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Cancer Support Community

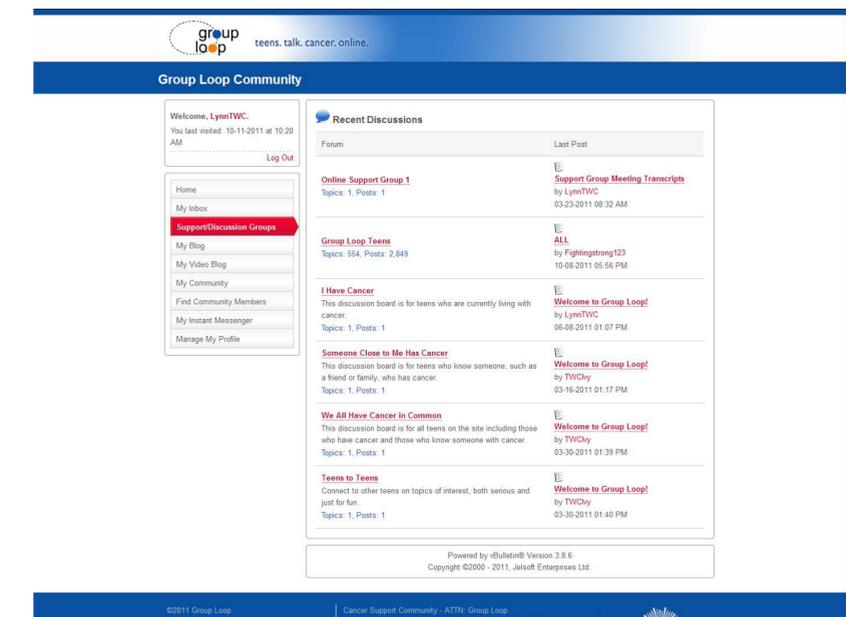
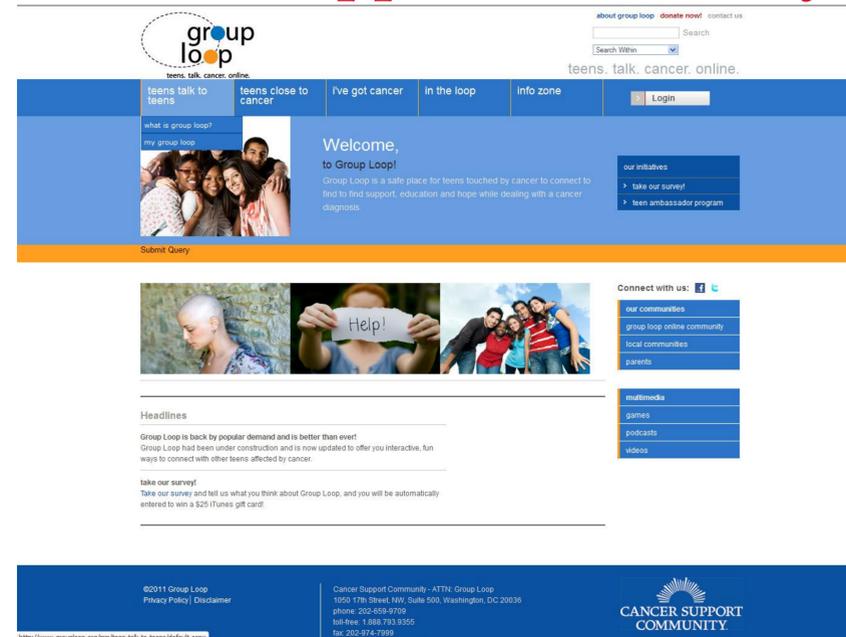
The Problem

Every year across North America, an estimated 7,500 teens between the ages of 13 and 19 are diagnosed with cancer. They and their families are confronting the impact this diagnosis has on their lives. These teens face a set of pressures and emotions that can isolate them from their peers and take a long-term toll on their development and emotional well being. For teens having an opportunity to learn about cancer and share their feelings and experiences with others in a similar situation is crucial to mitigating the emotional and psychological distress that can be provoked by a cancer diagnosis. It is well documented that teens diagnosed with cancer have higher than normal levels of anxiety and depression, report feeling socially isolated, and struggle with issues related to body image. At a stage of life where their developmental task is to separate from their families, a cancer diagnosis brings about feelings and practical realities that impinge on a teen's ability to do this.

Although the need for support for adolescents impacted by a cancer diagnosis is great, their relatively small numbers, busy schedules, treatment regimen requirements and treatment side effects as well as many other factors are all barriers to accessing traditional support programs. Where these programs exist they are often offered as support for "young adults with cancer". These Young Adult programs can include an age range from 13 to the mid 30s and young adult survivors of childhood cancers. However, perhaps more than any age group, teens seek support, information and validation from peers their own age.

The Solution

www.grouploop.org



What is Group Loop?

Group loop is an online community designed to address the needs of teens ages 13-19. Group Loop is a secure site where teens impacted by cancer can meet and connect with each other to build social and emotional support, and to regain a sense of control over their lives. Additionally, Group Loop provides educational information about cancer, and tools to cope with the anticipated changes in relationships and day-to-day activities due to a cancer diagnosis. Group Loop is monitored by a licensed mental health professional. The website consists of topical discussion boards, blogs, informational content, social networking capability and Instant Messaging.

What Teens Like About Group Loop

In a recent survey:

- 63% of teens said that talking to other teens was the #1 reason they come to the site
- 89% reported the discussion boards is their favorite part of the site
- 96% feel Group Loop is a safe site

About the Cancer Support Community

The mission of the Cancer Support Community (formerly Gilda's Club and The Wellness Community) is to ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community. Backed by evidence that the best cancer care includes emotional and social support, the Cancer Support Community offers support and education to all people with all types of cancer, as well as their families, friends, and caregivers. One of our highest institutional priorities is to serve the needs of children and teens whose lives are impacted by cancer. Visit us at: www.cancersupportcommunity.org.