

Students and survivors

Columbus State Community College students and alumni band together to help cancer patients.

BY CASEY PAYTON

Elaine Euwer knows how difficult it can be to give up favorite hobbies like gardening because of cancer treatments. She's lived it. As a breast cancer survivor, Euwer was hit hard by her cancer diagnosis. She not only had to give up her landscaping business, she also had to put her passion for gardening aside.

With the many medical restrictions cancer patients face during treatment, gardening can simply be too strenuous for them. But Euwer's journey gave her the idea to found an organization that could help restore cancer patients' landscapes while benefitting students in the field.

She founded Helping

Hands in the Garden, which provides support to patients receiving treatment for breast cancer in central Ohio by assisting them with the care and maintenance of their landscapes. Euwer is a graduate of the Columbus (Ohio) State Community College (CSCC) landscape program and has close ties with many students and alumni. In fact, the structure of Helping Hands in the Garden has been set up through the student-run Columbus State Landscape Association and its alumni affiliate.

With more than 25 volunteers, the organization has assisted 58 families with their gardens since 2009, completing general cleanups, installing a vegetable garden, adding seasonal color to a front yard and much more. The jobs are determined based on clients' needs.

Helping Hands in the Garden leaves brochures in local oncology clinics and doctor's offices throughout the Columbus area, so patients can apply to receive volunteer services.

Over the last three years,



Helping Hands in the Garden volunteers have provided landscape services to more than 58 families since 2009.

as well as the chance to network with industry professionals who are also volunteering."

In addition to student volunteers, Euwer says her organization gets a lot of cancer survivors who want to help. The projects are handled like any landscape job, she says. There's a walk-through of the site, followed by a meeting to discuss plans.

Euwer says being able to help other cancer patients has been gratifying. She adds that she has seen just how therapeutic gardening is.

"This has been a wonderful experience," Euwer says. "We feel we're making a difference in these cancer patients' lives, and it's also been a great way for students to learn." **LMI**

AT A GLANCE

Student Chapter: Columbus

State Community College

Location: Columbus, Ohio

Advisor: Richard Ansley, professor

SELECT PROJECT LISTING:

▶ **Helping Hands in the Garden**—Founded by CSCC alumna and breast cancer survivor Elaine Euwer, this nonprofit affiliate of the student group has helped 58 families maintain and clean up their gardens since 2009.

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