ENGAGE!

Powered by patients. A wildly supportive community where hope and science meet. An online community for colorectal cancer patients and caregivers, featuring more than 120 “neighborhoods,” each focused on a different aspect of the colorectal cancer experience. Every group is managed by trained Neighborhood Hosts who are either volunteer patients or caregivers who have relevant lived experience.

**2021 ENGAGE Highlights**

- **36%** increase in membership in our 120 neighborhoods, each focused on a different aspect of the colorectal cancer experience
- **72%** of our admins help out in more than one CT group
- **33%** of our admins spend more than 5 hours weekly helping manage COLONTOWN
- **66%** of admins spend more than 5 additional hours every week participating in COLONTOWN as a member
- **5** new groups: Military Service Station Immunoasis Book Nook In the Distance (distant lymph node mets) Safe Haven (mental health and CRC)
- **36%** increase in membership in our 120 neighborhoods, each focused on a different aspect of the colorectal cancer experience
- **1,000 new members = 20% growth**
- **1,000** members in the Healthy Gut Cafe and Fitness Center
- **66%** of admins spend more than 5 additional hours every week participating in COLONTOWN as a member
- **36 U.S. crews**
- **6 International crews**
- **2,776 CT members who are part of one of our Neighborhood crews**

**Neighborpalooza Community Events**

In 2021 we launched our Community Engagement Program (also known as Neighborpalooza!), bringing the COLONTOWN experience off the screen and into the real world. COLONTOWN’s more than 120 online “neighborhoods” include a network of 36 U.S. and 6 international Crews, connecting members who live or are treated near each other. Despite the challenges of covid, we were able to host several community events, offering some colorectal cancer education, some self-care activities, and of course the chance for our neighbors to meet each other in person!

**We found creative ways to increase engagement within COLONTOWN despite restrictions on in-person meetings:**

- Virtual book club meetings
- Regular Zoom chats for local Crews
- The return of the popular COLONTOWN holiday party
- Galentine’s Day cards exchanged in our Tough Chicks Group (2,000 member strong) — that’s a lot of love coming to mailboxes in February!
- Survivor Saturdays weekly feature

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**COLONTOWN Junior**

In response to the heartbreaking rise in incidence of colorectal cancer in patients under 18, we created COLONTOWN Junior as a community within a community: a special online space for the families of our youngest patients, some as young as 8 or 9. Our COLONTOWN Junior groups now support 20 families who are navigating the CRC journey as caregivers for their children. As we work to educate parents and clinicians about the rise in very young onset cases, we continue to see new families joining our Junior neighborhoods every month.
EDUCATE

COLONTOWN University

Over the course of last year, more than 1,000 patients and caregivers checked out the resources in our online education center, COLONTOWN University. In the fall, grant support enabled us to create a dedicated content team that includes direct patient and caregiver experience. By the end of 2021, this team was hard at work on CRC101, a complete guide for newly diagnosed patients based on the experiences of thousands of COLONTOWNies. Visit learn.colontown.org to check it out!

Patient-Friendly Resources

At PALTOWN, we believe the best source for patient education is right in our backyard - the patients and caregivers of COLONTOWN, who have asked the questions, sought the answers, and know better than anyone what their neighbors need.

In 2021, our patient and caregiver staff and volunteers created a wonderful series of educational resources for the community, including:

LIVER TRANSPLANT TALK - patients who have had a liver transplant for metastatic CRC share their experiences.

STAGE 4 MYTHBUSTERS - social media series on common misconceptions about stage 4 cancer patients

CHEMO “CHEAT SHEET” - decoding the alphabet soup of CRC chemo treatments with a colorful study aid

LIVER “DATING PROFILES” - from our Liver Lovers Group for patients with liver metastases, these snapshots provide an easy to understand introduction to several treatment modalities.

Clinical Trials Education

COLONTOWN members are students of their disease, and, increasingly, students of the complex and daunting clinical trials ecosystem. Community interest in understanding clinical trials and identifying trial options continued to grow dramatically in 2021. In response, we have expanded our trials education offerings, which now include:

Director of Trials Programming – coordinates programs and people for all trials projects

Trials Curator – provides in-depth context for new trials of note for CRC patients

9 COLONTOWN neighborhoods focused on trials information for different segments of our patient population

The Alanna Project - anonymized registry of COLONTOWN member participation in current and recent trials. This unique resource gives patients considering specific trials insight into real world outcomes through patient-reported experiences.

Clinical Trials Navigator Program – training patients and caregivers to navigate the trials information landscape

Clinical Trials Basics Learning Center in COLONTOWN University – providing an introduction to clinical trials education

Featured Clinical Trials Learning Center in COLONTOWN University – pilot project offering patient-friendly descriptions of some currently recruiting trials. This project seeks to not only help patients decipher trial information, but also to provide a model for researchers and trial sponsors for creating accessible trial descriptions patients can actually use.

Our DocTalk series grew exponentially in 2021. Moderated by PALTOWN patient and caregiver staff, these video conversations cover everything from immunotherapy to palliative care and reproductive health. The live Zoom events feature leading clinicians and researchers answering questions from the community, and are archived in COLONTOWN University’s Lecture Hall for all to watch.

“Doc Talks”

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Science Director Manju George and co-authors presented at a major research conference on how input from CT members impacted the design of several clinical trials.

