

CREATING A SPACE FOR HEALING: THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE CANCER SURVIVORS PARK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Often, when contrasting a life filled with joy, love, and fulfillment with a simple existence, we say that someone is “thriving, not just surviving.” But in the case of surviving cancer, “surviving” represents so much more than just carrying on. Being a survivor means meeting the worst possible fears head-on, living through it, and finding new meaning and purpose in life.

Our goal is create a space to honor survivors for the challenges they’ve overcome and the choices they’ve made to find the good in the bad, and joy in the journey. We also want to share this survivor spirit with the community at large, both educating our friends and neighbors about cancer and encouraging a communal atmosphere where people can get healthy and heal together to become survivors.

<Client> has joined with a number of partners to design and build the Cancer Survivors Park in the heart of town. This one-of-a-kind park, replete with gardens, hiking paths, and a central gathering place, will serve as a resource, a preserve, and a source of peace and contemplation. This living space will help survivors continue the journey they began during treatment, with each step along the paths of this park becoming a journey itself.

The investment required to complete the Cancer Survivors Park is \$4.5 million. The plans are complete, the ground is waiting to be broken, and the community is ready to show its support and survivor spirit. All that’s left to make this amazing plan a reality is you.

*“One touch of nature makes
the whole world kin.”*

~ William Shakespeare

INTRODUCTION

Imagine a place so tranquil, so peaceful and energizing, that you could forget the rigors of your day, leave anxiety at its threshold, and wring cares from your body and mind. Even if you had cancer

The Cancer Survivors Park will be just such a place. Here, natural beauty weaves together messages of hope and images of renewal to promote a sense of energy, rejuvenation, and strength. Here, individuals can enjoy a peaceful moment of contemplation or engage with their community in constructive, comforting activities.

Cultivated from rough and untouched land will spring thoughtfully designed sculptures and meditation gardens, winding paths, and gathering places. At the center will be the awe-inspiring Celebration of Hope Pavilion, which draws one's gaze upward, ever hopeful. The spaces were specifically designed to encourage looking inward to find courage as well as outward to find inspiration. Just as survivors find beauty and hope even amidst challenges of cancer, the designers of this park have pulled back the vines to reveal natural beauty thriving beneath.

The seeds of this park were sown 13 years ago as part of a teenager's project to provide an enhanced view for chemotherapy patients. Today, despite challenges and set-backs along the way, those seeds are blossoming into a true space for healing. With your help, we can build together a gift to mind, body, and spirit that reminds us of what many survivors call the "gift of cancer": the realization that time is precious and that it is within our power to live each moment to its fullest.



WHY A CANCER SURVIVORS PARK?

Prior to 1969, cancer was not something you talked about in public. You certainly never shared this diagnosis with others. As a result, millions suffered and died in quiet isolation. The 1969 declaration of a "War on Cancer" marked a turning point in how we perceived cancer and those who had it. It was time to bring the subject out into the light.

This seminal moment was both a blessing and a curse. At once, cancer had the spotlight, a boon for research and a kind of validation for people who had been suffering in silence.

Unfortunately, with the attention came the anxiety, the stigma, and the clinical desire to treat and cure rather than to heal. Patients were out of the dark and under the national microscope, perceived as a growing population just waiting for death to come.

Today, our perceptions are shifting again. According to the American Cancer Society, the five-year survival rates have risen from 49% in the 1970s to 67% in the early 2000s. Physicians are now treating cancer as a long-term, chronic disease to be managed, not a death sentence whose only answer is time and palliative care. And, as our doctors have begun to see the light, so too has society in general. We're wearing pink ribbons, we're running in races, we're cutting our hair to support our friends who have taken off their wigs to proudly display a post-chemo pate. We're supporting those with cancer but, more importantly, we're emulating the survivor spirit, making it our own.

As more people with cancer work to win their battle, the need to support their recovery and rejuvenation grows ever more important. Hospitals often have healing programs and gardens but it is crucial when in treatment and in recovery to find a place that provides comfort and solace within the community. The Park will serve as just such a place, inviting cancer survivors into the fabric of the community, helping distract from the rigors of treatment and focusing on the living – not simply “getting through” treatment. Today's challenge is to create a space for healing for our survivors while changing our own perceptions – from seeing cancer as a death sentence to seeing it as an opportunity for growth and change--and supporting our friends and neighbors by providing a central location for them to heal mind, body, and soul.



There is life after diagnosis, and our goal is to help survivors make the most of life with and after cancer.

CREATING A SPACE TO HEAL

Our Vision

While most cancer patients are familiar with the healing spaces at their treatment facilities and hospitals, few have access to such spaces when their treatment is over and their recovery begins. Instead, they leave the serenity of these places and return to the rush and cacophony of daily life. Over half of all cancer patients experience some form of fear, confusion, or loneliness, feelings that can lead to psychological and physical damage. The Cancer Survivors Park is the natural antidote to these negative effects.

We have all seen patients' and survivors' spirits lifted after spending a few quiet moments post-treatment in a park or garden. Until now, however, the emphasis has been on providing a separate space for them to just be away from the hustle and bustle of treatment and life. By contrast, the Cancer Survivors Park encourages all walks of life to become active participants in the natural surroundings. Unlike the other beautiful Greenville parks, however, this space is not just another pretty space.

