

VISITING HOURS

A Loved One Has Cancer: What Can You Do?

BY DARLA GULLIKSON, RN
Avera Sacred Heart Cancer Center

Very few people in this world can say that in some way they have not been touched by cancer. Its toll continues to grow across the world, and experts estimate that if current trends continue, 16.5 million new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in the year 2020; most of those will be in developing countries. Therefore, sooner or later, those people will unexpectedly be struggling with the dilemma of what can I do to help my friend or loved one through the cancer experience.

When people are diagnosed with cancer their lives instantly change and they are now entering one of the scariest times of their lives. Everyone who is diagnosed with cancer needs help from others sometime during this experience: practical assistance, emotional support, kind words or acts and loving gestures.

On a monthly basis I help facilitate cancer survivor support group meetings and felt that this was a subject about which more people need to be knowledgeable. While discussing the different acts of kindness that our survivors experienced, the one thing that speaks loudest is that kindness can work wonders for those in need. Please consider some of the tips from our local survivors that someone bestowed upon them while they were going through treatments. Keep in mind that one's needs may change from day to day.

- Be a good listener. If you want to listen, which is what your loved one with cancer wants you to do, you need to be careful and not be giving advice or judging them as a complainer and then start to blame or advise. Listening focuses on the speaker's words, feelings and their meaning. Please give that person the gift of your entire attention.
- Your loved one may want to hear about topics other than to talk about her cancer. Sit down and



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talk about subjects that you usually would discuss with your loved one or friend such as a book, movies and your family. Don't avoid taking about the cancer if this is what the person wants at the time, though.

- Offer to take them to their doctor appointments or cancer treatments. Sometimes travel is involved and it may be a concern to the individual on how she will get to her appointments or even afford the cost of travel. This is also a great time to be with your loved one to just talk.
- Offer to cook. One survivor appreciated having her friend bring supper on the days that she received chemotherapy treatments. One should ask if there are foods or smell of certain foods or even the texture that the loved one should avoid or cannot tolerate due to the side effect of the treatments. Another idea was to buy Meals on Wheels for a few weeks during their treatments.

- Help with housework. Do a load of laundry. Change the loved one's bedding and wash it for the next changing. You may need to even take the laundry to your house and bring it back nicely folded in the basket. You can even offer to pay for someone else to do the housecleaning. Do the grocery shopping. Ask the individual to make a list of grocery needs and offer to pick them up.
- Offer to do yard work. Your loved one or friend may be a gardener and can't get out to plant or weed it. Offer to do this for them. Mow the lawn. You may be helping the spouse out in giving them more time to spend with their loved one instead of doing the yard work. If the individual is sedentary in a particular room of the house, set up a birdbath or feeder in front of the window so he can watch the birds come to eat or play.
- Send cards or small gifts. Remembering some-

one with just a short "Hello, I'm thinking of you" note can boost the spirits. Send more than just one card, however. It is nice to hear from people in the beginning when things are very difficult, but to send a card a few weeks later assures your friend or loved one that you truly are thinking of them.

- Help her buy a wig. If your loved one will be losing her hair when she has treatments, go with her to a wig shop or salon to pick out the wig she will need to wear. Have fun and maybe suggest this to be an opportunity for your friend to see how she looks as a blonde or red head. Remember to also offer to attend your local ACS Look Good Feel Better program for makeup tips and hairstyle suggestions.
- Go visit your friend or loved one. If you know they are not feeling real well, make your visit short. Even a short visit with a good friend can be a mood booster.
- Offer to care for their pets. Take the pets out for their daily walks or go with your friend when she walks her pet. If the pet needs to go to the vet, offer to take care of this also. Remember, pets play a vital role in many peoples lives.
- Give them a gift certificate. Gift certificates to restaurants, spa, massage therapy, video stores or, if appropriate, financial assistance are nice gifts. Small gifts that you know someone would like are also appreciated. A survivor mentioned that she was always cold after receiving her treatments and just loved having her rice bag to lie down with and rest.
- If you are a cancer survivor who has gone through treatments for the same cancer diagnosis as your friend or loved one, please offer to talk to them and allow them to ask you questions about your cancer experience. Many survivors have mentioned how much it helped them to realize that they are not alone and that others have had the same feelings and fears when dealing with their cancer.
- Assist individuals if they need any information

on their particular cancer, by contacting the American Cancer Society. The Navigator program is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They will supply you with free information and research any question you may have. The number for the ACS Navigator is 1-800-ACS-2345.

