

The Gathering Place **IMPACT REPORT** **2025-26**



*"With support, compassion, and understanding,
The Gathering Place lifts up those of us facing cancer."
-Linda*

Dear Friends,

As our 25th Anniversary comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on the incredible community that has made this milestone possible. At the heart of our story is you.

For 25 years, your generosity, compassion, and belief in our mission have ensured that no one has to face cancer alone. Because of supporters like you, thousands of people have found a place of comfort, connection, hope, and healing during some of life's most difficult moments.

What began as Eileen Saffran's vision to provide free emotional and social support for those impacted by cancer has grown into a thriving community that touches countless lives each year. Every support group attended, wig fitting provided, every wellness activity offered, and every moment of encouragement shared has been made possible through the generosity of donors who understand the power of being there for someone in need.

As you read this report, I hope you see more than numbers and statistics. I hope you see lives strengthened, burdens lightened, and hope restored. I hope you see the impact of your kindness reflected in the stories of individuals and families who found support when they needed it most.

While we are proud of what has been accomplished over the past 25 years, we are even more excited about the future. The need for cancer support services continues to grow, and because of your partnership, we are prepared to meet that need with the same commitment that has guided us since the beginning: ensuring that every program and service remains available free of charge to those who need them.

Additionally, I would like to recognize our amazing team of clinicians and administrative staff. Our mission comes to life every day because of the extraordinary skill, compassion, and dedication of our team. Through your commitment to serving individuals and families facing cancer, you transform hope into healing and ensure that no one has to face cancer alone. Thank you for your passion, expertise, and tireless service, which makes our mission not just a statement, but a reality.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and most importantly, the thousands of people whose lives have been touched by our organization, thank you. Thank you for believing in our mission, for standing alongside those facing cancer, and for helping us create a community where hope, support, and connection thrive.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership and hope you will stop in next time you are in the neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Adam Ross

Interim Chief Executive Officer and Chief Development Officer

INDIVIDUALS SERVED:

Programs & Services Information

TOTAL NUMBER OF TGP INTERACTIONS:
6,042

Number of Participants Served.....3,675
Number of New Participants.....1,559
Number of Community Support Interactions.....540
Number of Community Event Attendees.....2,367
Number of Patient Services by Hospital Liaisons.....864

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMBINED PROGRAM & SERVICE INTERACTIONS:
20,584*

Programs:

Support Groups.....2,360	Education.....282
Young Adults.....155	TGP Kids.....547
Movement/Exercise.....11,229	Nutrition.....523
	Creative Arts.....532

Services:

Individual Services.....3,848
Wig Fittings.....670
Reiki & Reflexology.....438

*INCLUDES PROGRAMS & SERVICES NOT REPRESENTED IN THE ABOVE CATEGORIES

"The people and programs at The Gathering Place carried me when I needed it most."
-Dennis

AGENCY REVENUE

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Individual Giving	\$986,338
Events (Net)	\$898,369
Corporate/Foundation Grants	\$616,341
Third-Party Fundraisers	\$136,537
TGP Warehouse (Net)	\$107,869
Business Development Income	\$68,752
Earned Income	\$11,849
Total Revenues	\$2,826,055

Thank you for your commitment to our mission and for believing in the power of whole-person cancer support. Because of your generosity, individuals and families facing cancer can access The Gathering Place's programs and services at no cost, ensuring that no one has to navigate the cancer journey alone.

Your support makes hope, connection, and healing possible every day.

Without you, there is no us.

25 Years of Hope and Healing Celebrated at Anniversary Gala



The Gathering Place marked a milestone 25 years in the making on April 18, 2025, bringing together more than 500 supporters, community leaders, staff and friends for a sold-out celebration at the InterContinental Hotel Cleveland.

Together, guests helped raise more than \$700,000 (net) to support the mission of The Gathering Place and ensure programs and services remain completely free of charge for individuals and families impacted by cancer.

The 25th Anniversary Gala, themed “Honoring Our Past. Celebrating Our Present. Building for Our Future,” reflected on the people and vision that shaped The Gathering Place while looking ahead to the evolving needs of the cancer community.

