



TAKE ON CANCER TOGETHER

JOIN. GIVE. ACT.

Welcome to Gilda's Club Louisville!

Gilda's Club Louisville opened its red doors to the community in August, 2007.

Since then, we've welcomed hundreds of members and volunteers— all ages, all walks of life and all on a cancer journey.

At Gilda's Club Louisville you'll find a safe and warm environment and, most of all, caring people who understand the challenges of living with cancer. As one member said when helping draft this handbook, *"I wish there was a way to express the understanding I received at Gilda's. It appears to be the key to everyone's cancer journey—understanding."*

We welcome you to the Gilda's Club family. We hope you will become a familiar face and you can find fellowship and share support, get useful information or just kickback and relax and have some fun. This guide offers useful information to help you navigate your first visits to Gilda's Club Louisville. Anyone you see at the clubhouse— members, volunteers or the clubhouse team — will be glad to answer a question or lend a hand. Don't be our guest. Instead, make yourself at home. We're glad you're here.

"A personal experience with cancer and eight months of research made us realize there was no organization in our community that offered the social and emotional support needed to get through the cancer journey. We couldn't rest until we knew all people – all ages, races and gender – had a place to go to learn how to live with cancer."
— GCL Co-Founder

Our Roots

Comedienne Gilda Radner, perhaps best known for her years performing with the Not Ready for Prime Time Players on the original "Saturday Night Live" television program, is the inspiration for Gilda's Club. Diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 1986, Gilda found needed support and understanding in community with others who had a cancer diagnosis or who were connected to someone who did.

Following her death at age 42 in 1989, Gilda's husband, actor Gene Wilder, and her cancer therapist, Joanna Bull— with help from TV critic Joel Siegel and actor Mandy Patinkin— began developing the first Gilda's Club so that others might feel the same soothing connection that Gilda did. Gilda said, *"Cancer is the unfunniest thing in the world but even cancer couldn't stop me from seeing the humor in what I went through."*

Learning to laugh again after a cancer diagnosis is difficult, but laughter comes easier when it is shared. You might even say laughter is the best medicine— without all the side effects. For this reason, Gilda's Club Louisville is a place for sharing, where people with cancer — along with their families and friends — join with others to experience the laughter, tears, joys and fears of everyday life. Gilda's Club is a place to learn how to **live with cancer**.

“There are those who open their hearts to others,” Gilda said, “who never think twice about giving of themselves. They are the wonderful, warmhearted people who make all the difference in our lives.”

Our Mission

To ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community.

Our Values

Gilda’s Club is a special community because of our deep commitment to these core values:

- ❖ **Individual expertise and collective wisdom.** We value the expertise you’ve gained through your experiences and the collective wisdom that comes from being in community with each other.
- ❖ **Learning to live with cancer.** Our doors are open for members to be who they are– which means accepting the full range of feelings and choices associated with living with cancer, whatever the outcome.
- ❖ **Spirit, whimsy and humor.** Gilda’s Club uses the spirit, whimsy and humor of Gilda Radner throughout the clubhouse: This is a place where you can let your hair down . . . or take your hair off, whichever the case may be!
- ❖ **As essential as medical care.** We believe that when there is cancer in the family, mutual social and emotional support areas essential as medical care.
- ❖ **Commitment to excellence.** We are committed to excellence in the quality of our program, the fulfillment of our mission, the governance of our organization and our relationships with each other.
- ❖ **Free to members.** Social and emotional support for members is free of charge. . . we simply cannot charge for what is given freely heart to heart.

“I’ve decided that there’s a magical quality that comes over everyone who enters the building, which must account for the warmth and heartfelt generosity that is exuded by staff, visitors and members alike. Now if only we could manifest that magic into the larger universe. Wouldn’t that be grand?!” — Member

Clubhouse Culture

Members and guests are a diverse group of people, each with unique feelings, views and ideas. All members and guests are welcome and encouraged to be tolerant of one another and willing to respect the variety of thoughts and opinions you may hear expressed at Gilda’s Club Louisville.

Members also are encouraged to be good stewards of the clubhouse. That means:

- ❖ Be mindful of others when you are here since more than one event or meeting may be going on at the same time.
- ❖ Refrain from wearing cologne or perfume, as some members may be sensitive to odors during chemotherapy.
- ❖ If you are ill or if you have a fever, be considerate of fellow members whose immune systems may be compromised, and visit the clubhouse when you are better.
- ❖ To help us better prepare for your visit, remember to register in advance (online at www.gildasclublouisville.org or by calling 583-0075) if you will be attending clubhouse classes, workshops, guided discussions, groups or social events. We need a 48 hour notice for you and especially if you will be bringing children under age 16. With a 48

hour notice, we can arrange for trained volunteers to provide structured program for youth.

