

NRCI Insights Newsletter

Northeast Regional Cancer Institute

Get a deeper look at the Northeast Regional Cancer Institute- its board, staff, volunteers, and activities.

Riverside School District Mom, Kim Owens, Honors Her Late Husband Through Cancer Fundraisers



Karen M. Saunders, President, Northeast Regional Cancer Institute, Luke Russomano, Mason Owens, Mady Owens, Grace Sochovka and Mr. Dave Walsh, Riverside Elementary East Principal.

Kim Owens is a Riverside School District mother who knows all too well about colon cancer. Kim's husband, Dennis, died of colon cancer at a young age. Despite her grief, Kim has continued to honor Dennis every day.

Dennis was tenacious and believed in giving back and so does Kim. She continues to make a difference in her community and is an example for her children. She had a support team when her family was in need, and she wants to provide support to others. Kim also wants to raise awareness about early detection and screening as her children may be in a high-risk group for colon cancer as they become adults due to their family history.

Kim and her children, Mason and Mady, started a C.A.S.U.A.L. Day team to honor him. Their team's name is "Team Capt. Dennis Owens Jr." They started participating in 2013 by promoting the team on their Facebook page and asking family and friends to support them by purchasing a C.A.S.U.A.L. Day t-shirt. Throughout the years, the team has grown and since Kim's children are in the Riverside School District, she wanted them to be able to participate more too. This year, the school designed and sold their own colon cancer awareness t-shirt and donated the proceeds to support the work of the Cancer Institute. The t-shirts were sold to students, teachers, and families. Several families in the Riverside school district have been affected by colon cancer. Proceeds from the C.A.S.U.A.L. Day benefitted NRCI's efforts to raise colorectal cancer awareness and support colorectal cancer screenings for low income, un/underinsured individuals.



Kim Owens

In addition to Kim starting the C.A.S.U.A.L. Day team in 2013, she also established the Capt. Dennis Owens Jr. Memorial Scholarship through an organization called Vikings Helping Vikings. The Capt. Dennis Owens Jr. Softball Tournament began in September 2013. To date, Kim has awarded over \$25,000 in scholarships to students. This year, award scholarships were given to three Riverside senior students to recognize them for their acts of community service at Riverside's Class Day. Another student scholarship was given through Vikings Helping Vikings. All of Kim's efforts keep Dennis' memory alive and give back to the community. Kim's children meet someone new yearly and they share memories and stories about Dennis.

Get to Know NRCI Volunteer Mary Ann Eastman



Bob Eastman with his sister, Mary Ann Eastman pose while volunteering at one of NRCI's Cancer Survivors Day events.

If you've attended a Cancer Survivors Day in Scranton over the past few years, Mary Ann Eastman has likely greeted you at the event registration table. Mary Ann has been a longtime volunteer at Cancer Survivors Day.

Mary Ann first heard of NRCI when Regional Hospital (formerly Mercy Hospital) hosted a support group for cancer patients and caregivers. Mary Ann was going through cancer treatments and attended meetings with her husband. She met two individuals at the meetings that told her about Cancer Survivors Day and Mary Ann began volunteering with them. Mary Ann recruited her brother, Bob Eastman, to join her as he lost his wife to liver cancer in 2010. Mary Ann has a unique perspective as a cancer survivor and a caregiver. Both experiences have helped shape her into the compassionate and caring woman she is today.

Mary Ann continues to volunteer each year because she can relate to the struggles and the triumphs affecting those with a cancer diagnosis. She also enjoys seeing familiar faces year after year and listening to a variety of stories from patients, survivors, and caregivers. Mary Ann is mindful and grateful for devoted caregivers and families of those who have succumb to the disease to continue to come to the event and share their loved one's story.

Thank you, Mary Ann and Bob Eastman, for your years of volunteer support to NRCI.

Anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis is welcome to attend our annual Cancer Survivors Day-Honoring, Remembering, Sharing events. Join us on Saturday, September 17th at McDade Park, or Saturday 24th at Kirby Park. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m. and the event begins at 10:30 a.m. Please dress for the weather as the event will take place rain or shine.

