

IT Division Cooks Up Hope at Hope Lodge

Citizens supports several charities during the holiday season and throughout the year and encourages its employees to give back to their community.

On November 14, members of the Information Technology (IT) Division volunteered at the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation Hope Lodge.

How They Helped

The afternoon started with a tour of the facility that provided information about the American Cancer Society's (ACS) mission to provide a free home away from home for cancer patients and their caregivers. Volunteers then organized their garages, put up and decorated their Christmas trees, and helped with some administrative tasks before "cooking up hope" for about 60 patients and caregivers.

Employees of the IT Division donated funds to have an Olive Garden pasta station delivered. Pasta, fettucine, meatballs, grilled chicken, sausage, marinara, meat, and alfredo sauce were dished out – along with their famous salad and bread sticks. Dessert was a huge pan of Bono's famous banana pudding.

While serving dinner, the volunteers interacted with the patients and heard their stories of perseverance and hope.

One patient was receiving her last treatment the following day and would be able to go home after eight weeks at the Hope Lodge. Another patient shared that they were on their third cancer diagnosis and treatment and were thankful for the ability to have a free place to stay while away from home. All were thankful for a warm, comforting meal at the end of a long day of appointments and treatments.

More About Hope Lodge

The Hope Lodge offers a supportive, homelike environment where guests can share a meal, join in the evening's activities, or unwind in their own private room. There is no charge for staying at the Hope Lodge – you just need to be in active cancer treatment and live more than 40 miles from your treatment facility.

The Hope Lodge relies on the generosity of donors, and patients staying there rely on donations of everyday essential supplies like laundry detergent and sanitizing wipes.

The group has an Amazon wish list of needed items. You can place a one-time order or set up a recurring purchase to have items delivered regularly.

The Hope Lodge can always use volunteers to help with everyday tasks and to participate in the Cooking Up Hope program that provides meals.

Special thanks to AJ Jain, Cindy Brunner, Jon Lessig, Jonathan Evans, Ganga Padmakumar, and Arya Aryasomayajula for taking time from their busy days to help. And to all who contributed to help pay for the dinner.