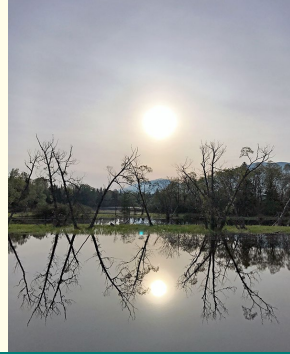


# CANCER & SICKLE CELL SUPPORT PROGRAMS



THE PATKIN  
SICKLE CELL  
CENTER



Vol. 15 No. 1 Winter 2021 Newsletter/Calendar

Photo by Olga Bedoya

We've persevered through a most challenging year, and we go forward with hope... I'd like to share an inspiring story with you--a story of challenge, perseverance, and celebration, followed by self-imposed challenge, determination, and triumph...



To know **James Blanchard**, age 65, is to know he likes to clown around. But it was no joke in 2009 when he was diagnosed with melanoma (skin cancer)... and then in 2016, when it was found to have spread widely. James underwent immunotherapy infusions. Responding very well to this treatment, he was thrilled in October of 2018 to be declared "in remission."



It seemed that whenever I saw James at BMC, his bicycle was at his side. I never thought too much about this until he called me early in the day this past December 16th.

He explained: "When they told me I was in remission, I decided I wanted to really take care of my health. My friend Tom's nephew was selling his professional-grade bike for a good price, so I bought it. I've been biking to keep as healthy as I can. I'm out most days, doing 5 to 7

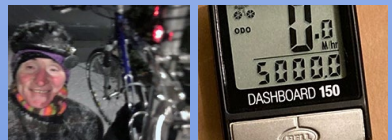
laps between Andrew Square and Fields Corner [in Dorchester], or I ride around Castle Island, as I live in South Boston.

"I got to 4,000 miles, and since I like the number '5,' I made it a goal to reach 5,000. I don't brag, but I'm so proud after what I've been through, with Stage IV cancer, tumors everywhere, on my heart, liver, kidney, everywhere..."

I asked how he manages to ride in the winter. He said he buys wool sweaters from Good Will and wears 10 layers on very cold days. Ten layers?!

He had called me because this was the day he was going to hit 5,000 miles. In no rush to get started, he explained how he had joined an online Stage IV melanoma support group. He said it was a long time before he spoke up in the group, but when he finally told his story, he was pleased at how others felt encouraged and how they thanked him. Then he told me he'd better get going...

That cold night, before the snow fell, a proud man texted me a selfie and proof:



*Bob David*, Manager

## Support Groups

*--currently meeting by video/teleconference*

Support groups offer a unique opportunity for current patients and long-term survivors alike to get to know others who have had similar disease and treatment experiences as their own. In a safe and confidential space, participants may share details of their experience, ask questions, and offer knowledge and insights that doctors usually cannot provide. True support, encouragement, and uplifting energy are the norm.

Sometimes a doctor or specialist is invited to give information on treatments and self-care and to answer questions; but the heart of the group is always patients talking to patients. Generally what is gained in these groups can seldom be found elsewhere.

- Our support groups are open to all patients/survivors, regardless of when and where they may have been treated.
- Registration is not required, but it's best to call ahead to let us know you are coming and for any additional information.
- Family members and friends are welcome to the cancer support groups (though men only to the men's groups, women only to the women's groups). The Sickle Cell Disease support group is exclusively for adult patients.
- All support groups currently running are meeting monthly by ZOOM.

### *One-to-One Peer Support*

If you would like to speak one-to-one with someone who has had a similar disease and/or treatment experience as you've had, let us know and we can likely find someone who will be happy to speak with you.

### *Caregiver Support*

The role of caregiver to a cancer or sickle cell patient can be very challenging. If you feel stressed, have questions, or would just like to talk about the situation, our staff is available.



Please call **617-638-7540** to request a convenient telephone appointment.



<i>Groups meet <b>monthly</b> unless otherwise noted.</i>			LOCATION
NAME	DAY	TIME	
<b>Cancer by Type</b>			
BLOOD	2nd Wed.	1-3p	ZOOM video/ teleconference
BREAST	2nd Tues.	5-7p	
GASTROINTESTINAL (GI)	1st Fri.	12:30-2:30p	
LUNG	2nd Thurs.	1-3p	
PROSTATE	1st Tues.	5-7p	
HEAD & NECK	1st Wed.	12-2p	
<b>Cancer by Population Group</b>			
WOMEN (any cancer)	3rd Wed.	3-4:30p	ZOOM video/ teleconference
MEN (any cancer)	Last Mon.	12-2p	
HAITIAN CREOLE-speaking	4th Thurs.	5-7p	
SPANISH-speaking	Last Tues.	7-9p	
YOUNG ADULTS (ages 18-39)	Call Molly from the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute at 617-582-9617 for info.		
<b>Sickle Cell &amp; other diseases</b>			
SICKLE CELL DISEASE	1st Thurs.	6-8p	ZOOM video/ teleconference
SARCOIDOSIS <i>(Not shown on calendar. For info, call Melissa at 617-834-4123 or Sharon at 857-492-7616.)</i>	3rd Thurs.	6:30-8p	
AMYLOIDOSIS <i>(Not shown on calendar)</i>	<i>on hold</i>		
<b>Additional Support</b>			
OSTOMY colostomy/ileostomy/urostomy For info or help, contact Jocelyn at 781-228-9509	3rd Wed.	6:30-8p	Teleconference Dial: 425-436-6367 Access Code: 745311
CAREGIVERS Telephone support sessions available. See page 4.			
BEREAVEMENT For those who have lost a loved one to cancer, Sickle Cell Disease, or other serious illness. Meeting by ZOOM videoconference. Call 617-638-7540 for info.			

