

## Burning Calories and Making Friends

You'd never know by the laughter that there is real work happening in the wellness studio at RiverBend. Yet every Tuesday evening at 5:30, a group of eager individuals gather to laugh, dance and sweat for the next 45 minutes.

Zumba® is one of the newest classes in an already impressive roster of fitness classes at RiverBend. A dance class at its core, Zumba combines salsa and merengue music with a lively instructor to motivate the room into movement. It's energizing, easily adaptable to any skill level, and since its debut in September, the Zumba class is already one of RiverBend's most popular.

Like the others, RiverBend offers Zumba year-round and free of charge thanks to the support of donors. It's an impactful gift for survivors that provides support, camaraderie and valuable togetherness. When the Wellness Room was created, South Bend Medical Foundation stepped up to underwrite its cost.

"For some people, coming to RiverBend is the only support system they have,"

said Laura Baker, RiverBend's Executive Director. "We choose our education and wellness classes based on their needs and what we know to be helpful in any survivor's recovery."



For Zumba instructor Christine Vnosek, she chose to teach at RiverBend for this reason. A pediatric nurse, she wanted to be part of a group where participants could use Zumba as part of their recovery. Prior to moving to the area earlier this year, she led classes in California, and was excited to teach them for RiverBend clients.

"I call Zumba 'exercise in disguise'. You don't have to do everything. All I ask is that you keep moving, keep a smile on your face and have fun," Vnosek said. "This is a party where you burn calories, make friends and have a blast."

Some participants in RiverBend's Zumba classes are chair-bound, and that's ok. "This program is truly made for everyone. That's why it's become such a popular worldwide exercise," Vnosek said.

For more information on Zumba, or any of the education and wellness classes available at RiverBend, visit the website at [www.RiverbendCancerServices.org](http://www.RiverbendCancerServices.org), or call 574-287-4197 and request a calendar of all activities and support groups.

## With Gratitude

Please join us in recognizing the following companies and individuals who have provided significant funding to RiverBend in the past year. Without these everyday heroes, we couldn't provide the services and programs we do:

**Beacon Community Impact • The PHP Foundation**  
**Sonny and Dee Tepe • St. Joseph Regional Medical Center • The Ganey Family**

RiverBend Cancer Services improves the quality of life of cancer survivors and their families in our community through helpful advocacy, hopeful support and innovative educational programs. Our programs help those living with cancer feel more hopeful and empowered to manage their cancer treatment and survivorship.

### Regular Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9 am-4:30 pm

Friday 9 am-12 pm

### Holiday Office Hours

November 28-29: Closed for Thanksgiving

December 25-27: Closed for Christmas

December 31: Closed for New Year's Eve



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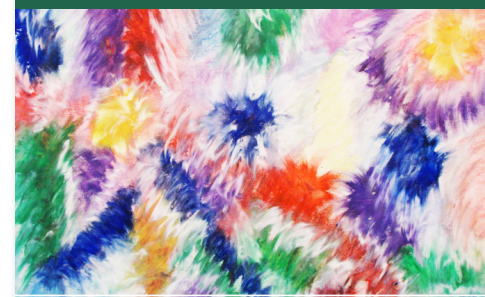
3516 East Jefferson Boulevard South Bend, Indiana 46615

# Around the Bend



Fall 2019

## SAVE THE DATE Upcoming Events



### Art Around the Bend Thursday, November 7 | 4:30-7pm



### Thanksgiving Dinner Wednesday, November 27 | 6-8pm



### Holiday Open House Wednesday, December 11 | 4-6pm



I'm really excited to share this newsletter with all of you. As our team compiled the stories and articles, a beautiful theme emerged: everyday heroes. At the Wellness House I see the heroic efforts of survivors and their families as they battle and navigate their cancer journey. This newsletter spotlights the everyday heroes who recognize the needs of our beloved community and use their resources to make a difference in the lives of our clients. From the extraordinary owners of The Beiger Mansion, Ron Montandon and Dennis Slade, who have defined our signature summer fundraiser Jazz Around the Bend since its inception, to Kim Dalton, who has led our monthly bra fit clinic for the past 10 years, their generosity has made a profound impact on our organization and community. And, because you're a friend of RiverBend, you're an everyday hero too! I hope you enjoy reading these stories, and be inspired to continue all of your good work.

With kind regards,  
Laura



## Finding Your Perfect Match

A 2014 study found that more than 44% of women opt *not* to have reconstructive surgery after mastectomy. Some of those are choosing the trend to “live flat” or “go flat”. The rest will seek out a prosthetic device to help regain a more balanced aesthetic look.

For the past 10 years, RiverBend has helped women with a free bra and/or prosthetic fittings following their mastectomies. Funded entirely through private donations, the cherished program is known as Kim’s Bra Boutique.