The evening celebrated the vision of founder Eileen Saffran, whose spirit of living fully during and beyond cancer has remained at the heart of The Gathering Place throughout its history.

The evening also honored six individuals whose leadership, service and generosity have helped advance the mission of the organization: Karen Lipman Steiger, Lauren Rich Fine, Stacie Halpern, Lauren Spilman, Eileen Coan, MA, and Mary Fisher Bornstein, LISW-S.

While the gala celebrated how far The Gathering Place has come, it also helped fuel what comes next. Funds raised will support AYA (adolescent & young adult) programming, survivorship programming, and children and family programming, while helping ensure that all TGP programs and services remain available at no cost.

The anniversary gala was both a celebration of 25 years of extraordinary community support and an investment in the future - helping The Gathering Place continue to grow, respond to changing needs and remain a place where no one has to face cancer alone.



FINDING STRENGTH THROUGH CREATIVITY

Cancer can bring experiences and emotions that are difficult to put into words. At The Gathering Place, Creative Arts & Meditation programs offer another way to process them through creativity, reflection and connection.

Over the past year, 216 people participated in The Gathering Place Creative Arts & Meditation programs.

From art, meditation and singing bowls to journaling, horticulture therapy, needle arts and drum circles, participants are invited to explore what feels meaningful to them. No artistic experience is necessary, and every program is completely free of charge.



One of this year's offerings, Still Me: A Self-Portrait Photography Workshop, invited participants to explore identity through photography and self-reflection, creating works of art illustrating the fullness and identity of the person beyond their cancer diagnosis. That idea is at the heart of Creative Arts at TGP. What matters isn't simply what someone creates, but what can happen in the process: an emotion expressed, a story shared, a new connection made or a moment of calm and joy.

It's all part of The Gathering Place's whole-person approach to cancer support - creating space to care for emotional and social well-being alongside the physical experience of cancer.



MOVING THROUGH CANCER, TOGETHER

For someone navigating cancer, movement can mean far more than exercise. It can help rebuild strength after treatment, restore confidence in a changing body, ease stress and create connection with others who understand.

Over the past year, 528 people participated in movement and exercise programs, accounting for 11,229 visits.

Participants ranged in age from 7 to 95, reflecting the many different ways movement can support individuals and families impacted by cancer throughout their lives.

At The Gathering Place, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach. With 20 recurring weekly programs, plus independent workouts, people can find an approach that works for them. Offerings extend across TGP's East and West locations, online and outdoors—including Cleveland's scenic Metroparks—while partnerships with hospitals and community facilities bring yoga, aquatics and comprehensive wellness programming closer to home.

Demand continued to grow, with several in-person classes reaching capacity and developing consistent waitlists. In response, TGP added strength, yoga and independent workout sessions, along with staff to provide safe, knowledgeable guidance.

Access expanded further with the opening of a new Fitness Studio at TGP's East location. Specialized equipment and a guided open-gym model allow participants to work out independently with cancer exercise specialists available for individualized guidance. Made possible through the generosity of Karen Lipman Steiger, the studio brings fitness together with nutrition, healing arts, support groups and other TGP services under one roof.

TGP also contributed its cancer exercise expertise to the American Cancer Society-supported EXERT Metastatic Prostate Cancer Research Study at University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center. By working with patients during their existing medical visits, TGP helped make participation more accessible while contributing to research on whether specialized exercise can help people with advanced cancer maintain strength, function and quality of life during treatment.

Movement can also be about challenging yourself and experiencing joy. At a Young Adult climbing event at Shaker Rocks, participants, support people and family members encouraged one another, tested their limits and shared the exhilaration of accomplishing something they may not have thought possible.

"I never thought I could do it, but I did it!" one participant shared after completing a climb.



That sense of accomplishment and connection is at the heart of the approach of The Gathering Place. Whether practicing yoga from home, rebuilding strength in the water or climbing to new heights, people can discover what they are capable of and move forward with greater confidence - all completely free of charge.



