

PARTNERS

Newsletter of the Patient and Family Advisory Program at Moffitt Cancer Center | SUMMER 2026

PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Waiting: Cancer's Least Favorite Side Effect

*Judy Adkins, Patient Advisor,
Patient and Family Advisory Program*

Waiting is almost the worst part of cancer. During treatment, time doesn't exactly slow down—it becomes unreliable. Days stretch, minutes linger and the calendar feels less like a planning tool and more like a reminder of what's coming next.

Waiting for test results is especially hard. Your life begins to orbit appointments and side effects, and everything else politely steps aside. Treatment today is far better than it once was, and I'm grateful for that. Still, waiting leaves plenty of room for imagination, and none of it is helpful.

What made that waiting bearable were the people. The clinic staff consistently treated me like a real person—not a diagnosis, not a chart and not the sum of my test



Judy, waiting with wisdom.

results. Their patience, kindness and steady presence mattered more than they probably realized, especially on days when everything else felt uncertain and impersonal.

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CO-CHAIR COLUMN

*Rae Sawyer, Family Advisor and Co-Chair,
Patient and Family Advisory Council*

Summer is often associated with long days filled with sunshine, family vacations, and extra time to spend with those we love.

In our family, summer has served as the backdrop for some of our favorite memories. We reinforce these moments through the stories we tell—carefully “catalogued” by volume and chapter, becoming more dramatic with each retelling. These stories connect us, remind us of the closeness of our family and give us something to laugh about year after year.

When a family is navigating a cancer journey, however, summer can look very different from seasons that came before. Family time often centers on caregiving and finding contentment in simple moments. For a cancer patient, energy levels and physical comfort may change from day to day. Focusing on the pleasure of being outdoors—enjoying a simple picnic, sitting on the patio in a cool evening breeze, watching the sunset or taking a walk in a nearby park—can be relaxing and allow everyone to feel included and valued.

Summer can also become a time for storytelling to take on a deeper meaning. Sharing old family adventures with younger generations brings perspective and new joy. Laughter over favorite movies, rooting for opposing sports teams or reminiscing about past vacations helps preserve a sense of normalcy. Circumstances may have changed, but the heart of what makes summer special remains the same.

Above all, the most important element is emotional support. A cancer diagnosis reshapes priorities, teaching us to embrace small victories and cherish time once taken for granted. Summer can be more than a season; it can serve as a reminder that joy can exist amid uncertainty. We can be present in the moment and find avenues to create lasting family stories.



INTRODUCING...

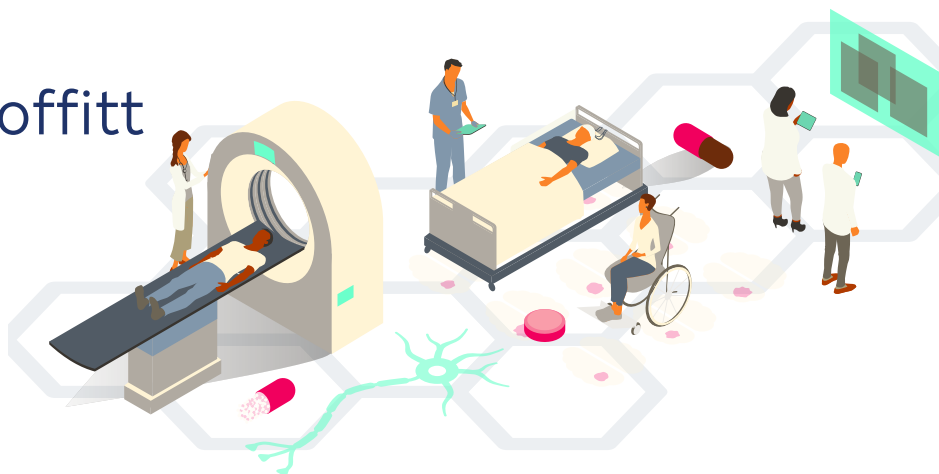
Proton Therapy at Moffitt

Valentina Ahumada, Internal Communications Coordinator, Strategic Communications

Moffitt Cancer Center is bringing a new kind of radiation treatment, called proton therapy, to the Tampa Bay area. Starting in June 2026 at the Speros Outpatient Center in Pasco County, this advanced therapy can target cancerous tumors while protecting nearby healthy organs, like the heart or spinal cord.

Proton therapy uses charged particles called protons to deliver radiation directly to the tumor. Unlike traditional radiation, which passes through healthy tissue on its way to the tumor, proton beams stop precisely at the cancer, lowering the risk of side effects. This makes it especially helpful for tumors near vital organs or in children, whose growing bodies are more sensitive to radiation.

