

# School Spirit for Cancer Bridges

## *Schools & Students Program*



*School Spirit for Cancer Bridges is a comprehensive school and student-led support and/or fundraising program dedicated to aiding Cancer Bridges. This initiative is designed to engage students, staff and faculty, and the community in meaningful activities that raise awareness or potentially generate funds to support Cancer Bridges' mission.*



Cancer Bridges | 2816 Smallman Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
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# School Spirit for Cancer Bridges

Dear Community Partner,

Imagine the heartache of learning that a young student in your kindergarten class has been diagnosed with cancer. The ripple effects of such a diagnosis extend far beyond the child's family, impacting teachers, classmates, and the entire school community. This is where Cancer Bridges steps in.

In one kindergarten classroom, this devastating reality happened. Cancer Bridges was there every step of the way. We provided the teacher with the tools and guidance to manage the classroom, helping students understand and cope with the challenges of having a peer with a life-threatening illness. We worked closely with the school administration to support the entire school community, offering resources and emotional support.

Through our comprehensive programs, we ensured that the students' classmates had the language and coping skills to navigate their emotions. Despite the sorrow of this child's passing, their classmates, teacher, and school emerged stronger, united by the experience and better equipped to handle future challenges.

By partnering with Cancer Bridges, your school can play a crucial role in supporting families and children during their most challenging times. Here's how getting involved can benefit your students directly:

- **Building Empathy and Compassion:** Students will develop a deeper understanding of empathy and compassion, essential life skills that will benefit them in all areas of life.
- **Leadership and Responsibility:** Participating in volunteer and fundraising activities fosters leadership skills and a sense of responsibility in students.
- **Community Engagement:** Students will feel more connected to their community, knowing they are making a tangible difference in the lives of their peers.
- **Educational Enhancement:** Through our programs, students learn valuable lessons about health, wellness, and emotional resilience.

Getting involved with Cancer Bridges is simple and impactful. Enclosed in this packet are a variety of ways your school can support our mission. We invite your school to join us in supporting individuals and families facing cancer. Together, we can build a stronger, more compassionate community.

For more information on how to get involved, please contact Jen at [jen@cancerbridges.org](mailto:jen@cancerbridges.org) | 412-338-1919 or visit our website at [www.cancerbridges.org](http://www.cancerbridges.org).

Thank you for considering this opportunity to make a profound impact.

Warm regards,

*Stephanie Ciranni*

Stephanie Ciranni  
Executive Director

# School Spirit for Cancer Bridges

## WHAT WE DO

Cancer Bridges provides a warm and welcoming environment for anyone impacted by a cancer diagnosis. This includes those with a cancer diagnosis, those in survivorship, those who have a loved one with cancer, or have experienced the loss of a loved one due to cancer. Cancer Bridges is currently providing nearly 200 free programs and services each month. The following programs are available to the diagnosed, family, friends, and caregivers who support them at no cost:

- Short-term supportive counseling for individuals, couples, & families
- Support Groups
- Education & Community Connections
- Health and Wellness Classes
- Creative Expression Classes
- Family and Youth Programming
- Social Activities
- In School Support



## FAMILY & YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Cancer Bridges offers a comprehensive Family and Youth program that includes the offerings above, but centers on the unique needs of youth, adolescents, and the family unit. Our F&Y program focuses on emotional and social support for children and youth ages three to 18 as well as the family unit - utilizing therapeutic learning activities, helping children and their families process and cope with a cancer diagnosis.

Our Family & Youth program also offers specialized support groups including:

- **CLIMB (Children's Lives Include Moments of Bravery):** a support group for children ages six to eleven who have an adult family member diagnosed with cancer. Children engage in therapeutic art and play to discover basic information about cancer, along with coping skills and emotional expression. A concurrent parent group is offered to assist adults in helping their children to cope and increasing communication about cancer. This group is offered on an as needed basis.
- **Pediatric Cancer Bereavement Group:** for families who have experienced the death of a child or adolescent to pediatric cancer. A concurrent sibling group is offered as requested. This group is offered monthly.
- **Teen's Turn:** for teens aged 13 - 18 in active treatment for a cancer diagnosis, all stages, or newly post-treatment. This group is specific to teens to meet their unique developmental needs. The group incorporates a combination of education and socialization to empower teens and decrease isolation. This group is offered monthly.

