THE 2026 FALL UPDATE

13THIRTY INSIGHTS

ON HOW WE ARE HELPING ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS LIVE THEIR BEST LIVES - TODAY!

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PAGE 4

NURTURING NATURE



POTTERY WITH PURPOSE

PAGE 6

AYA CARE NETWORK

FUTURE OF AYA CARE

PAGE 3



PAGE 5

SEE WHAT'S COOKING

13thirty cancer connect — CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

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13thirty cancer connect

Our mission is to help teens and young adults diagnosed with cancer meet their unique challenges through a coordinated, continuum of essential resources and public advocacy efforts.

13thirty Cancer Connect is a registered IRS 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization.

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A Message from Lauren Spiker

Founder & Executive Director

Hello Friends,

Here in Western New York, the seasons often seem to change without warning. Yesterday the temperature was in the '70's and today, there was frost on the roof and I needed gloves for our early morning walk! I'm reminded of something Oscar Wilde, the Irish poet and playwright, once wrote:

And all at once, summer collapsed into Fall.

Life sometimes feels like that, doesn't it? Just when we get comfortable, things change and our lives get turned upside down, the world as we knew it, suddenly a blur. Hearing the words, "You have cancer," has that effect. As a teen or young adult in the prime of your life with grand adventure and plans ahead, it's like a trap door suddenly opening and pitching you into an abyss with no view of the bottom.

As Wilde said of the seasons, the walls that once kept you safe, seem to collapse around you. You're left in the rubble, hopes and dreams shattered with no clear path forward. I remember that feeling as a Mom. I can only imagine how it feels for our AYAs to hear those crushing words.

That's where 13thirty Cancer Connect comes in. We help our AYAs put the pieces back together when their world falls apart. Much like the Japanese art of kintsugi, which fills the seams of broken pottery with gold-dusted lacquer, the bonds built at 13thirty help make our members stronger, more resilient, and even more beautiful than before.

As the days grow shorter and the weather more inclement, instead of retreating indoors wrapped in a comforter, how about a walk under the golden Harvest moon? Give a call and I'll join you!

With thanks, as always,
Lauren



Thanks to YOU We Reached the Goal!

Last year at this time, we asked you to help us raise $250,000 to ensure our long-term sustainability. We hit the target six months earlier than planned!!

Here's to making a difference for the next 25 years and beyond!



Survive and Thrive

The cancer world is constantly changing, from new, innovative treatments to evolving patient needs. At 13thirty Cancer Connect, we have seen AYAs, historically unrecognized and underserved, begin to emerge into the oncology spotlight. But while AYAs are becoming part of the conversation, significant gaps in age-appropriate care still exist. National, evidence-based studies describe the unique psychosocial challenges facing this age group but we wanted to better understand the impact on AYAs in our community

In 2023, Lauren asked the Community Outreach and Engagement Office at Wilmot Cancer Institute to help, and they connected us with Dr. Annalynn Williams, a Wilmot Cancer Institute researcher and AYA cancer survivor. Annalynn knew from her own cancer experience, as well as her own research, the disparities in resources for AYAs and agreed to help. Together with Lauren and input from our AYAs, she designed the AYA NEEDS Study, to assess the met and unmet needs of AYAs in the Greater Rochester area. Both of our area's major health systems, UR Medicine and Rochester Regional Health, jumped on board.

Funded in part by the Louis D'Amanda III Young Investigator Award, a research grant made possible by a legacy gift in honor of our 13thirty member Louis D'Amanda who died in 2015, AnnaLynn's study revealed significant gaps in medical, financial, and social support. Armed with these data, it was time to fill the gaps. The solution? The AYA CARE Network (Centralized, Accessible, Relevant, Empowering), an innovative online directory connecting AYAs with providers across multiple sectors educated on the challenges of AYA cancer. After attending our training, providers may enroll in the Network, through which AYAs will be able to search for the type of "wrap-around" supportive care they need. This new resource will empower AYAs to be more proactive about their health, increase provider capacity in our community, and ultimately reduce cost and inequities. **Cancer is overwhelming enough. Finding a provider who understands you shouldn't be. Be sure to check it out!**

CONNECTING ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG ADULTS (AYAS) WITH CANCER TO PROVIDERS WHO UNDERSTAND

AYA COMMUNITY

Adolescents & Young Adults

- Ages 18-39
- In-treatment
- Post-treatment
- 5 year+ survivorship

Search for, benefit from & review certified providers

PROVIDER DIRECTORY

- Health/Wellness
  - *Primary care, mental health, dental, physical therapy, sexual/reproductive health*
- Professional Services
  - *Legal, financial, insurance, employment, transportation, spiritual*
- Personal Care/Home
  - *cosmetic care, personal trainers/coaches, massage, reiki, herbal, acupuncture, tatoo, electrical, mechanical, plumbing*

PROVIDER TRAINING

- Pre-enrollment Training
- Elective training

AYA RESOURCES

- Be informed!
- Be empowered!
- Be supported!

Providers! Join the AYA CARE Network! RSVP for FREE training!

