

Community Partnerships Expand Possibilities

Athena Cosmetics began with a mission to empower cancer patients. Its founders, local residents Dr. Michael Brinkenhoff and his late wife Gayle, created products to help women feel confident and beautiful after Gayle's breast cancer diagnosis in 2006. Since then, the company has remained dedicated to supporting cancer patients and improving their care.

Since 2018, the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara has proudly collaborated with Athena Cosmetics and the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center to support this program. We were pleased to initiate a pilot program with UCLA Health in 2025. Together, we are making scalp cooling accessible in Santa Barbara County, providing hope and normalcy for cancer patients during their treatment.



Lori Willis

Executive Director



Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara and Athena Cosmetics Partner to Provide Scalp Cooling Treatments

For many cancer patients, losing their hair during chemotherapy can feel like losing a part of their identity. With ongoing support from Athena Cosmetics, the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara is helping patients preserve their hair during treatment.

Used at both Ridley-Tree Cancer Center and UCLA, the Paxman Scalp Cooling system helps reduce hair loss caused by chemotherapy. During treatment, patients wear a lightweight silicone cap, which fills with a cooling liquid. By cooling the scalp, the Paxman system restricts blood flow to hair follicles, minimizing damage caused by chemotherapy drugs and helping patients retain their hair.

Staff guide patients through every step of the scalp cooling process. Physicians introduce eligible patients to the program during treatment planning consultations, and a care team then handles enrollment, cap sizing, and coordination during chemotherapy.

Athena Cosmetics' grant removes the financial burden of scalp cooling, which typically costs \$1,400 to \$2,400, making the treatment accessible to patients who might not otherwise afford it.

For many patients, keeping their hair is about more than appearances—it helps them feel like themselves. By preserving their hair, patients can navigate their daily lives with confidence and without drawing attention to their treatment.



NICK FIELDS

Cancer WellFit Program

What began as a severe headache led to an unexpected diagnosis for 30-year-old Nick Fields: a large brain tumor requiring immediate surgical intervention.

It then took nearly three months and the opinions of more than five major medical institutions to diagnose the pathology of the tumor. Nick's case was reviewed by specialists at the Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins, and UCSF before it was accurately identified at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as anaplastic pleomorphic xanthoastrocytoma, a malignant brain tumor so rare that fewer than one case is reported each year in the United States.

“My world was turned upside down,” said Nick. “My future felt uncertain, knowing that this cancer would likely come back. I felt like I’d lost so much – my energy, independence, and ability to do what I love, like surfing and playing music.”

In his search for anything that could help, Nick found Cancer WellFit, a wellness program funded by the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara. The program was initially

developed in 1994 by Julie Main and Fred Kass, MD at the Santa Barbara Athletic Club, which is now called SWELL.

"It sounded like exactly what I needed to reconnect with my body," he said. "I was like 'yes' I want to do that as soon as I can!"

The 10-week workout program offers supportive and gentle exercises designed specifically for people who have become deconditioned or chronically fatigued from cancer and its treatments, helping them regain strength, flexibility, and confidence.

"The trainers, Paula (Lilly) and Derek (Moore), are amazing," said Nick. "They get to know each of us and personalize every workout. I'd never been part of a gym before, but they made me feel comfortable from the start."

Nick said Paula even tailored exercises to help him rebuild paddle strength and balance, after she learned of Nick's love of surfing.

"I felt like I was working toward new goals and building back the strength for a life I love," he shared.



"The benefits are more than physical. Chemo brings tough side effects and I often get anxious before each round. But having a routine and a place where people understand what I'm going through has made a huge difference."

WellFit not only focuses on fitness but also friendship. Nick said he's met some lovely people who share their stories and offer support.

"It's been so welcoming and loving – it's really kind of amazing," he said. "I hope more patients find out about this program and are encouraged to sign up."

"What I appreciate about WellFit is that your commitment is showing up," he continued. "Even if you can't get through the exercises, they will find something for you to do. So, on days when I really just felt like I can't do anything, I show up. Having this commitment to move my body has given me something to look forward to, even when I'm not looking forward to it. It's a routine that keeps me moving and the movement has helped me physically with my chemo."

"Without fail, I'd show up, twice a week. And I always left feeling a little stronger and a little more hopeful."

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Planning for Peace of Mind

If You Have Planned a Vacation, You Can Plan Your Estate

You might be surprised to learn that almost two-thirds of all adults have no estate plan. While it can feel overwhelming or complicated to create a plan, it doesn't have to be. You already know who is important and what values are significant to you. It's not a matter of what you want to do. It's just about deciding to get it done the right way. Your plan can include surprising but significant benefits.

Name Names – Be specific

Whether you want to benefit a person or an organization, like the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara, ensure you have named them clearly and unambiguously. Make it easy for others to know and find them.

Careful with Taxes

With professional advice, you can ensure that your family and treasured causes receive what you intend.

Preserve choices - Your plan is flexible

If you want options, then a plan is a must. You can always update it.

Please let us know if you've already included us in your estate, intend to, or would like to discuss the many options available which provide income or tax savings. Please contact Lori Willis at (805) 898-2187 or lwillis@cfsb.org.