



# The Cancer Club

The Cancer Club • 6533 Limerick Drive • Edina, Minnesota 55439

Humorous and helpful products for people with cancer

Volume 6, Issue 2

"Don't Forget to Laugh!"™

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## THE CANCER CLUB® STORY

By Christine Clifford

*"When you get over 95, every day is your day."*

**Bob Hope**

I don't know about any of you, but I wake up every morning and think "this is my day." I may never see 95, but I know this much to be true: I have today and it is mine.

I hope you all found a way to celebrate "National Cancer Survivor's Day" during the month of June. I attended over a dozen such celebrations around the country and found everyone in attendance to be joyful, grateful and happy to be alive.

Why only three days after "Survivor's Day", the headlines in the paper and on television blared, "Almost all cancer rates are falling" for the first time in decades. That is the kind of news that makes my day!

So if you're stuck, looking for a way to make your day, here are a few simple suggestions: get a massage \*sing in the shower \*go canoeing or sailing \*give someone a hug \*finger paint with a child or friend \*have your fortune told or your horoscope read \*fly a kite \*skip or square dance \*roller skate or roller blade \*learn a magic trick \*whistle in public \*learn to cook something exquisite \*play charades \*sing in a choir or sing karaoke \*go camping with a tent or under the stars \*ride a roller coaster or Ferris wheel \*buy bubble gum and blow a bubble \*call into a radio show \*go sleeveless or wear shorts...

But whatever you do, make it your day! Have a sizzling summer!

Warmest regards,

Christine Clifford  
Founder/CEO/President

## HALLELUJAH AND AMEN!

Secular souls take note: getting a little religion can be good for your health. Epidemiologist William Strawbridge and his colleagues at the Public Health Institute have shown that people who regularly attend some form of worship service tend to be in better shape and live longer than folks who rarely set foot inside a house of prayer. Strawbridge says there's no denying that faithful attendance enhances a person's sense of well-being.



A group of Cancer Club members pose aboard the *Ms. Maasdam* during our "Celebrate Life Cruise" in April. A fabulous time was had by all!



## FACES AND PLACES

Gavin Jerome has been a stand-up comedian for over 12 years. His workshops and presentations are designed to teach people how to use humor effectively in their personal and professional lives. He is the author of *Gavin Jerome's Comedy College How-To-Handbook*.

A member of the National Speaker's Association and President of the Iowa Chapter, Gavin can be reached at 1-800-96-GAVIN or [www.gavinjerome.com](http://www.gavinjerome.com)

## SHARING EXPERIENCES CANCER BITES

by Gavin Jerome

"Cancer Bites!"

Michael, a 68-pound warrior who was waging a battle with cancer, uttered that piece of wit and wisdom to me. Here I sit, on a picnic on an Iowa June day that is so muggy it feels like a rhino is sitting on my chest.

Every year Camp Sunnyside is engulfed with hundreds of kids who are dealing with the ravages of cancer. The Heart Connection is an organization dedicated to providing the camp experience for kids who are struggling with this dreaded disease. They all come together once a year to celebrate life. This year I was lucky enough to be able to provide a program for the kids, the counselors, and the staff.

But I have to be honest with you, I really didn't know what to expect. The one thing I didn't expect was in the air in abundance. Laughter. And lots of it.

Michael put it into perspective, "This is the one place where we get to be kids again." Another profound statement. In addition to all the horrible things these kids endure, the cruelest injustice is that cancer robs them of their childhood.

"So what are you going to do today?" I asked Michael.

"Everything", he said with a smile. "But first I am going to make a friendship bracelet for that girl over there." He pointed to a sun soaked girl wearing a canary yellow bandana.

"That's Melaine. She's a babe."

I laughed for the first time since I sat down. Melanie was indeed something special. But after chemo took her hair, I'm

guessing she didn't feel much like a babe. In Michael's eyes however, she was. And soon that would be all that mattered. In a blink of an eye, Michael was off and running, but was quickly replaced by Rachael, a rambunctious redhead, all of seven years old.

Rachael sat in the front row of my presentation and laughed at everything I said. I wish all my audiences were full of Rachael's! "Here, I made you this in the craft tent." She handed me an oversized piece of construction paper with a smiley face and the words "THANKS FOR MAKING US LAFF," written in marshmallows and macaroni. "I would have written more, but I ate most of the marshmallows." I laughed again. As a gentle breeze provided a brief respite from the oppressive heat, Rachael and I talked at length. We spoke of many things: of bumblebees and butterflies and Backstreet Boys. As Rachel rose to leave, I asked her one last question. "What's the best part of coming to this camp?" Rachael didn't hesitate. "Nobody here asks me any questions or thinks I look funny." And with those words still ringing in my ears, Rachael skipped away, probably in search of more marshmallows.

I sat there in silence and remembered a quote of Mark Twain's that I recently had read. He said, "The human race has only one effective weapon and that's laughter." Many of us forget that. These kids didn't. I sat there and watched these kids run, jump, and play and unleash the most powerful destructive force in their arsenal to repel the dragon they deal with on a daily basis. I sat there and watched as their laughter triumphantly declared, "YOU WILL NOT BEAT US, NOT TODAY, TODAY IS OUR DAY."

Some of these kids will not be in camp next year. The dragon is just too strong. But some will. And this camp will give them the strength to fight the good fight all year long. I glanced up and noticed Michael in the distance. He was talking to the sun soaked girl wearing the canary yellow bandana. He whispered something in her ear. A friendship bracelet changed hands. She blushed. She laughed. Michael's words echoed in my mind. "Cancer bites." I sat and watched as these kids used laughter to bite it back.

## HAVE YOU HEARD?

**ABOUT... "LIVING WELL WITH CANCER: A Nurse Tells You Everything You Need to Know About Managing the Side Effects of Your Treatment"?**  
by Katen Moore, MSN, R.N., NP-C, AOCN and Libby Schmais MFA, MLS Published by Penguin Putnam. Now available in all major bookstores.

**ABOUT...Airlifeline?** This nonprofit group of volunteer pilots provides free air transportation anywhere in the U.S. to financially strapped patients who qualify. For information, call (877) 247-5433 or log on to [www.airlifeline.org](http://www.airlifeline.org).

**ABOUT...Baboo's Patch?** This Medical Tube Retainer Apparatus is an iron-on patch that goes inside any tee-shirt, intended to hold the ports of a central venous catheter. Named in memory of Anthony Duchesneau (nicknamed "Baboo"), the patch can be found at [www.baboospatch.com](http://www.baboospatch.com)