



## Acts of Kindness Program



“To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.”  
-Anonymous

### **OUR MISSION**

Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting the emotional and non-medical needs of cancer patients and their caregivers in our community. *We support cancer patients in treatment at an individual level, regardless of diagnosis, age, race, gender or socio-economic status.*

### **ACTS OF KINDNESS PROGRAM**

In 2001, a dedicated circle of friends who volunteered with cancer patients at Virginia Oncology Associates (VOA) determined that food was an effective vehicle to feed the emotional needs of patients – and our Acts of Kindness program was born. More than a decade later, hundreds of volunteers serve savory sandwiches, snacks and beverages to nearly 1800 patients each week. The emotional support cancer patients and their caregivers receive through our Acts of Kindness program helps reduce the stress of treatment itself, provide morale in maintaining daily routines during treatment, and contributes to their quality of life. At Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater, we have found that food can do more than just physically nourish. Food can start a conversation, calm a fear, foster a friendship and restore dignity.

### **HOW IT WORKS**

The Acts of Kindness program generally takes place between 11AM-1PM, Monday through Friday, at 9 Virginia Oncology Associates infusion clinics in Hampton Roads and northeast North Carolina. Teams of volunteers gather at each location to serve a variety of foods and drink to patients undergoing treatment that day, including, sandwiches, cookies, brownies, jello, pudding, pretzels and chips. While distributing savory snacks to patients, Acts of Kindness volunteers meet patients and caregivers with open hearts, eager ears and kind words. Our volunteers connect with patients and caregivers to create friendships, ease fears, reduce stress and instill hope. *The primary purpose of our Acts of Kindness volunteer food service is not to nourish patients, instead, our food service becomes a vehicle to provide emotional support to patients and families.* Some volunteers have special talents they share, such as classical guitar or reading aloud, which help to create a relaxing environment for patients. As a volunteer with Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater you are a part of a community of patients, caregivers, survivors and medical professionals. We encourage you to embrace that community by sharing your joys, sorrows, triumphs and hardships.

## **WHO ARE OUR VOLUNTEERS?**

The vast majority of our volunteers are themselves cancer patients, cancer survivors or caregivers who donate their time and talent to “pay forward” the kindness and comfort they received from Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater during their treatment. However, not all our volunteers fit this profile – many are simply kind-hearted individuals who have had the blessing of never being touched by cancer and simply want to give back to their community in a meaningful way. Because Acts of Kindness volunteers generally volunteer between 11AM-1PM, Monday through Friday, most of our volunteers are retired individuals or individuals with flexible work schedules. The summer months often provide greater flexibility, giving students the opportunity to volunteer. Many volunteers also choose to join us at other events supporting Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater in the community, such as Just Walk for Liz, our Marie Hadley Memorial Bake Sale or Dive for a Cure.

## **ARE WE THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOU?**

The Acts of Kindness volunteer program requires no special skill or professional training. All you need is an open heart, a caring spirit and a willingness to listen. *What we do require is a minimum volunteer commitment of three months.* The purpose of our program is to provide emotional support to patients in treatment and to foster feelings of comfort and kindness. We are best able to provide this type of support when patients and caregivers have a familiarity with our volunteers. Additionally, we find that our volunteers become better listeners and gain confidence in the value of their work over time. Since our goal is to bring people together at the intersection where medicine meets humanity, we find that the familiarity that comes with long-term volunteering best suits our program. In addition to our three month time commitment, we do require volunteers to provide their own transportation to the volunteer site.

## **THE NEXT STEP**

If the Acts of Kindness program sounds like the right fit for you, please complete the attached application and return it to our office by fax or mail at the address listed on the back of this brochure. Please call us if you have any questions or require more information. Thank you for your interest in Cancer Care Foundation of Tidewater.

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**We fight cancer with kindness.**

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