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## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Cancer Bridges provides a variety of ways for students, staff and faculty, clubs, and teams to get involved with the organization and give back in meaningful ways.

### Advocacy & Leadership

Advocacy and leadership skills are crucial for students as they foster personal development, enhance academic and career success, and instill a sense of civic engagement and social responsibility. These experiences build confidence, communication, and problem-solving skills, while also preparing students for future leadership roles and active citizenship. There are different ways for student ambassadors to represent and advocate for Cancer Bridges within their school.

**Advocacy Campaigns** | Develop and implement advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about cancer and Cancer Bridges within the school and community. This can include social media campaigns, poster drives, and writing articles for the school newspaper.

**Peer Education Programs** | Students can create and lead educational workshops or presentations about cancer awareness, the services provided by Cancer Bridges, or about nonprofit management and event planning. Invite guest speakers from Cancer Bridges to provide insights and training.

### Volunteering

Volunteering is important for students as it fosters empathy, social responsibility, and a sense of community, helping them develop into compassionate and engaged citizens. It also provides practical experience, enhances communication and teamwork skills, and offers opportunities for personal growth and future career development. Through volunteering, students learn the value of contributing to the well-being of others and making a positive impact on their communities.

**Volunteer Coordination** | Students can organize and lead volunteer groups to assist with Cancer Bridges' events or services. This involves recruitment, scheduling, and volunteer participation.

**Service Learning Projects** | Integrate service learning into the curriculum, where students work on projects that support Cancer Bridges while applying academic skills. This can include research projects, creating informational brochures, developing marketing materials, social media campaigns, and more.

### Fundraising Activities

Students can take on leadership roles in organizing and planning fundraising events; this involves project management, delegation, budgeting, and marketing skills. Older students can mentor younger peers in organizing fundraising activities, teaching them about community service and the importance of supporting causes like Cancer Bridges.

#### Host a school fundraiser!

- Challenges: fun run, trivia night, dance/read-a-thon
- Sales: bake, crafts, car wash
- Foodie favorites: dinners, cook-offs, ice cream social
- Tournaments: corn hole, pickleball, chess/checkers
- Online: Facebook & Instagram fundraisers

#### Create a competition!

- Tape a teacher/principle to the wall
- Coin Wars with extra change
- Coaches Challenge
- Spirit Week
- Faculty vs Student Sport Events

# School Spirit for Cancer Bridges

## BENEFITS TO YOUR SCHOOL & STUDENTS

By partnering with Cancer Bridges, your school will have a tremendous impact on our local community. Cancer Bridges is located in Pittsburgh's Strip District, primarily serving Southwestern PA residents, but extending services as far as Johnstown & Harrisburg. Cancer Bridges supports the people YOU care about in our neighborhoods – family, loved ones, friends, and co-workers – living and working here.

In acknowledgement of the time and effort these projects take, Cancer Bridges can offer various forms recognition and support to schools/students who engage in advocacy, leadership, volunteering, and fundraising activities to support us.

### **Certificate of Appreciation:**

- Personalized certificate to students acknowledging their contributions and efforts.

### **Volunteer Awards:**

- Official documentation of volunteer hours that can be used for school or college applications.
- Help students build their resumes by documenting their volunteer work and leadership experiences.
- Annual awards ceremony to recognize outstanding student volunteers and fundraisers.

### **Public Acknowledgment:**

- "Student/School of the Month" feature Cancer Bridges' monthly "CB Buzz" e-newsletter, as well as on our social media, and website to highlight their contributions.
- Letters of recommendation for students who have made significant contributions.

### **Senior/Graduation Project Fulfillment:**

- Staff will guide and support students to lead or participate in special projects or initiatives, as needed to meet senior or graduation requirements. Students will have the opportunity to present in front of Cancer Bridges' staff.

### **Networking Events:**

- Opportunities for students to meet and connect with professionals, those impacted by cancer, and other advocates.

### **Education:**

- Access to education and seminars on cancer awareness, patient support, and related topics to educate and empower students.

