

Nature's Healing Ways at the Christopher Farm & Gardens!

Sunday, June 1st

Cancer patients/survivors and their guests enjoyed a day to Celebrate Life and enjoy Nature's Healing Ways at the beautiful Christopher Farm & Gardens!



SPECIAL THANKS to Mr. Jay Christopher, the Christopher Farm & Gardens, and the wonderful staff for hosting National Cancer Survivors Day celebration for the sixth consecutive year!

The day included:

- Another Opportunity to "Wander the Wonderful Gardens"!
- Guided Tours of the Christopher Farm & Gardens with Robyn Jacobchik
- "Mindful by Nature" Walk with Kaitlynn Kiela, CYT
- A Nature Art Project by Erika Lusthoff and Hannah
- Nature's Healing Ways Comments from Erika Lusthoff (CF&G), Kirstin Opgenorth (Cancer Survivor and Mental

Health Professional), Kaitlynn Kiela (Mindful by Nature Walk facilitator).

- A "Bonding Bonfire" with Hot Dogs & S'mores!
- These and more of "Nature's Healing Ways" for area cancer patients/survivors!

Thank you to all the survivors, co-survivors, and caregivers that joined us!

I couldn't think of a more appropriate way to commemorate this year's event than with the playing of "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong. Admittedly, this song has some significance in my personal cancer experience and I think it quite apropos to this day, this location, and the "Nature's Healing Ways" theme!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3yCcXgbKrE>

As I stated in my opening comments, I always enjoy our National Cancer Survivors Day celebrations and I always enjoy our visits to the Christopher Farm & Gardens! With this year's "Nature's Healing Ways" theme, I found myself especially excited... and it did not disappoint!

Please allow me this opportunity to share...

What the "Healing Ways of Nature" and the Christopher Farm & Gardens Means to Me!

CF&G is a Place to Move the Body!

Not surprisingly, I initially saw the CF&G primarily as a beautiful place for cancer patients/survivors to come together to move their bodies! The most popular activity for many who visit is simply "Wandering the Wonderful Gardens," whether you saunter, walk, hike, or even jog. Being outdoors and surrounded by the natural and the manmade beauty of the Gardens makes the CF&G a perfect place to move my body!

A Place to Expand the Mind

Thanks to the amazing staff of the CF&G who enthusiastically share their knowledge and expertise of our natural world, I have learned many lessons about nature (flowers, plants, birds, etc.) and of life! I may have much to learn but time spent at the CF&G have has resulted in greater awareness and appreciation for our natural world and, as a result, subtle behavioral and attitudinal changes that may have a profound impact on the health of Mother Earth for years to come!

A Place to Grow the Heart

It seems that nature and the great outdoors simply nurtures human connection.

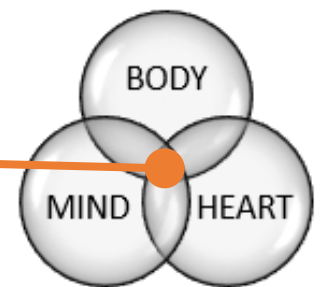
Perhaps the natural world is that "greater something" that fosters a sense of belonging? Perhaps being outdoors offers a shared experience that provides common ground? Perhaps the diversity found in nature (and is so eloquently displayed at the Gardens) encourages a greater awareness, appreciation, and acceptance of our own human diversity? Whatever the mechanism, the CF&G is a great place for area cancer patients/survivors to connect with one another while also connecting with Mother Earth.

A Place to Soothe the Spirit

It is not often or easy to find such a place (or enjoy an experience or develop an understanding) that positively effects the body, the mind, and the heart all at once. When these three aspects of our being come together, it touches that energy, that force, that essence deep within us that gives us life – the Spirit!

In other words:

The CF&G is a place to **Heal My Spirit and MY ENTIRE BEING!!**



This photo submitted by cancer survivor Chris Meyer reminds us all that we are "Lucky Ducks" to be surviving cancer and to be gathering at the CF&G!

