



Breathing Room
Foundation

For Families Affected by Cancer

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

“Your organization is a beacon of light for anyone experiencing this horrible disease. Thank you does not seem to be enough... We love you all and hope that we can now continue to spread your good deeds and actions by becoming volunteers...”

BRF Recipient

*Our office is located at
600 West Avenue in Jenkintown
215-277-1006*

Brief History of the Breathing Room Foundation

The Breathing Room Foundation was founded in February of 1997 by Diane and Bernie Fitzgerald. Diane had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 1991 and had fought a very difficult battle against the disease. Throughout those 6 years of chemo, radiation, several surgeries and a bone marrow transplant her family was the recipient of an incredible outpouring of support from their extended family, friends, and the community. They received meals regularly, rides for their children to practices and school events, home improvements and renovations and house cleaning, as well as, emotional and spiritual support.

Diane and Bernie were so grateful for the continuous support and felt that they were constantly saying “thank you”, but were unsure how to express how much the help was truly appreciated. They knew that very few people going through similar situations as theirs had the large family and community support that they had. They wanted to give others the comfort of knowing that there is help and support out there for families that are living with a cancer diagnosis. Diane and Bernie knew first hand that cancer affects every aspect of a family’s life; financially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

When support was given to them, whether it be having their house cleaned or a hot meal delivered to their home it provided Diane’s support system with “breathing room” from their daily struggle with the disease. This is where the name and the idea of The Breathing Room Foundation came from. Diane and Bernie had a vision and began the process of seeing it through. They selected a group to be the original board members that they felt would make this vision come to reality.

Just three months after that first meeting in the family room of Diane’s home, she lost her battle against breast cancer. She did however have the satisfaction of seeing the first family assisted by the work of the foundation. Diane lived her life to assist others and left this world with the comfort of knowing that she would continue to make a positive difference in the lives of those who would be diagnosed with cancer.

The Breathing Room Foundation has gone from assisting just 7 families in the first year of existence to assisting over 600 families in 2014. Although we do have the guidelines of assisting only those families living in Philadelphia and limited parts of Montgomery, Bucks, Delaware and Chester counties, we will reach out to all those families no matter the type of cancer, age, race or financial situation. The thing that makes us unique is our personal attention to details and our ability to provide individualized support depending on the needs of each particular family.

Breathing Room Foundation Volunteer Opportunities

Meals, Yard work, Office Work, Family Deliveries, Knitting Afghans,
Quilts, Fundraising, Mailings, Special Event Support,
Holiday Programs – Collections and Organization

We are always looking for kind, compassionate individuals to share their time and talent for BRF families who have a member suffering from cancer. Various opportunities are available to match your specific interests and availability:

- *share your cooking talents by donating an extra homemade meal*
- *share your gardening ability by mowing a lawn and raking leaves*
- *share your knitting or sewing talent by donating an afghan*
- *share your organizational skills for a fundraiser*
- *share the BRF social media posts with family and friends*
- *share your time to wrap gifts or pack backpacks*
- *share your family time and deliver holiday items with your children*
- **SHARE YOU!!**

Sign up at www.breathingroomfoundation.org on the Volunteer link. Complete the Perspective Volunteer online form and you will be contacted by the Volunteer Coordinator. For more info, email Eileen@breathingroomfoundation.org

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke and saw that life was service.
I acted and behold, service was joy.
Rabindranath Tagore*

*Though my work may be menial, though my contribution may be small,
I can perform it with dignity and offer it with unselfishness.
My talents may not be great, but I can use them to bless the lives of others.... The goodness of the world in which we live is the accumulated goodness of many small and seemingly inconsequential acts.” Gordon B. Hinckley*

BREATHING ROOM PROGRAMS

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE – January. Spend this school holiday as a day of service with your children by preparing home cooked meals, baking treats, making homemade cards, quilt making...in your home.

VALENTINE’S DAY- SHARE THE LOVE – February. Valentine goodies are delivered to local families. Donations needed of homemade goodies, cards, fuzzy socks, candy, decorative bags... help assemble treats and deliver. Perfect service opportunity for school children or youth groups to create handmade Valentine cards.

SPRING/EASTER BASKET PROGRAM – March or April. Fill a child’s basket with specific items favored by the child and deliver to collection site. Volunteers needed to assemble and deliver completed baskets to families.