November 3rd 9-11:15 AM
November 4th 5-7:15 PM
November 17th 5-7:15 PM
December 2nd 9-11:15 AM

AYA CARE NETWORK
13THIRTY CANCER CONNECT

FREE Continuing Education Credits! Learn more at 13thirty.org.

Snapshots



A Stream of Fun

Despite heatwaves, smoke, and thunderstorms the RCIR team made sure our annual rowing program happened, a night of physical empowerment for members.



When Life Gives you Lemons

Julia, 13thirty supporter, hosted a Pilates fundraiser at Lulu Lemon in Eastview mall. A chance for attendees to not only better themselves but also their community.



A Family Affair

Clear skies and sunnshine greeted our families as we gathered at Lauren's home for our Annual Family Picnic. An afternoon of food, laughter, and water balloons!



Scholarly Endeavors

Roc member Tatum was the recipient of our annual scholarship made possible by 13thirty Champion, Rose Ann. Good luck on the next great adventure, Tatum!



Community Resources Aplenty

We spent the day tabling for Wilmot's ROC Against Cancer Event at MLK Park. A community event bringing awareness to local resources, cancer prevention, and screenings.



Take a Hike

Members hit the trails at Mendon Ponds for a summer evening of fresh air, good company, and a few hopeful bird sightings!



Riding for a Reason

Over 1,000 ATVs took to the streets for the Clancy family's annual Poker Run fundraiser raising $10,000 for both C.U.R.E and 13thirty!



Seoul Food

Chef Robert Younger from NY Kitchen taught Rochester members how to elevate their next bowl of ramen to make a nutritious and delicious meal.



Cuse Comedy Club

Syracuse members laughed the night away at Comedy Club! Improv games and joke writing had members connecting over the more humorous parts of cancers.



Catch of the Day

Catching Dreams took Syracuse members and their families on free fishing charters this summer giving members the chance to cast a line and reel in some fun.



Behind the Scenes Preparations

Supporters from Five Star Bank took the day to help craft centerpieces, decor, and more for our annual gala, Journeys, for this milestone celebration!



Let's Taco 'Bout It

This quarter, we explored the unexpected emotions of cancer, creating space for members to share everything from joy to anger with others who truly understand.






Pottery with Purpose

They say you can make just about anything out of clay. For the Independent Pottery Association of Syracuse(IPA), that includes a meaningful way to give back.

What began in 2012 as a fundraiser for breast cancer research, Clay for a Cause, has grown into an annual tradition of "clay philanthropy" raising more than $105,000 over the years for local causes. For the past 2 years, 13thirty Cancer Connect has been the beneficiary.

On September 18th, the Syracuse community flocked to Benjamins on Franklin to browse hundreds of ceramic pieces available to take home in exchange for a donation to 13thirty. "As an artistic medium clay, allows for a wide array of techniques and creative approaches," Josh Hawley, IPA Events Chairman, explained. "This event is fun for our members as it allows them to showcase their unique skillsets and display recent work in a way that benefits the community!"

This night was so much more than a fundraiser, it was a night all about community. Attendees danced along to live music by Walking Buddy, enjoyed food and drink donated by Middle Ages Brewing and IPA members, and had plenty of time to kick back, have fun, and score a one-of-a-kind ceramic piece from their favorite local artist.

In just three hours, $9,825 was raised, making the IPA's total contribution $21,670 to 13thirty over the past two years, our most successful Syracuse fundraiser to date!

The IPA's support has gone far beyond Clay for a Cause. Not only have they financially supported our programming, they have also made it a point to directly support our members through a yearly expressive art program affectionately known as Pottery N' Pals.

This year, five IPA members joined us at the Syracuse center for a bisqueware glazing workshop. Members used stencils, stamps, and a variety of glazes to make their own food-safe cups and bowls, all of which were hand-thrown by IPA potters.

"The Pottery n' Pals programs are my favorites," expressed Valerie Lopez, Syracuse 13thirty member. "We get to focus solely on our creative process for a few hours. Not only does it help you focus on the moment and de-stress but you get a cool piece that you made at the end!"

Turns out, you *can* make just about anything out of clay, and the IPA has shown us that it includes community, connection, and a whole lot of good for those who need it most!



Melissa's Legacy Circle Garden Party

"The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry."

With great pride and dutiful preparation, our best-laid plans don't often go awry, so cancelling our Annual Garden Party due to unexpected wildfire smoke was especially heartbreaking during this, our 25th year. The health of our Legacy Circle Donors, friends who have donated $500 or more in the previous year, was our primary concern. Although we couldn't express our gratitude in person, we are deeply grateful for our donors' unwavering support ensuring that even when our best-laid plans go awry, our mission never does.

