

One Hour a Week Can Change a Cancer Journey

By Sanjeevani: Life Beyond Cancer

Most people want to help someone facing cancer.

Yet, when confronted with the reality of cancer—the diagnosis, the treatment, the emotional upheaval, the financial strain—we often feel helpless. We assume that meaningful support requires medical expertise, large donations, or significant amounts of time.

The truth is far simpler.

Just **one hour a week** can make a meaningful difference in the life of a person battling cancer.

The Hidden Burden of Cancer

Cancer is not merely a medical condition. It affects every dimension of a person's life.

A diagnosis often brings fear, uncertainty, loneliness, financial stress, disruption of family life, and emotional exhaustion. While doctors, nurses, and hospitals address the medical aspects of cancer, many psychosocial needs remain unmet.

Patients frequently need:

- Someone to listen without judgment.
- Guidance on navigating treatment pathways.
- Help accessing resources and support services.
- Emotional encouragement during difficult phases of treatment.
- A sense that they are not alone in their journey.

Often, these needs can be addressed not by specialists, but by caring members of the community.

What Research Tells Us

Research consistently demonstrates the value of community engagement and volunteer support in improving health and well-being.

The World Health Organization defines community engagement as developing relationships that enable people to work together to address health-related issues and improve well-being. WHO

notes that community engagement strengthens trust, promotes better health outcomes, and helps create more responsive health systems.

Studies examining cancer support organizations have found that community-based support helps reduce feelings of isolation, provides emotional validation, decreases stress, and creates a sense of belonging among people diagnosed with cancer. Volunteers and community members often become an important source of psychosocial support.

Research reviewing volunteer support programs for people with cancer has similarly highlighted the important role volunteers play in providing practical, emotional, and peer support.

Interestingly, volunteering benefits not only those receiving help but also those providing it. Systematic reviews have shown associations between volunteering and improved well-being, higher life satisfaction, and lower rates of depression.

The conclusion is clear: communities have a powerful role to play in supporting people affected by cancer.

Why One Hour Matters

Many people underestimate the value of small contributions.

One hour a week may seem insignificant.

Yet consider what can happen in sixty minutes:

- A volunteer can call a patient living alone and offer companionship.
- A community member can share verified information on cancer awareness through social media.
- Someone can help organize a local awareness event.
- A retiree can mentor a caregiver struggling with emotional stress.
- A student can assist in fundraising or awareness campaigns.
- A professional can offer guidance, networking support, or administrative assistance to a cancer support organization.

When multiplied across hundreds of individuals, one hour becomes a powerful collective force.

If 100 people contribute one hour each week, that translates into over 5,000 hours of community support annually.

Imagine the difference that can make.

The Ripple Effect of Human Connection

Cancer patients often remember acts of kindness long after treatment ends.

A phone call.
A reassuring conversation.
Help completing a form.
A ride to the hospital.
A nutrition kit delivered at the right time.
A message saying, "I am thinking of you."

These gestures may seem small to the giver, but they can mean the world to someone navigating one of life's most difficult journeys.

Community support does not replace medical care.

It complements it.

It restores dignity, hope, and connection.

From Compassion to Action

Many people ask:

"What can I do?"

The answer is simple.

Start where you are.

Use the skills you already possess.

Give the time you can spare.

The most impactful volunteers are not necessarily those with extraordinary talents. They are ordinary people who choose to show up consistently.

Introducing the Community Cancer Leader Program

At **Sanjeevani: Life Beyond Cancer**, we believe that every citizen has the potential to become a catalyst for change.

Our **Community Cancer Leader Program** has been designed to empower individuals to create meaningful impact within their own communities.

Community Cancer Leaders are trained and supported to:

- Spread awareness about cancer prevention and early detection.
- Guide individuals toward credible information and support services.

- Mobilize local communities for cancer-related initiatives.
- Support patients and caregivers through empathy and connection.
- Advocate for timely diagnosis and treatment.
- Become ambassadors of hope within their neighbourhoods, workplaces, and social networks.

The program recognizes a simple but powerful truth:

Cancer care cannot be the responsibility of hospitals alone. It must become a community movement.

You do not need medical qualifications.

You do not need vast amounts of free time.

You only need the willingness to contribute.

One hour a week.

One conversation.

One act of kindness.

One person choosing to care.

Because sometimes, that is all it takes to change a cancer journey.

If you would like to become a Community Cancer Leader and contribute your time, skills, and compassion, connect with Sanjeevani: Life Beyond Cancer and join a growing movement of citizens committed to ensuring that no one faces cancer alone.