Kim Dalton is the energy behind the program. A formally trained prosthetic consultant, Kim used to work for a local healthcare organization that had a similar program. When that program ended, the organization donated their inventory to RiverBend—and Kim followed, now as a fit consultant.

Kim’s Bra Boutique is open one afternoon each month, by appointment. There, Kim uses her training to assist women impacted by breast cancer with a free bra and/or prosthesis fitting.

“It is the most rewarding experience,” she says. “There’s such a great need for our services. Sometimes women come in and they are wearing prosthesis that are 20 years old, in a baggie with duct tape, composite oozing out, and no means to get a new one, other than us.”

She tells the story of a woman who spoke no English; her daughter was with her to translate. The woman came in dressed in a big sweater and wrapped in a shawl. The daughter explained her mother had worn a prosthesis as long as she could remember, but needed to replace it. After the fitting, the woman redressed, but didn’t put on her ever-present shawl. They left the building, but before they drove away, the daughter came back in, and she was crying. The mom was outside, and she was crying too. The daughter said she’d never seen her mother without the shawl and her mother was transformed.

“In that half-hour, we changed her life forever. It was powerful,” Kim remembers.

She says this story is not uncommon. For women who’ve had cancer long ago, and feel their choices are to pay to replace their prosthesis themselves—or go without—they can come to RiverBend.

“Some women remember a grandmother who wore a prosthesis and it was heavy, hot and ugly. There are so many options today for realistic materials with breathable fabric. Women have choices.”

Kim has worked with RiverBend for over a decade because she’s witnessed just how powerful this can be for women.

“Women who are fit correctly have an inner confidence that they didn’t have before coming here. We help them feel complete again.”



Kim Dalton, Kim’s Bra Boutique

## DID YOU KNOW?

Breast prostheses are artificial breast forms used by women either singly or in pairs following mastectomy. The forms fit into specially made mastectomy bras. Made most often from silicone gel, they can also be made from foam or fiberfill. Prostheses can also be worn attached to the body with a special adhesive. Prices range from under \$100 to \$500 per form, though they’re often covered by insurance, as is the mastectomy bra. They do break down over time, so replacing them is important. Dalton recommends women check with their physician if they are interested in a replacement prosthetic or mastectomy bra.



Kim’s Bra Boutique is in need of the more common sizes of bras and prosthetics. If you’d like to consider supporting RiverBend and Kim’s Bra Boutique, please contact Laura Baker at 574-287-4197 to learn about ways in which you can help.

## Supporting RiverBend in Style A Conversation with Ron Montandon and Dennis Slade

Every July, Ron Montandon and Dennis Slade throw open the shutters and lay down the pink carpet runway at Beiger Mansion, their historical inn in downtown Mishawaka. Since 2002, they’ve been the hosts of RiverBend’s Jazz Around the Bend, and in that time, it’s become one of the community’s signature events. Their generosity has raised more than half a million dollars over the years. We recently sat down with Dennis and Ron to find out what makes this event so special to them.



Photo credit: Josephiney Photography

**Gorgeous place you have here. And perfect for an event like Jazz Around the Bend! How did this event come about?**

Ron Montandon: You are asking a question that’s tough for old guys like us since it was a long time ago! I believe it was through our friendship with Kate Voelker. We were doing a dinner service on Friday nights that were open to the public that we called Jazz on the Verandah. It was very popular. That is where the idea originated.

**Do either of you have a personal history with cancer?**

Dennis Slade: I do. Ron and I were together for three months before I told him I had cancer. Thankfully it was non life-threatening, but because of my family history, we treated it full-blown. Knock on wood, I haven’t had a recurrence in all these years.

**So RiverBend is personal to you**

DS: For us, it’s an emotional evening seeing people that we’ve known over the

years. We’ve seen the relationships that are created. Being there when someone is down, or just diagnosed, it’s a really intimate moment. Our job as hosts is to be good listeners; we just cry at the stories we hear. It’s pretty special to be part of it.

**Your quiet support is something you don’t really like to share, but we know you’re both involved with many community organizations. What is it about giving back that’s so important to you?**

RM: RiverBend is a good example. They help people on a very personal and local level—people who really need the help and are very appreciative. We choose to support organizations with this mindset. DS: I support RiverBend because of my Dad’s experience with cancer, and then my own. I want to make sure that men learn to discuss their illnesses, my Dad did not and it was a miserable way to live. Organizations like RiverBend create the awareness, and encourage men to feel comfortable with the process.

**Jazz Around the Bend is a fun night! How do you do it year after year?**

DS: Ron and I really create that certain special magnetism and it works really well. When we see RiverBend succeed and reach their goals, we know we did what we set out to do. And that’s what makes it feel special. Seeing people’s faces and the joy, the camaraderie. These parties are just unique. It’s more of a story than a fundraiser. What makes an event? It’s that special magnetism that happens—and believe me, it doesn’t happen at every event. You have people looking forward to this one a year out.

