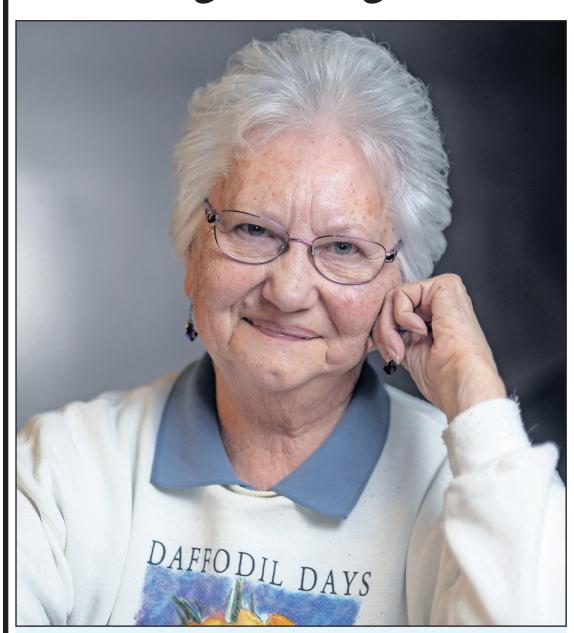
Survival and Hope Life After Cancer





JOYCE MILLER, 81

CANCER SUPPORT ADVOCATE

Caregiver for husband-cancer of the tongue

The Basics:

■ RESIDENCE: Hesperia

■ OCCUPATION: Retired health educator

■ FAMILY: Jeanne Greenman, 45, daughter

■ **HOBBIES:** Designing Victorian style Christmas ornaments. Volunteers at Good News Club, Rose of Sharon Pregnancy Resource Center

PHILOSOPHY: Enjoy serving others

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Joyce Miller's, 81, is a retired health educator. Her journey with cancer started in 1987 when her husband was diagnosed with cancer.

"They kept trying to find the location of the tumor and couldn't find it," she said.

"In 1989 they discovered it was at the base of his tongue. By the time they found it, it was too late to do anything and he passed away that

"The American Cancer Society was so supportive, I became a volunteer.

Miller said the Victorville Cancer Support Group has been in existence more than 25 years. Ten years ago, she was asked to take over as facilitator.

"We have women come in regularly and it runs around 12 to 15 ladies," Miller said.

"Some have been there almost since



the beginning of the group and are wonderful support for ladies going through treatment.

"The High Desert Church has a really good support group where they include men, and that is where I refer men when they contact me."

"One of our girls has been cancer free for more than 30 years. That lets others know there is life after

"Women get the love and support they need at our group. It's a real sisterhood."

The American Cancer Society website states support groups can be very helpful for those facing a cancer diagnosis and treatment, the organization offers information about how to choose a cancer group and who is likely to be best served by participating in one.

Liz McGiffin, is the local community development leader for the American Cancer Society, Inc. West Region. She also is a member of the Cancer Awareness Action Team, a group that is a clearing house for resources available in the High Desert.

"The American Cancer Society Wig Bank has existed at Merle Norman Cosmetics in Victorville for the past 15 years," McGiffin said. "Now, thanks to a group of women who are a part of the Cancer Awareness Action Team (CAAT), it has expanded it to be a place that men and women can go for information.

"We refer to the location as the High Desert Cancer Connection

hdcancerconnection.com. It is a place where cancer survivors can stop by and pick up local cancer support resources and American Cancer Society information.

"The CAATs are on a mission to make sure anyone who hears those dreaded words, 'You have cancer,' is aware of how supportive our community is and knows they are not on this cancer journey alone.

There will be a fundraiser and cancer awareness night Friday at the Desert Barn Brewery in Hesperia. Admission is free for everyone.

Founding and facilitating a cancer support group is a labor of love.

Barstow resident Claudia Stone is trying to expand a fledgling support group in her area. "In a community where most people must travel for oncology

appointments, getting the word out is difficult," she said.

"I am an eight-year cancer survivor. I believe 100 percent a support

"...there is life after cancer."

group is what saved me. This is my journey. I benefitted from it and I want to share it.

In 2014, when Verenice Santos was diagnosed with breast cancer, she returned to her native Mexico, where her family lived, for surgery and chemotherapy.

"My husband was with me some weeks in Mexico during the hardest times, but he had to come back because he had to work," she said.

"I was starting a new life with all the issues that come with treatments, she said. Everything was OK, but people didn't understand very well if they didn't go through it.

Santos located a Spanish-language support group in Apple Valley and joined it in 2015. This year, the group's founder, Maria Garcia, moved to Bishop and Santos became the group's facilitator.

"Nuestra misión en grupo es ayudarnos mutuamente a descubrir nuestras fortalezas y a mantener siempre la esperanza," she said.

(Translation: "Our mission in the group is to help each other discover our strengths and always maintain hope.")

Local Support Groups:



Apple Valley **Women's Support Group**

6-7 p.m.,

third Tuesday of the month Alicia Griggs 760-242-2311, Ext. 8435

Alicia Griggs@stjoe.org Cancer Support Group in Spanish 11 a.m.-1 p.m.,

second Monday of the month Verenice Santos 760-912-8805 berereal@icloud.com

Caregiver Empowerment Group

6-7:30 p.m.,

First Monday of the month Tash Champion 424-265-2235 tasha@tashachampion.com

Barstow Support Group 6-7:30,

third Tuesday of the month Claudia Stone 760-694-7218 myangellaura@juno.com

Victorville

Cancer Support Group

first Wednesday of the month Victor Valley Global Medical Hospital

Joyce Miller 760-793-4863 Joybelmil#gmail.com

HDC Care

All cancers

6:30, first and third Tuesdays of the month

High Desert Church 760-245-2415, ext. 250 Patti Lynch

implynch@yahoo.com Tim Wheeler

tim@highdesertchurch.com

Coming soon:

Men's cancer support group Brent Hubbard 760-987-8904 brenthubbard42@gmail.com

Contact the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org or call 800-227-2345



The American Cancer Society provides a 24 hour service to answer questions about diagnosis, insurance, local support and resources

www.cancer.org or call 800-227-2345

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