

Commentary...

# A time to give back

By Katy Yoder  
Correspondent

July marks the third anniversary of my cancer diagnosis. When I look back through my journal entries I feel myself sliding back to those days of terror, exhaustion and defiance. Until I opened my journal and began reading, I'd forgotten so much. Like the day at Central Oregon Radiology Associates when I began hearing words like, "irregular mammogram, suspicious, core sample, more tests." I chastised myself, "It's all coming to a head — over-eating, stress, fear, being sedentary, procrastination, stuffing emotions. It all equals this — a body out of balance."

I didn't know how to handle the situation. "More questions than answers ... too many. My imagination goes rogue. Feeling a strong urge to reach out, tell people; get their support. But fearing the downside of trying to remember who knows and keeping them all informed. Reach in, not out comes to me."

Here I am three years later feeling better than I have in 20-plus years. Writing this column has been such a blessing. Allowing me to share this

experience and hopefully help others while learning more about myself. There's nothing like baring your soul to keep you on the right track.

Now it's time to repay some of the generosity I received during my experience.

There's a young man in our community who needs our help. Justin Veloso grew up in Sisters. He's a musician, a teacher, and a true asset to our community. He has been quietly fighting for his life, undergoing surgery and other treatments to help him regain his health. The financial burden of treatment has overwhelmed his family. I understand how easily that can happen, even with health insurance, the cost of treatment that cancer patients are responsible for is devastating.

When my family needed help, this community stepped up and helped us handle the financial burden, and for that we are eternally grateful. That assistance removed some of the stress we were dealing with, but even more importantly than that, knowing how many people loved, supported and cared about us made us stronger.

Justin needs that now and

there's a fundraiser being planned to make it happen. A strong show of support through auction item donations, financial support at the event and after will bolster his resolve and give him the strength to push on.

The event is being planned by Justin's close friends and those who have been touched by his spirit of generosity and character. On September 15, a benefit aptly named, "One Of Our Own," will take place at The Belfry with a live auction and music provided by his many musical friends. This will be an evening of celebration and the chance for friends and friends-to-be to come together and make a difference for Justin.

There have been many generous donations so far, but there's still a need for vacation properties that could be included in travel packages. Organizers would appreciate donations for locations attractive for vacationers planning their next big trip. If you have a vacation rental, donating a week for one of the auction items would really help make the evening a success.

Jeff Mornarich, who volunteered his time for my fundraiser, is once again



PHOTO PROVIDED

Justin Veloso is in a battle with cancer.

making time out of a very busy schedule to come over from Roseburg and be the auctioneer. Jeff is Jennifer McCrystal's brother and has done a fantastic job as the auctioneer at My Own Two Hands for the last two years. Justin has been a server at Cottonwood Café, and Jennifer is doing everything she can to help him get through his health challenges.

I know Justin through my job. He's a former Americana Project student and he's taught at Song Academy for Youth. He's also a drumming instructor who's teaching children and passing along his love of music. I don't know

Justin well, but that's not the point. He's a member of our community, and he needs our help. Sisters folks have shown many times that we know how to support those in need better than any place I know.

In this time of unrest, pessimism and divisiveness it feels good to focus on helping someone who needs it. We can't change the world, but we can change the course of someone's life. I experienced that firsthand and I know it's going to happen for Justin. I'm so grateful to live in a community that knows how to step up and get things done.

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# Quilt Drawing

for

**FURRY FRIENDS**  
FOUNDATION  
501(c)(3)

100% of the proceeds go to Furry Friends Foundation.

"Friends of Furry Friends" quilt was pieced by Valerie Fercho-Tillery. The bold colors and incredible detail make this a spectacular quilt.

The quilt is currently on display at  
The Nugget office, 442 E. Main Ave.

Bring your pup by for a dog cookie and have a look!