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Fri.

Sat.

Sun.

SG = Support Group CSG = Cancer Support Group

All programs shown are being held by ZOOM video/teleconference unless noted otherwise. Call 617-638-7540 to confirm schedule.

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
				1	2	3
				NEW YEAR'S DAY (Clinics Closed)		
4	5 Prostate CSG 5-7p	6 Head/Neck CSG 12-2p Cooking 2:30-3:30p	7 Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	8	9	10 GI CSG 12:30-2:30p <b>We Heal</b> 6:30-8p
11 Observer Mind 5-7p	12 Breast CSG 5-7p	13 Blood CSG 1-3p	14 Lung CSG 1-3p Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p	15	16	17 <b>We Heal</b> 6:30-8p
18 MLK, JR. DAY (Clinics Closed)	19 Knitting 6-8p	20 Women's CSG 3-4:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	21 Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p	22	23	24
25 Men's CSG 12-2p Observer Mind 5-7p	26 Spanish CSG 7-9p	27	28 Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	29	30	31
1	2 Prostate CSG 5-7p	3 Head/Neck CSG 12-2p Cooking 2:30-3:30p B.E.A.M 6-7:30p	4 Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	5	6	7 GI CSG 12:30-2:30p <b>Sing!</b> 6:45-8p
8 Observer Mind 5-7p	9 Breast CSG 5-7p	10 Blood CSG 1-3p B.E.A.M 6-7:30p	11 Lung CSG 1-3p Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p	12	13	14 <b>Museum of Fine Arts Virtual Tour</b> 2-3:30p
15 PRESIDENT'S DAY (Clinics Closed)	16 Knitting 6-8p	17 Women's CSG 3-4:30p B.E.A.M 6-7:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	18 Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p	19	20	21 <b>Art in the Moment</b> 12-2p
22 Men's CSG 12-2p Observer Mind 5-7p	23 Spanish CSG 7-9p	24 B.E.A.M 6-7:30p	25 Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	26	27	28 <b>Poetry Workshop</b> 6:30-8p
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15	16 Knitting 6-8p	17 Women's CSG 3-4:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p B.E.A.M 6-7:30p	18 Movem't & Medit'n 5-6p	19	20	21
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29 Men's CSG 12-2p Observer Mind 5-7p	30 Spanish CSG 7-9p	31 B.E.A.M 6-7:30p				

# Support Activities

--currently meeting by video/teleconference

Our ongoing activity groups speak to the interests of many. People get to know one another in the context of skill-building and mind/body activities.

Registration is not required, but it's best to call ahead to let us know you are coming and for any additional information.

Family members and friends are welcome.

NAME	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
<b>Mind and Body</b>			
OBSERVER MIND Learning & practicing how to be mindful.	2nd & last Mon.	5-7p	ZOOM video/ teleconf.
MOVEMENT & MEDITATION Qigong, standing/sitting yoga, meditation (Contact Betsy: blousimmons@gmail.com or 617-966-9066 for the ZOOM link)	Thursdays	5-6p	ZOOM video conference
BODY • ENERGY • AWARENESS • MOVEMENT ( <b>BEAM</b> ) Joint- and tension-release, balance, coordination, unifying of energy	<i>starting February!</i> Wednesdays	6-7:30p	ZOOM video conference
<b>Handiwork</b>			
KNITTING For newcomers & experienced knitters. Instructions and materials for beginners provided.	3rd Tuesday	6-8p	ZOOM video conference
<b>Diet and Nutrition</b>			
COOKING LESSONS Class for cancer & sickle cell patients	1st Wednesday	2:30-3:30p	ZOOM video conference
Classes open to all: 'From Farm to Table'  Go to: <a href="http://www.bmc.org/nourishing-our-community/teaching-kitchen/classes">www.bmc.org/nourishing-our-community/teaching-kitchen/classes</a> and click on the day's class in the calendar. Follow instructions to see ingredients, recipe, and to sign up.	Most Wednesdays	5-6p	

## Activity Descriptions

### OBSERVER MIND

- Bob David

Our thoughts and feelings affect our mood, stress level, and peace of mind. Research is now showing how they also affect how our body functions.