An Anonymous Friend
David & Jen Arnold
Drs. Barbara & Dennis Asselin
Joseph & Bianca Bateh
Monica & Scott Batzing
Laura & John Beitz
Jared Bertoni
Tim Berwind
Steven Bintz

Jimmy & Gina Blaesi
Rose Ann Bovenzi
Jacinda Chislum-Pearson
Jeremy & Theresa Cimino
Dr. Louis & Sally Constine
Charlie & Danielle Coté
John & Kathy D'Amanda
Marlene Dattilo
Nada Debbaghi

Kevin Fay
John & Joanne Felsen
Paul & Lisa Ferrara
Timothy & Carol Fitzgerald
Dr. Jamie Flerlage
Luca Fornataro
Frances Full
Myra & Robert Gorski
Ted Heinrich & Laura Reitter

Tim & Sue Hern
Adam and Claire Herrman - Moran
Mark & Julie Ippolito
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Sandra Jennings
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Jimmy & Maria Karras
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Kelsey Lunt
John and Lori Luther
Jim & Beth McDermott
Brian McDonald

David McDonald
Scot & Brittany McNair
Kevin McPherson
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Joseph & MaryBeth Morelle
Esther Neal
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Richard & Jean Ottalagana
Rita Palmeri

Chris & Katie Piedici
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Seth Plyter
Thomas & Priscilla Poole
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Plouto & Stacey Poulios
Brian & Lisa Prince-Smith
Karen Rector

Kevin & Debbie Rector
Gail Riggs
Dr. O.J. Sahler
Robert Sailer & Susanne Nowatzki
Michael Schmitt
Daniel Seaberg
Michael & Mae Ellen Sengbusch
John & Julie Sidou
Erin & John Simms

David & Julie Simoni
Jason & Nicole Simoni
Michael & Carol Simoni
Danny & Erin Sirianni
Jim & Marie Sorrentino
Randy Spaan
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Doug & Lauren Spiker

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Patrick & Stepanie Wischmeyer
Addy Wischmeyer
Joe & Adelita Wischmeyer
Chris Wolak
Emily Zeafla



SPOTLIGHT ON

Tom Anderson & Rev. Kate Dunn M.Div., M.F.A.

Upstate Cancer Center Chaplains

Tell us a little bit about your role at the Upstate Cancer Center.

Kate: I joined Tom at the Cancer Center in October 2025 as another part-time chaplain. We both cover three days and overlap Tuesdays, so between us, we provide full-time Spiritual Care at the Cancer Center. We spend a good bit of time rounding on the second-floor infusion unit, either seeing patients we know or meeting patients for the first time.

We also follow up on referrals we receive from providers, sometimes meeting them in person and often calling them on the phone, which is called "telechaplaincy." If patients we know go to the ED or in-patient, we visit them there. I'm a big believer in groups and am currently co-leading an expressive writing group called "Poetry for Healing."

What role does spirituality play in a patient's treatment process?

Tom: Spirituality plays an important role in a patient's treatment process. It is also helpful to a patient's loved ones and friends.

Often times, people speak of spirituality in terms of religious beliefs and practices. While this may be true for some, spirituality is broader and encompasses things that bring joy, meaning and peace into an individual's life. It might include communing with nature, listening to music, writing, creating or viewing works of art, reading... any other number of things.

The goal is to encourage patients to reflect on their spirituality and identify the things that bring meaning into their lives. We then work with patients to consider how they can use these things to help support them as they move through their ongoing treatments.

For those that are religious, we explore questions that might arise in light of their illness, questions that might result in spiritual distress. We also explore how we can support their faith practices in a time of need – perhaps through prayer, Scripture, sacraments.

Generally speaking, people who engage in the practice of their spiritual or religious beliefs and practices, are able to move through this time with an inner strength and resilience.

What are common misconceptions about the services you provide?

Kate: Sometimes people think we have an agenda, that when we come by to visit patients, we want to pray with them or impart spiritual messages. Or people may feel afraid of being judged, because religion has become equated in so many people's minds with judgment and hypocrisy. So, part of our initial work involves allaying those anxieties, communicating that we're here to listen, to be present to you wherever you are, because what you're going through right now is hard. And you have permission to feel whatever you're feeling and ask challenging questions of the universe or God or whatever your spiritual framework is.

You have both referred patients to our programs. What value do you feel 13thirty offers for a patient's overall wellbeing?

Tom: 13thirty is a wonderful resource for patients that may not necessarily be served by traditional programs and services. I remember meeting with some young adults who expressed interest – a need, actually - in connecting with a program or service geared toward people their age. They said that the issues and difficulties they are dealing with, emotionally, physically and spiritually, can be very different than older adults. Being able to engage with people their own age dealing with similar circumstances is not just important, it's helpful in navigating a new, profoundly impactful experience.

Last spring, we received an invitation to attend "Sometimes You Just Gotta Laugh." Not only did we laugh the whole evening, but we appreciated the amazing work that 13thirty does helping youth and young adults come to terms with some of the most difficult experiences people their age go through while making incredible art in the process. We're big fans of this organization!

Thanks, Kate and Tom for laughing with us!



13thirty cancer connect
1000 Elmwood Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620

MAKE A DIFFERENCE - DONATE TODAY!



Will you help keep the promise?

"If you've learned anything from me through all of this, do something with it to make a difference, to make things better."
Melissa Marie Sengbusch, 1981 - 2000

Please make checks payable to: 13thirty Cancer Connect
1000 Elmwood Ave., Rochester, NY 14620

DONATE ONLINE!
13thirty.org

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@mllf_13thirtyCancerConnect