The main feature of the event is called the Circle of Survivors. We invite attendees to stand in a circle and say a few words about their experience with cancer. We also provide survivor ribbons based on the type of cancer, caregiver pins.

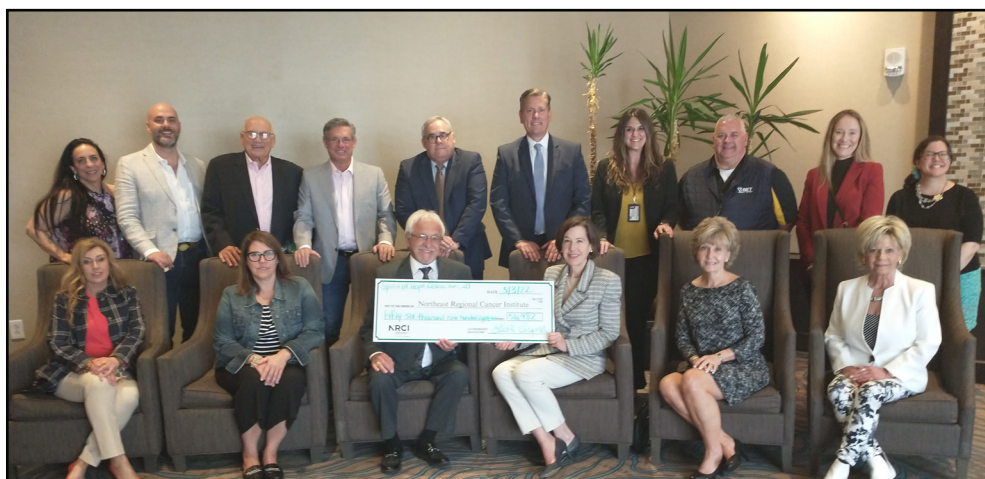
For questions and more information, please contact us at (570) 904-8808.

Spirit of Hope Ambassadors Reflect on Fundraiser Success

The Spirit of Hope Celebration Board of Ambassadors and Associate Board of Ambassadors presented the Cancer Institute with a \$56,982 check from their 2021 Spirit of Hope event. The Board of Ambassadors, a group of community volunteers, hosted the ninth annual Spirit of Hope Celebration in November 2021 at Mohegan Sun Pocono. More than 300 people were in attendance. The event featured cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, music, and a live and silent auction. Richard P. Conaboy Jr. was the Tribute to Courage Honoree.

In late April 2022, NRCI hosted the Ambassadors at Mohegan Sun Pocono to thank them for their hard work in 2021 at a luncheon. Attendees reminisced about the November 2021 celebration and photos from the event were displayed through a PowerPoint Presentation. Additionally, NRCI's Executive Vice President, Laura Toole, shared information on the Community-Based Cancer Screening Navigation Program. This program helps low income and un/underinsured individuals in northeast Pennsylvania get their recommended colorectal, breast, cervical, and lung cancer screenings. The celebration proceeds support this program. Quotes from program participants were declassified and read out loud to further share the impact our program is making in the community. A date is set for this year's event, Friday, November 11 at Mohegan Sun Pocono.

Thank you to the Spirit of Hope Board of Ambassadors and Associate Board of Ambassadors under the leadership of Chair, Leo Vergnetti. Your tireless efforts to continue to educate the community on who we are and what we do are immeasurable.



Save the Date

Cancer Survivors Day- Honoring, Remembering, Sharing

Saturday, September 17- McDade Park

Saturday, September 24- Kirby Park

Registration at 10:00 a.m., Event begins at 10:30 a.m.

Spirit of Hope Celebration

Friday, November 11- Mohegan Sun Pocono



The Northeast Regional Cancer Institute is a nonprofit community-based agency serving seven counties in northeast Pennsylvania with offices located in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. Focusing on surveillance, community and patient services, and hospital and practice support services, the Cancer Institute invests 100% of its resources locally.

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