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June Ray of Hope: News from VCU Massey Cancer Center

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To: advos@vcu.edu

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Give now to support cancer research >

A large graphic with a yellow background and a white sunburst pattern. The words "RAY OF HOPE" are written in a large, black, serif font across the center of the sunburst.

RAY OF HOPE

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June 2021

Director's Update

Dear *|GREETING|*,

This June, National Pride Month and Juneteenth National Independence Day brought nationwide attention to the importance of equity in its various forms. National Cancer Survivorship Month allowed us to honor the millions of survivors who have bravely faced a cancer diagnosis and are living proof of our vision of a future without cancer, and, on Father's Day, we shared Geoff Shudtz' poignant story and his legacy of positivity that continues to inspire us. National Men's Health Month also gave us the chance to remind everyone — men and women — to stay vigilant about our own health. We know that staying active can help prevent cancer, and, if you do have cancer, to help fight it.

We all need to take steps to stay healthy — for ourselves, our families and our communities. Get out and exercise. Eat right — **Massey's weekly farm stand with Shalom Farms is back to help source healthy foods**. Make an appointment to see your doctor. Read up on cancer prevention strategies, like the HPV vaccine for

your kids. Many conditions, including several types of cancer, are preventable or manageable if we were proactive about our physical and mental well-being. Our loved ones will thank us for it.

Best,

Robert Winn, M.D.

Director and Lipman Chair in Oncology, VCU Massey Cancer Center
Senior Associate Dean for Cancer Innovation, VCU School of Medicine

View video message to survivors from Dr. Winn

Be Inspired

Meet the people who inspire us



Geoff and Julie Shudtz and the power of positivity

This Father's Day, Massey Nation remembered Geoff Shudtz. In 2017, just three weeks after Geoff and his wife, Julie, welcome their first son, Geoff was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer and given six months to live. For the next 15 months, the Shudtzes' cancer experience included chemotherapy, clinical trials and, despite a lot of bad news, always hope. "I remember leaving [our first] appointment [at Massey] and having this new sense of energy, in that there was hope, and that this

new team — and family — that we had just acquired was not going to give up on us,” says Julie. “And they didn’t.” Geoff passed away in 2019, leaving a loving family and a legacy of positivity. Julie is committed to continuing that legacy by giving back to Massey and through her foundation, FCSP (Fight Cancer Stay Positive). For Julie, “a future without cancer ... means lazy Saturdays ... leisurely checking off your bucket list instead of rushing ... And it means getting to see a whole life together, instead of just a really amazing, small amount together.”

[Read more](#)

[Watch video](#)

Be Innovative

Check out our latest research news



Vulnerability in pancreatic tumors discovered and targeted

Saïd Sebti, Ph.D., associate director for basic research at Massey, has discovered a vulnerability of pancreatic tumors addicted to the cancer-causing mutant KRAS gene and identified a drug that effectively thwarts these tumors. “Our findings are highly significant, as they revealed a new avenue to combat an aggressive form of pancreatic cancer with very poor prognosis due mainly to its resistance to conventional therapies,” says Sebti, who made the discovery as part of a preclinical

study conducted in his previous role at Moffitt Cancer Center. The news was featured widely this month in science and news publications, including **New Atlas** and **Science Daily**.

[Read more](#)

Be Involved

Support advances in cancer research



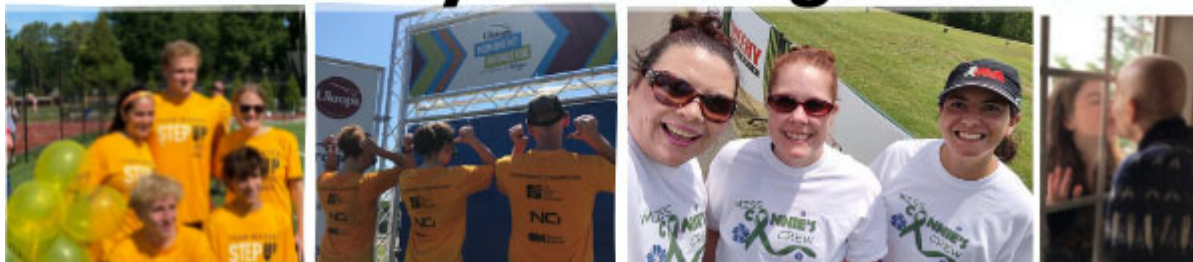
Save the date: Massey on the River returns Sept. 10

