

2023 Lights of Hope Story Columns



ALABAMA



Mable Ella Perry

Mable Ella Perry has never backed down from a challenge. This was true when she was diagnosed with leukemia at 11, and even more so 23 years later when her mother, for whom she was named, was diagnosed with breast cancer and Mable became her caretaker. Her mother passed a few months after diagnosis. Four months after her mother's death, Mable faced her own breast cancer diagnosis, resulting in a double mastectomy. Inspired by her faith, Mable fights back by leading the ACS CAN volunteer team in her congressional district, advocating on behalf of other cancer patients and their families.

ALASKA



Johna Beech

Johna Beech is a community activist, caregiver, and charity pie baker from Kenai. A Relayr since 2009 and ACS CAN volunteer since 2013, Johna was an integral part of the Smokefree Alaska campaign and served as Alaska's SLA during the peak of COVID-19. She cites watching the governor sign the smokefree workplace bill into law as her proudest accomplishment. As an advocate for ACS CAN, Johna has developed strong relationships with her lawmakers. She can walk into their offices with no introduction and never takes a "no" on our issues. Johna is one of Alaska's top Lights of Hope fundraisers.

ARIZONA



Danny Efron

Danny Efron's journey with cancer has been both personal and profound. Personally, he is a two-time advanced stage brain cancer survivor. Cancer has also ravaged his family, as he lost both his parents to cancer at a young age and his sister is a breast cancer survivor. As father to a six-year-old son, Danny does everything he can to stay positive and focused on advocating for a cure. He views his volunteerism with ACS CAN as a real opportunity to tell his story, and to use it as a tool to fight for progress in the halls of Congress.

ARKANSAS



Misti Coker

Melanoma survivor Misti Coker is the president of Personal Pep Rally, an Arkansas-based nonprofit that prepares and ships gift boxes ("Joy Mail") to cancer patients to encourage them to stay in the fight. Misti's own cancer journey began in 2016 when her then 33-year-old son-in-law Marc was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. Misti joined him for many appointments throughout his three-and-a-half-year battle, which ended in January 2020. Today, as an American Cancer Society volunteer and accomplished fundraiser, Misti continues to honor Marc's memory and is looking forward to formalizing her role as a natural advocate with ACS CAN.

CALIFORNIA



Linda Shaner

Linda Shaner was a 29-year volunteer with the American Cancer Society and an ACS CAN volunteer since its inception. A cancer survivor, Linda was passionate about the need to address disparities in cancer incidence and survival, and fought for policies at the local, state, and federal levels to increase funding for cancer research, improve access to clinical trials and cancer screening, and reduce the burden of tobacco. Linda was named SLA of the Year in 2014 and in 2021 received the prestigious Capital Dome Award. She was an inspiration, a leader, and a cherished friend who will be dearly missed.

COLORADO



Sabrina Wright-Hobart

Sabrina Wright-Hobart is a three-time cancer survivor living with metastatic breast cancer, who is thriving today due to a drug that was developed and approved by the FDA in 2016. Originally diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006 at the age of 37, Sabrina volunteers with ACS CAN and is passionate about cancer research because she understands that it literally saved her life. Today Sabrina is the lead ACS CAN volunteer in her Colorado congressional district, working to engage lawmakers at all levels of government in her fight for increased funding for cancer research, prevention, and care.

CONNECTICUT



Dave "Coach" Koch

As a cancer survivor, Dave "Coach" Koch has advocated for cancer research funding for more than two decades. Currently facing his own battle, Coach has seen firsthand the results of that research in the form of new treatments that were unavailable at the time of his first cancer diagnosis in 1996. His new diagnosis has not stopped him from continuing to fight for funding increases so that others may benefit from advances in treatment, or from honoring those he calls "heroes," including by hosting a large display last year at his home in Hamden, featuring over 700 Lights of Hope.

WASHINGTON D.C.



Cassie Baloue

Miss District of Columbia Cassie Baloue founded Cancer Collections, a panelist series that promotes cancer awareness, to honor her mother, a cancer survivor. Cassie is proud to have advocated for policy which would ensure all health insurance plans cover screening and diagnostic breast imaging with no out-of-pocket costs for women at higher risk for breast cancer. Cassie is also an ACS CAN Legislative Ambassador and recently joined forces with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society as a fundraiser for their Visionaries of the Year campaign.

