



Cancer Care

SEPTEMBER 2026

Melinda Rittenhouse crafts intricate collages from vintage papers and found objects to explore her experience with cancer treatment and survival.

The Healing Power of Art

By D'Ann George

When diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, Melinda Rittenhouse needed a new source of hope during one of the darkest periods of her life. An accomplished collage artist, she naturally turned to her creative work. But this time, she added a new twist. She joined an art therapy group offered by Duke Cancer Institute's Patient Support Program.

Led by Geoffrey Vaughn, LMFT ATR, a medical-family therapist and licensed art therapist, the monthly gatherings are held at the Nasher Museum of Art in a beautiful room filled with natural light. Rather than teaching artistic techniques, Vaughn invites participants to explore thoughts and emotions through creative expression. He begins each session with an optional prompt, but participants are free to follow their own ideas.

No artistic background is necessary to join. In fact, Rittenhouse says that's part of what makes the program

special. "You don't need to be an artist," she said. "You don't need to ever have made anything in your life."

Although Rittenhouse has spent years developing her own artistic practice, she says the greatest benefit of attending the sessions has little to do with the artwork itself.

"Art therapy isn't a class," she explained. "It's really just using art to try to find some sort of expression of how you're feeling."

Everything participants need is provided, including magazines for collage, paints, drawing supplies, canvas boards, paper, sculpting materials and a wide variety of mixed-media art supplies. Some people paint or draw. Others sculpt, knit or make a collage. The focus is not on creating a masterpiece but on exploring emotions in a safe, supportive environment.

As participants work, some people share their stories. Others simply create alongside one another. At the end of each

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Duke Cancer Institute

dukehealth.org

Cancer Support Services

Duke Cancer Institute offers a variety of cancer support and survivorship services for patients and their loved ones to assist with navigating life during and after cancer treatment. Our goal is to shape the future of cancer survivorship and improve the quality of life throughout treatment.

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session, those who wish can talk about their artwork and what it represents.

For Rittenhouse, that sense of community has been especially meaningful. Although she now has no evidence of disease, she continues to take medication and cope with challenges that aren't always visible to others.

"People say, 'You look great,'" she said. "They can't see all the other things"—the daily medications, lingering side effects and survivor's guilt that can continue long after treatment ends.

"I've always been glad that I've gone," she said. "I always feel better having been there, having created something, and having spent time in community with other people going through similar things."

To learn more and to register for a session on second Wednesdays at the Nasher Museum, visit duke.is/nn4gr.

Support services are offered both in-person and remotely. Please call 919.684.4497 for more information.

Patient and Nurse Navigation

Navigators support patients, families, and caregivers throughout cancer care — from diagnosis to the end of treatment. They provide information to guide decisions, advocate for your needs, identify barriers, and connect you with helpful resources. To learn more, ask your healthcare team about available Navigation services.

Clinical Social Work

Oncology and palliative care social workers help patients and families manage emotional and practical challenges. They ease stress, address financial concerns, and connect you with resources like disability support, home health, hospice, and end-of-life planning. Ask your healthcare team about Clinical Social Work services.

Cancer Nutrition

Our registered dietitians specialize in oncology and help to prevent and treat malnutrition, restore digestive health, and minimize the side effects of your cancer treatment. To learn more, visit duke.is/Onc-Nutrition.

Chaplain Services & Education

Duke chaplains are on site seven days a week to offer spiritual support to you and your loved ones. When requested, they connect you with faith-specific representatives from the community. To learn more, contact Chaplain Services & Education at Duke Cancer Institute locations by visiting dukehealth.org/support-services/pastoral-services.

Therapy and Counseling

Our medical family therapists provide individual, couples, and family therapy. They help you and your loved ones cope with the impact of cancer, all at no cost. Psychiatry and psychology services are also available and offered as part of our treatment for emotional, psychological, and relational issues associated with a cancer diagnosis. To learn more, visit duke.is/c/b47z.

Sexual Health Services

Sexual health services explain the impact cancer treatments can have on sexual health and intimacy. They help you address concerns surrounding sexual function, sexual feelings, intimacy, and changes in sexual health. To learn more, visit duke.is/sexual-health.

Quit at Duke

Quit at Duke is a program designed to help people quit using tobacco products. Services are provided by tobacco treatment specialists and behavioral medicine clinicians. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 919.613.QUIT (7848). To learn more, visit dukehealth.org/quit.

