We’re Back!

Welcome to the third issue of the GildaGram! As spring flowers poke up from the earth, we celebrate a new season in the history of Gilda’s Club as we celebrate re-opening our red doors.

The six months of flood recovery were a time of trial but also hope and inspiration. We truly wouldn’t be here today without all of your support, from financial gifts to donating needed items for our clubhouse to the volunteer work of scrubbing, unpacking, and organizing. Thank you from all of us.

Best wishes,

Lindsey

Stronger Than Water

On August 20th, more than 500,000 gallons of water poured into the clubhouse. At the high point, 12 feet of water filled Noogieland.

The clubhouse sustained more than $1.4 million in damage. We reached out to the community to help us raise the $100,000 deductible for our $1 million flood insurance policy, plus the updates needed to prevent future flooding.

We were overwhelmed by the response. Over 600 individuals, companies, and foundations donated more than $264,000 in financial support and in kind donations. Dozens of volunteers helped restore the clubhouse. J.P Cullen completed the resoration work on the clubhouse at cost.

Gilda’s officially re-opened our red doors on March 4th, and celebrated our grand re-opening on March 14th.

“We didn’t have to face this flood alone.”

On March 14th, Gilda’s Club Executive Director and CEO Lannia Stenz happily cut the ribbon symbolizing our joyful return. She was joined by Middleton Mayor Gurdip Brar.

“Just like Gilda’s Club helps ensure no one faces cancer alone, we didn’t have to face this flood alone. If not for the immense community response, we would not be reopening our doors today,” shared Lannia Stenz, Gilda’s Club Madison’s Executive Director/CEO at our Grand Re-Opening.

She continued, “Gilda’s Club Worldwide once told our founders that they didn’t think our community was large enough to support a Gilda’s Club. What they didn’t understand was the depth and breadth of generosity and heart that make our community strong.”

Because of you, our red doors are open once again to families touched by cancer.
I had never heard of Gilda’s Club, but I did know who Gilda Radner was, so I naturally assumed it was a comedy club. We were searching for fun things to do in our new community, so as soon as I got home I sat at my computer and Googled “Gilda’s Club + Madison.”

Little did I know that what I was about to learn would change all of our lives for the better. It was a total coincidence how I stumbled upon Gilda’s Club, but their mission certainly hit close to home. Coincidentally, it was a cancer diagnosis that brought our family back to Wisconsin. My wife Jackie was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in November of 2007, she was only 28 and an otherwise perfectly healthy woman with no history of ovarian cancer in her family.

Fortunately, Jackie’s story has a happy ending. They removed her tumor and her treatment was a complete success. This November, she will celebrate 12 years of being cancer free! However, although her doctors were very optimistic about her treatment, that didn’t make the experience any less frightening while we were going through treatment. I say “we” because as anyone who has dealt with a cancer diagnosis will tell you, it doesn’t simply affect the person going through treatment, it affects the entire family. Jackie and I didn’t have much family in CO, most of our support systems

That was my first thought when I ran by Gilda’s Club for the first time back in June of 2010. My family had just relocated back to Wisconsin after living in Colorado for eight years. I was out for a run and took the path behind the clubhouse when I noticed a Gilda’s Club banner.

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We give to Gilda’s Club because of our strong belief in the importance of emotional support when dealing with cancer. We’ve lived it ourselves. The least we can do is our little part to help those that don’t have access to the same support systems that we were fortunate enough to have. Or, as Payton puts it, “It makes me feel good when I help them feel good.” I couldn’t have said it better myself!
To learn more about joining Gilda’s Legacy Circle, please contact Lindsey Dalton at lindsey@gildasclubmadison.org or call (608)828-8880.

We know that you support Gilda’s Club Madison because you believe in what we do and you want to support families touched by cancer. While our program activities are offered free of charge to our members, our programs are not without cost. We rely on the generosity of our community to keep our programs available and free to our members.

Legacy or planned gifts help Gilda’s Club Madison plan for the future because they will be realized at a later date.

When you leave a legacy gift to Gilda’s Club Madison, you make a lasting impact on those touched by cancer. Your gift will stay in our community and will directly support families touched by cancer in Southwest Wisconsin.

When you designate Gilda’s Club Madison to receive a legacy gift of any amount, you will become a part of the Gilda’s Legacy Circle. Please contact Lindsey Dalton, Development Director, to learn more.

Leaving a Legacy

A Grand Re-Opening

On March 4th, we officially re-opened our red doors, a feat that would not have been possible without the hard work and contributions of over 600 people. It truly took a village to rebuild our clubhouse.

Upcoming Public Events at a Glance

- Genetics, Cancer, and You: Wed., June 6th, 6:00 pm at the clubhouse. This presentation will define genetic counseling and for whom genetic counseling and genetic testing is appropriate.
- 4K for Cancer Lunch: Wed., June 26th at 11:30 am at the clubhouse. Join an amazing group of students as they bike from Baltimore to Seattle.
- Frankly Speaking about Cancer: Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia: Mon., July 8th, 5:30-7:00 pm at the clubhouse; Join us for a free workshop featuring ways to help manage the physical and psychological effects of the disease and its treatment. Dr. Vaishalee Kenkre will speak.

To register or see our complete calendar of events, visit our website: www.GildasClubMadison.org or call (608)828-8880.
In 2009, at the age of 26, Marc heard those dreaded words: “You have cancer.”

At the end of his treatment, he learned about Gilda’s Club. Other than one person he met through treatment, he said that it was in the Young Survivors group at Gilda’s that he first found people his age that had faced cancer.

“It was so helpful to not feel isolated and to meet so many other people my age that were worried about the same thing,” he shares. “I quickly made a lot of friends in this group.”

From 2009 to 2015, Marc only missed one meeting of Young Survivors. When his brother Bryan was diagnosed with a different cancer, he commuted from Milwaukee for the meetings.

Later, when Bryan received a bone marrow transplant, he would attend the meetings via Skype from the hospital. “It was really important for him to feel connected...our group was always the highlight of his month,” shares Marc.

Young Survivors is a monthly support group for adults in their 20s, 30s and early 40s with a cancer connection. It addresses the unique concerns of young adults facing cancer.

In Marc’s words, “It’s people offering resources, support, and friendship. It’s a place where you belong...you don’t have to feel alone.”

The Young Survivors group is one of several monthly support groups at Gilda’s. Monthly support groups are aimed at bringing together members who share a common bond related to cancer, whether it’s their age or specific type of cancer or interests.

Young Survivors helps young people facing cancer connect with others with similar experiences. Marc shares, “It’s helpful for me to come to the group...but it also allows me to help other people not feel alone.”

In 2009, Young Survivors is made possible by a generous program sponsorship from Electronic Theater Controls.