**Pictured left: Karen Lipman Steiger
& Daniel Steiger**



WHEN CANCER IMPACTS A FAMILY, NO CHILD SHOULD FACE IT ALONE



Cancer affects the entire family. When a child or teen is living with cancer, has a loved one who has been diagnosed, or is grieving the death of someone from cancer, they face emotions and changes that can be difficult to understand and navigate.

The Gathering Place's Children, Teen and Family programs provide a safe, supportive place for families to navigate those experiences together. Through free, professionally facilitated programs and services, children, teens, parents and caregivers can strengthen communication, develop healthy coping skills, build resilience and connect with others who understand.

Support is tailored to the unique needs of each family and includes one-on-one consultations, family and parent/caregiver support groups, sibling support, grief support, summer day camp and other opportunities for connection throughout the year.

*This past year, over 100 individuals participated in
TGP Child & Family programs.*

A Place to Simply Be a Kid

One of the most meaningful expressions of this support is TGP Summer Camp, a therapeutic, week-long day camp for children who have a family member living with cancer or who have experienced the death of a loved one from cancer.

Using animals, activities and shared experiences as catalysts for connection and coping, camp creates an environment grounded in safety, choice, trust, empowerment and connection. Children build friendships with peers who understand their experiences, express emotions in healthy ways and strengthen their confidence and resilience—all while having fun and creating the joyful memories of childhood.

For families, that impact can be profound. After her granddaughter attended TGP Summer Camp following the death of her mother from cancer, Kathy sent staff a note expressing her gratitude for the care, support and experiences her granddaughter received.

She ended her note with five words that beautifully captured the impact:

"The work you do is sacred."

**"Camp helped me understand my feelings when
I didn't even know what they were."**

-Coletta, TGP Summer Camp Participant

BRINGING SUPPORT INTO THE CANCER CARE SETTING

Cancer can feel overwhelming, especially when patients and families are trying to figure out where to turn for help. Through The Gathering Place's partnership with Cleveland Clinic Hillcrest Hospital, Clinical Liaison Sandi Zampino, RN, connects patients receiving cancer care with TGP's free programs, services and supportive community.

Since beginning onsite in April of 2026, Sandi has provided 129 extended patient visits in Hillcrest's Cancer Center Pavilion and inpatient oncology unit, offering information, referrals, one-on-one support and a compassionate presence.

Hillcrest Hospital Liaison Impact

since April 2026 launch

129 extended patient visits

21 patients receiving follow-up support

36 referrals directly to The Gathering Place services



The value of Sandi's presence can be seen in the experience of Emily and her husband, Anthony. Sandi met Emily on her first day of treatment, helping her register with TGP and access Young Adult Support Services. During follow-up visits, Anthony, who is also her caregiver, registered with TGP, participated in an onsite virtual chair fitness class and learned about caregiver groups and wig services.

When Anthony shared the challenges of balancing life after cancer became part of their family's journey, Sandi offered practical coping strategies, helpful resources and a space for him to be heard.

*"I'm grateful for every person who has taken care of my wife, but I'm equally grateful
for the individuals who have taken care of me while I've stood beside her.*

That kind of compassion stays with you."

-Anthony

Whether after an appointment, during treatment or while navigating a hospital stay, having Sandi onsite provides an immediate source of support during a time often filled with questions, uncertainty and difficult emotions. The connection at Hillcrest Hospital can open the door to ongoing support and a community of people who understand the cancer journey.

"Having Sandra Zampino onsite at Hillcrest Cancer Center has been a tremendous asset to our patients and staff. Her ability to build meaningful relationships and connect patients with the support services offered through The Gathering Place enhances the overall patient experience and provides support beyond what medical treatment alone can offer."

-Cory Caranci, RN BSN, Nurse Manager, Hillcrest Cancer Center

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Founder: Eileen Saffran, LISW-S

*In loving memory

The Gathering Place is a caring community that supports, educates and empowers individuals and families currently coping with the impact of cancer in their lives through programs and services provided free of charge.

touchedbycancer.org | 216-595-9546

