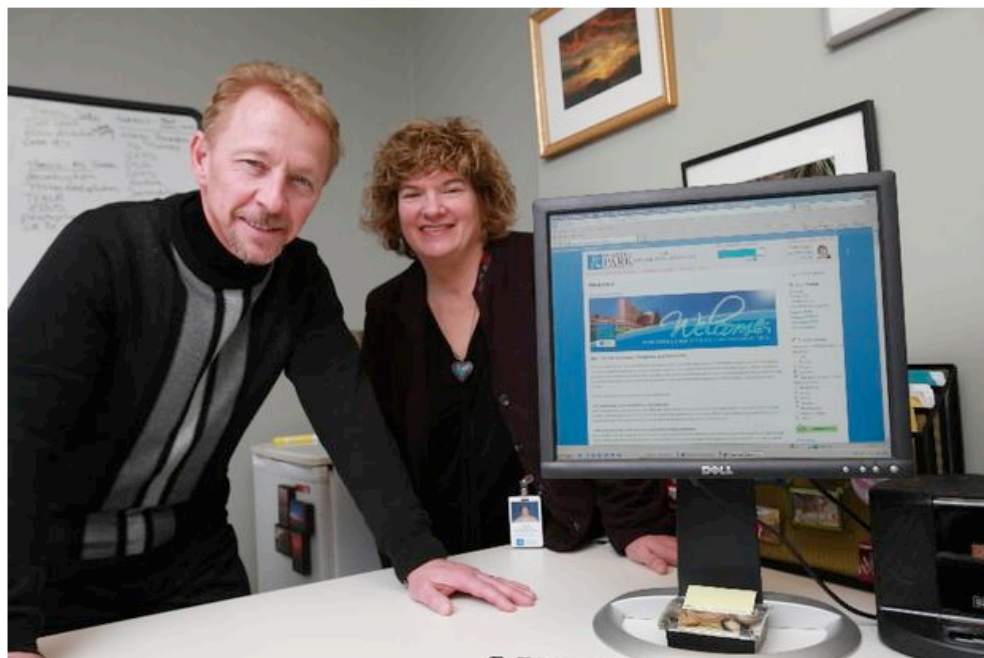


HEALTH & PARENTING » Health



A place where cancer patients can connect

By CHARITY VOGEL
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Published:
January 10, 2011, 1:29 PM

Font Size:
A A A A A

E-mail Share Print

Updated: January 11, 2011, 7:52 AM

Cancer can be a deeply lonely place -- and no one knows that better than people who have faced it.

"Everything changes. Your world crashes down," said Ken Metzger, 55, a Clarence husband and father who is eight years past his successful treatment for a rare form of skin cancer at the base of his tongue.

"We kind of suffered alone. We didn't know any better."

That loneliness -- and the sense of isolation, like Metzger's, that can result -- is the focus of a fledgling initiative by Roswell Park Cancer Institute that breaks new ground where cancer mentoring and support is concerned.

Called "CancerConnect," the project aims to bring together the hospital's cancer patients, along with caregiving families and interested others, into a warm and friendly circle of communication.

The Web-driven initiative, part of a national project that Roswell Park was the first to join, has been up and running for about four months now -- and has already garnered more than 200 users.

The site is accessible at www.cancerconnect.com/roswellpark. It is free of charge. Anyone may visit the site to read informational material and communicate with others, as long as they register with a user name and password.

"This is going to be an awesome site for people to use," said Metzger, who said he uses the new site frequently to reach out to comfort and mentor others dealing with the condition, using the sign-on name "KenMetz222."

Entertainment Calendar

BEST BETS:

Wed 1/12: Sick of It All

Fri 1/14: Chris Trapper

Fri 1/14: Thunder Slam Monster Truck & Motorsport Spectacular

Sat 1/15: Thunder Slam Monster Truck & Motorsport Spectacular

Advertisement



Do not try e-cigs until you read this report. You'll be shocked what we found.



Mom discovers shocking \$5 method for erasing wrinkles. Dermatologists hate her for revealing...



The electronic cigarette craze has been sweeping the country. Is it truly as good as people claim?

The Feed / What's Happening Now

MOST VIEWED

LATEST UPDATES

BUSINESS | 22 mins ago

Beverage maker bringing up to 90 jobs to Rich's facility on Niagara Street in Buffalo

COURTS | 10 mins ago

City plow driver sentenced for fatal crash

WEATHER

Widespread snowfall on the way

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

World was different for today's retirees

BRUCE ANDRIATCH

Trampling on the rights of those who run

SUNDAYS

Californication 9PM ET
episodes 9:30PM ET
shameless 10PM ET

SHOWTIME ORDER SHOWTIME NOW

At Roswell Park, administrators who oversee the "CancerConnect" project said they are proud that Roswell was the first cancer institute in the country to build an online community through the larger national "CancerConnect" Web project, which is run by OMNI Health Media out of Idaho.

"Roswell Park was the very first hospital to sign on," said Faith Addiss, a registered nurse who is patient education facilitator at the cancer center, which is located at Elm and Carlton streets in the city.

The reason Roswell chose to establish this sort of online community, according to hospital administrators, was simple: community and support is not just helpful during a cancer diagnosis and treatment program -- it is necessary.

"I don't know of anything that is more important," said Addiss. "No matter how good an attitude you have, no matter how much family support you have, no matter whether you believe in a higher power or an inner power -- whatever -- you are going to have moments where you just feel overwhelmed.

"Here," said Addiss, speaking of the website, "you can let it all out, 24/7. You can say things that you can't even say to your family and friends."

And, by providing a link between cancer survivors -- people like Metzger -- and those currently struggling with the condition, the website can provide the kind of intimate and knowledgeable advice, tinged with hopefulness and optimism, that many current cancer patients crave.

"When it's somebody who has been there before, it's tremendously more helpful," said Addiss, of the support the survivors provide. "Being able to access all the members of this community ... is very powerful."

In addition, the Roswell Park forum and the larger national "CancerConnect" page (www.cancerconnect.com) offer reading material and resources designed to empower patients, families and others with tools, tips and information.

Sample topics covered on the Web forum include chemotherapy, spirituality, caregiving, and there are individual pages devoted to specific cancers, Roswell administrators said.

getwell@buffnews.com

GET \$25 CASH BACK!

Buffalo Marketplace

Marketplace videos
Watch the latest offers, products and services from our advertisers.
[Learn More »](#)

Browse our print ads
It's the ultimate advantage for Buffalo consumers. Never miss another ad again!
[Newspaper Ads »](#) | [Special Sections »](#)

Buffalo Savers: coupons
Buffalo coupons at your fingertips. Just click and print. It's Easy!
[View coupons »](#)

Buffalo's Ultimate Guide
Search by category search categories

Find

Near

Latest Blogs

POPSTAND

What celebrities are wearing: Bright shoes!

CAMPUS WATCH

No clear leader in the MAC

STRICTLY BUSINESS

Gas lands, dollar stores, saving research and dental pain...

BILLBOARD

Your choice on Auburn's stars?