Survivorship Services

We partner with you and your loved ones to support healthy, fulfilling lives beyond cancer. Care includes physical and emotional assessments, screenings, and counseling for prevention and wellness. Learn more at duke.is/survivorshipservices or call 919.668.2122.

Teen and Young Adult Oncology Program

This program supports teens and young adults (ages 15–29) and their loved ones through cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. Services include specialized medical care, individual and family therapy, peer support, and activity-based groups in both clinical and community settings. Learn more at dukehealth.org/TYAO.

Palliative Care

This team helps manage symptoms like pain, fatigue, nausea, anxiety, and more — improving your comfort and quality of life. They work with you, your loved ones, and your doctors to ensure care aligns with your goals. To schedule, call 919.668.6688 (option #7) or visit dukehealth.org/treatments/palliative-care.

Self-Image Services

Our self-image consultants offer a variety of services and products to assist individuals with changes in body-image experienced during cancer treatment and survivorship. If you are interested in a self-image consultation, at one of our three locations, call 919.613.1906 or email cancersupport@duke.edu. To learn more, visit duke.is/self-image.

Child and Adolescent Life Services

They focus on supporting the emotional and developmental needs of children and teens in families who are facing cancer. They hold individual education sessions to support parents while they take the lead in helping their children understand a cancer diagnosis, treatment, side effects, and changes in their family life. To learn more, visit duke.is/cals.

Onco-Fertility Services

Cancer treatments can impact fertility. If you are interested in a fertility preservation consult, talk to your care team, and a nurse navigator will connect you with specialists — including fertility-trained providers, financial counselors, and therapists, and more. Services are available from diagnosis through survivorship, even if preservation wasn't completed. Call 919-613-4389 to speak with a nurse navigator. To learn more, visit duke.is/fertpreservation.

Do you want to receive this newsletter monthly by email? Scan the QR code to [subscribe](#) today.



Scan to learn more or visit duke.is/n8h92

Pets at Duke

Take a break, find some calm, and connect with a furry friend.

Check the calendar to plan your visit: duke.is/PADCalendar



Support Gatherings

Duke Cancer Patient Support Program's support gatherings are professionally facilitated. Attendees have an opportunity to meet people in a similar situation, share their experience and get support, tips, and ideas from those who understand what they are going through. Registration is required. To learn more, call 919.684.4497. Scan the QR code to register for support groups. All times listed are in Eastern Standard Time.



Art Therapy at Nasher

Wednesday :: September 9
2 to 3:30 p.m.

[Second Wednesday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is open to patients and caregivers and is located at the Nasher Museum of Art in Durham. No art experience is needed. For more information and to register, visit [duke.is/nn4gr](#).

Breast & GYN Cancers Support Group

Tuesday :: September 8
5:30 to 7 p.m.

[Second Tuesday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is for patients only. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](#).

Caregiver Support Group

Thursday :: September 17
6 to 7 p.m.

[Third Thursday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is for caregivers only. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](#).

General Cancer Support Group

Thursday :: September 17, 5 to 6 p.m.

[Third Thursday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is for patients only. Topics typically include communicating, finding information, making decisions, solving problems negotiating, and standing up for your rights. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](#).

Head and Neck Cancer Group

Monday :: September 14, 4 to 5 p.m.

[Second Monday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is open to patients and caregivers and is located at Duke Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine in the Center for Living Campus. For more information and to register, visit [duke.is/g/utqh](#).

Kidney and Bladder Cancer Support Group

Wednesday :: September 16
4 to 5:30 p.m.

[Third Wednesday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is for patients and caregivers. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](#).

LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support Group

Wednesday :: September 23
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

[Fourth Wednesday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is for patients and caregivers. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](#).

Metastatic Cancer Support Group for Women

Wednesday :: September 16
3 to 4:30 p.m.

[Third Wednesday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is for patients only. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](#).

Parenting with Cancer Meetup

Tuesday :: September 15, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

[Third Tuesday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is for parents with cancer and their caregivers, who have young children and/or teens. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](#).

Prostate Cancer Support Group

Monday :: September 28, 4 to 6 p.m.

[Fourth Monday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is for patients and caregivers. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](#).

KidsCAN!

KidsCAN! is a supportive program for children and teens, ages 4 to 18, who have a parent or significant caregiver living with a diagnosis of cancer.