Patients receiving proton therapy first have a simulation session with CT scans to map the tumor and surrounding area. A personalized plan is then created, and treatments are delivered with high precision. The process is painless, and most people return to their normal activities right after.



While proton therapy isn't the right choice for every patient, it offers an important option for many cancers, including brain, breast, lung and pediatric tumors. Moffitt's multidisciplinary team works closely with each patient to determine the most appropriate treatment plan for their individual needs.

To learn more about proton therapy at Moffitt, visit Moffitt.org/treatments/radiation-therapy/proton-therapy. If you're curious whether proton therapy might be right for you or a loved one, talk with your doctor to see if it should be considered as part of your treatment plan.

WAITING: CANCER'S LEAST FAVORITE SIDE EFFECT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

As tests approach, anxiety quietly uses up most of your energy. Waiting becomes its own kind of work—emotional, invisible and exhausting. It teaches you how long a minute can feel, how much strength it takes to sit with uncertainty, and how meaningful it is to be treated with dignity while you do.

Support is available for patients and loved ones navigating a cancer diagnosis. Moffitt offers a variety of programs to help throughout your cancer journey. Learn more at Moffitt.org/SupportPrograms or call 813-745-8407 to reach Social Work.

NEED A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

Moffitt's Patient Accessibility Services is here to support you at no cost. If you need any accommodations, modifications or communication assistance for your upcoming appointment, we encourage you to email AccessCoordination@Moffitt.org at least 3-5 business days in advance.



A Legacy of Passion, Kindness and Humility

*Jackie Beaushaw,
Patient and Family Advisory Program Manager*



A legacy is something we carry forward. It's a light that keeps shining because someone cared enough to make a difference. Patti K. Halula left that kind of light behind.

Patti was a mother, wife, friend and patient at Moffitt. As a longtime patient advisor and co chair of the Patient and Family Advisory Council, she used her own experiences to help make care better for everyone after she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She worked to be sure that patients and families had a voice in their care.

Patti's passion showed in the way she spoke up for others. When she noticed something that could be improved, she didn't stay quiet. She believed that change was possible when someone was willing to ask hard questions or share a concern. Moffitt leaders remembered her as someone who searched for better solutions and kept patients at the center of every conversation.

Her kindness was just as strong. Even while living with metastatic breast cancer, Patti chose to support others through their hardest moments. She knew how heavy

fear could feel, and she helped create safe places where people could talk openly, share their feelings, and feel less alone.

Patti also lived with deep humility. She lifted others up. She listened closely, treated every person with care, and understood the value of simply being present. Those who worked with her say she had a rare gift for seeing the humanity in everyone she met.

The Patti K. Halula Legacy Award was created in Patti's memory to honor these qualities of passion, kindness, and humility and to recognize the Moffitt team members who live them each day. The award also celebrates the courage to speak up when it helps others, just as Patti always did. Patients, families, and colleagues can nominate Moffitt team members in any role throughout the year, and the award is presented each spring during Patient Experience Week.



Visit Moffitt.org/PKHLegacyAward to learn more about nominating a Moffitt team member.

Mastectomy Boutique AT MAGNOLIA'S SALON



Our certified team offers compassionate support and personalized fittings for patients after breast surgery or treatment.

Services include:

- Wig fittings
- Post-mastectomy fittings
- Mastectomy bras and breast prostheses
- Post-surgical and compression garments designed to support comfort and confidence

To learn more or schedule an appointment, call 813-745-3414 or email MastectomyBoutique@Moffitt.org.

MOFFITT RESOURCES

to Help Patients and Caregivers

UPCOMING EVENTS

June - August

Virtual Relaxation/Meditation for Stress Relief **813-745-6052**

Virtual/Zoom, RSVP only
Wednesday at 11 a.m.

[Moffitt.org/Meditation](https://moffitt.org/Meditation)

Virtual Gentle Restorative Yoga Class **813-745-6052**

Virtual/Zoom, RSVP only
Tuesday at 11 a.m. and Thursday at 2 p.m.

[Moffitt.org/Yoga](https://moffitt.org/Yoga)

Magnolia Open Art Studio

In person, Moffitt's Magnolia campus
3rd floor – Arts in Medicine Studio,
Located next to the B elevator
Monday – Friday, 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

McKinley Open Art Studio

In person, Moffitt's McKinley Outpatient Center
2nd floor – Patient and Family Center
Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Virtual Patient and Family Orientation **813-745-1690**

Virtual, RSVP only
Monday – Friday, 2 p.m.