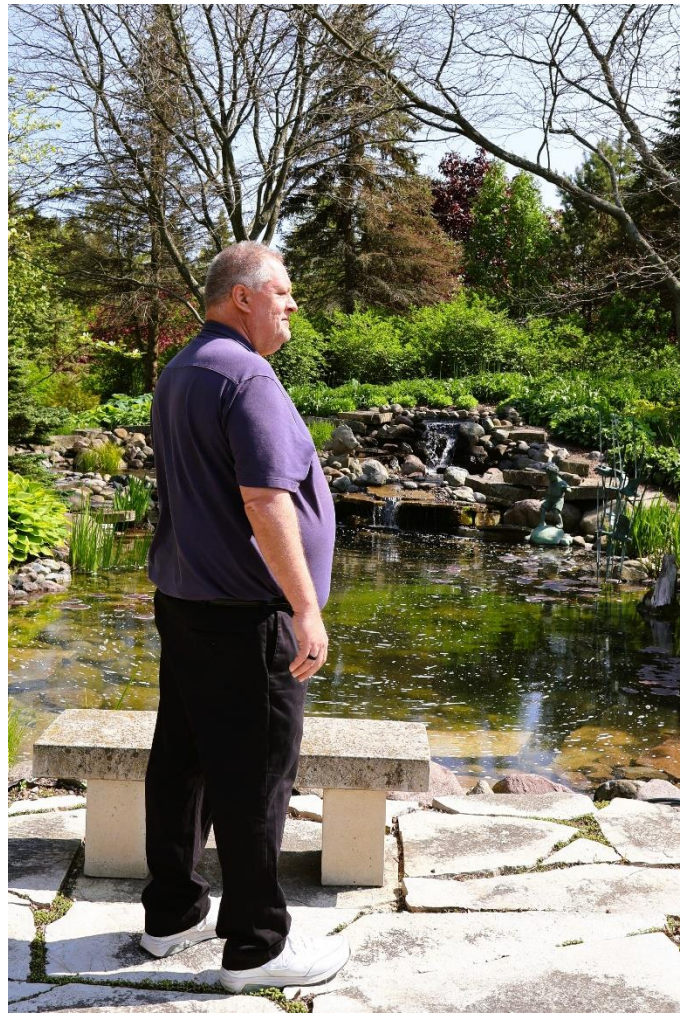
Nature's Healing Ways In Action and In Photos!

Thank you to Mary Schueller for once again providing so many wonderful photos from this year's event, including these first three that have been submitted to Coping Magazine for consideration in their annual NCSD issue!



ABOVE PHOTO SUBMITTED TO COPING MAGAZINE!

Cancer Survivors Diane Lengfeld and Kathy Burch are nourished by "Nature's Healing Ways" at a National Cancer Survivors Day celebration at the Christopher Farm & Gardens in Sheboygan, WI!



ABOVE PHOTO SUBMITTED TO COPING MAGAZINE!

Cancer Survivor Steve Breitzman reflects on "Nature's Healing Ways" at a National Cancer Survivors Day celebration at the Christopher Farm & Gardens in Sheboygan, WI!

Hope to See You Next Time at the Gardens!

If you missed this wonderful opportunity, be sure to watch the Local Cancer Community Update for details of our next visit to the Christopher Farm & Gardens! To make sure you don't miss any last-minute "POP UP-portunities," be sure to update your Local Cancer Community Update profile accordingly!



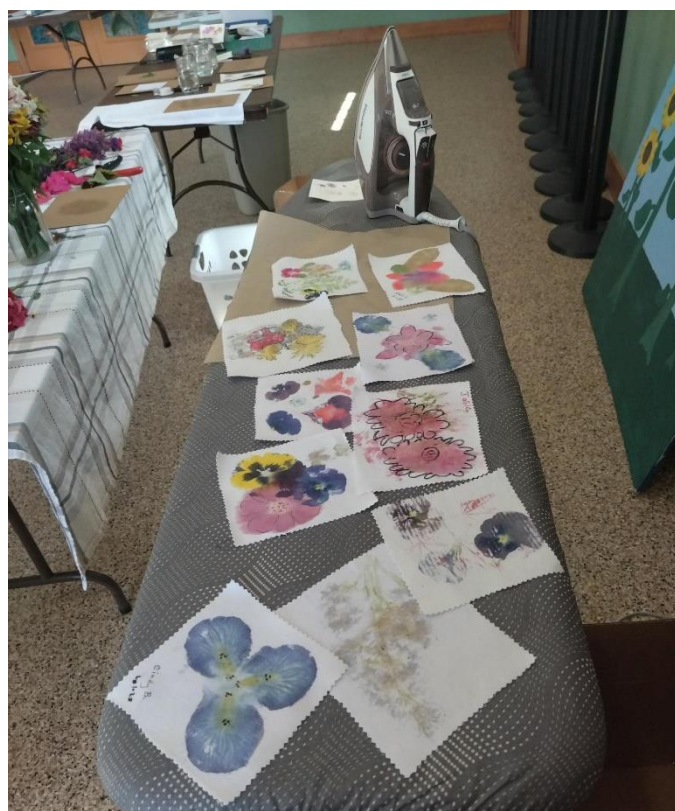
Thank you to Erika and Hannah (pictured in previous photo) for another wonderful Nature Art Project! Erika prepared an art project at last year's NCSD event. I really don't consider myself to be very creative that way, so I didn't participate. But, after I saw the finished product (photo below), I so much regretted it.