DELAWARE



Michael Marquardt

American Cancer Society Board Member Michael Marquardt holds a deeply personal connection to our cancer mission. Shortly after his thirtieth birthday, Michael tragically lost his first wife to cancer after a 17-month battle. In search of professional and personal ways to channel his grief, Michael co-founded MediGuide International, providing second opinions for members diagnosed with diseases including cancer. As a volunteer leader, Michael became adept at helping lawmakers recognize their critical role in saving lives from cancer. He is Immediate Past Chair of the ACS Board and served for eight years on the ACS CAN Board.

FLORIDA



LaVita Rodriguez

Mere months before completing her battle with triple-negative breast cancer at age 37, LaVita Rodriguez would say of herself "I'm an advocate. I'm a fighter. I'm a lover. I'm compassionate. I'm just me." Diagnosed at 33, LaVita advocated diligently to educate her community and elected officials on the importance of early screening. Understanding that her efforts weren't going to impact her own life but could save the lives of others, LaVita would enhance her impact through her Guardian ad Litem commitment and dedicated time with pediatric cancer patients at Tampa General Hospital, ensuring that her story and advocacy live on.

GEORGIA



Pastor Jill Henning

Pastor Jill Henning, Georgia's Vice SLA and mother of two, lives life with anxiety and hope. Anxiety because in 2017, her triple negative breast cancer returned with a vengeance, and she was given 6-12 months to live. Hope because she is in fact still alive. Cured, with no evidence of disease. It is this combination of hope and anxiety that fuels her advocacy work, fighting for continued research and treatment options for all cancer patients, and for quality, affordable health care that will be there for cancer patients and families like her own.

GUAM



Annette David

Dr. Annette David, American Cancer Society Guam Advisory Council member and cancer survivor, leads Guam's tobacco control efforts by tirelessly mobilizing partners, educating lawmakers, and advocating for strong tobacco free policies. Due in part to her advocacy, adult smoking rates in Guam declined 35% in a 10-year period, bolstered by both comprehensive clean indoor air laws and a series of cigarette tax increases. Not one to rest on her laurels, Dr. David now leads the Guam State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup, identifying new trends in youth e-cigarette usage and areas for future policy action. Look out Big Tobacco!

HAWAII



Tricia Adams

Tricia Adams was a loving mother, wife, daughter, and friend, and a 15-year ovarian cancer survivor. While serving Hawaii's youth as an elementary school vice principal, Tricia worked tirelessly to engage the fight against cancer as an advocate. Her participation in ACS CAN's Cancer Action Day in 2022 led Hawaii lawmakers to continue to support cancer research during a difficult fiscal year and protect NCI designated University of Hawaii Cancer Center. Earlier this year though, Tricia's cancer returned, and she tragically lost her battle. Her legacy carries on through our advocacy.

IDAHO



Kandie Luttmmer

Twin Falls realtor Kandie Luttmmer knows the power of forging relationships and storytelling. Since becoming an ACS CAN volunteer in 2006, Kandie has shared her story of surviving multiple myeloma with lawmakers at all levels of government, urging them to make fighting cancer a top priority. Under her leadership, the state volunteer team has established a decade-long relationship with their federal lawmakers and pushed relentlessly to achieve success in Idaho's difficult climate, including achieving Medicaid expansion in 2018. Without her inspiration and passion, Idaho's volunteer team would not be as successful or strong as it is today.

ILLINOIS



Jean Ryan

In the last eight years, Jean Ryan lost both her parents to cancer. Her mother was diagnosed in early 2015 and died that August. Her father battled prostate cancer twice, once in 2012 and again during the height of COVID in 2020. He passed away early this year. During each diagnosis, Jean's father endured 40 rounds of radiation treatments and two years of Lupron. Jean uses this experience with cancer and grief to motivate her work as an ACT Lead. When Jean thinks about the impact of cancer, one quote comes to mind: "Cancer is a word, not a sentence."