- ❖ Children younger than 16 must have an adult family member with them in the clubhouse.
- ❖ We share this space. Remember to clean up after yourself leaving the clubhouse as you found it so it is always ready for the next visitors. Notify staff if something is broken, a spill has occurred, something is stained, a light bulb is out, a restroom needs attention or when any other damage occurs.
- ❖ And, thank your volunteers. Gilda's Club Louisville couldn't function successfully without them.

Enjoying the Clubhouse

Your *participation* in Gilda's Club Louisville is the key to its success. While all of our programs are offered free of charge, you contribute by joining in the clubhouse program and events – your presence not only benefits you, it is a valuable source of support to others.

"I thought I had joined to support others and share what I have learned from living with cancer. But I received so much more." — Member

Support groups and networking groups

Gilda's Club is a place where people on a cancer journey and others who care about them can come together to give and receive support. One of the ways Gilda's Club Louisville provides that opportunity is to offer the following **support** groups:

- ❖ **Wellness** – For adults who are in treatment for active cancer.
- ❖ **Family & Friends** – For adult family and friends of people with active cancer.
- ❖ **Flying Solo** – For adults who live alone and are on a cancer journey.
- ❖ **Kids Talk** and **Teen Talk** – For youth (grouped according to age) who have a significant person in their lives with cancer or who have a cancer diagnosis themselves.
- ❖ **Survivor Support** – For adults who are six months post-treatment or beyond.
- ❖ **Survivor Family & Friends** – For adults connected to someone who is 6-months or more post treatment or post surgery.
- ❖ **Living through Loss** – for family members and friends of people who have died from cancer.

Support group participation is open only to Gilda's Club Louisville members who have been cleared to attend, so you must talk with a Program Team member before attending your first group meeting (this conversation occurs during a One2One meeting). The Program Team member will help you determine which of the groups or other program offerings best fits your needs or may guide you to other program offerings that may be of greater benefit. Support groups generally meet once a week. Guests or visitors are not permitted to attend support groups. Each of the support groups is facilitated by a licensed mental health professional. (*You will find more detailed information regarding support groups at the end of this manual.*)

*"Truly, Gilda's Club has fulfilled all possible needs that I did not even **know** I had. Our family has been blessed each time we come." — Member*

Because your needs will change and evolve we offer a continuum of support group opportunities. A support group is best thought of as a temporary place providing a protected environment allowing you to address current challenges. As you complete your work and as new challenges inevitably arise, you will transition to other support experiences that better address these needs. An important part of any group process is transitioning from one group to another or ending your participation. Coordinate with your group facilitator and plan your departure to ensure sufficient time for adequate closure with fellow group members.

We also offer various networking groups that provide peer support and education focused on a particular common interest or type of cancer. Generally networking groups meet once a month and new groups are formed as members identify a need. Networking groups are open to both members and non-members and are facilitated by trained volunteers who have expertise with the focus of a particular networking group.

“I love being there. I was in sad shape when I came to my first support group. I have come a long way since then and I feel it was because of what Gilda’s Club offered me.” — Member

Support and Networking Group Guidelines

- ❖ **All are welcome to come as you are.** We are a diverse community. As a group member you may be exposed to values and beliefs that are not your own. Listen respectfully to those of others. Be respectful when sharing your own.
- ❖ **Be committed.** Building community takes time. The groups provide support, not therapy. Your commitment to regular attendance helps create a sense of familiarity and trust, which creates support that is meaningful and helpful.
- ❖ **Honor privacy.** You are invited to share from your experience, as are other members of the group. It is up to each individual to determine when and with whom to share personal stories. We ask that you not share other members’ identities or stories outside of your group.
- ❖ **It’s about sharing.** Be aware of all group members to ensure that everyone who wishes to has an opportunity to participate in group discussion.
- ❖ **Welcome new members.** Beginning participation in a group is a unique experience. Welcoming new members can help put them at ease.
- ❖ **Attend to transitions.** Goodbyes will occur from time to time as participants’ needs change. Coordinate with your group facilitator and plan your departure to ensure sufficient time for adequate closure with fellow group members.
- ❖ **Remember to RSVP online at www.gildasclublouisville.org or call ahead.** We want to be prepared for your visit. Letting us know your intentions helps staff and volunteers better prepare for all members.