ABOVE PHOTO SUBMITTED TO COPING MAGAZINE!

**Cancer Survivor Barb Bogenschutz immerses herself in "Nature's Healing Ways" at a National Cancer Survivors Day celebration at the Christopher Farm & Gardens in Sheboygan, WI!*

NATURE ART PROJECT!



CHRISTOPHER FARM & GARDEN TOURS



Thank you too Robyn Jacobchik for leading a couple of tours through the Gardens! It's a tough job, mostly because there is so much to see – too much to cover in a single tour.

MINDFUL BY NATURE Walk

Thank you to Kaitlynn Kiela, CYT (one of our wonderful ST&BF Gentle Yoga for Survivors instructors) for leading a couple of “Mindful by Nature” meditative walks through the gardens!



We slowly walked, we stood, we found a quiet spot and sat and breathed, and we rested and reflected... all in silence while taking prompts from Kaitlynn and focusing on all that our senses could enjoy!



Comments From a Survivor!

Thank you for all the work you do to make our lives better surviving! It is such a beautiful place and good for the soul - and we were blessed with beautiful weather as well.

Thanks again! Terri (cancer survivor)

BONDING BONFIRE



NATURE'S HEALING WAYS! Condensed Comments from Our "Nature's Healing Ways" Speakers!

Erika Lusthoff, Christopher Farm & Gardens.



On behalf of Jay Christopher, welcome! He cannot be with us today but he loves knowing that others are here enjoying this beautiful space. When you create

something it is often because you have a passion for it, but you also have others in mind. In my years here, I have been involved in creating a lot of the Garden spaces and I constantly find myself asking how will this space be enjoyed, what makes it different, what makes it interesting, and what makes it amusing.

One point I wanted to talk about briefly is the thought of "connectedness" and how we are able to connect when we are outdoors. Whether it be walking and talking. You're alive when you are outside. It's a dynamic space that brings out life, that brings out creative thinking, that brings out energy, that brings out positive thoughts.

Personally, I love to see this space have more of a focus on mental health and physical health. I think it is perfectly designed for that. I love how this group really taps into that, taps into the potential healing that is offered here.

This is a space that needs to be cared for and we have a staff of about 25 people that take care of the Gardens on a weekly basis. We have 3 lawn cutters, a greenhouse specialist, an annual specialist who potted up all of our annuals in the last week. There's a lot of care that goes into this space and seeing others care for it helps us feel cared for and enables us to care for each other.

Enough gratitude cannot be expressed to Jay Christopher, Erika Lusthoff, Rob Pragalz, Robyn Jacobchik, and everyone else at the Christopher Farm & Gardens for their tireless efforts in nurturing the Gardens and nurturing our Local Cancer Community!

Kirstin Oppenorth, Cancer Survivor & Mental Health Professional.



The psychological impact of cancer can be quite profound. When we grapple with things like anxiety and depression and the sense of losing control of our own lives. I am here today, we are all here today as a testament to the resilience, courage, and hope that this group represents. So I want to say thank you to Tim for everything he does to nurture this group.

What is hope? Hope is not just a wish for a better tomorrow. It's more of a sense of purpose and a feeling of anticipation. Sometimes we have to search for that purpose and sometimes that purpose finds us. I got into counseling because of my cancer diagnosis. Of course, I had my own

experience and I could also see what others were going through became aware of ways I could help. could help. So purpose found me in my cancer journey.

