

Our Doors are Open

Michelle Silverman, Executive Director

I have to be totally honest with you: I've been pinching myself a lot lately. Why? Because I sometimes think I must be dreaming. And I know I'm not the only one.

After years of hard work by our entire community—donors, volunteers, board and staff

- We've reached our capital campaign goal of \$3.8 million.
- Our clubhouse is real—all 7,300 square feet of it.
- Our red door is open and people who need Gilda's Club are walking through it each day.



We did it!

In 2010, we launched our capital campaign to raise \$3.8 million so we could open Gilda's Club Twin Cities. Today, thanks to a combination of cash and in-kind goods and services, we've *met our goal*.

I want to thank each and every one of you for believing in our dream and for providing financial support, pro bono services, building materials, creative energy, sweat, time and talent. We imagined a place where no one would face cancer alone, and now that place is a reality. Pinch me.

Our next chapter: Serving the needs of our members

Since the "soft opening" of our beautiful clubhouse in early January, we've enjoyed the thrill of serving our first Gilda's Club Twin Cities members. What does it take to become a member? Let me answer that by telling you about Millie.

A few weeks ago, Millie stopped in to learn about Gilda's Club. She arrived just in time for our Monday morning Coffee Talk, when people drop by the clubhouse kitchen for coffee, conversation and camaraderie.

Millie shared that when she was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 40, her doctor told her she had just five years to live. She also said that in the years since her diagnosis, she'd never been able to find a place where her cancer experience was valued or understood. Until now.

After just a few minutes of conversation with GCTC Interim Program Director Ali DeCamillis and others at that morning's Coffee Talk, Millie fell in love with Gilda's Club.

"This is my clubhouse," she said. "This is my place." And then she shared something really worth celebrating: the day marked the 40th anniversary of her cancer surgery. We gathered around the table to raise a toast in her honor.

Shortly after, Millie became one of our newest members, taking advantage of some of the core services we've already launched: nutrition, yoga and meditation classes, as well as member orientation meetings, which give people the opportunity to learn about Gilda's Club Twin Cities and explore the services they believe are right for them.

Orientation meetings also enable us to hear firsthand what our members want. As we ramp up our program in stages, this member input is critical. After all, our members are the experts who guide the ongoing development of our program. This is the Gilda's Club philosophy—and our dream—coming to life. Pinch me again!

Whoop hoo! Let's celebrate! Party! Shout it out!

To celebrate the completion of our capital campaign and the start of our program, you're invited to our official Ribbon Cutting and Open House, Wednesday, April 23. (Please see our ribbon-cutting article for full details.)

Even if you've already toured our fabulous clubhouse, you'll want to join us because it will be your first opportunity to experience the clubhouse *alive!*

And please note that we will officially close the Clubhouse Circle at our June grand opening "You Rock." celebration. Being in the Clubhouse Circle requires a total donation of at least \$1,000, so if you know anyone interested in joining the circle, or would like to find out your own giving history total, please email Trudi.Meloche@GildasClubTwinCities.org.

There's more to come. We're not done yet.

We imagined this place. Now it's time for us to grow our program. As our next step, we are hosting our annual fundraising breakfast at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 6. (If you are interested in hosting a table or attending this FREE breakfast, please contact Glenda.Hawkins@GildasClubTwinCities.org and she'll take care of you.)

Our goal is to raise \$250,000—and if our past success is a predictor of our future success, I'll once again be saying, "pinch me!"

While in the past we needed funds to purchase and renovate our building, the money we raise going forward will enable us to deliver our program—and make good on the promise we've made to each other and to the more than 28,000 Minnesotans who will be diagnosed with cancer this year.

Once again, on behalf of all our current and future members, thank you for making Gilda's Club Twin Cities a reality.

Warmly,
Michelle Silverman
Executive Director

P.S. Do you or someone you know want to sponsor Noogieland or our Community Room? We still have a few [room sponsorships available >](#)