Monthly meetups focus on issues such as understanding cancer, changes in the family life, feelings, self-care, memories, cooperation, love and family. **KidsCAN!** ages 4 through 5th grade meets virtually on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. **KidsCAN!** Middle School meets virtually on the third Monday at 6:30 p.m. In addition to virtual sessions, **KidsCAN!** offers quarterly in-person meetups. On Saturday, Sept. 26 we will meet at Duke Cancer Center.



Registration is required. To learn more and to register, visit [duke.is/m/wv4y](#).

TYAO

Teen and Young Adult
Oncology Program

Join us for a meetup for young adults (18-39 years old) on Wednesday, September 23 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Boxyard RTP in Durham. Email [TYAO@Duke.edu](#) for more information and to register. Check out our Instagram for updates and upcoming events.



@duketyao

Rest, Relax, Renew

The Duke Cancer Patient Support Program provides services and resources to help support patients and their loved ones. For a list of complimentary services, visit dukehealth.org/cancersupport or call 919.684.4497.



Virtual Tai Chi
Friday :: September 4 & 18, 2:30 to 3:15 p.m.
First and Third Friday of the month
Join Dr. Jay Dunbar, founder and director of The Magic Tortoise Taijiquan School, for a virtual [Tai Chi class](#) for cancer patients and survivors. Visit duke.is/8mues to learn more and to register.

Virtual Yoga
Tuesdays :: September 8 & 22, Noon to 1 p.m.
Second and Fourth Tuesday
Join certified Yoga for Cancer instructor Laura Woodall in a [class](#) designed specifically for cancer patients and survivors. Visit duke.is/7jgt3 to learn more and to register.

Mind-Body Approaches to Coping with Cancer
Tuesdays :: September 1 & 15, Noon to 1 p.m.
First and Third Tuesday of the month
Mindfulness can be a powerful tool to manage the stress that can accompany living with and life after cancer. These [virtual sessions](#) teach mind and body approaches to coping with cancer. Through the focus on the breath and the present moment, patients and their caregivers will learn to discover how to respond rather than react

to life's stressors. For more information and to register, visit duke.is/gzsvt.

Explore the Power of Your Voice for Healing
Wednesdays :: September 2 & 16, Noon to 1 p.m.
First and Third Wednesday of the month
In this virtual [workshop](#) you will explore breathing techniques, vocal toning, and chanting. These tools and techniques, when used daily, encourage mindful attention to one's heart and voice. Experience the health benefits of sound, vibration, and self-expression. Visit duke.is/mn7m9 to learn more and to register.

Exercise Consultations
Mondays :: 2 to 4 p.m.
Wednesdays :: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Supportive Care & Survivorship Center offers [exercise consultations](#) by exercise physiologists. These personalized sessions

are available to oncology patients and survivors at no cost. Video chat or phone sessions are available on Mondays between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. and Wednesdays between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. To learn more or to register email DHFCancerExercise@dm.duke.edu or visit duke.is/82cne.

Salon Services
Wednesday :: September 16
Monday :: September 28 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Third Wednesday and fourth Monday of the month
Our volunteer team of expert hair stylists provide private consultations at the Belk Boutique in Durham at no cost. They offer dry cuts for your hair or a head shave. Our stylists can also assist with wig styling, cutting, and general wig care. To learn more, visit duke.is/n/8mu6.



Helping cancer survivors live a healthy, full life while navigating their unique needs.

Cancer Survivorship Services



Learn more or schedule a visit:

919.668.2122 or [Cancer Survivorship Services](#)



Duke Cancer Institute

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Duke Cancer Institute Support and Activity Groups

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1 Mind/Body Approaches Coping with Cancer	2 Explore the Power of Voice	3	4 Tai Chi
7 Labor Day	8 Yoga Breast & GYN Cancer Support	9 Art Therapy at Nasher	10	11
14 Head and Neck Cancer Group KidsCAN! (Age 4 to 5th Grade)	15 Parenting with Cancer Meetup Mind/Body Approaches Coping with Cancer	16 Explore the Power of Voice Women's Metastatic Cancer Support Kidney and Bladder Cancer Support Group	17 Caregiver Support Group General Cancer Support Group	18 Tai Chi
21 KidsCAN! Middle School	22 Yoga	23 LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support Group TYAO Young Adult Meetup	24	25
28 Prostate Cancer Support	29	30	For more information and to register, visit dukehealth.org/cancersupport or call 919.684.4497 To make a gift to support our no charge services, visit gifts.duke.edu/cancersupport	