

During this time of year we often reminisce about family members and time spent with loved ones who have passed. Those living with cancer and their caregivers understand just how precious those special moments with family are, and how important it is to prioritize them.

Nobody perhaps understands the importance of family more than **Lucas Costanzo**, an absolute Cancer Assistance Program (CAP) champion; caregiver, cancer survivor, and donor we had the pleasure of speaking with earlier this month.

Lucas watched his beloved grandmother Maria live with breast cancer when he was a young boy. He admired her strength of will, determination, and steadfast loyalty to continue to care for, and look after her family, no matter how she felt. She loved cooking, took Lucas and his brothers to the park, and would always put makeup and jewelry on before heading out the door in her wig, wanting to look her absolute best – even when she was feeling her worst.

CAP provided vital support for Lucas' grandmother Maria and her family during this time.

"We didn't have a lot of family here at that time, they were all in Italy. And my grandmother needed to get to her appointments. My mother was a stay-at-home mom raising young children (my brothers and I), so it was tough for her to leave the house with three young kids in tow. During those times, CAP stepped in and provided my grandmother with rides to and from her appointments. I have so much respect for the organization for how they helped my family at a time when we had little support here."

Lucas was a direct witness to the help that CAP provided for his family. His grandmother used the drive program, and accessed equipment she needed; a wheelchair, a rollator, and was even fitted for some wigs. Maria lived with cancer for 8 long years before passing away 3 months after losing her husband to a massive heart attack. The family remembers Maria's determination and willpower and notes, ***"It wasn't the cancer that got her, but a broken heart."***

In 2019, at the young age of only 25, the unthinkable happened. Lucas would come to learn some life altering news, that he, like his grandmother Maria, would be diagnosed with cancer; testicular cancer. With cancer prevalent in Lucas' family, it was a worrisome diagnosis indeed.



Maria and Grandsons



The happy couple



Victorian, Lucas & Rosalia



Beautiful Rosalia



ONE-TIME DONATION: Yes, I want to make a gift to ensure cancer patients and their families get the help they need.

\$100 \$150 \$200 \$250 Other \$ _____

- I have enclosed my cheque made payable to **Cancer Assistance Program**.
- I authorize CAP to charge my credit card in the amount indicated at left.
- Please sign me up for electronic communications from CAP (be sure to include your email address).

Visa Mastercard

Card # _____

Expiry _____ CVV _____

Name on Card _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Phone _____

Email _____

*Thank
You*

Please make cheque payable to Cancer Assistance Program. To make your gift online please go to **www.cancerassist.ca**. Charitable Registration Number 14026 2759 RR0001

"The last 5 years have been very emotional. Cancer is something you don't expect to be dealing with at 25. I remember I was in the shower when I first discovered the lump. My heart just dropped. Knowing my family history with cancer, I immediately went to the doctor, got an ultrasound, and was called in the next day. So I knew it wasn't good news. The doctor confirmed, it was in fact a cancerous mass, and within a week I was scheduled for surgery. And that was only the beginning of my long journey."

Lucas was lucky to have his parents by his side during this time in his life. He also had a loving and supportive girlfriend named Victoria, who he wanted to marry and start a family with. She would rush home after work every day to be with him. He remembers the heartache of being told by his doctor to not get his hopes up about having children. Family was so important to him, Lucas couldn't imagine not having children. It was devastating news.

After treatment Lucas returned to work, but couldn't shake the paralyzing fear he had about the cancer returning. He was in remission and was told that he was fine to resume life "as normal", but he felt an impending sense of doom and panic. He couldn't stop thinking that something was wrong, and that the cancer was still there. He decided to push the doctors to give him more tests, and in fact he was right, the cancer had spread. Lucas faced a second battle with cancer and went through radiation treatment. Thankfully, the treatment was a success, and Lucas recovered again. Shortly thereafter Lucas was able to get married to the love of his life and amazingly they got pregnant and had a beautiful baby girl named Rosalia (born in 2022).

Lucas is now 30 years old and is a happily married man, proud father and an avid supporter of CAP. He understands intimately the unique challenges that cancer presents to patients and their families, perhaps more than most. Through Lucas' learned experiences he has become a true CAP Champion and donor.

Like Lucas, many of us have experience with cancer in our families and understand how difficult and overwhelming cancer can be on everybody from caregivers to children, extended family and spouses. In addition to the emotional support that patients rely on their family for, the practical services needed can be long-term and demanding.

Cancer is a family illness. Nobody can do it alone.

Today, you can make that experience a little bit easier for a family in your community impacted by cancer, by donating to CAP. All our services are FREE and greatly improve the lives of cancer patients and their families.

Here at the Cancer Assistance Program our goal is to maximize the time those with a cancer diagnosis get to spend with their families and loved ones, by providing FREE services with practical items, like providing clients with rides to and from cancer appointments, offering parking spots near Juravinski Cancer Center and providing essential in-home equipment.

This holiday season, we ask YOU to please remember those families experiencing cancer by donating a gift to help CAP continue to provide the services that helped Lucas and his grandmother Maria. YOU will be directly helping families who need help the most.

With Warmest Gratitude,

Debbie Logel-Butler
Executive Director
Cancer Assistance Program

Did you Know?

CAP is always looking for volunteers to help with the drive program, client services, equipment shop and special events!

If you want to make a difference in your community, visit cancerassist.ca/volunteer today to help those in your community impacted by cancer.

MONTHLY DONATION: Yes, I want to join the **CAP Monthly Giving** program to ensure cancer patients and their families get the help they need.

I authorize CAP to charge my credit card in the amount of \$_____ on or after the 15th of each month, commencing in the month after I date my request.

Visa Mastercard

Card # _____

Expiry _____ CVV _____

Name on Card _____

Date _____ Signature _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please sign me up for electronic communications from CAP (be sure to include your email address).

Thank You



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Thank You!

An official tax receipt will be issued for all gifts of \$20 and above. Monthly donors receive one tax receipt at the end of the year for the full amount.