PatientLibrary@Moffitt.org

Patient and Family Orientation **813-745-1690**

In person, RSVP only
By appointment

PatientLibrary@Moffitt.org

Virtual Meet the Experts **813-745-1690**

Virtual/Zoom, RSVP only
Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

PatientLibrary@Moffitt.org

PATIENT AND FAMILY VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS

For your convenience, we offer support groups via Zoom.

To learn more about support groups or to register, visit
[Moffitt.org/SupportGroups](https://moffitt.org/SupportGroups) or call the Social Work
Office at **813-745-8407**.

General Cancer Support Group

A group for patients diagnosed with any cancer type.
Meets every Tuesday, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Family and Friends Support Group

A group for families, friends and caregivers of patients.
Meets every Wednesday, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Ostomates

A group for patients with a colostomy, ileostomy or
urostomy. Meets the first and third Monday of every
month, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Metastatic Breast Cancer Support Group

A group for patients with stage 4 metastatic breast
cancer. Meets the first and third Tuesday of every
month, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Breast Cancer Connection

A group for patients diagnosed with breast cancer.
Meets the first Tuesday of every month, 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Metastatic Breast Cancer Spiritual Support Group

A group for patients with metastatic breast cancer,
facilitated by a Chaplain. Meets the second Thursday
of the month, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Learn About Upcoming Moffitt Events

Moffitt offers a variety of virtual and in-person
events. These events are here to help you learn
and connect with other patients and caregivers.
You can find a full list of upcoming events by
visiting **[Moffitt.org/Calendar](https://moffitt.org/Calendar)**.

A vibrant, hand-drawn style graphic with a yellow sun in the top left, a blue star on the left, a yellow handprint at the bottom left, and a blue heart at the bottom right. The background is a mix of yellow, orange, and light blue brushstrokes.

Summer fun & safety

“Nurturing both your mind and body go hand in hand—make space for the small joys in your life. Spend quality time outdoors with your loved ones, while pacing your energy and protecting your skin.”

Naomi Baldwin, Social Worker

“Sunscreen isn’t just for sunny days—remember to wear it daily as the sun’s UV rays can still damage your skin even on cloudy days. For effective protection, choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher.

Don’t forget often-missed areas like behind the ears, scalp/hairline, neck and beneath clothing straps. It may also be helpful to apply sunscreen to the hands—especially while driving—since they are frequently exposed to sunlight through car windows. Reapply every 2 hours and avoid peak sun hours from 10 a.m.– 4 p.m.

For patients receiving radiation therapy, skin can be extra sensitive, so additional sun protection is especially important.”

**Ashley Garabali,
Certified Physician Assistant**



In warm weather, bacteria grow faster. Don't leave food out for more than 1 hour (or 2 hours if kept cold) and always refrigerate leftovers promptly after grilling or picnics.

If you have had a recent surgery, port placement or open wound, avoid swimming in lakes, rivers, or pools unless your care team has cleared you. Water exposure can increase the risk of infection.

When in doubt, keep it clean and dry, and check with your care team before swimming or soaking!

Use a food thermometer when grilling—meat should be cooked to the proper internal temperature to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.”

Jenna Rivers, Infection Preventionist



Take in the summer warmth while staying hydrated, resting when you need to and giving yourself the care and grace you deserve.”

Latoya Hemmings, Social Worker



Art can be made anywhere, with anything – no studio required, just curiosity and imagination. Let the colors, textures and natural treasures of summer inspire creativity wherever you are.”

Jessica Halferty, Artist In Residence, Visual Artist



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Wanting to Get Active? You Can Do it!

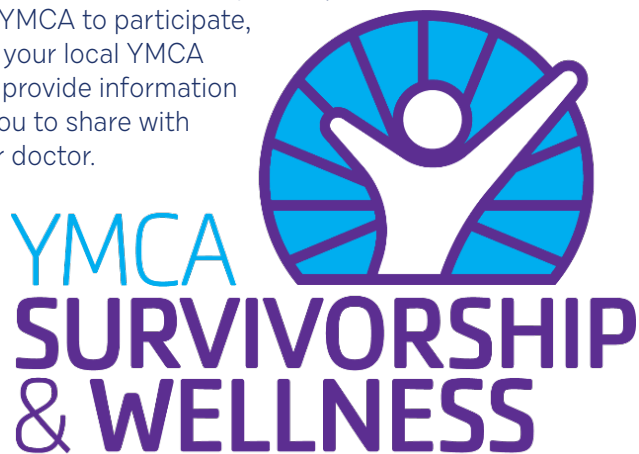
Allison Nguyen,

Research Partnerships Program Manager

Has your doctor told you that physical activity or exercise could help with managing your symptoms or rebuilding the strength you lost during treatment? Do you know how to get started? The YMCA Survivorship & Wellness Powered by Moffitt program may be right for you.

