

OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center Celebrates Cancer Survivorship

by Tim Ditman
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ALTON - A capacity crowd of cancer survivors, their family members and care teams filled the conference center at Lewis & Clark Community College on September 15 as OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center recognized and celebrated survivorship.

The annual Cancer Survivors Celebration featured in-person testimonials from cancer survivors, as well as several heartfelt videotaped patient stories. Additional highlights of the evening included a musical performance by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, plus survivor recognition by years – from day old survivorship to 40+ years.

Angie Halliday, nurse manager for the OSF Moeller Cancer Center, paid tribute to the survivors. “You are a cancer survivor from the day you are first diagnosed with cancer. Some of you are currently undergoing active treatments, some have recently finished treatment and some finished treatment many years ago.

“No matter where you are in your journey, you are strong, you are brave, you are resilient and you are a survivor,” she adds. Each survivor in attendance received a special photo holder, handmade with love by the oncology team, signifying strength, personal growth and knowledge gained through new experiences.

As a surprise recognition, the entire oncology nursing team was recognized as an unprecedented collective winner of The Daisy Award® by OSF Saint Anthony’s Chief Nursing Officer Lisa Schepers. Typically the award is given monthly to *one* extraordinary nurse who is nominated by a patient for skillful, compassionate care.

The group award submission was made by [longtime Godfrey resident Cathy Keller](#), who said, “I couldn’t just pick one nurse from the chemo or radiation unit. It would be like asking a parent to choose their favorite children.

“Every nurse at the OSF Moeller Cancer Center has become like a member of my family,” says Keller, diagnosed last year with breast cancer. She talked about her cancer journey, with appreciation for the nursing expertise. “While I sat in the cubicle receiving chemo week after week, I watched each nurse attend to their patients with care and concern. Always with a smile and positive comments.”

Keller is in her last quarter of treatment for the HER2 part of her cancer diagnosis (human epidermal growth factor receptor 2), which includes an infusion every month. As she begins to wind down her visits, she reflects, “The Moeller Cancer Center has an atmosphere of love and compassion.”

Bobby Collins, also of Godfrey and former president of the 100 Black Men of Alton, shared his experiences, starting with an idea to bring free prostate health education and screenings to the Alton area nearly 20 years ago as part of a grant he helped to facilitate from the Illinois Department of Public Health. “We – the 100 Black Men – had a goal to educate 200 men and screen 20% of that group.” The target was initially African American men, but Collins insisted not to exclude anyone. “We tested anyone who came forward.”

After connecting with OSF Saint Anthony’s to develop community outreach and prostate screenings, Collins and his team worked closely with [Dr. Jim Piephoff](#), radiation oncologist, to achieve those goals. And then a few years ago, Collins himself

was diagnosed and treated for prostate cancer. But armed with the knowledge of the signs and symptoms, he knew where to go.

“Dr. Piephoff saved my life.”

Also in attendance were the namesakes of the OSF Moeller Cancer Center, Mike and Amy Moeller. A longtime friend and supporter of OSF Saint Anthony’s, Mike Moeller said, “Every person at the dinner has been gut-punched by the ‘C’ word of cancer. However, what I witnessed was the beautiful collaboration between physicians, nurses, technicians, prayer partners and the incredible survivors to overcome the fear of ‘C’ with the power of the ‘H’ word...Hope!”