SUMMER FUN PROGRAM – Memorial Day through Labor Day. Help solicit donations from your workplace, local stores, museums, sports teams and restaurants to supply our families with fun activities and a “vacation from cancer”. Share unused Phillies tickets with a Breathing Room family.

BACK TO SCHOOL PROGRAM – August. Each family sends a list of school supplies needed. Volunteers help sort donations, purchase specific items and deliver to the families by the weekend before Labor Day.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS - November. Families are provided with complete Thanksgiving dinners. Volunteers are needed to: make a basket for a specific family and deliver to collection site; assemble dinner baskets from food donations; or deliver complete uncooked meals to families the weekend before Thanksgiving. Baked goods and holiday cards made by children’s groups are also appreciated.

HOLIDAY GIFT PROGRAM - November through December. Spread the holiday cheer with friends, family, or co-workers by purchasing one item or entire wish lists for a family. Volunteers are needed to bake, make cards, shop and wrap gifts. Delivery people are in great demand to insure all gifts arrive in time for the holidays.

HOLIDAY PARTY – First Saturday in December in Jenkintown. Kick off the holiday season for our families with an afternoon of food, crafts, secret shopping and a visit from Santa. Volunteers needed to solicit and pick up food donations, help with crafts, Bingo, set up and break down. Donations of small gift items for the children to select and wrap for their parents are greatly appreciated.

COMFORT PROGRAM – Ongoing. Handmade afghans and quilts are distributed to new recipients to provide warmth and comfort during treatment days. Donations of new afghans and quilts are always welcome.

“Through our hardest times the Breathing Room has always been there to lend a helping hand in the areas where we needed the most help.”

DIRECTLY ASSISTING FAMILIES

The Breathing Room offers our families support services during cancer treatments. Volunteers may provide: yardwork, homecooked meals and companionship.

Volunteers are matched with specific families based on availability and geographic location. If you are providing assistance for a family, you will be given the contact information, as well as, relevant details about the current status of the family.

Here are guidelines for your service:

- Contact the recipient to introduce yourself as a Breathing Room volunteer.
- Confirm the time and date with the recipient.
- Share your phone number with the recipient in case of a last minute change of plans.
- Contact the Breathing Room @ 215-277-1006 with any questions/concerns.

The Breathing Room Foundation respects the privacy of our families and maintains their confidentiality throughout our delivery of services and programs. In many cases only first names are shared unless a specific volunteer or service requires additional information. Our recipients are entitled to this in all endeavors and they appreciate our discretion.

Service time spent with the family should be logged in at www.breathingroomfoundation.org or email Eileen@breathingroomfoundation.org. The Volunteer link allows you to “Log in Service Hours”. The documented volunteer hours are required information for future grant funding. Please include any relevant comments regarding the recipient and your volunteer experience with the family.

“It is with great appreciation and humility that I write to you. Because of this organization my life has been restored to a place of peace and normalcy.”

MEAL VOLUNTEERS

Home cooked meals are a generous and gratifying gift to a recipient in treatment for cancer. Pulling a homemade meal out of the freezer at the end of a long day allows the parent the extra time to rest or relax with their family. Families and single recipients will enjoy a satisfying and nourishing meal with minimal effort. The following information offers guidelines for our “Meal Program”.

- Meals go out weekly to families ranging in size from one person to larger families with many children.
- If you volunteer to cook for a specific family, you will be given information about their individual food likes/dislikes, as well as, food allergies and dietary restrictions.
- Meals should be frozen to preserve freshness and insure safe transport to the recipient’s home. Please label the meal with the ingredients and the reheating instructions. Please wrap the meal very tightly to prevent contamination.
- Pasta is very easy to prepare and freeze. However, many times our recipients are swimming in lasagna and baked ziti. Please try to avoid these meals if possible.
- Homemade baked goods are an easy way to involve your children in the Meal Program. The families love to receive fresh baked cookies, cupcakes and brownies. Please label the name of the baked good.
- **Peanut and shellfish allergies are a health concern for some families. Please include those ingredients on the label if you added that to your meals or baked goods.**
- Meal delivery volunteers are given the contact information for the family. The Volunteer Coordinator will give you pertinent information, as well as, possible delivery times for the meals.
- Please call the family directly to set up a delivery day and time. Exchange phone numbers in case the plan changes at the last minute.
- Deliver the frozen meals promptly to insure food safety.
- The recipient may require assistance carrying the food to the kitchen and packing it into the refrigerator or freezer. This is a good time to discuss the quantity of

the food that is being delivered, as well as, the necessity for future meal deliveries.

