

It's a Place Where Kids Can Be Kids



There aren't many programs in the country specifically targeted to helping kids whose lives are impacted by cancer. The Philadelphia area is blessed to have the Cancer Support Community Greater Philadelphia's (CSCGP) Kids and Teens programs available. It's a hidden gem for those in need of some fun, emotional help, and a little education about the disease impacting their lives.

Rodney Warner, his wife Bobbie, and his daughter Kaitlin moved to Yardley in 2004. Rodney was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2000 and started remission number three in March 2003. They purchased their home in August 2004. Rodney started attending programs at what was then Gilda's Club Delaware Valley (the organization's name later changed) in Warminster and started volunteering shortly after.

Rodney still lives in Yardley and works as a freelance writer. Kaitlin was in first grade when she moved to Pennsylvania and graduated from Slippery Rock University just over a year ago. She lives in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Rodney: "I'd been treated at hospitals in Connecticut and Massachusetts. I'd also been to hospitals in New York and Philadelphia. There was nothing like CSCGP. You'll find this or that support group here or there, nothing comprehensive literally under one roof like here. Even the major cancer centers I'd been to didn't have anything like this for patients and family members. Support for kids simply didn't exist."

Kaitlin: "What I remember most about CSCGP is all the different programs they have to offer for the kids. One of the first ones I went to was having breakfast with Santa. I can see in my head a picture I took with Santa smiling ear to ear with my front teeth missing. Another program that I thoroughly enjoyed at CSCGP was doing arts and crafts. I recall that my Dad would volunteer or participate in adult programs when I was in elementary school about two times a week. On those days, all day at school I would be so excited because I would be going home, then to CSCGP."

Rodney: "It's a stressful time, no matter who's dealing with the disease. It could be the child, a sibling, parent, or grandparent. A friend may have cancer. When you're a parent with cancer, it robs you of time with your child. You're in the hospital, sick, exhausted. Because of the disease, you don't know how much time you have. You fear this incredibly important time in your child's life is slipping through your fingers."

Kaitlin: "I think CSCGP is a good place because everyone is so nice there, and they make it like a second home. Everyone there is so inviting, and you don't have to worry about anything while you are there. A lot of kids that go to programs there are going through a rough time, but being there makes you forget everything going on."

Rodney: "I remember going to what was, essentially, an art therapy program. Parents and kids were there. One young girl, in her sing-song voice, talked about the picture she drew of her family and matter-of-factly described the medical trauma her mother was going through like it was something all families dealt with. I'd heard a lot from fellow adults going through treatment, but hearing it from a child was different. I remember thinking, if what she said couldn't impact an adult, they'd have to be made of stone."

Kaitlin: "I think people should support Noogieland because the people there support YOU as well as YOUR FAMILY. This place not only supports the people going through cancer but also their families, which makes a huge impact. It is a great place for kids to come hang out and forget whatever is going on in their home life. There are so many different things that you can do while you are there, whether it's playing games, getting homework help, doing arts and crafts, or even watching a movie."

Rodney: "It's estimated about 79,000 people were diagnosed with cancer in 2019 in Pennsylvania. When you add all the family members impacted by the disease, you're talking about hundreds of thousands of people. Plus, you add the thousands diagnosed in the past, those being treated, and those surviving the disease. Unfortunately, the chances you'll be affected, directly or indirectly, by cancer are good. With enough support, CSCGP will be here if you, your kids, or grandkids need their help."

You can learn more about the Cancer Support Community Greater Philadelphia at www.cancersupportphiladelphia.org or you can call them at 215-441-3290.




**CANCER SUPPORT
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at Gilda's Club

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