INDIANA



Christine Yoder & Oliver Gauthier

A wife, mother, and nana, Vice SLA Christine Yoder spent four years as Relay chair before turning her focus to advocacy in 2021. Her reason was personal. Not only is Christine herself a breast cancer survivor, but in 2020 her beloved grandson Oliver received his own diagnosis – an aggressive form of brain cancer – at the age of 8. Today Ollie is cancer-free due to advances in cancer research. Ollie's story has been shared with lawmakers at all levels of government to demonstrate the promise of cancer research and the need for full funding. Now cancer advocacy is a family affair.

IOWA



Gail Orcutt

In 2010, two years into her retirement from a 33-year teaching career, Gail Orcutt was diagnosed with radon-induced lung cancer, setting her on a mission to educate the public and lawmakers about the harmful effects of radon exposure, the second leading cause of cancer in the state. What began as one woman sharing her personal story quickly grew into a movement. Twelve years later and two years after Gail's passing, the Gail Orcutt School Radon Safety Bill was signed into law to protect Iowa's students and teachers from radon exposure. Thank you, Gail.

KANSAS



Stephanie Barr

Both Stephanie Barr and her mother got cancer, but different kinds. Because Stephanie had breast cancer, she qualified for Medicaid — covering care and protection from steep medical bills. Her mother had lung cancer, could not get Medicaid, and died in 2020. Stephanie received treatment through Medicaid for ten years. Without worries about medical debt, she earned her high school diploma and enrolled in community college. Today, Stephanie is a restaurant manager with insurance through the marketplace. She is also an active ACS CAN volunteer, sharing her story with lawmakers to highlight the importance of affordable quality health insurance for all.

KENTUCKY



Pam Pilgrim

A 42-year melanoma survivor, Pam Pilgrim has been a caregiver, a patient, and a fierce advocate for ACS CAN for over a decade. In 2023, Pam used her personal cancer story to help convince Kentucky state lawmakers to pass key legislation requiring insurance coverage for biomarker testing. She has represented ACS CAN at state and federal lobby days, including as part of One Voice Against Cancer and the Patient Quality of Life Coalition. As State Lead Ambassador, Pam is committed to fighting for rural health equity and access to care and cures for all Kentuckians.

LOUISIANA



Amber Stevens

Amber Stevens was a beloved 17-year ACS CAN volunteer who lost her battle with cancer in March 2020. Amber fought to pass the Louisiana Clean Indoor Air Act in 2007 and was a key part of the volunteer team that made New Orleans entirely smokefree in 2015. For these efforts, Amber was recognized as the American Cancer Society's Mid-South Division Volunteer of the Year in 2007-08 and as ACS CAN's SLA of the Year in 2015. Amber's smile and indomitable personality lit up every room she entered. The Louisiana team and many advocates nationwide were lucky to have known her.

MAINE



Diane Davis

Cancer had always been part of Diane Davis's life, having lost many family members to the disease. In 2017, when Diane's own ovarian cancer did not respond to chemotherapy and spread into her lymph nodes, she knew it was a bad sign. Rather than continuing with chemotherapy, her doctors ordered biomarker testing, which revealed new treatment options for Diane that would not have been known otherwise. She started immunotherapy and within a few months her tumor had disappeared. Today Diane is a fierce cancer-free advocate with ACS CAN, fighting to ensure access to life-saving biomarker testing for all Mainers.

MARYLAND



Linda Cookingham

Linda Cookingham was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer and given 3-5 years to live. Then she lucked into the clinical trial that saved her life. Twelve years later, Linda lobbied elected officials for more research funding and access to biomarker testing, and in 2020, helped overturn the Governor's veto of a state tobacco tax increase. Currently serving as Vice State Lead Ambassador, Linda was the top volunteer fundraiser in Maryland for Lights of Hope for three years running. Always willing to help those around her, Linda is a beloved and active member of the Maryland volunteer team.

MASSACHUSETTS



Dana Bernson

Dana Bernson and her husband Jon were newlyweds when he was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare cancer normally found in children. As she shifted into the role of caregiver, Dana went from planning parties and home renovations to juggling appointments and learning complex medication regimens. Jon's care team managed his symptoms well, and they were able to maximize time together. Jon died in May 2015, leaving Dana a widow at 29. In 2016, Dana began sharing their story, advocating for increased cancer research funding and palliative care, and today is the lead ACS CAN volunteer in her congressional district.

