

Cancer Care

DECEMBER 2026

Surrounded by family, pancreatic cancer survivor Steve Motter is sharing his story of faith, humor, and hope as the featured speaker at Duke Cancer Institute's Tree of Hope Lighting Ceremony.

Pancreatic Cancer Survivor with a Sense of Humor Shares His Story

By D'Ann George

Two things help Steve Motter navigate the challenges of living with pancreatic cancer: faith and a sense of humor.

Motter will share that message of hope as the featured speaker at Duke Cancer Institute's annual Tree of Hope Lighting Ceremony on Thursday, December 3. His wife, Jamey, and their children, Elizabeth, and James, will join him.

Diagnosed in August 2025, Motter brings both his faith and sense of humor with him to clinical appointments. At one, he wore a t-shirt printed with a scan of his tumor on the backside. "Duke's Got My Back," the text underneath said.

After 15 rounds of chemotherapy, an unsuccessful attempt to remove his tumor because of its location, and considerable pain, he feared what might come next. But his Duke team kept looking for options and helped him gain access to an oral treatment through an early access program.

The medication, which has since received FDA approval, has improved his quality of life. Though not a cure, it is helping keep his cancer in check.

Help From Services Beyond Medical Treatment

Motter says some of his greatest help has come from services beyond medical treatment. His nurse navigator, Bailey Thompson, BSN, RN, OCN, became his go-to person for questions, concerns and complicated paperwork. When an expensive medication needed to be covered, she spent hours on the phone resolving the issue.

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"She's the hub. Any questions, concerns, you can go to her. She's going to find out," he said.

A medical family therapist, Jessica Harris-Gray, PhD, LMFT, helped Motter and his wife navigate the emotional strain of cancer, including the difficult days when he finds himself in a dark place. His dietitian, Keegan Zavodnick, MBS, RDN, LDN, offered nutritional shakes and practical suggestions when Motter was losing weight and struggling with changes in taste and appetite.

Motter is particularly appreciative that his Duke team sees him as a person, not just a patient. "They know you inside and out. They know your personality. They know your idiosyncrasies. They know your medical care. And that is phenomenal," he said.

For Motter, sharing his experience has become a way to give others hope. "God is pushing me out of my comfort zone!" he said. "This may be a 'goal for my soul' to tell my story to others."

Free and open to the public, Tree of Hope begins at 5:30 p.m. with Motter speaking in the Duke Cancer Center lobby, followed by the lighting ceremony at the Garden of Tranquility. Can't join us in person? A recording of the event will be available afterward. You can also honor or remember someone special by purchasing a luminary, with proceeds supporting free cancer support services for patients and families through Duke's Cancer Patient Support Program. To learn more, register, purchase a luminary, or watch the recording, visit **duke.is/TreeOfHope**.

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.

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**.

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

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**.

Physical Therapy

Physical therapy can help improve strength, mobility, balance, and function during and after cancer treatment. A provider referral is required. Talk with your oncologist or primary care provider about a referral. To learn more, visit **duke.is/PT4Cancer**.

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 :: December 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 :: December 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 :: December 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 :: December 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 :: December 14, 4 to 5 p.m.
Second Monday of the month
This **group** is open to patients and caregivers is located at Duke Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine in the Center for Living Campus. For more information and to register, visit **duke.is/mhc7m**.

Kidney and Bladder Cancer Support Group

Wednesday :: December 16
4:30 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

Returning Wednesday :: January 27
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 :: December 16
3 to 4:30 p.m.
Third Wednesday of the month
This **group** is for patients only.
To register, visit **duke.is/mhc7m**.

Onco-Endocrinology Support Group

Monday :: December 7, 4 to 5 p.m.
First Monday of the month
This **group** is for patients only. To register, visit **duke.is/mhc7m**.

Parenting with Cancer Meetup

Tuesday :: December 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 :: December 21, 4 to 6 p.m.
Typically the 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, December 14, at 6:30 p.m.
KidsCAN! Middle School for youth in grades 6–8 typically meets on the third Monday of the month, December 21, at 6:30.
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 meetup for young adults (18–39 years old) on Tuesday, December 8 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. 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 :: December 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 :: December 8 & 22, Noon to 1 p.m.

Second and Fourth Tuesday of the month

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 :: December 1 & 18, 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 :: December 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 DHFCCancerExercise@dm.duke.edu or visit duke.is/82cne.

Salon Services

Wednesday :: December 16 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Third Wednesday 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



DECEMBER 2026

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	1 Mind/Body Approaches | Coping with Cancer	2 Explore the Power of Voice	3	4 Tai Chi Hanukkah begins at sundown
7 Onco-Endocrinology Support Group	8 Yoga Breast & GYN Cancer Support TYAO Young Adult Meetup	9 Art Therapy at Nasher	10	11
14 Head and Neck Cancer Group KidsCAN! (Age 4 to 5th Grade)	15 Mind/Body Approaches | Coping with Cancer Parenting with Cancer Meetup	16 Explore the Power of Voice Kidney and Bladder Cancer Support Group Women's Metastatic Cancer Support	17 Caregiver Support Group General Cancer Support Group	18 Tai Chi
21 Prostate Cancer Support KidsCAN! Middle School	22 Yoga	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day
28	29	30	31	To make a gift to support our no charge services, visit gifts.duke.edu/cancersupport

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