- The last tip is for the newly diagnosed survivor of cancer. You must learn that it is permissible for you to not do things during your treatments as you would normally on a daily basis. This is a difficult time for you and you need to prioritize items that you feel are OK to let set for a while. You must also learn to accept others' generous gift of time, energy or sustenance. Please allow others to give. Keep in mind that you are taking that other person's ability of giving away from them when you refuse their offer of kindness. Think how you would feel when someone turns your kind offer away.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in the Yankton Community Relay for Life on Friday, July 16 at Riverside Park. It was a wonderful event. This event is put on for survivors and to honor their courage and strength in fighting this terrible disease. It is also held to bring increased awareness to others on how much there is still to do to prevent more of our friends, coworkers, neighbors and family from hearing the words: "I'm sorry, but you have cancer."

Darla Gullikson, RN, is the director of the Avera Sacred Heart Cancer Center.

This weekly column is produced by the public relations office at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital to promote healthy lifestyles and provide useful medical information to our community.

Alleged Freeway Shooter Was Targeting ACLU

BY TERRY COLLINS
Associated Press Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. — A California man known for his anger over left-leaning politics said after a freeway shootout with CHP officers that he had been planning an attack on the ACLU and another nonprofit group, police said Tuesday.

Byron Williams, 45, a parolee with two previous bank robbery convictions, wanted to "start a revolution" by killing people at the American Civil Liberties Union and Tides Foundation, both in San Francisco, Oakland police Sgt. Michael Weisenberg said in court documents.

The weekend shootout occurred during a 24-hour span in Oakland when a sniper shot at police officers from a high-rise building, and a Virginia man who had a job interview in the San Francisco Bay area was fatally shot in downtown Oakland by robbers who got away with just \$17.

The spate of violence came just a week after budget problems led Oakland to lay off 80 police officers.

The Oakland Police Department is leading the investigation into the shootout, but no city officers were involved in the incident that occurred on Interstate 580.

The FBI joined the case after a binder entitled "California" was discovered in the truck driven by Williams and removed by a bomb squad robot, CHP spokesman Sam Morgan said.

Officer Jeff Thomason, an Oakland police spokesman, said the two nonprofit groups were targeted because of their political ideologies. The ACLU is a civil rights group, while the Tides Foundation says on its website that it works to advance progressive social change.

"It's an unbelievable incident," Thomason said, adding that authorities believe Williams was acting alone. "We're very fortunate in the Bay Area that the CHP was able to stop him."

Sitting in a wheelchair, Williams was arraigned Tuesday

in Alameda County Superior Court after being released from a hospital where he was treated for gunshot wounds to his arms and legs. He looked down and did not enter a plea as a judge read the charges — four counts of attempted murder on peace officers, plus weapons and body armor enhancements.

The judge also noted that Williams' two previous convictions for bank robbery could make him eligible for life in prison under California's Three Strikes Law if he is convicted in the CHP shootout.

No CHP officers were seriously injured in the incident.

Williams was wearing a bullet-proof vest and armed with three guns, including a rifle, as he traveled to San Francisco late Saturday night in his mother's Toyota Tundra, police said. He is accused of opening fire on California Highway Patrol officers who approached his truck after pulling him over for speeding and weaving in traffic.

Williams surrendered and was arrested after a 12-minute gunbattle with 12 officers, most of whom responded as Williams reloaded several times, police said. Morgan said about 150 rounds were fired during the shootout.

Williams had "made a decision that he would not be arrested and that he was willing to shoot and kill the officers," according to the probable cause statement filed in court.

During a police interview at the hospital, Williams said he had planned to camp out in San Francisco on Sunday night then begin his attack when the ACLU and Tides Foundation opened Monday, Thomason said.

Christine Coleman, spokeswoman for the foundation, said the organization had taken additional security measure to protect its staff.

"We had never heard of this man before," Coleman said. "We cannot speculate about the incident while the investigation is going on."

Phone calls to the ACLU of Northern California were not immediately returned.

Accidents And Agriculture: Where Does Safety Rank In Farm Priorities?

BY VAL FARMER

WHERE DOES SAFETY RANK IN FARM PRIORITIES?

Some people live in one of the most dangerous work places in America — the family farm. That's right. The family farm. Agriculture ranks second in the nation as the most dangerous occupation, next to mining.

Farmers are at high risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries, work-related lung diseases, noise-induced hearing loss, skin diseases and cancers associated with chemical use and prolonged sun exposure. Research shows that in an average year 516 workers die doing farm work in the U.S. (1992-2005).

Family members who often share the work are also at risk for injuries, illness and death. Between 175 and 300 children die in farm accidents each year, and thousands more are seriously injured.

If you live on a farm, you already know how dangerous it is. It is something you live with on a daily basis. Yet, with a few precautions, farm accidents are preventable.

Why is this such a tough issue? Economics are involved. Family values are involved. It goes to the heart of family farming.

It costs money to be safe. It takes money to upgrade equipment and to have safety features like shields on power trains installed on older farm equipment. It's money some farmers don't have. In the scramble to get by, one place farmers often cut corners is in the area of safety.

Tractors need roll-over protection. How many farmers can afford to retrofit their equipment? Tractor roll-overs are the number one cause of farm-related deaths. One fifth of farm deaths are caused by tractor overturns.