MICHIGAN



Heidi Varner

Heidi Varner received her initial cervical cancer diagnosis in 1987, while pregnant. In 2007, uninsured, she was treated for precancerous cells and underwent a lifesaving hysterectomy thanks to the Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. By then Heidi was already an ACS CAN volunteer, having joined Relay to honor her cousin and quickly discovering advocacy. Today Heidi volunteers alongside her daughter, successfully passing the advocacy gene to the next generation. They promote the federally funded program that saved Heidi's life and take pride in funded research that led to the HPV vaccine, preventing most cervical cancers in vaccinated children.

MINNESOTA



Monica Theis

Monica Theis was a mother of two and four-time cancer survivor. She was also a beloved ACS CAN volunteer, winning ACT Lead of the Year in 2020. Monica was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma at 19, and subsequently diagnosed with Stage 1 breast cancer, which became Stage 3, and finally Stage 4 in 2015. During these three decades of fighting her disease, Monica fiercely advocated for cancer research funding, access to trials, and more. Though we lost Monica in April, she will long be remembered for her activism, and we will continue to carry her "healthy hope" for future cancer patients.

MISSISSIPPI



Pearl Carter

Pearl Carter knows first-hand the impact of a cancer diagnosis – she has heard the words "you have cancer" five times. She also knows how to turn fear and anger into action, as a Reach to Recovery volunteer, and as the lead ACS CAN volunteer in her congressional district. Building key relationships with lawmakers and placing among the top ten Lights of Hope fundraisers in the country, Pearl has stood out for her advocacy even while continuing to battle chronic leukemia. In 2021, Pearl was awarded ACT Lead of the Year for her many efforts to make cancer a national priority.

MISSOURI



Karen McKay

A former city councilwoman, Karen McKay served as the lead ACS CAN volunteer in Missouri's 1st congressional district from 2001-2022. In this role, Karen did extensive outreach to media in her area, attended nearly every federal and state lobby day, was consistently among the top 10 national fundraisers for Lights of Hope (raising over \$62,000), and in 2013 received the ACS CAN National ACT Lead of the Year award. Karen was known and trusted by lawmakers at all levels of government; we are extremely thankful for all her time and efforts and proud to recognize her contributions to our team.

MONTANA



Lois Fitzpatrick

Hailing from Yonkers, Lois Fitzpatrick became a librarian to grant youth in underserved areas access to books. With a master's from Pratt Institute, she became an adjunct professor at Carroll College. Amidst raising two daughters, breast cancer struck Lois in 1993, spurring her volunteer work with Susan B. Komen and the American Cancer Society. At ACS CAN, she led legislative efforts passionately. After volunteering in Montana and Oregon, Lois returned to Montana, to be closer to cherished family. Elected to the school board in 2022, she valiantly fought metastatic breast cancer while advocating fervently until her passing in March 2023.

NEBRASKA



Ann Yager

Former State Lead Ambassador Ann Yager is a 13-year breast cancer survivor with nearly 40 years in the field of oncology. It was this combination of personal and professional experience that led her to ACS CAN in 2019, advocating for both legislative and regulatory change to prevent cancer, promote research, and ensure patient access to care. As SLA, Ann was most proud through Lights of Hope to have honored 140 individuals touched by cancer, including her own mother, who lost her battle with ovarian cancer at just 55 years of age.

NEVADA



Jennifer Johnson

Jennifer Johnson, a lung cancer survivor, battled her insurer for months to receive the biomarker testing that ultimately helped to optimize her treatment plan and save her life. In April, Jennifer and her daughter Jacy traveled to Carson City to participate in ACS CAN's Cancer Action Day, sharing her story with lawmakers and gathering support for state legislation to require insurance coverage for biomarker testing. Today Jennifer is the lead volunteer for ACS CAN in her congressional district and is still fighting tirelessly for biomarker coverage for all Nevadans.

