

# Survival and Hope *Life After Cancer*



**JOYCE MILLER, 81**  
CANCER SUPPORT ADVOCATE  
Caregiver for husband—cancer of the tongue

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 Verence 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  
Verence 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  
myangella@juno.com

**Victorville Cancer Support Group**  
6 p.m.,  
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](http://www.cancer.org) or call 800-227-2345

## 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 year.

“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 cancer.

“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, and 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



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