

Hi, my name is Angela Snary. I was diagnosed with Leukemia (AALL) in August of 2005. My particular treatment plan is 2 years in length. Because of the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre, I do not have to spend all that time in the hospital! This facility and the people in it has had a huge impact on my overall wellness and allows me to enjoy as 'normal' as life as possible.

The first thing that I was struck by as a patient, and continue to be, is the overwhelming kindness of each and every worker there. It starts in the parking lot where you are greeted and sometimes hugged by one of the parking lot attendant's. Then, just as you enter the building, you are greeted again by an equally friendly and caring volunteer team working the information desk. They are there to answer any of your questions and are handy when you are visiting the Centre for the first time. The décor is warm and inviting with the 'automatic' piano often playing which adds a soothing element to your visit. On this level you will also find an in-house lab and various offices for the volunteers, fundraisers and the social work team; another invaluable resource. This team provides counseling services to patients and our families as we face the challenges that are presented to us during the course of our treatment & illness. They also offer additional skills such as Therapeutic Touch to help offset the effects of our chemo and radiation therapies. They stay in touch with our protocols and seem to know just when to show up with that extra needed support, guidance or word of encouragement.

Volunteers in yellow jackets permeate the Cancer Centre throughout and are an integral part of its daily workings. They are always available for a kind word, a hug, a blanket, a joke ... they keep the coffee & cookie trays stocked up, help move patients and medical supplies around and take care of many little things throughout the day which can make a real difference in the patient's overall experience.

The Cancer Centre also houses the Radiation Department which offers an efficient and friendly staff, focused on making your experience as pleasant as possible. In addition there is a Health Records Department, Pharmacy and Doctor's offices on site. The Doctor's are supported by a friendly administrative staff that manages our ever changing schedules and highly adept Nurses to facilitate our care. Having all these services available under one roof makes a big difference to the patient. It means less time, less driving and less confusion.

The Chemo Suite is a hub of activity that is responsible for deploying many different services to the patient and it is here where you spend most of your time. They have the facilities to provide various testing such as bone marrow and lumbar punctures, private rooms for those patients with special needs and blood transfusions. The Nurses administer and monitor our chemotherapy regimens, change dressings and are the source of an incredible element of emotional support and information for not only the patients but their friends and family as

well. They in turn are supported by an administrative staff, personal support workers and porters who are just as caring and kind as they are.

In summary, I can attest that when you are going through your treatments it's the little things matter. Each and every volunteer or staff member at the Cancer Centre seems to be always looking for an opportunity to make you more comfortable, they are ever mindful of your privacy and often know what you need before you do because of the experiences that they have had.

It's not what they do. It's the manner in which they do it. This upcoming race, Running for Cancer, is another example of how the workers of the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre show that your job can be a true calling and that making a difference in someone else's life can happen every day. I will be forever grateful for the difference that they have made and continue to make in mine.

Hi, my name is Michael Rehner. I was born, raised and educated in Windsor, Ontario. I'm 63 years of age. My wife Nora and our two daughters, Alison and Lindsay, reside in Tecumseh area. I spent thirty-four years as an educator with the Greater Windsor Essex County School Board and retired in 1997.

Following retirement I led an active life. I avoided the "retirement blues" by taking on several part-time jobs: building decks and fences and acting as a sales representative for a local auto parts distributor. Both jobs were extremely rewarding, I gained a great deal of knowledge and developed many friendships.

On a voluntary basis, I have acted as a canvasser for a variety of fundraising organizations. For 10 years I have coached basketball at the provincial travel level for the Windsor Valiants. I continue to do so to this day and it remains an enduring passion.

My life dramatically changed in January 2004 when I was diagnosed with Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS). In short, this "pre-leukemic" condition means that my bone marrow no longer produces red blood cells, which causes me to be dependent on bi-weekly blood transfusions. My life expectancy has been shortened considerably. Knowing that we are all different, and we don't follow the same progression gives me great cause to be optimistic.

The health care professionals at Windsor Regional Cancer Center, who I work with on a regular basis, are an inspiration. Their positive and supportive manner gives a person the hope and strength needed to "battle" this disease among many other cancer related illnesses. Tremendous progress is being made daily for which all cancer patients will be benefactors. In times, when health care monies are scarce for "patient comfort", there are many ways that those who are healthy can make a contribution.

This debilitating disease, which can strike at any time, in a number of different forms, gives one cause to re-examine what's important in life. Take on day at a time, keep life as normal as possible and focus on relationships with others. This has become my personal mantra. I don't plan on going anywhere soon. I have too much to do and many more basketball miles to travel!