

## **Participants' Yard Sale Set for September 15**

Hope Connections for Cancer Support provides a safe haven for people affected by cancer to cope with the emotional and physical challenges that come with a cancer diagnosis – including the financial burden of costly hospital visits and other expenses. To ensure that these financial worries do not prevent people from receiving the help they need, all programs at Hope Connections are provided free of charge, thanks to the generous support of individuals, local businesses and foundations.

Participants that benefit from Hope Connections' free services have found a variety of ways to give back – and the first annual Participants' Yard Sale on September 15<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to noon, is one of them. The idea for a yard sale fundraiser originated from Hope Connections' Participant Advisory Committee, formed in January by participants who wanted to help build awareness of Hope Connections and explore ways to help underwrite the cost of providing programs to thousands of people affected by cancer. Yohannes Gebreysus, the participant representative on Hope Connections' Board of Directors and Chair of the Participant Advisory Committee, explains, "Last year we discovered that many of our participants had no knowledge that Hope Connections is dependent upon contributions to be able to provide all of its programs at no cost to participants. But, after an education effort, participants have gotten involved in fundraising to help support Hope Connections so that programs can continue to be free to all those affected by cancer in our community." So far this year, Hope Connections' participants have held a potluck dinner and silent auction. In addition to the yard sale, the committee has also planned a holiday party in November.

Yohannes, a pancreatic cancer survivor, was at Georgetown University Hospital when he first heard about Hope Connections. "The next day I went in and everyone was so friendly," he

says, “It’s been three and a half years and I’ve been attending a support group, yoga classes and educational workshops ever since. It’s like my second home – that’s what I call it.” Yohannes emphasizes that all participants should contribute by volunteering and spreading the word because, as he puts it, “If we want more people to find out about Hope Connections and get help, then we need to be proactive.”

The Participants’ Yard Sale is a perfect example of participants actively working together to give back and build awareness of Hope Connections. All of the items for sale are donated by participants. Some items will have set prices, while other items will be available for buyers to contribute whatever they can. Participants have been advertising the yard sale through word of mouth, and Yohannes plans to put up fliers throughout the neighborhood. He calls the yard sale a “community event,” and he urges everyone to come out and support Hope Connections for Cancer Support.

Yohannes is sure that the Participants Yard Sale will be a success and hopes that it will become an annual event. Yohannes seems to be filled with hope – he uses the word “hope” frequently and credits Hope Connections for his optimistic outlook. “When you are affected by cancer, you need all the help you can get to heal,” he says. “And that’s where to get it – Hope Connections.”

Support Hope Connections’ free programs by coming out to the Participants Yard Sale in the Hope Connections parking lot on September 15, from 9 am to 12 pm. As Yohannes puts it, “We can make Hope Connections bigger by contributing and spreading the word.”