This place is such a beautiful place! They cultivate all of these gardens and fields, which in turn, help us heal. They are building a sanctuary for us cancer survivors to come to reflect, a place to appreciate the beauty in life, a physical place where hope grows! It's through the work of those that tend these gardens that we can see the hope as the Gardens grow and the hope as we look forward to the next day! A place like this offers us a place where we can immerse ourselves in the therapeutic aspect of nature.

If you can and if you want, those of you that have and are surviving cancer, would you please stand (photo below). These people, whether they feel it or not, are the very face of hope! They are the face of hope for someone who may be diagnosed tomorrow.



And if you look at those seated around us, those who are supporting cancer survivors, we need to say thank you to them because their job is really hard too.

Thank you!

NATURE'S HEALING WAYS

Kaitlynn Kiela, CYT – “Mindful by Nature” walk facilitator



We get to be here today in this beautiful space with an amazing array of all sorts of nature. But we don't always have access to a space like this all of the time or maybe we don't feel drawn to go backcountry camping into the remote depths of nature. However, we can observe nature in a tree outside of your apartment, or a patch of moss that you walk by on your way to work; that is also alive in nature and something you can connect to. It doesn't have to be this grand connection every time, just notice.

The second thing I started to reflect on is the theme of the day – Nature's Healing Ways – I started thinking of how my observations of nature have taught me about my own healing processes. One is that healing takes time. When we observe nature, whether for an afternoon or 20-minutes walking around outside, we can see a million things! You might also observe the environment or even a single plant over the course of the entire year, and you'll notice a million different things that happen throughout the seasons. And then there are all of the observations you might find and things you might learn through generations, like how a forest evolves or how a prairie comes to exist. I think I'm someone who, when confronted with a problem, I want to figure this all out, get a solution, and be done... but I'm reminded that's not how nature works. And that's not how our bodies and minds work either. So nature has given me that space to take more time.

The last thing that I was observing was, as Erika was saying, that connection to each other as well as connection to the space that we are in. When I think of that in nature I think of the interconnectivity of an ecosystem and how the bugs, and the birds, and the creatures, and the algae, and the plants all depend on each other. But also how I can look at one beautiful aspen tree, as an individual, but knowing it is part of a colony of trees that may be many acres wide. Or one mushroom that connects to its fellow mushrooms over several miles. That gives me a perspective of scope that maybe my own small fixations are not as big as I think they seem when I fixate on them. But also maybe that

fixation is shared. Whether it is something that I am struggling with mentally, or a diagnosis, or whatever it may be... when we are able to connect others who are feeling similar to ourselves, we can feel that we are not alone. Through shared experience we might learn a new perspective, or a treatment, or a way of walking through nature together. Beyond learning from one another, just being together forms a sense of solidarity, which is especially critical when we feel unsteady or uncertain, so I think that time to share space with one another can be really powerful

And that brings me back to sharing this time with all of you. Thank you for having me here today!

Comments from a Survivor!

Thank you so much for planning Sunday's event at Jay Christopher Gardens! My husband and I attended and had a wonderful time.

We were so impressed with the property. We toured the east with Robyn. She is so informative and personable!

This was our first event with SCCCf even though my husband was diagnosed 17 years ago. I was diagnosed 6 months ago.

The weather couldn't have been better and the speakers were great as well.

Thank you, Kathy (cancer survivor)

"WANDERING THE WONDERFUL GARDENS!"

We offered some WONDERFUL opportunities at this year's event! But, as folks began RSVP-ing, many (especially those who are familiar with our visits and familiar with the Gardens) indicated to me

that they planned to spend some or even all of their time simply "Wandering the Wonderful Gardens" (either alone or with a few close family/friends)! Personally, my favorite parts of the day included the listening to our speakers, the "Mindful by Nature" walk with Kaitlynn, and also the fifteen minutes I spent alone in the Asian Tea Gardens doing some Qigong by myself before anyone showed up! 😊



The above photo submitted by cancer survivor John Seaman reminds me that, however you spent your day at the Gardens... I hope it was "JUST RIGHT" for you!!! 😊

HOPE GROWS HERE – A Seed Has Been Planted!

As the story of the 2025 National Cancer Survivors Celebration comes to an end, another story is just beginning! Kirstin Opgenorth's "Hope Grows Here" theme has become a seed to an idea that the Christopher Farm & Gardens has embraced. Watch for details about a special "Hope Grows Here" space within the Gardens designed for area cancer patients/survivors, co-survivors to rest, reflect, remember, and rejoice!

Additional details coming soon!!!