

Being part of Ashland County Cancer Association has been a pleasure

By BECKY PLANK Ashland County Cancer Association Published: July 19, 2016 4:00 AM



T-G Photo| Ashland County Cancer Association has moved its office to the Tower Plaza at 1200 E. Main St.

Ashland County Cancer Association has moved to its new location at 1200 E. Main St., Suite 7, and we are enjoying our new space. In addition to our move we are having some other changes at our office this summer. I will be retiring as the agency director in late summer. It has been my pleasure, the last 10 years to work for this great organization that provides financial assistance to Ashland County cancer patients.

There are about only six to eight organizations such as ours in Ohio and many people wish their county had an organization such as ours.

Chris Shoemaker will begin his role as agency director. He will serve as the external face of the agency so you will see him out and about in the community. Give him a call if you need his help on a committee and keep him involved in the community.

Mary Yordy has been hired as the office administrator. She began her duties Friday July 15, and will serve as the internal face of the agency, handling the day-to-day activities of the office. We also have added Debra Biddinger as an office assistant. She will help cover the office when the others needs to be out for meetings.

We have served 1,642 Ashland County patients and their families since the organization was started in 1947 by Tom Dexter and of that number 782 (47 percent) have been added in the last 10 years. I have met so many wonderful people and families during this time, at a time they were going through one of the most difficult times in their lives. Everyone who has used our services, no matter what the outcome has been grateful that the ACCA was here and for that we thank the Ashland Community.

Support is all local

The support for the ACCA is all local. We receive no funds from state or national organizations. We are a United Way of Ashland County partner agency, which accounts for about one-fifth of our budget each year. Your donations to the UW help Ashland County cancer patients and their families. We are supported by the Mohican Area Community Fund.

We work closely with the **Ashland County Community Foundation** with funds we have invested there and receive funds from the Ruth Grabill Estate to help us continue services to our patients.

Our budget has grown to about \$150,000 annually. In 1989, the ACCA provided reimbursement of 20 cents per mile for travel for a total of \$75 per month and a maximum amount of \$900 per year per patient. Today, we provide up to \$120 per month or about \$1,440 per year for as long as the patient needs help. Additional funds come to us from a variety of sources including memorial donations, general donations and fundraisers.

Fundraisers, upcoming events

We have two fundraisers each year and those are the Taste of Vineyards coming July 23 from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Mitchell's Orchard. Cost is \$20 per person. Food, entertainment and raffles will highlight the evening. Our second event will be the 13th Taste of Ashland from 5 to 7 p.m. Nov. 15 at Park Street Brethren Church. Cost will be \$11 and you get a "taste" of what Ashland has to offer. Silent auction and raffles will be available. Check our website and Facebook page for details of all events that support our agency.

From time to time others have events for us and most recently the Matt Underwood Golf Outing took place at Ashland Golf Club. That event provides help to the ACCA as well as Team Focus and the Sophia Underwood Scholarship Fund. Sophia Underwood was a past director of the ACCA serving from 1991 to 1994 and also served on the board of trustees. We are grateful for this continued support to our agency from all those who work on the golf outing and all those who take part.

From Friday, July 29 to Sunday, July 31, Sparkleez Crystals will have a Hats for Cancer marathon at its store located at 1147 E. Main St. Stop in and get involved with it to support the ACCA. On Saturday, Spakleez Crystals will have a bake sale in addition to its marathon on knitting and crocheting of hats for cancer patients.

On July 30, the Ashland VFW Post 1067 and Ashland Eagles Club will have Rhonda's Ride For Cancer. The poker run will begin from the VFW at 125 E.t Main St. with registration beginning at 10 a.m and first vehicle out at 11 a.m.

Then beginning at 4 p.m. at the Eagles Club, 400 E. Lake Drive there will be a cruise-in. Food, raffles, 50//50 drawing and entertainment by the Midlyfe Crysis band from 5 to 7 p.m. will close out the day.

In November, the Elks Club and Luray Lanes will have the Greg Stoops One More Time Bowling Tournament in support of the ACCA.

Also, please watch for the many upcoming events for the 2017 United Way campaign "Caring For Our Own." Fun, Fabulous Fridays will continue on July 22 and Aug. 5 at the Corner Park and Stuff the Bus will be Aug. 6 and 13 at Walmart. The ACCA will participate in the Kay Conrad Day of Caring, which will be Oct. 13. We expect a great group of volunteers to be out and about in the community that day to "Care for Our Own." They will rake yards, trim shrubs, bushes, wash windows and other misc small jobs to get the homes of our senior citizens ready for winter. If you are in need of assistance, feel free to call our office and get registered. Shoemaker is coordinating the event.

Services

The ACCA also has a wig bank and a variety of hats for those that need that type of assistance as well as masectomy forms. We also carry Boost Nutrition supplement for our patients. We have a Women with Hope support group that will resume its meetings soon. A letter will go out to get ideas as to when is the best day and time to meet.

We are also excited as we have received a grant from the **Ashland County Community Foundation Women's Fund** to provide a day trip to Amish Country this fall for up to 40 ladies who have been impacted by cancer in some way or another. Details will be coming soon, but you can call the office and have your name put on our list for that event if you are interested.

We also have other services that are of benefit to those in Ashland County, not just cancer patients. We administer the Patient Medication Assistance Program, which began in 2003 as a United Way community investment program. This program provides technical assistance to Ashland County physicians so we can access brand-name medications for patients who may not have insurance.

In 2015, we expanded the program with the help of United Way, Associated Charities, Ashland Christian Health Center and a fundraiser to provide short-term financial assistance to clients while they are waiting for help from a patient assistance program, a market place plan to take effect or some other long term prescription insurance to take effect.

Staff have also been trained by the Ohio Department of Insurance to participate in the OSHIIP program. We provide help to those new to Medicare or on Medicare who have questions about the Medicare program. We can also help those who all in the Medicare Part D gap.

We also offer help with mammograms for those women 35 to 64 years old who have no insurance. A short application is completed and from that we refer the patient to the proper program to get help. If a patient is older than 50 years old, we would refer them to the Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening Program now called the Central Region BCCP serving Ashland County out of the Newark, Ohio site. The BCCP works with local doctors to help those with no insurance get needed mammograms and pap tests. If a patient is having no problems and just needs a mammogram we could also have them attend our Mammovan Day at our office.

On Dec. 2, Tiffany Breast Care will be here with a mobile unit and provide mammograms from our office to about 20 women. For those with immediate needs, they would be referred to University Hospital Samaritan Medical Center for help We can help with finances on that or refer them to the hospital financial assistance program.

We thank the many people in the community who assist the ACCA in so many ways. At times we are told we are one of the best kept secrets in Ashland County as people are not aware of our services. Please don't hesitate to call Shoemaker or Yordy at 419-281-1863 and ask about any of the above services or programs that are available from our office. Stop in see our new space at 1200 E. Main St., Suite 7, as well as our resource library. Visit our website at ashlandcancer.org or see us on Facebook at Ashland County Cancer Association. Look for our new sign on the Tower Plaza post from Morris Signs and for our celebration next summer "celebrating 70 years of service" to the Ashland community, cancer patients and their families.

Dexter envisioned help for cancer patients and their families and that is what the Ashland County Cancer Association will continue to do -- best kept secret or not.

Becky Plank is executive director of Ashland County Cancer Association. She can be reached at 419-281-1863.