“"How do I keep track of my biomarkers?" Our DocTalk series grew exponentially in 2021. Moderated by PALTOWN patient and caregiver staff, these video conversations cover everything from immunotherapy to palliative care and reproductive health. The live Zoom events feature leading clinicians and researchers answering questions from the community, and are archived in COLONTOWN University’s Lecture Hall for all to watch.
**EMPOWER**

**Second Opinion Project**

The Second Opinion Project, supported by the Lu Family Fund, provides financial assistance to stage IV colorectal cancer patients seeking second opinions and new treatment options. The Lu Family Fund was established by Felix Lu, COLONTOWN member and caregiver for his wife Dianna, who passed away in 2020. Felix hopes the Second Opinion Project will enable more stage IV patients to seek out more aggressive treatment options that may provide a durable response.

**Leadership Summit**

In between Delta and Omicron, huddled around a fire pit in unusually chilly San Diego weather, we gathered many of the folks who make PALTOWN tick. Almost all of the staff, key volunteers, and board members who attended were patients and caregivers; they are truly the heart of the organization, the inspiration for everything we do, the engine of all our growth, and the reason thousands of families dealing with CRC have more hope, more support, and more knowledge today than they did when they first connected with us.

**Reconnecting with the workforce through PALTOWN**

As PALTOWN’s programs have expanded, we have turned to our members for the professional expertise needed to support our mission. Most of our staff are part-time, in many cases working around treatment schedules or caregiving commitments. In this way, we enable members to find meaningful work that fits their needs, and supports an important aspect of our mission to empower patients.
GIVING BACK

PALTOWN’s 2021 programs were made possible through the generosity of many individual donors, Facebook fundraisers run by our community, and the support of organizations through grants and sponsorships.

Memorial Gifts
Every year, we lose community members. COLONTOWN families often request that donations be made to PALTOWN in memory of their loved ones. The Lu Family Fund, created by caregiver Felix Lu in memory of his wife, Diana, continues to be our single largest fundraising effort. Felix raised more than $100,000 in 2021 for the Second Opinion Project and COLONTOWN.

In addition to the incredible work on our behalf by Felix Lu, we thank the families and friends of:

- Henry Barash
- Dr. Chelsea Bief
- Dr. C. Clair
- Amanda Clark
- Jeannie McKenna
- Wendy Nicholas
- Stephen Sutton
- Jeni Faka
- Todd Mercer
- Armand Ramirez
- Zachary Presto
- Bradley Hook
- Michael Moran
- Jamie Samuelsen
- Seth Zuckerman
- Alexa Frisbie
- Anna Brooks
- San Francisco
- Dianna, continues to be our single largest fundraising effort.

GIVING BACK

Many members of our extended family of patients and caregivers raise money for us via Facebook fundraisers, workplace events, and our monthly giving program, Team Wild Blue.

Community Fundraising

- Please contact Marie Sander at marie@paltown.org for more information about our Memorial Gift Program

Donors

**Foundations**

- Atalaya Fund
- Columbus Foundation
- David and Loma Gladstone foundation
- Jobs and Gayle Halperin foundation
- Klarkey Family Fund
- Microsoft Employee Matching Fund
- Tegna Foundation

**Individuals**

- **$1,000 and up**
  - Nick Barcus
  - Black, Mann & Graham
  - Brant Goosen
  - J. Feller
  - Shahn Chandrasoma
  - Allen Cheng
  - David Igo
  - Christopher and John Klarkey
  - Andrew Kanta
  - Mihal Lotia
  - Albert Moy
  - Brian Rinsky
  - Andy Robbins
  - Sharon Ruth
  - Shirley Schwartz
  - Amy True
  - Brian Vaughn

- **$500-1,000**
  - Dennis Arthige
  - Elane Atkins
  - Emily Bass
  - Wendy Baumann
  - Diane Bendtson
  - Victor Bracamontes
  - Christina Braun
  - Stephen & Kristen Bulano

- **$250-499**
  - Theresa Addy
  - Jennifer Bass
  - Lomi & Graham
  - Brant Goosen
  - Shahn Chandrasoma
  - Allen Cheng
  - David Igo
  - Christopher and John Klarkey
  - Andrew Kanta
  - Mihal Lotia
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- **$100-249**
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Support

Grants

- Bristol Myers Squibb
- Colon Cancer Coalition
- GemanPECT
- Tahe Oncology

Corporate Sponsorships

- Amgen
- Lilly
- Teva
- Fisher
- X1 NaNs
ENVISION

Our community members are a constant source of terrific ideas for new projects to educate and empower their neighbors. If you have an idea for us, reach out to tiffany@paltown.org and become a part of the innovation that drives us!

Building Our Future

We come into 2022 with the momentum from our first Leadership Summit, with a full schedule of workshops, DocTalks, conferences, educational resource launches and community events before us, and with a deep commitment to serve our people.

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Medical Advisory Board

To engage leading clinicians and researchers in our educational programming

CRC101

Guide for newly diagnosed patients — distilling the experience and wisdom of thousands of COLONTOWNies

New Onboarding

System to enable us to grow COLONTOWN while maintaining the personal touch

EMPower

Training to give patients the tools they need to navigate the clinical trials system

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Program to serve the expanding need for current, reliable scientific information in conversations across COLONTOWN

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Return to in person and also offering virtual and in person options

THE NUMBERS

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PROGRAM EXPENSES

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