

New ministry intended to help cancer patients

Will pair newly diagnosed with survivors

by Matthew Quinn
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JOHNS CREEK, Ga. — Johns Creek Presbyterian Church is hosting a ministry intended to help those with cancer.

"CanCare is a cancer support ministry," said Kay Royal, who organized CanCare Atlanta. "It actually is a branch of the CanCare ministry that was started in Houston, Texas in 1990." That ministry started with one church in Houston and has since grown to 70. It is now branching out across the United States. The first expansion was in Colorado Springs, Colo. and the second is in Johns Creek. Royal was part of the original ministry in Houston, which helped her through three bouts with lymphoma. The ministry matches someone who has been newly diagnosed with a particular variety of cancer with someone who has survived. "That offers hope to someone who is struggling with cancer, because they can see someone that's survived or that's in remission," she said.

Nancy Tucker, the president of CanCare and a 20-year survivor of thyroid cancer, agreed with Royal's rationale. "I have been there myself and know what it's like to have cancer," Tucker said in a press release. "When a CanCare volunteer tells someone they know how it feels, it's not a figure of speech." She said CanCare is made up of compassionate people who are willing to relive a hard time in their lives to provide hope to those going through what they survived.

The first meeting of volunteers was held Oct. 23. "We had 20 volunteers show up," she said. "They represented six different churches in the Johns Creek area." These churches were Johns Creek Presbyterian, Johns Creek Baptist, Saint Columba Episcopal Church in Suwanee, Parkview Church in Suwanee and Perimeter Church, as well as Central Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. Those who wish to receive help from the ministry will be put in contact with the Houston office through the participating churches, and the Houston office will put them in touch with cancer survivors. If a local survivor of a particular cancer is not available, the client will be put in touch with another via telephone. The ministry will also link past cancer caregivers with current cancer caregivers as well.

A volunteer training session is planned for April 20-22, 2012 at Johns Creek Presbyterian. People will come from the Houston office to train volunteers in how to interact with clients. Royal said many of those volunteering were those who have benefited from the organization in the past and now want to give back.

Royal said the ministry will start in Johns Creek and they'll see if they can expand. "There's been a real positive response so far," she said. CanCare has already allied with Johns Creek Baptist Church's cancer ministry, Sweet Tea. "They have quarterly teas to offer support for cancer patients," she said.

The two ministries complement each other — CanCare will provide individual support, while Sweet Tea allows cancer patients to support one another en masse.

Applicants for the April 20-22 session must complete an interview process. To obtain an application, one should call the **CanCare office toll-free at 888-461-0028** or visit www.cancare.org. Those interested in finding out more information about CanCare Atlanta should contact Royal at royalt4@bellsouth.net or Neal Kulhorst at nealk@jcpusa.org