This no-cost, 12-week fitness and wellness program is offered in the community for survivors at most locations of the YMCA of the Suncoast and the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA. The program focuses on rebuilding strength and fitness and building a sense of social support with other cancer survivors.

Medical clearance is required by the YMCA to participate, and your local YMCA can provide information to you to share with your doctor.



POWERED BY: **MOFFITT** 
CANCER CENTER

The program is open to YMCA members and nonmembers. Participants receive a no-cost family membership for the length of the program, which means your caregiver could also visit the YMCA and work out separately.

On average, adults are encouraged to complete at least two and a half hours of moderate activity each week, and this program helps participants work toward that goal. The program meets twice a week for 12 weeks for an hour and fifteen minutes each session. It might sound like a lot, but program coaches help you start slowly and safely.

The program is offered in small groups and led by trained coaches who meet each participant where they are, so they can exercise safely based on their individual needs. Over time, participants build strength, confidence, hope and camaraderie with other survivors. At the end of the program, participants celebrate their accomplishments with a graduation.

To Learn more about the YMCA Cancer Survivorship Program, visit: Moffitt.org/YMCASurvivorshipFlyer to view the program flyer or contact your local YMCA branch for availability and participation requirements.

Moffitt's Specialty Pharmacy

offers personalized support for oral chemotherapy and other specialty cancer medications, including insurance assistance, medication education and free delivery in Florida.

To get in touch with a pharmacy specialist, call 813-745-7354 or visit Moffitt.org/SpecialtyPharmacy to learn more.



Life Beyond Cancer

Fatima Singh, Patient Advisor, Patient and Family Advisory Program



I can still remember how I felt the day I was diagnosed with Stage IV Hodgkin's Lymphoma at 21 years old.

Words cannot describe how overwhelming it was, but here I am—over 15 years later—a proud survivor. My journey has shaped me into a stronger person and I am deeply

grateful to be alive and able to share my story.

I am especially thankful for my family, who helped me get here. My mom was my rock. My dad, a doctor, worked extra hours to support us. My sister was my stem cell donor, and my brother was a constant source of care and support. Together, we were an unstoppable force. Now, I am grateful to be married to my soulmate, who is always by my side.

Going through cancer gave me a new perspective on life. Some of the bravest moments of my journey came from facing those challenges and difficulties head-on. Since then, I have earned three graduate degrees—an achievement I am incredibly proud of. I studied to become a social worker, because I witnessed firsthand the impact this profession has on patients in hospitals.

Their dedication inspired me deeply. I also have the honor of giving back by serving as an AYA peer visitor at Moffitt Cancer Center, by supporting adolescents and young adult patients and their families.



Fatima and her husband, Paul, celebrating his birthday.

Finally, being a survivor has taught me resilience. Facing these challenges made me a stronger person and gave me a deeper appreciation for life. I sincerely hope every cancer patient has the opportunity to overcome their battles, emerging with strength, hope and gratitude while discovering the courage from within.

If you are a patient between the ages of 15-39 and are interested in learning more about Moffitt's Adolescent and Young Adult program, visit [Moffitt.org/AYA](https://www.moffitt.org/AYA) for more information.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Moffitt's Patient and Family Advisory Program is seeking members from diverse and underrepresented communities.

Help us ensure all voices are represented and heard by Moffitt leadership.

To learn more, call **813-745-3753** or email [**PatientAdvisors@Moffitt.org**](mailto:PatientAdvisors@Moffitt.org)



Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated

Rachael Williams, Clinical Dietician

Are You Consuming Enough Water?

Poor water intake can cause several symptoms, including poor skin health, dizziness, decreased concentration and fatigue. Severe dehydration can lead to seizures and even organ damage. Drinking water frequently is important; make it a habit to bring a refillable water bottle with you everywhere you go.

If you have a hard time with plain water, you can add whole fruit or flavoring drops to encourage you to drink more. A few favorites of mine are freshly cut strawberries, a squeeze of fresh lemon or cucumber slices. If you are currently undergoing treatment, be sure to check with your care team about any dietary restrictions, as some foods may need to be avoided depending on your treatment plan.