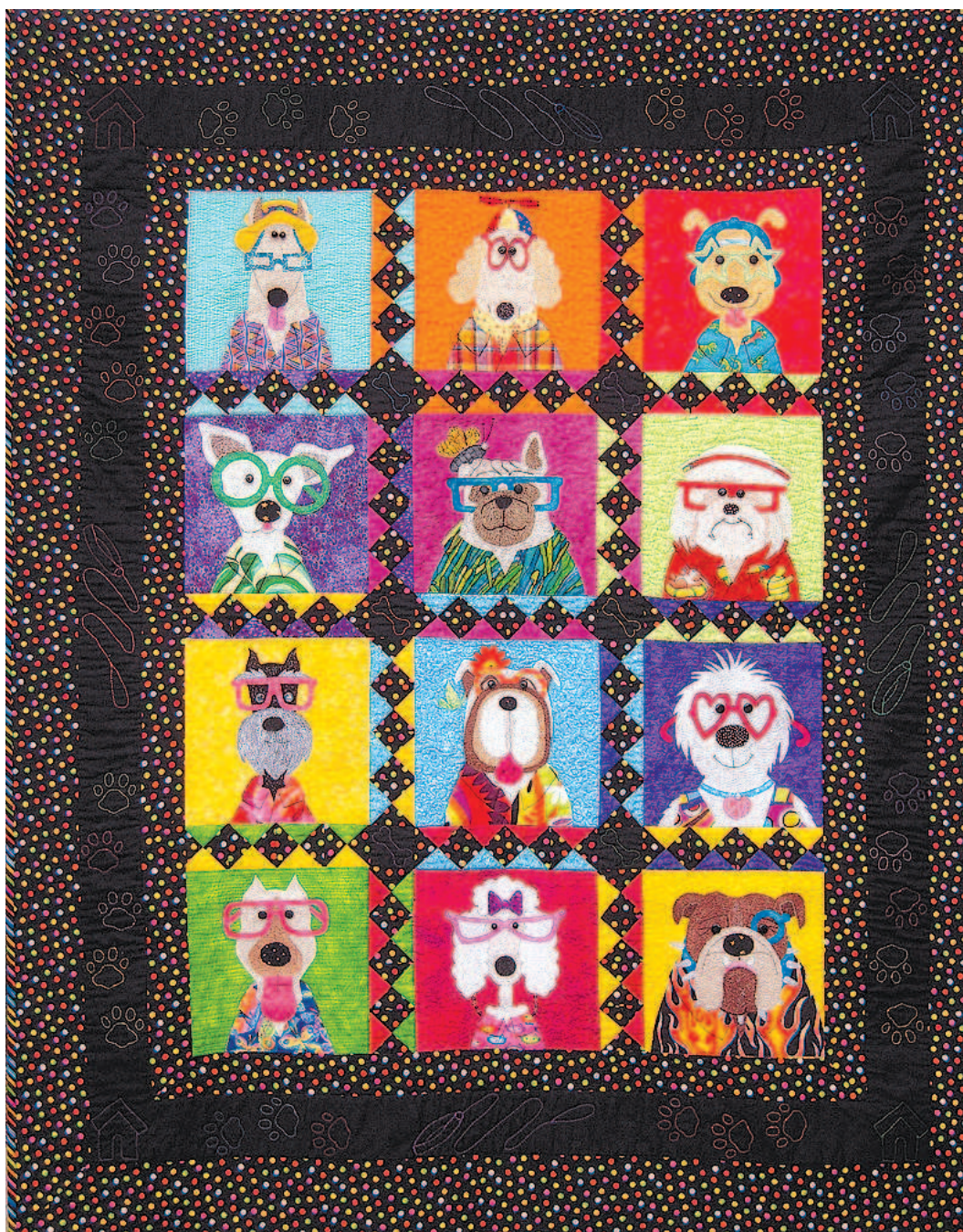
Tickets may be purchased at The Nugget office  
or online at our website  
[www.furryfriendsfoundation.org](http://www.furryfriendsfoundation.org).



Tickets are \$1 each, six for \$5 or  
go for it, 25 for \$20.



Info: 541-549-9941



"Friends of Furry Friends" - by Valerie Fercho-Tillery (46"w x 59"h)