Cancer is simultaneously a physical and emotional experience, and the arts and literature are powerful venues for capturing and communicating human responses to the disease. Research has demonstrated that people with cancer respond more positively when their care environments include works of art, music and literature. Academic and scientific communities have been slow to appreciate the power of the arts in enhancing the well-being of cancer patients.

**INITIATIVE**

Discovery Park’s Oncological Sciences Center and the College of Liberal Arts created the Cancer Culture and Community Program (CCC) in 2007 to explore the human response to cancer as expressed through literature and the arts. Purdue is a cancer research intensive university and this unique program exposes the campus as well as the local community to the non-medical and non-scientific dimensions of the cancer journey. An annual CCC colloquium is held in November and features a nationally acclaimed writer/artist whose work reflects aspects of the cancer experience. Selections of the work are incorporated into the freshman English and Visual and Performing Arts curricula. Student projects inspired by the work are displayed at various campus venues, and the visiting writers and artists hold student workshops and lead classes. The highlight of the colloquium is a free public presentation by the featured guest.

**IMPACT**

More than 4,000 students impacted since 2007; more than 400 students, faculty, staff and community members annually attend the free public presentation 2007, author, Terry Tempest Williams, Refuge, An Unnatural History of Time and Place, and The Clan of the One-Breasted Women, inaugural event 2008, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Margaret Edson, Wit: reenacted scenes by Purdue theatre faculty and students 2009, 14th Poet Laureate of the United States Donald Hall: student-created paintings, sculptures and imprinted scarves displayed in Pao Hall 2010, creators of the graphic novel Our Cancer Year, Joyce Brabner and Frank Stack: artwork by high school students displayed in Purdue Memorial Union; creation of a graphic novel, Lafayette: Our Cancer Year, featuring stories by community members, scripted and illustrated by local professionals 2011, award-winning documentary maker Noah Hutton, More to Live For: Purdue Jazz Band performance preceding the public lecture; Lafayette Jazz Sampler by local musicians; campus and community-wide bone marrow registry 2012, award-winning screenwriter Will Reiser, 50/50: Lafayette Symphony String Quintet performance of musical score created by Purdue student; “Look Good/Feel Good” community fair at Jefferson High School 2013, V-Foundation, Laugh, Think and Cry, commemorated the 20th anniversary of Jim Valvano’s inspired speech at the ESPY Awards. Nick Valvano along with video from legendary sportscaster Dick Vitale were featured in the public presentation. “The Last Lecture” by Randy Pausch was incorporated in the freshman English curriculum.

Partners: Office of the Provost, Office of Engagement, Purdue Center for Cancer Research, School of Nursing, College of Science, College of Pharmacy, College of Health and Human Sciences, College of Education, Krannert School of Management, Purdue Athletics, PSUB, WBA, Lafayette Symphony Orchestra, West Lafayette Library, Long Center, Lafayette Theatre, Harrison High School, DKMS national bone marrow registry, Tippecanoe Arts Federation, Discovery Lecture Series

http://www.purdue.edu/discoverypark