

life of the party

*Cancer survivors
gather to celebrate life*

BY ANTIONETTE ROLLINS

*"We
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from the
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— HUNTER FROM
WIND-FM'S HUNTER & MICHAELS
MORNING SHOW



Something special took place on June 2. All over the world, cancer survivors with diverse stories gathered to celebrate and stand in solidarity. That extraordinary experience even spread to the Webber Center at the College of Central Florida, as the Mid-Central Florida Chapter of Oncology Nurses hosted their own National Cancer Survivors Day event—something the chapter has been doing since 2007.

While a DJ spun tunes, survivors and caregivers gathered to make cancer bracelets, eat lunch, win giveaways and hear talks by physicians and other cancer survivors. Perhaps most importantly, guests were able to mingle and inspire one another.

"It was really a great place to have rapport and fellowship," says Linda Dolhay, a registered nurse at Ocala Regional Medical Center's Cancer Center.

The event was an opportunity to inspire those who were recently diagnosed and show the community that a survivor's life is worth celebrating.

"It was a day to raise my arms in the air and say, 'I survived it all,'" says Hunter from Wind-FM's

Hunter & Michaels Morning Show. Hunter, who was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, was also a speaker at this year's festivities. "I spoke about attitude when it comes to beating cancer. Attitude is everything."

Instead of nametags, survivors sported badges displaying how long they had been living with a history of cancer, with ranges

spanning 45 years to five weeks. Hunter donned hers as she admired the numbers on other survivors' badges.

"I was '1,' and there were people with '20,'" she says. "I can't wait until I get 20!"

National Cancer Survivors Day has been held on the first Sunday of June for the past 26 years. Although hundreds of communities across the globe hold individual events, they are united by one purpose: to celebrate life. Started by the National Cancer Survivors Day Foundation, the annual day proudly declares that life after a cancer diagnosis can be meaningful and productive.

"It was really cool to talk to other people who have been there and know what you went through," says Hunter. "We are all survivors, and we are survivors from the day we are diagnosed."



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit ncsd.org to get additional information about National Cancer Survivors Day and survivorship.