### **Future Opportunities:**

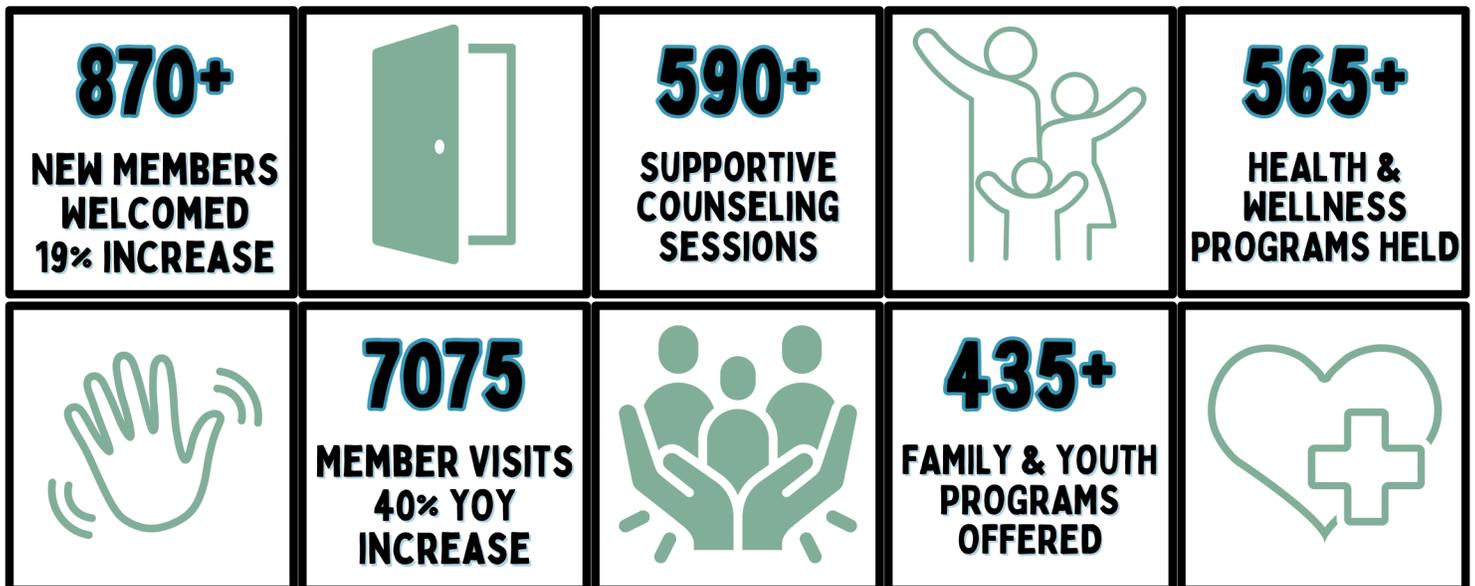
- Career guidance for students interested in pursuing careers in healthcare, nonprofit management, or related fields.
- Cancer Bridges also has robust internship opportunities for college students pursuing their undergrad and graduate degrees, in areas including counseling and social work, nonprofit program management, and nonprofit fundraising and development.

# Why your support matters...

*"When my wife was diagnosed with terminal cancer, my heart broke and my immediate worry was how my beautiful, sweet 8-year-old son would cope with such a loss. Cancer Bridges provided him with a safe, caring environment to work through his feelings and helped us work through an unimaginable tragedy. We still have miles to go, but I don't think we would be where we were without the help provided by this organization." - Erik & his son, Cancer Bridges Members*

*"This organization is very close to our hearts. Cancer Bridges allows us to escape from doctor's visits, test results, and the worry and stress of Alli's care, even if only for an evening. Cancer Bridges has become an integral part of our cancer journey, offering resources and a supportive environment for Alli and our family. The creative expression classes, different social activities, and times spent volunteering have given her something to look forward to and a sense of fulfillment she has missed since receiving her cancer diagnosis." – Alli B., brain cancer survivor & mom, Michelle*

## Cancer Bridges 2023 Impact Numbers



*Thank you again for the work that you do. My family will be forever grateful. Your organization really helped us get through one of the hardest things we have faced. Knowing my boys had a trusted adult who they could talk to meant so much. All the scary things they didn't want to say, or ask in front of me, were handled in such a child-friendly and appropriate way. The Child Life Specialist created an environment where they felt very comfortable sharing as much or as little as they wanted." – Cancer Bridges Member*

*"We love attending anything at Cancer Bridges because it is such a special place that people who have been through one of the hardest things in their lives can still gather and find hope and care in each other." – Cancer Bridges Member*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORT!**

Please contact us to get started or with any questions:

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412-338-1919



# Cancer Bridges

Every cancer journey is unique.  
We are here for you.



 @CancerBridgesPgh

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 @CancerBridges5945

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