

## Holiday gift wrapping volunteers needed

Autistic Services, Inc., 4444 Bryant Stratton Way, Amherst, needs volunteers to help staff their holiday gift-wrapping booth at the Walden Galleria Mall. Proceeds will benefit the agency's programs for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. For more information, call 631-5777.

# US TOO!

## Group offers hope for those with prostate cancer

by **ANDREA KIMBRIEL**  
Reporter

**T**alking with others who battled prostate cancer was vital for survivor Bill Krellner.

"It's really helpful because then you don't feel so alone," Krellner said. "My first thought was, 'I'm going to die.' I didn't know other people who had it."

The 60-year-old is a member of the local chapter of the Us TOO! prostate cancer support group, which meets at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month in Room 1109C of the VA Medical Center, 3495 Bailey Ave., Buffalo.

This chapter serves Buffalo and other communities, including Amherst and Tonawanda. An Us TOO! chapter is also located at St. Joseph Hospital in Cheektowaga.

Us TOO! is an international organization offering information and support for those with prostate cancer and their loved ones.

Krellner said about 25 to 30 people attend the monthly meetings, and larger audiences have attended presentations by such speakers as Dr. Donald Trump, chief executive officer of Roswell Park Cancer Institute, and Dr. Khurshid Guru, Roswell's director of robotic surgery.

"It offers a lot of support — talking to people, listening to people's story — seeing the same guys all the time. We haven't lost any that I know of," he said.

He volunteers in the VA Hospital's resource room, which has a large section on prostate cancer. Several people are available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. during the week to provide information about the disease for those who walk in or call.

Howard Henry, 66, is another prostate cancer survivor who volunteers in the resource room. He has been a member of Us TOO! for more than two years.

People at the meetings can share their experiences and the treatment options available, he said.

"We've found out that there are a lot of things the doctors don't tell you," Krellner said.

He said seven or eight treatment options are available, but specialists, such as surgeons or radiologists, are most likely to suggest the



**Bill McLaughlin**, of Clarence, **Mike Ameroso**, of Amherst, and **George Massic**, of Amherst, discuss their experience with the Us TOO! prostate cancer support group at the VA Medical Center in Buffalo.

Photos by John Rusac  
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— **Bill Krellner**  
cancer survivor



type of treatment they offer. That might not be the best choice for the patient since some treatments preclude others.

One out of every six men in America will develop prostate cancer sometime in his life, said Krellner. If the disease is diagnosed early, there is a good chance for survival, so annual testing is recommended for men older than 50.

The tests include the prostate-specific antigen test and the digital rectal exam.

Most people with prostate cancer are older than 40, but Krellner said he recently spoke with a 37-year-old survivor.

Henry said the group helps people accept the disease and respond in a positive way. New attendees share their stories, and others offer sug-

gestions and encouragement. Some have recently been diagnosed, while others are already through treatment.

Wives and girlfriends of those with the disease often attend as well, said Krellner.

He has participated since being treated for prostate cancer in 2005. He believed he was healthy until a stroke in March of that year brought him to the hospital, where blood tests revealed prostate cancer.

After being diagnosed, he was tested to make sure his heart was strong enough for robotic surgery. Four clogged arteries were discovered, so he had quadruple bypass surgery in July and prostate surgery in September.

"Everything is brand new," he

said. "As of now, I have no sign of cancer."

Henry said his cancer was discovered after his physician noticed a change in his PSA test. He received brachytherapy, which involves the implanting of radioactive seeds in the prostate, in April 2005.

His PSA level decreased after treatment but began rising again — a warning sign for the disease. After rising for a year and a half, it has been dropping recently.

"I don't know why. I'm happy about it — the doctors are confused," he said.

He discovered he had a vitamin D deficiency after being tested at the suggestion of someone in the group. Since his doctor put him on a dosage, his PSA has been decreasing.

Diet seems to be an important factor in preventing and treating the disease, said Krellner. Various vitamins and minerals may be helpful, including vitamin D, selenium and lycopene.

Henry said he and Krellner are newcomers to Us TOO! who are reaping the benefits of the hard work of other group members during the past decade.

"It takes you out of a sense of isolation. You find out you're not the only one. It helps you look at the future more hopefully and be grateful for what you've got," he said.

For more information, call 632-8410.