



June 3, 2020

This was to be a year of celebration for 13thirty Cancer Connect – our 20th year of making a difference for adolescents and young adults (AYAs) with cancer. We had plans to honor their strength and recognize their courage in the face of a life-transforming challenge. We'd hoped to thank our supporters for believing in us and to showcase our accomplishments, the fruits of their trust.

And then, as sudden and unexpected as a cancer diagnosis, the threat of COVID-19 forced us to re-adjust and re-think how to continue our mission of helping teens and young adults with cancer live their very best lives. Curiously, as often happens when change is thrust on us, new ideas and creative solutions began to percolate, old ideas were re-evaluated. Amidst the chaos, I witnessed what I had learned from Melissa and all the AYAs we support. Nothing, not even cancer or the coronavirus, could steal spirits fueled by purpose and fortified with hope.

But the spirit that lies within each of us, that innate, human power that can rise above all adversity when allowed, is bearing a heavy weight today. Our hearts and our streets are spilling over with anger, frustration, loneliness, hopelessness. Like cancer, the root cause of this unrest is complicated, multi-dimensional, and long-standing. The cures, elusive and complex.

Today, we at 13thirty Cancer Connect take a break from our usual activity to recognize suffering in whatever form it takes, in whomever it resides. Today, we commit to upholding our values in every interaction and to work towards being even more responsive to the needs of our community.

*Tender Loving Care*

Compassionately nurture each person's spirit with warmth and kindness.

*Respect*

Preserve the dignity of all by valuing each person's inherent worth, unique needs and capacity for self-determination.

*Relevance*

Provide meaningful resources congruent with our mission and values by staying abreast of medical, social and technological trends.

*Honesty*

Engender trust by fostering open communication, being fair and truthful in all transactions, and adhering to the highest standards of professional integrity.

*Safety*

Create an environment where people gathering in friendship feel physically protected, emotionally safe, and psychologically unburdened.

*Stewardship*

Continually improve our business practices in order to manage our resources wisely and sustain the organization's mission.

Together, we promise to be the best we can be in service to these ideals and all we hold to be true.

With hope,

*Lauren*