“I love the lectures, workshops & dinners as well as game nights. They’re always fun and I’ve met so many new friends—friends who get it.” — Member

Classes, Workshops and Guided Discussions

Members and guests are welcome to attend classes, workshops and guided discussions offered at your clubhouse. So we can better prepare for your visit, please RSVP 48 hours in advance (at gildasclublouisville.org or by calling 502-583-0075) to let us know you're coming to a workshop or lecture and if you will be joining us for a meal if one is scheduled.

Attending program offerings is voluntary. When enjoying an exercise class including, but not limited to yoga, Pilates and Zumba you should ensure your safety by first consulting with your medical provider prior to participation. You are required to complete a consent/release specific to that class. Your instructor can assist you in completing this important detail when you attend.

Social Events

Members and guests are welcome to attend social events—large and small. Please note that some are for everyone, some for adults and some for youth. So we can better prepare for your visit, please RSVP 48 hours in advance (at gildasclublouisville.org or by calling 502-583-0075) if you plan to attend a clubhouse social event or join us for a meal.

Family Focus, Team Convene, Open to Options™ and Individual Consult

Occasionally you may find you and your family may need additional support. Your program team offers additional support that is custom-designed for you.

Family Focus and Team Convene meetings are available to help members, friends and families resolve difficulties that can arise on your cancer journey – anything from discussing a new diagnosis, addressing conflicts and problem-solving, and the practical issues of managing the day-to-day when cancer is a part of your lives.

Open to Options™ is a support opportunity offered to members who have an active cancer and are facing treatment decisions. Through a structured, reflective conversation, you identify your questions for your treatment team and prepared to be an active participant in these important conversations.

Individual consults can be arranged as you identify a need. These can include consults for parents regarding support to their children, consults with co-workers, teachers and classmates—all customized to meet your needs. To arrange for any of these support opportunities, contact a member of the program team.

“We were lucky to have had so much support from each other, when we heard about Gilda’s Club, we knew we had to do it.” — GCL Co-Founder

Confidentiality

Privacy is important at Gilda’s Club Louisville. Members can rest easy knowing that any personal information—either

Provided to the clubhouse team in written documents or shared in support and networking groups, Family Focus and Team Convene meetings or other individual support is kept confidential. However, members are reminded that

Gilda's Club is an open community, and that any information shared by you at other times in the clubhouse or at an event or informal gathering may be overheard by others.

"Thank you for being here. It has helped in many ways in my life." — Member

Kitchen Tips

- ❖ Snacks and meals are donated by many generous supporters of Gilda's Club Louisville. We welcome healthy, nutritious food items. It is your responsibility to choose those that suit your dietary needs and restrictions, including any food allergies.
- ❖ Help yourself to any food items on the counters or in the refrigerators. Some fridge items may be marked for a specific use or person, but everything else is fair game.
- ❖ Use real dishes rather than paper plates and cups whenever possible—we are committed to being as green as possible.
- ❖ Put things away when you are finished using them.
- ❖ Dirty dishes and utensils should be rinsed and placed in one of the dishwashers in the second-floor kitchen. If the dishwashers are full, rinse the dishes and place them in the sink.
- ❖ Empty bottles, soft drink cans, paper and plastic can be placed in marked recycling bins in designated cabinets.
- ❖ When joining us for a meal, be aware of other guests and wait until everyone has had something to eat before returning for second helpings.
- ❖ Members and guests who do not sign up in advance for a meal are asked to wait until those who have made reservations have been served.
- ❖ Please keep food items in the kitchen, small dining room or community room. Beverages are welcome in group rooms but, please, no food items or beverages in the game room, library or playrooms.
- ❖ The clubhouse kitchen closes at 7 p.m. so that the volunteers who provide dinner can clean it for the night. After 7pm, please place any dirty glasses or other dishes on the cart **outside** the kitchen door.
- ❖ All food and beverage items are intended to be enjoyed by members, guests and staff while in the clubhouse. We do not permit food and beverage items to be removed from the clubhouse.

"I love the cozy feeling you get when entering Gilda's." — Volunteer

Communication

Gilda's Club Louisville wants to ensure the program meets members' needs, so it's important that your clubhouse team *communicate* with you and, in return, that you keep the team informed.

Each bi-monthly calendar of clubhouse events is available at www.gildasclublouisville.org Members who provide an e-mail address also will get a weekly "blast" with late-breaking additions or deletions to the schedule. The blast also includes up-to-date information about fellow Gilda's Club members and the clubhouse. So let us know what you're

celebrating in your life as well as any changes in your cancer journey, or other important benchmarks.

