

Ribbon of Strength Event Raises Money for Local Cancer Patients

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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COTTAGE HILLS/ALTON -The Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation (AMHSF) invited community members to come together to support cancer patients at their fourth annual Ribbon of Strength event.

On Thursday, April 11, 2024, over a hundred attendees gathered at Grip & Sip in Cottage Hills to honor their loved ones with cancer and raise money for oncology patients at Alton Memorial Hospital (AMH). The event celebrated the oncology department at AMH while also recognizing the fight that many patients go through.

"I think there's hardly anybody who doesn't know somebody who has been through cancer," said David Whaley, communications consultant at AMH. "I think we can all

identify with this event, and it was just a good time. It's the fourth annual event that the foundation's done and they always do a good job of it."

The goal of the event was to raise money for AMHSF. The organization pools resources from their "You've Got a Friend" and "Extra Mile" funds to provide gas cards and money for utility bills, rent assistance and more to oncology patients.

Whaley said the goal of the foundation is to "help patients pay for essentials and remove barriers that may prevent them from seeking or continuing treatment." He thanked AMHSF manager Shannon Fraley and coordinator Diane Rogers for their work to make the event possible.

Attendees could also buy a ribbon to hang up in honor of a loved one who has undergone cancer treatment. Whaley noted that this was both celebrative and reflective for many family members and former oncology patients. In addition to fundraising, the event aimed to promote the strength of cancer patients and their loved ones.

"People bought these purple ribbons in honor or in memory of folks who have had cancer, either if they passed away or they're still battling it or if they've gotten through," Whaley explained. "It was just a good tribute to people who've gone through cancer. That's quite a community of people who have had cancer and their family members. They kind of really form a bond through the years. So it was good to see all of them get together and have a good time, but also a serious moment to reflect on all that they and their family members have been through."

While the Ribbon of Strength event has passed, Whaley said people can still donate to the "You've Got a Friend" and "Extra Mile" funds at the [official AMHSF website at AltonMemorialHealthServicesFoundation.org](https://www.altonmemorialhealthservicesfoundation.org). These donations will help patients focus on their treatment by taking care of other expenses.

"We do this in the spring, but cancer patients need help 12 months a year," Whaley added. "They have a lot to worry about just taking care of themselves with their cancer treatment. This just kind of helps augment some of their other costs that they're undergoing at the same time, so it's really a good way to support our patients. And, of course, our oncology units — our medical oncology and our radiation oncology departments — do a fantastic job with treating our patients."

For those affected by cancer, seeking support can be vital. If you or someone you know is struggling with cancer, resources are available. For support, guidance, and information, you can contact the National Cancer Information Center by calling 1-800-227-2345 or visiting cancer.org. These resources offer help in understanding cancer, managing treatment and coping with emotional, practical, and financial challenges.

