

2021 IMPACT REPORT



Let's walk this journey together.

Two Locations. One Mission.
www.cancersupportcenter.org

Homewood Location

2028 Elm Road, Homewood, IL 60430 | (708) 798-9171

Mokena Location

19645 S. LaGrange Road, Mokena, IL 60448 | (708) 478-3529

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When January 1, 2021, arrived, there was a hum of excitement and promise that the new year would bring fewer challenges, less worry, and a return to normal. It didn't take too long into 2021 to realize that the pandemic would still dominate our lives. At The Center, we still pushed on with our hallmark values of determination, compassion, and hope.

This report shows how we steadfastly met the needs of people battling cancer, and we did so while further advancing our work in profound ways that would address barriers and inequities. You will see that The Center's work is life-changing through the words of our participants, and you will see how we grew in 2021 because our care is unwavering.

We could not do any of this without you. According to Proverbs, "A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle." Whether a volunteer, leader, donor, friend, staff member or participant, we did not break because each is so dedicated to our mission. Together, we walked this journey with hope and conviction. Thank you!



2021 SUCCESS STORIES:



We are Here - Wherever & However:

In 2021, CSC offered in person, virtual, and hybrid programs at both locations. There is a near 50/50 split between in-person and virtual participation, and more people joined us when we offered hybrid.



Children Services at Schools - Wherever

In 2021, CSC expanded programs in the schools, leading to an increase in referrals and children receiving supports. We now provide in-school art therapy, counseling, and children's support group.



Spanish Language Programs - However

In 2021, CSC began to offer programs in Spanish for our bi-lingual participants. These programs include counseling, on-demand videos, and yoga. This was an unmet need in past year now addressed.

Kick It Cancer Initiative - Wherever & However

In 2021, The Kick It Cancer (KIC) healthy inequity initiative provided resources to 8 targeted Southland communities with higher incidences of cancer and cancer deaths. KIC's work will save lives.



Expanded Marketing Reach - Wherever

In 2021, CSC launched a new website, debuted a new look for print and digital marketing, and grew our social media reach by 87% by utilizing paid advertising and creating engaging content.

Volunteers - Our Backbone

As we resumed some in-person programs in 2021, CSC's volunteers rose to the occasion. With students from Homewood-Flossmoor and Lincoln Way East High Schools, long-time and new volunteers, and Community Service volunteers, volunteers gave 5,434 hours to help CSC.

TO KNOW OUR IMPACT, MEET OUR PARTICIPANTS



Colleen Found Much Needed Hope through Counseling & Support Groups

In late 2020, Colleen's mammogram showed that she had breast cancer, which became invasive from the time of diagnosis to treatment. She tackled the disease and fought like a warrior. When told she was disease free, she fell apart emotionally, felt depressed and fought symptoms of chemo-brain. A friend told her about The Center, and after speaking to a therapist who connected her to a support group that very night, she felt a glimmer of hope. Ongoing therapy and meeting new friends on a similar journey changed everything for her. She says "The Center saved my life." Now Colleen shares her story so others know they are not alone and credits her still being here today to the support provided by CSC.

Christina Needed to Get Moving in our Fitness Programs

Christina was diagnosed with breast cancer through a routine mammogram. When she learned she had cancer, everything stopped. She had surgery and radiation therapy and felt like she was doing alright, but knew she needed something to get her out of the house. Christina saw an article about The Center in the local newspaper, attended the Walk of Hope, and found more ways to participate in our fitness programs to get her body moving again. She urges everyone to get their cancer screenings done because her's saved her life.



