreatic cancer in honor of his dad. Soon after, he gathered a team of employees and loved ones for the [LA Cancer Challenge](#) as Team Sol Meller, in honor of his superhuman father.

To-date, Scott's LACC team has fundraised over \$74,000 thanks to loved ones and employees from the [Feldmar Watch Company](#). Since joining the LACC, Team Sol Meller has consistently been a top fundraising team. Scott refuses to give up and continues to honor his dad's memory, by sharing Sol's story, through his LACC team, and by continuing to raise awareness.

[Read inspiring tributes >](#) [Share Your Story >](#)

*Stories from families & friends touched by pancreatic cancer often show the resilience and courage of the human spirit. Loved ones dedicate their time and effort every day to fight for a cancer-free future and every journey helps pave the way to a cure. Share your story, make a dedication and help raise awareness today.*