NEW HAMPSHIRE



Michelle Lawrence

Michelle Lawrence has had rare chronic leukemia for fourteen years. At 31, as peers purchased homes or had children, she became singularly focused on treating her disease and working to afford treatment. At one point Michelle calculated that 41% of her income was going towards medical expenses. In 2022, unemployed, Michelle knew she could no longer meet her health care and basic needs. Thankfully, she qualified for Medicaid, bringing access to palliative care, therapy, and medication. Today, Michelle volunteers with ACS CAN and is one of the strongest voices in New Hampshire advocating for stable health care coverage for all.

NEW JERSEY



Nelson Antonio Reyes

Diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2018, Nelson Antonio Reyes was sure of two things: that he had to fulfill his lifelong dream of going to college, and that he'd be dead in two semesters. He was undocumented, uninsured, at risk of homelessness, with no savings. Nonetheless, he started school and cancer treatment together, spending two days a week on campus and two days receiving chemotherapy. Nelson Antonio's experiences as an uninsured cancer patient inspired him to pursue a career in medicine and led him to ACS CAN, where he shares his story in support of our access to care agenda.

NEW MEXICO



Joyce Graves

Joyce Graves knows the importance of getting the right treatment at the right time. That's why she worked so hard to pass New Mexico's new law expanding access to biomarker testing. Joyce's connection to cancer is deep: she and her late husband combined for five cancer diagnoses: chronic myeloid leukemia for Paul, two breast cancers for Joyce, and skin cancer for both. Joyce jumped into volunteerism almost immediately, starting with ACS's Relay For Life. Though she does not consider herself political, Joyce is currently SLA for the second time, leading the state's volunteer team with empathy, conviction, and strong resolve.

NEW YORK



Marc Kaplan

Marc Kaplan was a beloved husband, father, and colleague who passed away last June after a long cancer journey that never diminished his positive outlook or sense of humor. No one made Marc prouder than his wife and daughter whose accomplishments he shared with anyone who would listen. Prior to joining ACS CAN's regional media advocacy team, Marc was a news reporter, disc jockey, and talk show host. He brought these skills and considerable Albany connections to ACS CAN, elevating campaigns on a wide array of issues. A role model who inspired his colleagues every day, Marc is deeply missed.

NORTH CAROLINA



Juanita Taylor

Juanita Taylor lived a life of service as a tutor, Girl Scout leader, and proud member of the Order of Eastern Stars. She was a community activist, loyal friend, and mother of two. She was also a 13-year ACS CAN volunteer, becoming the lead volunteer in her congressional district. Juanita built relationships with lawmakers, gained key support for ACS CAN legislative priorities, and mentored new volunteers. For these accomplishments, she was recognized as ACT Lead of the Year in 2017. Though Juanita lost her battle with cancer in 2020, she will be remembered for her compassion, focus, and passion.

NORTH DAKOTA



Daphne Hall

North Dakota SLA Daphne Hall was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2012 and has been sharing her story ever since, empowering cancer patients and educating lawmakers about their role in fighting the disease. Starting as Relay team captain, Daphne soon made her mark as committee member, speaker, and fundraiser for an array of ACS events, and has been the top Lights of Hope fundraiser in the state. Fueled by her own experience, Daphne is passionate about improving access to early detection and treatment, clinical trial enrollment, and palliative care, and the opportunity to influence policy in the fight against cancer.

OHIO



Jill McFarland

As a mother living with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer, Jill McFarland wants people to hear her story. So much so that in 2020, recently retired due to the burden of working full-time while undergoing treatment, Jill connected with ACS CAN and began sharing her cancer journey at public events and participating in a wide array of fundraising and lobbying efforts. Promoting access to care, research and prevention funding, and clinical trials, Jill meets with lawmakers so that when faced with a cancer-related bill, they will see her face and vote to reduce the burden of cancer in Ohio.

OKLAHOMA



Jennifer Redman

Jennifer Redman was a beloved American Cancer Society volunteer turned staff member who sadly lost her battle with cancer in 2021. Jennifer had experienced the cancer of multiple loved ones before her own diagnosis, fueling her passion to ensure that all Oklahoma cancer patients had the care they deserved and sparking her advocacy on behalf of the Oklahoma Hope Lodge. In her will, Jennifer left a bequest to the new Hope Lodge in her parents' name, where there is now a room that has been dedicated in their honor, a legacy of Jennifer's commitment to the fight against cancer.

