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CANCER TRANSITIONS CLASSES HELP CANCER SURVIVORS THRIVE

CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL NEW JERSEY EXPANDS PROGRAM TO THREE LOCATIONS

Bedminster, NJ (PR.com) – August 20, 2015 – Unknown to friends and family, cancer survivors can experience just as much stress after completing their active treatment for cancer as they did when they were first diagnosed. Many face that unexpected stress without the support network that was available to them when they began their cancer journey. Some survivors turn to *Cancer Transitions*, a series of classes that teach life rebuilding and coping skills.

Recent *Cancer Transitions* group member Patricia Malizia explains the post-traumatic stress-like symptoms that often occurs when active cancer treatment ends. “When you are in treatment, you feel like you are protected, by the chemo and other medical treatments you are receiving. That, along with the care of your team of doctors, social workers and others gives you a sense that the cancer is receding -- that there is no possible way it is growing or spreading. Once that ends, you are expected to return to the life you had before almost like it never happened. However, with the absence of routine medical support, the fear of recurrence and the uncertainty of where your path is leading is sometimes overwhelming. It’s a lonely and scary time. I finished treatment in September of 2013 and was referred to the Cancer Transitions programs in October, 2014 by my oncologist. Even after a year, I was in need of that camaraderie that can only be shared by people who have gone through the same experiences and from educators who understand the needs of the group. It was a relief to know that there were other woman who had the same fears, concerns and goals that I had and receive direction from mentors who were able to impart a sense of calm and control.”

Cancer Transitions participant Darlene Shamus recounts a similar experience. “CT provided me with the opportunity to share my feelings with others who have walked a similar path. I didn’t realize it right away, but while my support network of friends, family and medical team were celebrating the completion of my treatment, I found myself worried about what happens next. You don’t see your doctors as much and you don’t want to worry your family and friends AGAIN. It was a great experience for me to share my concerns with others, and know that these feelings are normal – all part of a new normal.”

The *Cancer Transitions* classes were surprisingly relevant for alumni, Dee Sparacio, who says: “I took the Transitions course a few years ago. It was one of those courses I went into thinking I knew a lot about

survivorship and would not learn too much. That was not the case. I finished each class having learned something new. I loved the class on nutrition. I learned new ways to reduce stress. And the exercise class was tailored to the capability of each individual person so the exercises I did took into account the abdominal and pelvic surgery I had. The amazing thing about the class is that I still practice the skills and exercises I learned five years later.

Cancer Transitions, a six week series of classes, is designed to support cancer survivors, and assist them with counselling, training in relaxation, stress management and nutrition. The Cancer Support Community of Central New Jersey (CSCCNJ) provides these classes FREE to all survivors who wish to participate.

This fall, CSCCNJ has collaborated with three local medical facilities to expand the *Cancer Transitions* program to three locations: The Summit Medical Group in Berkeley Heights, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey in New Brunswick, and Regional Cancer Associates LLP, Central New Jersey Division in East Brunswick. Registration occurs through the CSCCNJ offices.

Guest speakers will included a nurse, social worker, registered dietician, and fitness expert.

Survivors wanting more information or to register should call CSCCNJ at 908 658 5400.

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