Did you know, you can also increase hydration by including foods in your diet that are high in water content? Milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, fruits and vegetables all contain water. As we get closer to the

warmer months of the year, increased time out in the sun and sweating lead to a higher risk of dehydration. Making your own popsicles at home can be a fun way to encourage increased hydration while having a refreshing snack with friends and family out in the sun. If you are planning a picnic, a trip to the beach, or any outdoors event- be sure to include fresh fruit, lots of fluid or even those homemade popsicles on your list of items to bring!

Some health conditions may alter a person's fluid needs. If you have concerns about your hydration speak with your medical team. Moffitt's Nutrition Department is here to help! Patients concerned about their nutrition or hydration status can contact their medical team about a referral to one of our Registered Dietitians.

Everyone's hydration needs are different. If you have concerns about your nutrition or hydration status, talk with your medical team about a referral to a Moffitt registered dietitian for personalized guidance.





COOL DOWN WITH A

Homemade Creamsicle



Try this simple Orange-Ginger Creamsicle recipe from a Moffitt research Chef.

QUICK RECIPE

(Makes about 10 popsicles)

Blend together:

- ♥ 4-5 oranges (zest and fruit)
- ♥ 15 oz plain low-fat Greek yogurt
- ♥ 2 tsp vanilla extract
- ♥ 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- ♥ 1 tbsp agave (optional)



Oranges provide vitamin C to support immune health.



Greek yogurt contains probiotics that may benefit gut health.



Fresh ginger adds flavor and may help ease nausea.



Pour into popsicle molds or small cups and freeze at least 6 hours.



ENJOY!

Woven Together: Connection Through the Arts

Amanda Bonanno, Arts in Medicine Coordinator

Moffitt's Arts In Medicine studios offer a calming space to relax and explore the expressive arts with no experience necessary. This environment provides the opportunity to connect with oneself and others through creative outlets facilitated by our Artists-In-Residence team.

Patients and caregivers can choose from a variety of art practices designed to focus on the creative process and promote relaxation. Currently, weaving is highlighted, offering a tactile, meditative experience using different tools, techniques and textiles. Individual weavings can be made on small looms crafted from clay, cardboard or even seashells.

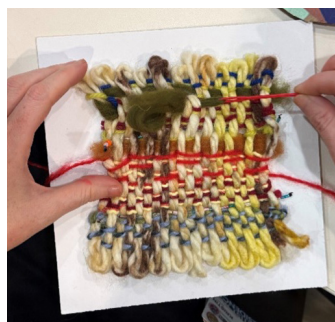
Community weavings are also available on large-scale looms, allowing participants to add to the artwork, each person contributing their own line of ribbon, paper or yarn to the design. Finished pieces will be on display later this year as part of an exhibit in the Healing Arts Gallery in honor of Moffitt's 40th anniversary.

These creations remind us how challenges can bring people together, intertwine our stories, and create new meaning. Please consider taking time out of your day to explore your own creativity and participate in the shared process of the community weavings.

Arts In Medicine studios are located at the Magnolia Campus and the McKinley Outpatient Campus and open weekdays. Bedside visits with art and music are also available. To learn more, email ArtsInMedicine@Moffitt.org or call Patient Support Services at 813-745-8407.



Individual Weaving Pieces



Weaving Process



Finished Seashell Piece



**Connect with Moffitt experts
a learn helpful information for
patients and caregivers.**



Sessions held Via Zoom
On Tuesdays and Wednesdays
At 10 - 10:30 a.m.



To register, please visit
Moffitt.org/MeetTheExperts
or call 813-745-1690

PATIENT LIBRARY & WELCOME CENTER

Information. Inspiration. Support.
All in one place.



Looking for information, support or a quiet place to recharge?
The Patient Library & Welcome Center offers easy-to-understand
educational resources, technology assistance and a welcoming space
for Moffitt patients and their loved ones.

Contact us at 813-745-1690 or visit Moffitt.org/PatientLibrary
for locations, hours, and upcoming programs.

PATIENT AND FAMILY

Orientation

LEARN HOW TO:



Connect with
Programs & Services



Partner with
Your Care Team



Find Your Way
Around Moffitt

- Virtual sessions presented at 2 p.m. on weekdays
- In-person sessions available by appointment
- Each session offers a 30-minute presentation with Q&A
- Presented in English and Spanish
- View online at MOFFITT.org/Orientation

813-745-1690 | Orientation@Moffitt.org

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If you would like to be involved in making Moffitt
the best it can be for all patients and families,
contact the Patient and Family Advisory
Program at PatientAdvisors@Moffitt.org
or 813-745-3753.

