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## ***Dr. Patricia W. Caruthers — Cancer Action's 2017 Volunteer of the Year***

By Shirley Gibson

**D**r. Caruthers or as I call her Dr. C, initially heard of Cancer Action many years ago because she taught a Sunday school class that the former Executive Director, Maxine Bowers and her husband attended. Having been raised in a Christian home, Dr. Caruthers learned many lessons from her parents. The top three of importance were education, faith and helping others. One of her life's mottos comes from a hymn they sang in her church and that was, "If I can help somebody along the way then my living shall not be in vain." From these early life lessons, she dedicated her life to helping others.

Dr. Caruthers spent her professional life as an educator, following in her parents footsteps. She received her Master's Degree in Higher Education Administration and English. She earned her PhD in Higher Education Administration and African Literature. She began by teaching 7th grade English and later became the first Black female professor at Kansas City Kansas Community Junior College, where she retired as Vice-President for Administrative and Student Affairs. Over the years, she has volunteered/served on numerous boards involving education, economic and planning commissions, youth empowerment, transportation and health care.

Dr. Caruthers has volunteered over 14 years for Cancer Action. This was particularly meaningful as both of her parents had cancer. She was eager to help when asked by her life-long friend and Cancer Action board member, Clyde Townsend, to join the



**Dr. Patricia Caruthers,  
Volunteer of the Year**

board of directors. She has served as a dedicated board member for 12 years. She also generously gives her time to help with special events, such as Sunflowers to Roses.

In 2015, Dr. Caruthers began as a volunteer driver. She has logged a total of 5,241 miles and 340 hours driving patients to their treatment appointments. She patiently waits for them while they

are getting their treatment so they are not alone. In 2016 she provided a total of 65 rides for 15 different Cancer Action Patients. Dr. C develops a special relationship with the patients she transports and enjoys sharing stories with them during their time. Patients ask for her when calling to schedule their rides. She always asks the patients about her driving. One patient jokingly gave her a B+ one day which did not satisfy Dr. C. She asked him why the B+ and he told her the reason. She drove him several other times and on his last treatment appointment she asked him to grade her driving. He gave her an A+!

Dr. Caruthers shares she is humbled, grateful and thankful for her health and her life circumstances as she shares with Cancer Action patients. She stated she enjoys the reward of seeing people progress, with some of them even beating cancer. She has generously given her time, talent and treasures to meet the needs of those with cancer in our community. It is a privilege to name Dr. Patricia Caruthers as Cancer Actions 2017 Volunteer of the Year.

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# A NOTE FROM KARLA

By Karla Nichols, Executive Director

Sometimes you are reminded about important lessons you have learned. I have been reminded once again how very personal cancer is - how it can change your life so suddenly and unexpectedly. I have been supporting cancer patients and their families for more than 27 years. Supporting those facing the challenges of cancer has become my passion, my life's work if you will.

This past month I have been reminded how different it is when it is your family who is going through the struggle. I am reminded of how very personal the journey is for the one who has been diagnosed and those who know and love them. I am reminded of the strong emotions, the difficult decisions, the life-changing moment it is when you are told "you have cancer". I am reminded of how those three words can alter the plans and path of life in just a matter of seconds.

As I have come alongside my family during this time, I am also

reminded how very important it is to have a place of support, comfort and hope in your community - a place like Cancer Action. The city my family lives in does not have an organization like Cancer Action available to help navigate this challenging time. They have plenty of support from family, friends, church members and even their medical team... but there is an important role for an organization that is independent of the medical system (yet its partner) to help families through this time. As my family has coped with the twists and turns, the barrage of information, and the myriad of feelings I would have loved to send them to a place in their community to find this additional support.

With that, I am reminded of the support that Cancer Action receives from our community that enables us to "Go the Extra Mile" with those facing the challenges of cancer right here in



our hometown. I am grateful for the thousands of hours of volunteers and the wonderful talents that are shared to help those who they don't even know and to say through their work "I care for you".

I am grateful for those who generously give of their financial resources to help with the many tangible services that cancer patients need as they fight their disease, some of these are life-saving. I am reminded of the compassionate staff and dedicated board of directors that ensure Cancer Action stays strong in its mission and effective in its work. As I am reminded... I am grateful, for those who I have come to know along their personal journey for whom I have grown to care deeply. Thank you for the privilege, the trust and the hope you inspire in me every day.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karla Nichols".

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## *We Couldn't Do It Without You...*

Together, we helped over 2,600 cancer patients on their journey during 2016. We want to share with you some of the impact we made together this past year...

- Supplied over **80,000 servings of nutritional supplements**
  - Arranged **794 rides** to treatment and doctor appointments
  - Filled **2,193 prescriptions** for those who could not afford their medication
  - Provided **313 wigs and over 1,200 turbans and scarves**
  - Gave over **570 pieces of medical equipment**
  - Distributed **37,000 medical supplies** to decrease the financial burden of cancer
  - Case managers provided thousands of hours in emotional support, guidance and education to all of our clients
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## Cancer Action Volunteers

# *Making the World a Brighter Place*

**Cancer Action Volunteers play an important role in making the world a brighter place for our clients for providing over 51,618 hours of service in 2016!**

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Volunteers drove over 11,350 miles and spent over 770 hours transporting cancer patients to their doctor and treatment appointments

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Over 1,850 hours donated by those helping our three offices run smoothly and with bulk mailings

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Approximately 49,138 hours were given to provide comfort items and care to our clients through individuals and our service groups

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Many others gave thousands of hours helping with special events, health fairs, organizing storage rooms, courier work, and a host of other activities to help us make a difference!

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**Dawn and Stella showing their beautiful afghans**



**A few of Cancer Action Volunteer Drivers: Terry, Betty, Bob, Dr. Caruthers, Mary Ellen**

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*Thank You Cancer Action Volunteers*

**Girls Nite Out-4-Breast Cancer (GNO-4-BC)  
 COUNTRY HOEDOWN**

**Saturday, April 29, 2017 4:00-8:00 pm**

Cotillion, 1721 Burdette Crossing, Blue Springs, MO 64015

Come join us for an evening of live country music, raffles, vendors, dinner and Fun, Fun, Fun!

For more information visit' <https://sites.google.com/site/girlsniteout4bc>

Cancer Action is the beneficiary for this event!



**15th Annual Sunflowers to Roses Bike Tour**  
 Join the fight. Enjoy the ride  
**Sunday, August 6th at 7:30 a.m.**

Begins at ERIK'S Bike in Overland Park Kansas  
 For more information, visit [www.sunflowerstoroses.org](http://www.sunflowerstoroses.org)

Cancer Action is the beneficiary for this event!

If you would like to volunteer at the event, contact us at 913-642-8885.



**32nd Annual Celebration of Life Rally  
 on National Cancer Survivors Day**  
**Sunday, June 4, 2017**

Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Survivors Park, Kansas City, MO

Visit [www.blochcancer.org](http://www.blochcancer.org) for more information

Patients, caregivers and supporters are invited to come and share an afternoon of celebration with anyone whose life has been touched by cancer.



**Cancer Action Locations:**

**Eastern Jackson County**  
 4010 S. Lynn Court  
 Independence, MO 64055  
 816-350-8881

**Johnson County**  
 10520 Barkley, Suite 100  
 Overland Park, KS 66212  
 913-642-8885

**Wyandotte County**  
 3730 Metropolitan Avenue  
 Kansas City, KS 66106  
 913-321-8880

[www.canceractionkc.org](http://www.canceractionkc.org)