

# Love Thy Neighbor

## What To Do When A Friend Has Cancer

(NAPSA)—The birth of a child is sweet. For Amy and Warren Taylor, the birth of a healthy baby boy was especially joyous because the fragile infant developed and survived his mother's treatment for stage-three breast cancer—including chemotherapy, blood transfusions and a mastectomy. His healthy birth ended months of uncertainty as to how the cancer treatments might affect him.

When Amy was diagnosed, the Taylors were overwhelmed with information, decisions and life. "When Amy was diagnosed, I told four people that first night and I was exhausted," Warren said.

When someone you know is facing a serious health diagnosis or a condition like breast cancer, there are many ways you can help ease the strain:

1. Help out at home: Mow the lawn, take the trash to the curb, water the plants or collect the mail or newspaper. Offer to fold laundry or clean the house.

2. Help with meals: Provide ready-to-cook meals, frozen and portioned according to the family's size. Make-and-bake meal preparation stores are convenient if you don't like to cook. Restaurant gift cards always come in handy. Go grocery shopping for those family members who remain at home—or invite them for dinner.

3. Take care of the rest of the family: Help the kids at home get to school in the morning or to their after-school activities. Provide rides for the kids or dinner for them before their evening activities. Offer to take them shopping for a special birthday, holiday or get-well gift. Walk the dog or change the cat's litter box.



**Amy Taylor cuddles her healthy son, whom she carried through her treatment for breast cancer. Her husband Warren plays with their older daughter. Taylor says she found much support through a special Web site set up by Warren's brother.**

4. Create a caring community: That's what Warren's brother did when he set up a free, personalized Web site where the couple could post regular updates to keep people apprised of her treatments. The site created through CaringBridge.org became the conduit for engaging the Taylors' friends and family to provide the encouragement Amy needed to persevere. Approximately 1/3 of the nonprofit's private, personalized sites are for individuals battling some form of cancer.

"When you're fighting cancer, you can feel like you're in a bubble and alone," Amy said. "The responses, the love from people reading my site, their prayers kept me going and helped me realize that I wasn't isolated in this bubble."

5. Don't do it alone: Coordinating daily dog duty or the kid pool to extracurricular activities among a group will help spread out the responsibility and time commitment. A group may even be

able to tackle larger projects such as painting or landscaping that will really touch the family.

### Doctor's Advice

"When facing a serious health condition, people live in a slow-motion world filled with fear, uncertainty and important medical decisions. They simply can't focus on—or may even forget about—day-to-day activities," said Dr. Jesse Gruman, president of the Center for the Advancement of Health. "Those burdens cause action paralysis. Friends and family can best help by just doing whatever they see that needs doing."

Supporting family, friends and neighbors who are facing a serious health condition, treatment or a prolonged illness can be incredibly fulfilling, and your efforts will be a welcome relief during long days.

### Learn More

You can find out more about free, personalized Web sites for people with a serious health condition and set up a site at [www.CaringBridge.org](http://www.CaringBridge.org).



**Note to Editors:** While this story can be useful at any time, readers may be particularly interested during October, which is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.