*“You continue to surprise me with blessings and support me in perfect ways! Thank you for the huge sack of snacks!
What a treat. Peace and thanks”*

SNACK BAGS

Snack bags are an unexpected surprise for our families to receive and offer the practical support which makes the Breathing Room Foundation unique. Parents know that children are always eating or thinking about the next snack or meal. A readymade snack bag in the kitchen cabinet, back seat of the car or tucked in a backpack makes daily life a little bit easier.

The snack bags are a quart size Ziploc type bag with a juice box and a couple different individually wrapped snack items. These items may include: granola bar, small box of raisins, goldfish, cookies...whatever snack items your own children enjoy. Some groups enjoy tucking a handmade greeting or picture in the snack bag. The cards may read “Thinking of You” or “Have a Nice Day”.

This is a simple service project for schools, youth groups or Scout troops, as well as, office service days. The children enjoy donating their favorite snacks or juice bags to the group donations, with little financial demand on the parents. The handmade card/note tucked inside each bag is a simple craft to complete during an inside recess or troop meeting.

For more information contact the Breathing Room at 215-277-1006 or
Eileen@breathingroomfoundation.org

Please log in your service hours at www.breathingroomfoundation.org or email Eileen@breathingroomfoundation.org Click the Volunteer link at the top of the home page to “Log In Service Hours”. Documentation of your service hours is needed for future grant funding. The comment section allows you to provide a quick update. Please add any pertinent information about the current status of the family, such as upcoming surgery, treatments or dietary issues.

“Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.” Booker T. Washington

“Having Someone Do Yard Work Allowed My Family To Take Me to My Doctor’s Appointments”

YARD WORK VOLUNTEERS

Yard work volunteers provide a huge service to a Breathing Room family. Surgery, recovery and cancer treatments often result in exhaustion and physical limitations. Looking out the window at an overgrown yard increases a recipient’s stress. A yard work volunteer rakes, trims, plants and mows the yard back to a beautiful oasis for the family to relax and enjoy time together. This is an excellent service opportunity for families, groups and teenagers requiring service hours.

Here are some guidelines as you plan your yard clean up:

- Brown lawn bags and flats of impatiens or begonias are provided by the BRF
- You will know what lawn/garden equipment the family has and what they want you to do before you arrive.
- Groups should bring additional gardening supplies so everyone can work together.
- Schedule a rain date if possible.
- Contact the family the day before you plan to garden to confirm the service. Identify yourself as a Breathing Room Volunteer. The family will expect to hear from you.
- The family may or may not be home when you are there depending on the current situation. Please bring your own drinks with you.

Log in your service hours at www.breathingroomfoundation.org or email Eileen@breathingroomfoundation.org Click the Volunteer link to “Log in Service Hours”. This information is important for our future grant funding. Please comment on your experience and include any additional needs you feel the family may have at this time.

**QUESTIONS: Please call the BRF office 215-277-1006
Eileen 215-740-3076 or Mary Ellen 215-570-0530**

*“Your service has given me strength, hope and a
moment to BREATHE”*

COMFORT BAG

Recipients in treatment receive a handmade “Comfort Bag” to use during treatment days or hospital stays. This handmade fabric tote bag contains a small pillow, as well as, simple necessity items to provide comfort during the long hours of treatment.

Donations of the following items are always welcome: travel size bottles of hand sanitizer and hand lotion; small packs of tissues; puzzle books; Chap Sticks; fuzzy socks and note pads. This type of collection is a simple, inexpensive service project for church groups, school students, service groups or Scout troops. Handmade notes or cards tucked inside the Comfort Bag provide a gentle lift to the recipients sitting in chemo chairs on those long treatment days.

*“NOTHING compares to the Breathing Room’s
CONTINUED care and concern. It is like a family
circle around me and
I LOVE IT!”*

QUILTS AND KNITTED THROWS

One of our most welcome gestures of support comes in a warm, handmade quilt or throw to wrap the recipient in the “arms of the Breathing Room family”. Chills are a common side effect of cancer treatments. A beautiful quilt (throw sized) or soft, knitted afghan provides physical comfort, as well as, emotional support to a recipient.

