

## **Holiday Donations Spell Relief for Cancer Patients**

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Linda, a breast cancer patient at Tulane Cancer Center, cannot fulfill her job because of side effects from chemotherapy. The financial assistance she receives from the center's Patient Relief Fund helps her to pay a few utility bills until she is back on her feet. Holiday gifts are welcome for the fund, established in 1998.



The Tulane Cancer Center Comprehensive Clinic provides complete treatment for cancer patients, and the center's Patient Relief Fund provides assistance for patients in need. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Other patients at the center also have benefited from the fund. Diane, a Hodgkin's disease patient who lives quite a distance from New Orleans, needs both chemotherapy and radiation. Her husband, a truck driver, doesn't get paid if he doesn't work and could lose his job by taking time off to drive to New Orleans each day. She uses Patient Relief Funds to assist with transportation costs so that she can continue her treatments.

Joe, a lung cancer patient, uses his Patient Relief Fund assistance to help pay for food and nutritional supplements so that he can continue to follow the healthy

eating plan his doctor advises.

These are just a few of the many patients who have been helped by [Tulane Cancer Center's Patient Relief Fund](#) over the years.

The fund helps patients with special needs meet unexpected expenses associated with their care at Tulane so that they can focus on getting well. It is often the only source available to solve urgent financial problems for cancer patients.

Since its establishment in 1998, the Patient Relief Fund has granted approximately \$40,000 in assistance, providing financial help with everything from transportation, meals, and short-term housing to prescription co-payments and rental assistance for patients facing eviction.

“In the past few months, we've even been able to assist several of our patients in purchasing lymphadema sleeves,” says Mary Kathryn Clabert, Tulane Cancer Center patient navigator. Lymphadema is a build-up of lymph fluid in the hands, arms or chest wall following breast surgery. “Several insurers do not cover the cost of the sleeves, and it is vital that some patients have these in order to manage this side-effect. Because of donations to the Patient Relief Fund, we're able to provide them.”

For those seeking meaningful alternatives to gift-giving this holiday season, the Tulane Cancer Center suggests donations to the Patient Relief Fund. Instead of a tangible gift, the recipient receives an acknowledgement card stating that the donor has made a donation to the fund in his/her honor.

It's an easy way to have your gift make a truly significant difference this holiday season and all year long and the cancer center staff does the work for you, says Dr. Roy Weiner, clinical hematologist-oncologist and founder of the Patient Relief Fund.

“These funds are an important source of financial as well as emotional relief for needy patients who are often overwhelmed by a cancer diagnosis and treatment schedule,” said Dr. Roy S. Weiner.

“The needs are great in our area, and they may grow at a much faster rate in the coming months, if the effects of our nation's economic crisis begin to be felt more broadly here at home.”

The center's staff will send out acknowledgement cards in the donor's name to your list of recipients for gifts of \$5 or more per recipient.

To participate, please send your contribution (make checks payable to Tulane Cancer Center), along with a list of those individuals who should receive acknowledgement of your gift, to: Keadren Green, Tulane Cancer Center, 1430 Tulane Ave., Box SL-68, New Orleans, LA 70112-2699. A donation form is available [online](#).

For more information, contact [Green](#) at 504-988-6064.

*Melanie N. Cross is the public relations and marketing coordinator for the Tulane Cancer Center.*