Massey on the River is back, in person and at a new venue this fall, with tickets now on sale! Save the date and join us Friday, Sept. 10, at Historic Tredegar. Richmond's best end-of-summer party will feature live music by The Jangling Reinharts, great food and drink from RVA breweries and distilleries and more, as we support innovative research and advances in cancer treatment and care at Massey. Presenting sponsor is First Citizens Bank; corporate champions include Apex Systems, Gumenick Properties and Travis Shaw, M.D. Interested in a sponsorship? Opportunities are still available.

[Read more and purchase tickets](#)



#MasseyChallenge2021



Massey Challenge 2021 is a wrap, with \$150,000 raised

Massey Director Robert Winn, M.D., said it best: “We are all part of one team, one fight.” The Massey Challenge looked a little different this year, with participants walking or running in their own neighborhoods or over four days of the reimagined Ukrop’s Monument Avenue 10K. But the goal remained the same: to raise awareness and funds critical to advancing Massey’s mission and to help move us closer to a future without cancer. Massey Challenge teams, led by grateful patients, friends and families of those impacted by cancer and Massey doctors including Winn, **Emma Fields, M.D.** (Cert.’16/E); Khalid Matin, M.D.; and Kandace McGuire, M.D., stepped up to raise more than \$150,000 to advance Massey’s mission and continue expanding access to innovative research and clinical trials, with support from our 2021 Massey Challenge corporate champions First Citizens Bank, Northeast Construction Inc. and Owens & Minor.

[Read more and watch a recap video](#)