RM: We have built a great signature event that is truly theirs and theirs alone. It’s evolved over the years, but it has only gotten better.

**So you’re in it for the long haul?**

DS: After doing it for the first couple of years, we’re family. You don’t walk away from family.

If you’re interested in being part of next year’s Jazz Around the Bend, don’t hesitate to reach out! To learn more, call 574-287-4197.



# Young Adult Cancer Support Group Fills a Void



As Brianna Foley entered her junior year at Saint Mary's College, she got some tough news. Doctors found two tumors, one the size of a lime, on her thyroid. She had stage III papillary thyroid carcinoma. A harsh diagnosis for a 23-year-old.

She took a semester off to process the news and begin treatment back home in Chicago. Once back to school though, she began looking for some support. She checked for groups on campus to no avail, then turned to Google where she learned about RiverBend's General Cancer Support Group. She went to one meeting that semester. Though everyone was wonderful, Brianna felt out of place.

"Everyone was so much older than I was," Bree remembers. "Most were in their 50s and 60s. I was 23." She voiced her dilemma to the group's instructor.

"Less than 3% of new cancers are found in patients age 20-34," said RiverBend's

Executive Director Laura Baker. "So, statistically, the need isn't as great for support services for that age group. Yet, when you're that 23-year-old facing cancer and wanting support services, we need to do a better job at providing them."

So, Baker and her team created a new support group for young adults facing any type of cancer. Meeting once a month on Thursdays, the Young Survivors Group is for anyone age 45 and younger. Led by Amy Jobst, the group is designed to discuss any of the unique challenges faced by someone younger.

Once Brianna heard about it, she was hooked. "I'm still the youngest person in support group—not many people have cancer in college—but it's been a great opportunity to meet people closer to my age. We laugh about the same things, we have victories together, share the most difficult parts of our journey. It's a great chance to get together once a month."

How's Bree doing today? Now a college graduate, she decided to stay in South Bend, taking a job at 1st Source Bank in their leadership development program. She continues to go to the Young Survivors Group each month.

"RiverBend provides the opportunity for you to go and talk to a therapist if you need to, go to support groups, cooking classes, yoga, book club, a walking group!" she marvels. "If you sit around and say 'my life sucks' and 'I'm alone', you're not going to get anywhere. Attitude is everything, and RiverBend truly helps you change your attitude toward having cancer."

If you know someone facing cancer at a young age, please connect them to us! We are here with free support services year-round. Call 574-287-4197 or visit [www.RiverBendCancerServices.org](http://www.RiverBendCancerServices.org) to learn more.



# The Inaugural Dave Geerhing Memorial Race Wins Big

## Donations to fund RiverBend's support programming

The death of their good friend Dave Geerhing was a tough loss for a group of hobbyists at Mishawaka's Thazer Slot Car Track. To them, Dave was not only a great long-term friend, he was also the man behind the sport they'd all cherished for decades.

So when cancer took their friend earlier this year, they came together in their grief to honor Dave with a fundraiser to support others facing their own cancer battles. With the blessing of Dave's wife Marcia, they created the Dave Geerhing Memorial Race, an amateur slot car race and auction to benefit RiverBend.

Fred Fowler helped organize the July 8<sup>th</sup> event. Geerhing was well known throughout the Midwest in the slot car circuit, and owned Thazer's right up until his death. Word of the charity race spread, and soon slot car enthusiasts from Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Indiana signed up to take part. Fowler chose RiverBend as the beneficiary of the race, an organization he'd never heard of prior to Geerhing's diagnosis.

"I took a tour and fell in love with the place," he said. "We knew we wanted to support a place that helps people where they need it most. Cancer is hard, and knowing there's a place you can attend support groups, get

nutrition advice, exercise classes for free, well I just can't believe we have this resource right here in our community."

The charity race raised around \$4,700 – a terrific amount that goes a long way to supporting the programming at RiverBend.

"The entire slot car community is amazing," said Katina Scarbrough, Client Advocate at RiverBend. "This group of people who'd never raised money for us before got behind our organization out of love for one of their own. RiverBend touched their hearts, and in turn, they did this amazing thing for us."

"All these people donated items to be auctioned, and we are so happy with what we were able to do," Fowler said, "The point wasn't to raise a million dollars, the point was to honor our friend and have some fun in his memory. We came from all walks of life to fight for bragging rights and share what we have with RiverBend."

### WANT TO HOST A FUNDRAISER?

Maybe your child wants to host a lemonade stand...or your workplace wants to have a company-wide fundraiser, there is truly no opportunity too small to make an impact on RiverBend's programs and services. Because we rely on donations to offer our incredible roster of wellness and education options, we encourage you to reach out with your ideas! To learn more about how you can help RiverBend through the support of a fundraiser, contact Laura Baker at 574-287-4197 or [lbaker@riverbendcancerservices.org](mailto:lbaker@riverbendcancerservices.org).