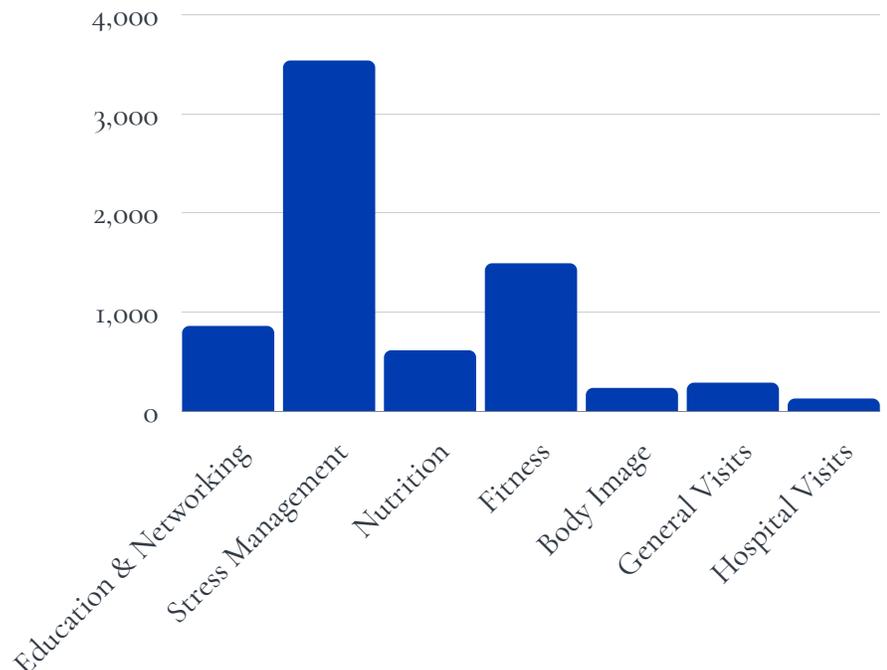
Donna Found her Way with our Nutrition & Fitness Programs

Long-time Homewood resident Donna is a thyroid and breast cancer survivor who first came to The Center in 2014. Admitting the difficulties of the pandemic in her personal life, she has regularly attended fitness and nutrition programs in person and has served for many years as a CSC volunteer. What keeps her coming back? The Center's nutrition and fitness classes keep her on track and motivated.

5 POINT PROGRAMS TELL OUR STORY!

Which supports from our 5 Point model of programs did our participants access in 2021?

Out of 7,128 registered participants, this figure shows the number of participants in each area of our Five-Point Model, our general visits and hospital visits in 2021. Throughout the pandemic, as many fought mental health crises, The Center continued to see huge growth in our Stress Management & Counseling programs, which accounted for nearly 50% of all program visits for the second year in a row with fitness an networking/education providing additional care.



WHAT DOES "QUALITY OF LIFE" MEAN?

92% of CSC participants agreed or strongly agreed that CSC programs improved their quality of life. What does that mean? At CSC, quality of life is more nuanced than if a person is simply "feeling better." We measure our success through many variables. Here's what our surveyed participants said their programs' top benefits were when asked multiple choice questions in a 2021 survey.



Counseling & Stress Management:

- 65% felt less stressed.
- 49% felt more hopeful about their illness or the illness of a loved one.
- 49% felt more able to cope with their own illness or the illness of a loved one.



Education & Networking:

- 88% received vital emotional support through networking groups.
- 69% felt less isolated in their or their loved ones battle with cancer.
- 65% felt they learned coping skills through educational programs.



Fitness:

- 87% felt that consistent physical activity through our programs improved their life.
- 71% gained increased flexibility and strength.



Nutrition:

- 83% learned to be more mindful about eating healthy foods.
- 63% made changes to their daily eating habits.



Body Image:

- 53% felt increased self-confidence.

OUR MISSION

The Cancer Support Center exists to provide strength, guidance, and support to anyone impacted by cancer - whoever and wherever they are.

Our evidence-based programs and services are created and delivered personally, virtually and in ideal settings by professional therapists, counselors, nutritionists, and healthcare experts and our resources are available and accessible to all through many communities, channels, and tools.

We are able to provide all of this at no cost to our participants near and far because of the dedication of our donors, benefactors, volunteers, and friends who know how critical this depth of support is for people to not just survive, but to thrive.

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