OREGON



Karen Malcolm

Karen Malcolm is a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and a 10-month breast cancer survivor. Karen began volunteering with Relay in 2007, starting as team captain before moving into other leadership roles including event chair and advocacy lead, where she caught the advocacy bug. Today Karen is the lead volunteer for ACS CAN in her congressional district, fighting for rural cancer care, clinical trials, research funding and palliative care. Having lost her mother to breast cancer, Karen is also passionate about the need for equal access to screening and early detection for all women.

PENNSYLVANIA



Donna Kemberling

Donna Kemberling is a mother, grandmother, and active volunteer with ACS CAN since 2015. Before losing her husband Dave to a rare and aggressive cancer, Donna promised him she would find a way to beat cancer. Donna was actively involved during the Moonshot Initiative, and her volunteerism has ranged from access to care and tobacco issues to fighting for increased funding for cancer research and prevention. Donna was named ACT Lead of the Year in 2021, has achieved recognition as an Advocacy All-Star and Media Star, and now leads the Commonwealth's volunteer team as State Lead Ambassador.

PUERTO RICO



Caroline Torres

In 2013, Caroline Torres Maldonado's life took a turn when she was diagnosed with uterine sarcoma at 28 years of age, impacting her early career as an attorney, her physical and mental well-being, and her dreams of motherhood. After enduring two surgeries, rounds of cancer treatments, and financial challenges, Caroline's faith and resilience led to conquering the disease and starting a family. As a survivor and ACS CAN Lead Ambassador for Puerto Rico, Caroline leverages both her legal and personal cancer expertise to advocate for cancer-related public policy, improving the lives of fellow Puerto Ricans.

RHODE ISLAND



Joyce Dolbec

Joyce Dolbec has been a volunteer for the American Cancer Society since 1982. She served as the state's first SLA when ACS CAN was established in 2001 and has been a vibrant and critical member of the Rhode Island team ever since. Joyce has received too many awards to list, including the St. George Award, the Society's most prestigious volunteer honor. She plays an active role in the Rhode Island health community, bringing an extensive knowledge of cancer control and advocacy. Joyce now serves as ACS CAN's Rhode Island Ambassador Training Lead, guiding newcomers and sharing her vast advocacy wisdom.

SOUTH CAROLINA



Pansy Yates

Pansy Yates has volunteered with the American Cancer Society and ACS CAN for more than 45 years, serving on the board for the South Carolina division, facilitating support groups, serving as Advocacy Chair at Relay For Life, and leading the state's advocacy volunteers as State Lead Ambassador. Pansy began advocating for cancer patients before ACS CAN was even founded, helping to build an incredible statewide team of advocates whose support for policy change has impacted countless South Carolinians. In 2019, the South Carolina House of Representatives honored Pansy for her lifelong dedication to fighting cancer, and she's not done yet.

SOUTH DAKOTA



Sarah Graves

At 28, Sarah Graves was newly married and helping her husband build his construction business. She also worked part time and cared for their daughter. They chose to forego health insurance because the additional expense would have broken their budget. Then Sarah was diagnosed with leukemia, hospitalized, and handed a \$70,000 bill. When Sarah needed a bone marrow transplant, she was forced to take a full-time job for health insurance. Sarah worked as much as possible while receiving daily chemotherapy. In 2022, Sarah bravely shared her story in support of state Medicaid expansion, and now serves as State Lead Ambassador.

TENNESSEE



Jamelia Jones

Hospice specialist Jamelia Jones knows firsthand the impact of a cancer diagnosis. For over twenty years, as part of her job, she has talked to patients facing the end of their life. She educates patients and their caregivers about comfort care and helps prepare them emotionally for their final days. As the lead ACS CAN volunteer in her congressional district, she takes great pride in educating lawmakers about the benefits of increasing cancer research and prevention funding in hope that one day she will have the opportunity to share stories and prepare patients to live their lives to the fullest.