When safety practices are discussed, farmers often say, "Get real." Improvements are too



VAL FARMER

expensive or too impractical to be used. **It takes a lot of work to supervise children on a family farm.** There are lots of dangerous places to be. Children lack judgment. Farmyards have a lot of vehicle and equipment movement. Besides parents, there are fathers, brothers, truckers and others who come into the yard. Parents need to insure that there are no unsupervised wanderings, not for a minute. For young children, an enclosed play yard provides safety. Babysitters and day care can be used when necessary. Drowning incidents accounted for one-fourth of the total deaths, and one-third of the deaths among youth less than 5 years old.

Parents shouldn't try to work on the farm and watch children at the same time. Attention is divided and sometimes parents lose track of their kids — with tragic results.

Too much, too soon. Having the kids take responsibilities on the farm is a part of the process of raising the next generation of farmers, a goal many family farmers share.

Children need age and ability appropriate tasks. Instead they are often expected to perform adult responsibilities. Unfortunately there isn't a lot known about development norms for operating different pieces of farm equipment or for different farm tasks. Even when the norms are known, farmers tend to overestimate the abilities and judgment of their children.

Even if dads understand the safety issues, they will have a hard time saying no when his kids are pushing to help. Kids will have peer pressure from their farm friends.

Teens need to meet the same

tractor safety certification rules as if farmers were hiring a teenager from another family. One of the statistical peaks for farm accidents is for 13-year-old boys who have physically matured but lack mental judgment in dealing with a crisis. Farm equipment generally isn't designed for use by children and consequently safety features for children are lacking. When children are operating four wheelers, they need to wear safety helmets. Some dads may not see the necessity.

One of the biggest causes of farm child deaths comes from allowing them on tractors as extra riders. Dads and grandpas may not see the danger. They grew up in an era when unsafe farming practices were commonplace and they survived just fine.

Farmers are in a hurry. Farmers are driven, time-conscious workers who are anxious about completing their work and getting on to the next job. Being in a hurry gets in the way of using proper safety precautions. They know better but they think they can save time by cutting corners. If a son has watched his father cut corners over the years and there weren't any accidents, then his confidence and safety practices may reflect an "it can't happen to me" attitude.

Farmers respect the need for shields for their power-trains on tractors, augers and other equipment. Sometimes they get too busy to replace a shield and invite disaster sometime down the road. When headers get plugged, farmers need to shut off the equipment. Fingers, hands and feet shouldn't get near running equipment. Even when farmers have the necessary cer-

tification as pesticide applicators, they are tempted to cut corners on the use of safety clothes, goggles or gloves.

As you can see, some of these safety issues go against the grain. To farmers, it may seem like opening the door to government regulation, added expense, more inconvenience and taking children away from work experiences on their own farm.

These are all good arguments until you read the stories, see the statistics and hear of families who have suffered a tragic loss. Hopefully it won't take an accident or a near miss to educate hard-headed, hard-nosed farmers. Good farming means putting safety first.

For more information on family farming, visit Val Farmer's website at www.valfarmer.com. Val Farmer's book, "Honey, I Shrank the Farm," can be purchased by sending a check or money order for \$7.50 to: Honey, I Shrank the Farm, The Preston Connection, PO Box 1135, Orem UT 84059.

For Val Farmer's book on marriage, "To Have and To Hold," send a check or money order for \$10 plus \$3.95 for shipping and handling for the first book and \$2.00 for each additional book to JVPublishing, LLC, P.O. Box 886, ND 58012.

Val Farmer is a clinical psychologist with MeriCare in Fargo, North Dakota. He specializes in rural mental health and family business consultation.

This column is sponsored by Lewis & Clark Behavioral Health.

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70th Wedding Anniversary

Carl and Ferne (Jonason) Schneider of Yankton will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary on July 21, 2010. Carl will celebrate his 96th birthday on July 25, 2010. Their children, Milo Schneider of Yankton, SD, Karen (Rick) Haakinson of Sioux Falls, SD; and Barb Schneider of Volin, SD, wife of deceased son Marlo, request a card shower to celebrate this occasion.

Cards may be sent to 302 Greenview Dr. Apt. #3, Yankton, SD 57078.

The couple has 14 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and 7 great-great-grandchildren.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schneider

Mr. and Mrs. Don Schroeder of Wynot, NE, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with an open house from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, July 25, 2010, at Sacred Heart Church parish hall in Wynot, NE. Friends and relatives are invited to attend. The couple requests no gifts please.

Don Schroeder and Doral Ketter were married June 25, 1960, at Sacred Heart Church in Wynot, NE. They have three children: Kirk, Kary, Keely and five grandchildren.

Greetings may be sent to P.O. Box 203, Wynot, NE 68792

Mr. & Mrs. Don Schroeder