

## PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Issued by:**

Robin Dudley

Dudley Business Development

[robin@dudleybusinessdevelopment.com](mailto:robin@dudleybusinessdevelopment.com)

**Ph.:** 805/ 781-3058

**Fax:** 805/ 781-2619

### **“CANCER CONNECTIONS” CELEBRATES ITS ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY.**

**Local cancer survivor group celebrates first successful year of positive, one-on-one support helping others deal with the disease.**

#### Release Summary

“You have cancer” are terrifying words no one ever wants to hear – often accompanied by feelings of fear, confusion, isolation and many, many questions. Sometimes just talking with someone who has “been there” can help. One year ago, a local cancer survivor started Cancer Connections, kicking off a countywide volunteer service that helps people diagnosed with cancer to cope with those feelings.

#### **San Luis Obispo, CA –**

**Cancer Connections of San Luis Obispo County** recently celebrated their first year anniversary of providing personalized cancer support to others countywide. The grass-roots group, founded by local ovarian cancer survivor Elaine Gardiner on November 2, 2005, is a positive, non-medical support network of volunteers who have had cancer, and are willing to share their time, a sympathetic ear and personal experience one-on-one with others grappling with diagnosis or treatment.

What makes Cancer Connections different from many cancer support groups is their broader focus, including all types of cancer. In the past year the organization has grown to 37 survivor-volunteers. “We have been able to make 24 “connections” in the county,” said Elaine Gardiner. “We are very proud to have reached so many who have needed us, and hope to grow more in our second year.”

Newly diagnosed individuals can call Cancer Connections between 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM on any day (including holidays) to be matched up with a volunteer who has “been there” and survived the same or a similar type of cancer. The call is free from anywhere in San Luis Obispo County. Local and long distance phone service for Cancer Connections is being provided through the generosity of Cellular One of San Luis Obispo. The volunteers are not doctors or trained therapists, but local individuals who offer non-medical information, reassurance and emotional support as needed, with complete confidentiality guaranteed.

Cancer Connections is also seeking cancer survivors to serve as volunteers. There are no meetings or fundraisers involved. You must just be caring, a good listener, and have a positive attitude and a desire to help others. For more information, call Elaine Gardiner, Cancer Connections Coordinator at 805-235-2997. # # #

**[Photo included with release]:**

**Cutline:** Cancer Connections volunteers at a recent gathering to celebrate “National Cancer Survivor Day.” *(Pictured left to right):*

**Front row:** John Fischer; Cathrin Eckle; Peaches Olson; Berta Hesser; Carol Rowe.

**Middle row:** Robin Dudley; Carol Thom; Elaine Gardiner; Frieda Sumpter; Lyle Rowe.

**Back row:** Howard Bentzinger; Bob Voglin; Murray Schmidt.