Participants practice short meditations designed to help us observe our thoughts and feelings so that we become less controlled by them. We see things more clearly and gain power and choice. We open the door to greater self-discovery and awareness.

### KNITTING

- Patty Doggett & volunteers

Knit and socialize with other survivors. Materials, patterns, and instruction are provided for all levels of experience.

### COOKING LESSONS

- Olivia Weinstein, Registered Dietitian

From BMC's Teaching Kitchen, Olivia demonstrates how to make tasty, easy, healthful dishes. Go to the website in advance to see and get the ingredients, then cook along with Olivia! Or simply watch and enjoy.

### MOVEMENT & MEDITATION

- Betsy Simmons

Weekly classes offering an hour of restful and moving meditations. We will practice Qigong (Tai Chi) while standing, Yoga sitting in a chair, and Meditation in stillness and in motion. Gentle practices for mind, body and spirit.

### BEAM: BODY•ENERGY• AWARENESS•MOVEMENT

- Bob David

A blend of exercise, Tai Chi, dance, and meditation, helpful for most all conditions. Set to a variety of good music, the activities are designed to:

- *loosen joints / stretch and strengthen muscles*
- *improve coordination and balance*
- *release body tension / unify energy throughout the body*

The overall goal is awareness of internal energy and greater awareness, comfort, and facility with our bodies.

## Complementary Services

Contact 617-414-6264 or [integrative.medicine@bmc.org](mailto:integrative.medicine@bmc.org) for updates on offerings by BMC's Program for Integrative Medicine.

### ACUPUNCTURE CLINIC

Acupuncture is a 2,500-yr-old method of treating pain and many other symptoms. Beth Sommers, PhD, MPH, LAc, has 40+ years experience in this field. She offers sessions to BMC adult sickle cell patients and to BMC cancer patients currently or recently in treatment. Thursdays, 9am-12pm, Moakley Bldg, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. To request an appointment, call Bob at 617-638-7540.



### American Cancer Society



The American Cancer Society offers free resources to cancer

patients. For information on what is currently available, call the ACS hotline, 800-227-2345 (open 24/7) or go to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). You may also consult with your Patient Navigator, or the Patient Navigation Program Manager, Katie Finn (617-638-2362 or [Katie.Finn@bmc.org](mailto:Katie.Finn@bmc.org)).

# WINTER ART

**WE HEAL** - an art project with international sculptor *Nora Valdez*

Friday, Jan. 8 & 15, 6:30-8:00p by ZOOM

An extended art project begun in October, “We Heal” is an opportunity for participants to create and represent in various mediums what is or has been healing for them. Two final sessions remain in January. Open to newcomers!



Two programs sponsored by **Boston University’s ARTS | LAB** :

## ART MENTORS

One-to-one mentoring in any area of art: theory and design, drawing/painting, photography, music, theater, dance.

*Art Mentors* provide 1-1 instruction by ZOOM at whatever time works for you. Opportunities may be limited at this point, but please call if interested.

**SING!** Friday, Feb. 5 & Mar. 5,  
6:45-8:00p by ZOOM

Be guided in relaxed, fun, and creative exercises and sing along in your own home. Join and *SING!* exactly as you are!



FGH Building, 2nd Fl.  
820 Harrison Ave.  
Boston, MA 02118

[www.bmc.org/cancer/support-services](http://www.bmc.org/cancer/support-services)



**BOB DAVID**, Manager  
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**CYRENA GASSE**, Assistant  
617.414.5726  
cyrena.gasse@BMC.org

## MUSEUM of FINE ARTS TOUR

Friday, Feb. 12, 2:00-3:30p by ZOOM

An informative *virtual tour* of several exhibits led by volunteer guides.

FREE PASSES to the Museum, as it reopens, will be available from our office.



## ART IN THE MOMENT!

Saturday, Feb. 20, 12:00-2:00p by ZOOM

A session of creative art-making. We outline the projects and you make them unique. We provide you with a list of suggested materials to gather in advance from in and around your home. Also bring an open mind and a readiness to be creative! For survivors, friends, and kids.

**POETRY WORKSHOP** with acclaimed American poet *Frannie Lindsay*

Friday, Feb. 26 & Mar. 26,  
6:30-8:00p by ZOOM



Frannie Lindsay “takes the world head on, moment by moment, with an intelligence and compassion that are fierce” [quoted in a review]. Publisher of six volumes of poetry, Frannie will guide us with simple exercises to explore our own themes.

## \*TRUE STORY THEATER\*

Thursday, Mar. 11, 7:00-8:30p by ZOOM



The talented playback theater group, True Story Theater, listens to audience stories then “plays them back” with humor, song, dance, and drama. They delight and enlighten as they beautifully capture the essence of our experience!

