



PRESS RELEASE

A new partnership between the Y and the Willamette Valley Cancer Institute promises to serve more cancer survivors A \$25,000 commitment bolsters LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA

Eugene, Ore., February 3, 2022 —

In recognition of the success of the LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA program for cancer survivors, the Willamette Valley Cancer Institute has generously donated \$25,000 to relaunch the program and ensure its viability in the future.

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA is a research-based physical activity and well-being program designed to help adult cancer survivors achieve their holistic health goals.

"This generous donation could not have come at a better time," said LIVESTRONG Program Coordinator Colleen Hogan. "When COVID-19 shuttered the Eugene Y, cancer patients lost access to a program proven to improve fitness and quality of life, decrease cancer-related fatigue and mitigate anxiety and depression. Isolation and loneliness have only gotten worse during COVID-19, while cancer diagnoses have continued to occur."

The Eugene Family YMCA was the first YMCA in Oregon to launch the evidenced-based program, founded in partnership with the Livestrong Foundation in 2007. Since its inception in January 2016, the Eugene Y's LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program has empowered more than 150 cancer survivors to improve functional capacity and to increase their quality of life through a 12-week, small group physical activity program led by specially trained instructors.

"Our oncologists refer patients to the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program regularly because they trust the Y and know that exercise, community support and socialization leads to positive health outcomes," said Steve Baron, Executive Director of the Willamette Valley Cancer Institute. "We are thrilled to ensure the relaunch of this invaluable program and its sustainability into the future."

Before a LIVESTRONG at the YMCA session begins, two instructors meet with each participant one-on-one to explain the program, gather medical information and discuss personal goals.

Participants receive a tailored workout plan based on the interview, their physician's recommendations and a physical fitness assessment. Exercise program designs include recommendations for the starting number of strength-training repetitions, sets, weight, and duration of each activity as well as an introduction to other exercise modalities such as gentle yoga, dance aerobics and water workouts.

"The program meets each person where they are and proceeds with a 'start low, go slow' approach to exercise progression," Hogan said. "Cancer survivors build cardiovascular and core muscle strength and endurance, flexibility, and balance, reduce the severity of therapy side effects, prevent unwanted weight changes, and improve energy levels and self-esteem. I'm moved to tears when I see the progress these participants make in a mere 3 months with a twice a week commitment."

While COVID halted in-person classes, Hogan and her team found an innovative way to serve cancer patients safely—the [RECLAIM: Cancer Exercise Series](#), six fitness videos for those

recovery from chemotherapy, radiation, surgery and other cancer treatments. The package includes a warm-up and cool down; two full-body strength workouts featuring resistance tubes & weights; a balance, stretch and range-of-motion workout; three guided meditations; two lymphedema exercise videos (upper & lower body); and two aerobic workouts.

"The video series filled an important void during a global pandemic but can't replace the magic that happens between participants, staff and experts in specific oncology fields during the 12-week in-person session," said Eugene Family YMCA CEO Brian Steffen. "Our mission was clear: to bring in-person **LIVESTRONG** at the YMCA back. The obstacle was large: declining revenue due to membership loss. Partnering with the respected Willamette Valley Cancer Institute is a brilliant solution to serving some of the most vulnerable members of our community."

The Willamette Valley Cancer Institute has 24 oncology specialists on staff and operates in Eugene, Florence, Corvallis and Lincoln City. It is affiliated with the US Oncology Network, one of the largest cancer treatment and research networks in the country.

"Our patients' care and well-being are paramount," said Dr. Benjamin Cho, an oncologist at Willamette Valley Cancer Institute. "We know the Y cares for our patients with the same level of compassion and understanding that we do, and offers exceptional expertise in the exercise arena. Knowing that our patients can enroll in the **LIVESTRONG** at the YMCA program after their diagnosis, surgery or treatment gives us great peace of mind."

The full, in-person **LIVESTRONG** at the YMCA program is scheduled to return in late February 2022.

Learn more about **LIVESTRONG** at the YMCA [HERE](#).

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About the Eugene Family YMCA

The Eugene Family YMCA is one of the region's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Each year across Lane County, the Y engages more than 18,000 people regardless of age, gender, income or background—to nurture the potential of children, teens and seniors; improve health and well-being; and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. In 2020, the Eugene Family YMCA awarded \$413,506 in financial assistance. The YMCA has been serving the Eugene-area since 1887.

About the Willamette Valley Cancer Institute

At Willamette Valley Cancer Institute and Research Center we offer hope. We guide and navigate. We are our patients' strongest advocates. As part of the US Oncology Network of over 1,200 independent physicians, we are dedicated to delivering value-based, integrated care to patients—close to home in Corvallis, Eugene, Florence and Lincoln City. As part of the Network, we form a community of shared expertise and resources committed to advancing local cancer care and delivering better patient outcomes. WVCI actively participates in clinical trials through US Oncology Research, which has played a role in more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies, approximately one-third of all cancer therapies approved by the FDA to date.

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