Creative quilters and knitters are welcome to donate your colorful treasures to Breathing Room recipients. Recruit your knitting or quilting club for donations. Please use washable fabric and yarn for easy care.

Please log in your service hours and the in kind value of your throw or quilt. You can do this at www.breathingroomfoundation.org or email Eileen@breathingroomfoundation.org Click the Volunteer link at the top of the home page to “Log in Service Hours”. This information is important for our future grant funding.

**Contact the Breathing Room Foundation at 215-277-1006 or
Eileen@breathingroomfoundation.org to learn more about the Comfort Program.**

“Thanks for thinking about us and bless all you do to make difficult situations a bit more tolerable.”

“I will never forget what your organization has done for my family. You have made us realize there are good people in the world.”

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Office volunteers are an integral part of our foundation. Volunteers in the office perform a variety of services including:

- Data entry: Update database to maintain current records for families, volunteers and donors.
- Bulk mailings: Stuff and label envelopes for large mailings.
- Photo displays: Create photo boards from recent holiday programs and events.
- Special projects: Vary depending upon the time of year and current needs.

Office volunteers are trained by an office staff member. The volunteer will sit individually with the designated staff member to review the steps needed to complete the specific task. The staff member will be available at all times to answer questions and review results. All necessary materials for the project will be provided to the volunteer.

The Breathing Room Foundation respects the privacy of our families and maintains their confidentiality throughout our delivery of services and programs. In many cases only first names are shared unless a specific volunteer or service requires additional information. Office volunteers are required to maintain the strictest confidentiality with any personal information they observe while working in the office. Our recipients are entitled to this in all endeavors and they appreciate our discretion.

The office staff will show you where to sign in and out when you arrive at the office. Please enter your contact information and service hours while at the office. This information is crucial for our future grant applications.

Our office is located at 600 West Avenue in Jenkintown. It was previously the Immaculate Conception convent. Free parking is available in the parking lot behind the building. Metered parking is available on West Avenue. Meters are strictly enforced. Our office hours are flexible so please call the office to confirm that a staff member will be there when you arrive. The office phone number is 215-277-1006.

“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.” *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

PROGRAM COLLECTION SITE VOLUNTEERS

Thank you for volunteering your time and talent for the Breathing Room Foundation Programs. Our Programs include: Martin Luther King Day of Service; Valentine’s Day - Share the Love; Easter/Spring Baskets or Passover Treats; Summer Fun; Back to School; Thanksgiving Dinner, as well as, the Holiday Gift Program. At the designated location, we collect and organize donations, assemble gift packages and distribute them for deliveries. We hope these guidelines will make your experience rewarding and encourage you to join us again for future programs. The Breathing Room is a **VOLUNTEER** organization so **YOU** are critical to the success of our mission to assist families with cancer.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE:

- * Detailed information describing the specific program and the necessary donations will be emailed to you as well as posted on our website. This includes the dates and times we will be at the collection site.
- * Encourage family, friends and coworkers to participate in the program by donating, organizing at the site or delivering directly to the Breathing Room families.
- * Bring a friend with you to volunteer and share this rewarding experience.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE:

- Stop at the Volunteer Table to sign in your contact information for our database. You will receive specific guidelines about the current program from an experience BRF volunteer.
- If you are donating to the program, the volunteer at the Sign In Table will document your donation in our database and direct you to the appropriate table for you to drop it off.
- An experienced BRF Volunteer will explain the various service opportunities needed at that time and match your interests and availability. You will shadow this volunteer as you learn what is needed at each work station.
- You will meet other volunteers who share your commitment to helping others. Feel free to help yourself to the available beverages and light snacks.
- Questions or concerns? The Program Coordinator and experienced volunteers are always available to assist.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- Stop at the Volunteer Table to document the time you spent volunteering at the collection site. This information is crucial for our future grant applications.
- If you are taking a holiday delivery to a family, a volunteer will be at the Sign Out Table to log in your name next to the family name. This allows us to track the delivery.

“The compassion, the kindness and the concern shown by those helping us was the most powerful gift for my children and me.”

DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS

Thank you very much for volunteering to deliver to a Breathing Room family. Here are some guidelines:

- Call the family before you leave for your delivery. When delivering program items, the family is expecting you but it is always good to confirm the family is home before you leave your home or the distribution site. The Program Coordinator will give you all the contact information. Call and identify yourself as a volunteer with the Breathing Room Foundation.
- For the holiday deliveries, you may have several families in one zip code. If you arrive at a home and no one answers the door, please do your other deliveries and then return to that home. Knock on the door in case a family member is home but does not answer the phone. Some of our recipients need extra time to answer the phone and/or the door. The family may offer to carry the items into their home when they know you are out front. If no one is home, you may need to return the delivery to us or take it home with you to arrange an alternate delivery date if that is convenient for you.
- A family may ask you questions about other Breathing Room support services or a bill payment. Please encourage the recipient to discuss these concerns with Mary Ellen Fitzgerald by calling the office at 215-277-1006 or email Maryellen@breathingroomfoundation.org
- Your follow-up is critical to our ongoing support for the family. Please let us know about your delivery outcomes when you log in your service hours at www.breathingroomfoundation.org or email Eileen@breathingroomfoundation.org. Click the Volunteer link at the top of the home page to “Log In Service Hours”. Documentation of your service hours is needed for future grant funding. The comment section allows you to provide a quick update about your delivery experience. Please add any pertinent information about the current status of the family, such as additional treatments, surgeries, improving health, or bill payment requests.

QUESTIONS? OFFICE @ 215-277-1006 MARY ELLEN @ 215-570-0530 OR EILEEN @ 215-740-3076

“My children get so excited when they see The Breathing Room Foundation on a package at the door. They know there is something fun inside. We love you guys.”

FUNDRAISING EVENT VOLUNTEERS

BOWLING NIGHT –Saturday night in February. Come bowl with us at Thunderbird Lanes. Help needed with food pickup, raffle prizes and sponsors.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE–April. Come celebrate with families living with cancer. Help needed for mailings, raffle prizes, sponsors, food donations, ticket sales, advertisements and set up/break down.

GOLF OUTING–April. Take a day off from work and play at the Philadelphia Cricket Club. Help to recruit golfers, register players and obtain raffle prizes and sponsors.

BACKYARD FAIR –Sunday in September. Bring your family to share a beautiful fall afternoon with fun games, prizes and food in Jenkintown Town Square. Volunteers needed to distribute flyers, set up/break down games, ticket sales, work game booths and obtain gift basket donations.

VALLEY ROAD RUN- First Sunday morning in October. A 5K run or 2 mile walk along Valley Road, Jenkintown. Help advertise event, register participants, track times and assist police with traffic control.

COACH BINGO – Friday in October. Girls Night Out! Play Bingo and win a beautiful new designer handbag. Volunteers needed to sell tickets, shop for handbags, assist with set up and clean up.

LADIES SHOPPING NIGHT – Friday in November/December. Enjoy holiday shopping with friends and family at the Abington Club. Select handmade gifts from local artisans and vendors. Volunteers needed to sell tickets, help artists carry their items into the Club; assist with set up and clean up.

New volunteers are always welcome to provide fresh energy and ideas to existing fundraisers or to propose new ones. The Event Coordinator for each fundraiser will explain the specific tasks needed for the success of the event. You will receive the necessary contact information and a donation letter for the store manager for a prize or food pick up. An experienced volunteer will pair with you to answer any questions or concerns. Here is a brief overview of the tasks:

Raffle Prize Solicitation: Encourage your friends and family to donate an item for a raffle prize. Ask a store or business you frequent to donate a gift certificate or gift basket. The Event Coordinator will provide a letter from the Breathing Room as an official documentation of the gift for the event. All donations are tax deductible.

Raffle Prize Pick Up: Prizes need to be picked up from the donors. You will receive a list of donations in the same geographic area with a similar pick up time. Please call the donor to confirm pick up time. Identify yourself as a Breathing Room volunteer. The donors will expect to hear from you prior to arrival at the store or restaurant.

Set Up/Break Down: Most events require some form of set up as well as clean up at the end. This may include: set up tables and chairs; arrange food donations on the table and safely package the leftovers; gather BRF signs after the Golf Outing...

Ticket Sales: Encourage your friends and family to attend the fundraisers to boost ticket sales.

Advertise: Promote the fundraiser through your personal and professional social media contacts