



Cancer Care

OCTOBER 2026

Dave Warthen's therapeutic bond with Kelly Young, PA-C, helped him defeat his 50 year smoking habit.

50 Years of Trying to Quit Smoking Then he tried one more time

By D'Ann George

Like many longtime smokers, Dave Warthen started as a teenager. He smoked in college, then continued the habit while serving in the U.S. Air Force. For 30 years working as a school photographer for Strawbridge Studios, he smoked on breaks and while driving to assignments.

He had tried to quit but didn't feel genuinely supported. "When I asked for help, what I got was 'here's the patch. Good luck,'" he said.

But that changed when Warthen began working with Kelly Young, PA-C, a clinician in the Quit at Duke program. Young belongs to a team of 12 smoking cessation specialists who assist more than 3,000 people every year, most virtually. Now celebrating its 10th year, Quit at Duke boasts one of the highest success rates in the US.

Working With Him, Not Judging Him

From their first meeting, Young's approach felt different to Warthen.

"I could tell early on that Kelly was on my side," he said. "It felt like she was working with me, not judging me."

That relationship became central to Warthen's success. Together, they looked at when he smoked, where he smoked and what prompted him to reach for a cigarette. They identified triggers and tackled them, one at a time.

He began leaving his cigarettes in his car rather than carrying them in his pocket. He started taking walks with his wife when he felt the urge to smoke. He kept a daily chart recording how many he smoked.

When he had setbacks, Young didn't treat them as failures. "It felt like the goal wasn't perfection. It was progress," Warthen said.

Rewiring Decades of Deeply Ingrained Habits

A central strength of the program is its emphasis on evidence-based approaches to tobacco treatment that are tailored to

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Duke Cancer Institute

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Cancer Support Services

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each person's needs. "For Dave, this meant using high-dose nicotine replacement therapy in combination with mindfulness techniques that helped him recognize, manage, and overcome cravings and triggers," said Young.

Gradually, Warthen rewired decades of his deeply ingrained smoking habits.

He set a quit date, but didn't make it. Then a week later, on March 6, 2026, he realized he didn't have any cigarettes. At 1:30 p.m., he smoked what he remembers as his last cigarette, a borrowed one.

He hasn't smoked since.

Today, Warthen says the biggest reward for quitting is freedom. He no longer worries about running out of cigarettes or having to stop somewhere to buy another pack. His wife appreciates the absence of tobacco odor. He says breathing is easier.

His advice to other smokers: "Swallow your pride. Get on the program. And don't assume it's too late."

To access Quit at Duke, schedule an appointment at dukehealth.org/quit or call 919-613-7848.

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

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.

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.

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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

Returning Wednesday :: November 11
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 :: October 13
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 :: October 15
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 :: October 15, 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 :: October 12, 4 to 5 p.m.

Second Monday of the month

This **group** is open to patients and caregivers and will be virtual for the month of October. For more information and to register, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

Kidney and Bladder Cancer Support Group

Wednesday :: October 21
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 :: October 28
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 :: October 21
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 :: October 20, 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 :: October 26, 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!** for children ages 4 through 5th grade meets virtually on the second Monday of each month, October 12, at 6:30 p.m.

KidsCAN! Middle School for youth in grades 6–8 meets virtually on the third Monday, October 19 at 6:30 p.m. In addition to virtual sessions, **KidsCAN!** offers quarterly in-person meetups for participants and families.



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 virtual healing through writing meetup for young adults (18-39 years old) on Tuesday, October 27. 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 :: October 2 & 16,
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 :: October 13 & 27, 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 :: October 6 & 20, 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 :: October 7 & 21, 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 DHFCCancerExercise@dm.duke.edu or visit duke.is/82cne.

Salon Services
Wednesday :: October 21
Monday :: October 26
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.

Join us Thursday, December 3
for the 36th annual Tree of Hope
Lighting Ceremony.

Visit duke.is/TreeOfHope to register for this free event and to learn more about how you can honor a loved one or a member of your care team who has made an impact on your life.



Duke Cancer Institute

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Duke Cancer Institute Support and Activity Groups

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
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						1		2 Tai Chi	
		5		6 Mind/Body Approaches Coping with Cancer		7 Explore the Power of Voice		8	
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