We always welcome ideas for new programs or new reasons to get together at your clubhouse. If you have a suggestion, contact your Program Team at 502-583-0075.

For **volunteer** questions, ask for the Volunteer Director at 502-583-0075.

For questions about **donations or fundraising**, ask to speak to a member of the Development Team at 502-583-0075.

Keep us up to date. Use the Guest Registration/Member Update form, call or email changes in your address, phone, email or other contact information.

Clubhouse Hours

Clubhouse hours vary. Check your bi-monthly Gilda's Club Louisville calendar for information on clubhouse events and times, or visit the Web site, www.gildasclublouisville.org.

Weather Policy

Your clubhouse follows the weather schedule of the University of Louisville. If classes are canceled at UofL due to inclement weather, programming at Gilda's Club Louisville also is canceled. (Should UofL close the university, then the clubhouse also is closed.) Call the clubhouse at 583-0075 if you have questions or concerns, but make your personal safety the priority when deciding whether or not to attend an event in poor weather conditions.

Parking

- ❖ When using the lot behind the clubhouse, observe marked handicapped spaces and, when possible, leave the parking spaces closer to the building for members who have mobility challenges.
- ❖ Parking also is available on the streets around the clubhouse.

Clubhouse Emergencies

If a fire alarm sounds in the clubhouse, quickly make your way to the first floor exits, closing the doors to rooms and/or the stairwells as you go. Exit the building and go to the sidewalk on Rogers Street until an all-clear is announced.

Should we experience severe weather when at the clubhouse the situation will be monitored by staff and in the event that we should take shelter these first floor rooms provide the safest shelter: Restrooms, art room and coat closet. Staff will direct members and guests to an appropriate location.

Again, we welcome you to Gilda's Club Louisville. Come and make yourself at home. If you should have additional questions do not hesitate to ask. Give us a call or shoot us an email, or better still come in for a cup of coffee and let's talk.

– Your clubhouse team

Additional Information regarding Support Groups at Gilda's Club Louisville

A support group is the intentional coming together of individuals who share common challenges to deliberately address cancer and its impact on their lives: physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially and spirituality.

By participation, each member in a group enters a social contract with the others to promote mutual concern and respect, acceptance (not necessarily agreement), and tolerance; create an emotionally safe environment; take emotional risk; and commit to address ones' personal challenges in order to effect positive change in his/her personal life outside the clubhouse.

In so doing, each participant mentors other members of the group by affirming that each other's experiences, challenges and needs are normal and expected responses to cancer and its impact. This mentoring also happens through the sharing of the collective wisdom within the group that promotes new ideas, new solutions and new perspective, and that empowers each group member to effect positive change in his/her personal life outside the clubhouse.

By purpose and design, support groups are temporary and graduated. Along the cancer continuum, one's needs naturally change and new challenges arise. So, too, should there be a continuum of support group opportunities to better address the progression of needs and specific challenges shared by members of each group. They exist to support participants who are experiencing significant distress in their lives because of cancer and its impact. Their ability to cope, mobilize their resources and address personal challenges has been overwhelmed. The benefit to participation in a support group is realized when distress is more manageable and effective solutions to these challenges have been found.

For these reasons, participation in support groups is not permanent. Ideally, through participation in a protected group, individuals experience relief in distress level, are empowered to take action in their personal lives and create expanded support within their own social networks.

While a benefit to participating in support groups, the social connections made and the hope imparted to others are not reasons in and of themselves for participating in support group. In fact, all program offerings promotes social connection and the opportunity for imparting hope to others.

Similarly, having a cancer diagnosis or a connection to someone who does in and of itself does not mean one's needs are best met within a support group. Each participant must have identified needs/challenges that they commit to address within the protected environment of the group. And their needs must align with the scope and limits of the group they join.

All support groups honor a confidentiality agreement between members and facilitators. Exceptions are made in Compliance with mandatory reporting laws governing expressed harm to self and others or disclosure of abuse. In addition facilitators may share only relevant information during supervision to further their learning and insight and enhance the effective management and success of each group. Such sharing itself is kept confidential.

Prior to joining a support group, every future participant must complete a One-2-One—a private conversation with a licensed counselor to assess an individual's needs, educate him/her about the scope, benefits and risks of group participation and to ensure his/her success in group. A request to participate in a support group does not necessarily mean an individual is admitted to a support group. One's needs may be beyond what the support group can address. Individual needs may best be met through other program offerings and not require a support group. Still others might benefit from referral for support beyond what is offered at Gilda's Club. This determination is made together during the One-2-One.

Our goal is to help you access the support that best serves your needs.