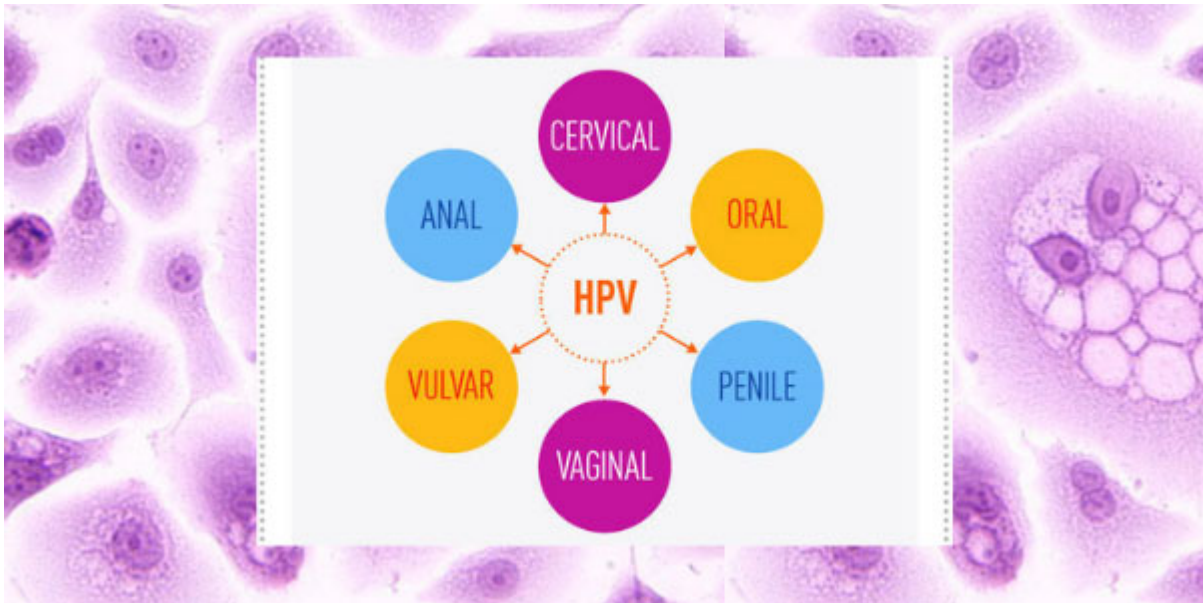
Massey celebrates cancer survivors

Today, thanks to advances in cancer prevention, research and care, more and more people are living — and thriving — with cancer. An estimated 17 million people in the U.S. are cancer survivors, and that number is estimated to rise to more than 22 million in the next decade. Commemorating National Cancer Survivorship Month, **Susan Hong, M.D.**, director of the Cancer Survivorship Program at Massey, joined forces with the integrative health team and others to share information about Massey's survivorship program and launch the Advancing Cancer Survivorship Series. The series, which will address a new topic each month and features leaders in community engagement and health disparities from Massey and the community, launched on June 21 with a look at men's health and survivorship among Black and Latino men.

View “Advancing Cancer Survivorship Series” webinar

Be Informed

Learn how we are improving health



Massey urges HPV vaccinations

Massey joins doctors and scientists across America at National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers and other organizations in issuing a joint statement urging the nation's health care systems, physicians, parents, children and young adults to get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination back on track. NCI cancer centers strongly encourage parents to vaccinate their adolescents as soon as possible, and they urge action by health care systems and providers to identify and contact adolescents due for vaccinations and to use every opportunity to encourage and complete vaccination.

Read more



Yarn-bombing exhibit honors and remembers cancer patients

The **Wanderlove: Threads of Connection** public art installation in Danville, Virginia, features a “yarn bombing” display along Danville’s River Walk Trail to honor cancer survivors and remember those lost. The exhibit, created in partnership with Massey’s Cancer Research and Resource Center in Danville and the Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History, is on display July 4-Sept. 26 and includes knitted squares and scarves created for individual patients. “Suzette Wilkins [is] a local artist who has created a very personal piece dedicated to a friend and her experience with cancer,” says Elsabé Dixon, DMFAH executive director, about the museum’s efforts to find creative ways to incorporate cancer awareness into the exhibit.

[Read more](#)

Massey in the News



Cancer Health: June 14

“The Cancer Health 25: Black Lives Matter”

Massey Director Robert Winn, M.D., is among 25 individuals recognized for breaking down racial barriers to cancer care.



99.3/105.7 KISS FM: May Community conversations with Director Robert Winn of VCU Massey Cancer Center:

“Mark Malkin, M.D., and Robert Winn, M.D., discuss brain cancer screening, treatment”



WHYY: June 4

“Lack of diversity in clinical trials has hurt patients of color. A new program aims to change that.”

Massey Director Robert Winn, M.D., discusses the need for diversity in clinical trials.

Richmond Times-Dispatch: June 12

A Chesterfield developer combines construction and fundraising to build a better community



Article profiles real estate developer George Emerson, a longtime Massey donor and advocate, including his work with Massey.



AWBC Magazine (pages 6-8): May “The Brilliant Dr. Sheppard”

Massey researcher Vanessa Sheppard, Ph.D., was featured in the cover article of this Chicago-based magazine, discussing her work addressing breast cancer disparities.



CBS-6 WTVR: May 24

The 2021 Ukrop’s Monument Avenue 10K and their charity partners

Massey staff member Amy Lacey discusses the Massey Challenge on CBS-6’s “Virginia This Morning.” **Yahoo! News** also covered the event.

Cancer doesn’t stop for a pandemic, and neither do we.

At Massey, a future without cancer is how we will measure our success.



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