

WHY WE VOLUNTEER

Charles (Chuck) Maack – Prostate Cancer Advocate/Activist

People often ask what motivates some of us to spend as much time as we do researching and educating ourselves regarding prostate cancer. The answer is that we feel an obligation to learn all we can in order to better understand our cancer so that, when providing counsel, we at least have a reasonable knowledge of our disease and enough understanding that we can refer those seeking our advice to appropriate materials to help answer their questions and, hopefully, satisfy their concerns. For some of us, we are encouraged by our religion to help others through periods of worry and concern; a ministry, if you will.

With permission, I have taken words that appear in "A Primer on Prostate Cancer - The Empowered Patient's Guide" by Dr. Stephen B. Strum and Donna Pogliano to describe what we, as prostate cancer patients and survivors, should be making of our lives.

"You have now inadvertently joined the fraternity of prostate cancer. You have a responsibility to yourself and to your loved ones to get the best care and the most information you can. At a time appropriate to you, part of your evolution as a human being afflicted with a potentially life-threatening disease is to become an advocate for more support for PC research, early detection, early cure, appropriate treatment, and supportive care of the PC patient. You will learn that if you mentor those who come after you, as so many others have done, your life will be further enriched and made more meaningful. Know then that you have fulfilled Emerson's definition of success:

"To leave the world a bit better,
Whether by a healthy child, a garden patch
or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier because you lived,
That is to have succeeded."

We only pray that the work we do and the counsel we provide has made someone else "breathe easier."