It is a venue intentionally designed to provide visitors with a journey blessed with many possible pathways. Visitors can seek out healing gardens and meditation spaces when they need peace and solitude, or wend their way along the paths, engaging with their fellow survivors, reading inspirational message, when they yearn for a more communal experience.

The goal is not simply take in the sights, but to engage, to become aware of nature's infinite cycles of change and renewal, and to draw the parallel between these inevitable changes and those which the survivor is experiencing.

The Plan

The Park will be situated on a 26 acre site in the very heart of downtown. To the south is the Church Street Bridge, which serves as a main artery to downtown and the pastoral, scenic Falls Park. To the east is the Cleveland Street Bridge, which connects to the more urban, mixed use Cleveland Park. Across the ravine is the innovation corridor which borders the County Square and the Governors School for the Arts. The beautiful Swamp Rabbit Trail will run through the



Cancer Survivors Park, connecting it seamlessly to the outer boundaries of Greenville. Truly, this park is in prime location and will serve as a literal and metaphoric bridge connecting the city's wonderful parks with areas of commerce, education, art, innovation, and community activity. Only this park, however, will offer a space where nature and art, mind, body and spirit come together to promote healing. Only this park invites visitors to walk deliberately and experience consciously.

Whether ringing the survivor bell to mark another milestone, visiting the chapel to say a prayer for a friend battling cancer, or meeting and making friends at the education kiosk to learn about a new fitness program, the benefits of this special space will engage the mind, energize the body, and lift the spirits of survivors and the community at large. The overarching goal is to create a space which promotes the following goals:

- **Respite and Rejuvenation** – Creation of a peaceful place with visible emphasis on the continuity of life and the healing impact of nature
- **Hope** – Development of a tangible and enduring association between cancer and survivorship and establishment of meaningful relationships among cancer survivors and their families
- **Inspiration/Motivation** – Use of space, sculpture, words and activities designed to inspire and provide a spiritual and moving experience that encourages individuals to cultivate attitudes of self-efficacy and take action to enhance their own well-being
- **Education and Behavior Change**– Innovative presentation of general and specific information about what to do to avoid cancer, engage in appropriate screening, detection and treatment, and learn to live beyond cancer
- **Empowerment** – Promotion of both direct and subtle messages of living beyond cancer, evidence of individuals who have used cancer as a prompt to re-evaluate their priorities and use it as a positive turning-point to reach their greater potential and to provide specific activities that promote individual action toward enhanced well-being
- **Celebration** – Provide a venue for the entire community to come together to honor all those impacted by cancer – no matter where they are along the path in their personal cancer journey

“Touch the earth, love the earth, honor the earth, her plains, her valleys, her hills and her seas; rest your spirit in her solitary places”

~ Earnest Dimnet

WHY GIVE?

Our city is a vibrant community with wonderful non-profit art and cultural groups and world class healthcare and educational institutions, so why should you consider making this cause a top philanthropic priority? Cancer truly does touch all of us. You now have the opportunity to invest in a one-of-a-kind project that achieves so many goals at once. With your gift, you can:

- Create a space for survivors and family members to enjoy and meet with those experiencing the same challenges and opportunities
- Honor a loved one or inspire a visitor you've never met
- Build a space to support your own journey (following your diagnosis or the loss of a loved one)
- Provide a resource for your friends and neighbors to learn about cancer and get healthy together
- Bring together so many disparate groups to unite under the banner of a singular cause

How many opportunities have you had in your lifetime to touch so many people in such a deep, meaningful, and lasting way?

WHY US? WHY NOW?

<Client> has been the guiding force behind this dream and has now brought all the necessary elements together. We led the charge in obtaining all the requirements, licenses, and rights of way to develop this property and brought together disparate – and often, at odds-- city organizations, REWA, the Naturaland Trust and all other organizations to not only gain approvals but to build a team of collaborators

To say that there will never be another time to act is not hyperbole. If we don't purchase this piece of land for the Cancer Survivors Park now, we will lose the opportunity to build here. This space will become simply another part of the Trail, rather than the extraordinary and purposeful destination we have planned. Timing is critical for all major building efforts, but if we don't act together now, this once in a lifetime opportunity will pass us by.

“Every action of our lives touches on some chord that will vibrate in eternity.”

~ Sean O'Casey

After years of research, focus groups with survivors and caregivers, and garnering opinions and support of stakeholders, the ideal setting for this healing space has revealed itself. All necessary pieces are now in alignment. All the pieces save one: you.

The projected cost for The Cancer Survivors Park is \$4.5 million. We are seeking charitable investment to fund construction and landscaping of the Park and to create an endowment to support the City Parks and Recreation Department which will maintain the site (and any future expansion) for the long-term. In addition to the desire to provide a healing space for the community, there are a number of tangible benefits to investing in this project including urban renewal, education on cancer prevention and treatment (resulting in a healthier community), and celebrating the life of a survivor in your life.

YOU CAN HELP CREATE A SPACE FOR HEALING

Every day we are faced with choices and opportunities. We can choose to face a devastating prognosis with inaction, or we can choose to live every moment as if it were our last. We can wither at the passing of a loved one, or we can celebrate their life and choose a healthier, more optimistic course to honor their memory.

With The Cancer Survivors Park, you have an opportunity before you. You can choose to bring awareness, peace, rejuvenation and life to the survivors all around us. Today, you can choose to join the *Creating a Space for Healing Campaign* to transform The Cancer Survivors Park from dream to reality.

This is a re-investment in living.