TEXAS



Susan Spurlock Rawlins

Texas's own "Unsinkable Molly Brown," Susan Spurlock Rawlins has survived five types of cancer since 1994. A longtime volunteer and prodigious fundraiser in the Texas Panhandle, Susan has been involved with ACS CAN since its inception. She is a two-time Celebration on the Hill ambassador and has served as the lead ACS CAN volunteer in her congressional district and State Lead Ambassador, leading a large delegation of volunteers in Austin and Washington while battling her three most recent cancers. Susan always has a kind and encouraging word for her fellow volunteers and is a valued member of the state team.

UTAH



Cathy Colledge

Cathy Colledge, a Stage 4 breast cancer survivor, knows all about the challenges that come with high-cost prescription drugs. The medication that keeps her alive costs \$15,000 a month, forcing her to rely on coupons, grants, and other forms of patient assistance to cover the expense. As an ACS CAN volunteer, Cathy shares her personal story with lawmakers and others to illustrate the need for more affordable prescription drug coverage and to lobby against copay accumulator programs that can significantly increase a patient's out-of-pocket cost.

VERMONT



Melissa Cox

In January of 2022, Melissa Cox lost her beloved aunt, Paula Garofano, to cancer. Paula's cancer was aggressive and fast, and she wasn't given the opportunity to receive treatment because of its progression. Paula was far too young and had so much more of her life to live. Today Melissa honors Paula's legacy and all those who have had their lives upended by cancer by serving as Vice State Lead Ambassador for ACS CAN in Vermont, bringing stories of family members and friends to a national stage, and sharing them with lawmakers in support of key policy change.

VIRGINIA



Caroline Corum

Caroline Corum is an ACS CAN volunteer, a nurse of twelve years, and currently facing breast cancer. Though Caroline's initial treatment costs were largely covered, everything changed when cancer forced her to leave her job and go on disability. Despite COBRA and the Affordable Care Act, Caroline faced \$1,500 a month medical bills, leading to real financial concern. This experience fuels her advocacy with ACS CAN, speaking on measures to lower drug prices and improve access to early detection, and has prompted her to refocus her advanced nursing and advocacy skills on ways health policy can better serve those facing cancer.

WASHINGTON



Carol Coram

Dr. Carol Coram is a retired principal, triathlete, and cancer survivor. She is also Washington's State Lead Ambassador and a founding member of the ACS CAN Black Volunteer Caucus. An educator for over 30 years, Carol saw ten colleagues diagnosed with cancer. Then, in 2008, that fight became personal when she was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in her small intestine. Carol fought back through advocacy, joining Relay For Life and ACS CAN. As a member of the Black Volunteer Caucus, Carol is passionate about the need for research, diverse clinical trials, and the elimination of health disparities.

WEST VIRGINIA



Angela Stanley

Angela Stanley, a breast cancer survivor, credits early detection with saving her life. Inspired to write poetry and share it with other cancer patients during her treatment, Angela has shared her personal story and her poetry with West Virginia lawmakers to ensure they understand the importance of screening and early detection. She has met with the state's congressional delegation on the Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act and secured her congresswoman as a cosponsor of the bill. Angela is currently the lead ACS CAN volunteer in her congressional district.

WISCONSIN



Vickie Dunnum

Vickie Dunnum, also known as Victorious Vickie, has been the lead ACS CAN volunteer in Wisconsin's 3rd congressional district for the past two years. A 6-year breast cancer survivor, Vickie is passionate about patient and survivor quality of life. In her own life, Vickie is an active member of the Mississippi Sisters, a 40-women strong dragon boat team made up entirely of breast cancer survivors. When she goes to Capitol Hill, Vickie makes sure her lawmakers know she is representing not only herself, but all 40 of her team members and thousands of others in her district.

WYOMING



Nita Hoebelheinrich-Myrup

Nita Hoebelheinrich-Myrup lived her life by Wyoming's 'Code of the West' highlighting courage, pride, determination, tenacity, fairness, honor, and loyalty- traits she channeled in realizing her dreams: college graduation at age 42, securing her dream job, and marrying her love, Randy, in August 2014. Just two months later, Nita was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and passed in 2015 at age 49. Today Nita's legacy lives on in the stories shared with Wyoming lawmakers by her sisters Michelle (former Wyoming State Lead Ambassador) and Tina (current Wyoming State Lead Ambassador) ensuring that Nita's life is celebrated and her fight is honored.