 

**Lights of Hope 2024 Toolkit**

**Volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to promote their Lights of Hope events and fundraising with their local media. Please use the following guide for resources and materials. Don’t hesitate to contact your media advocacy partner for bigger events.**

**Remember – once you’ve secured media coverage, *share, share, share!* Please send the link to your grassroots manager for promotion on ACS CAN social media channels and share it on your social media for increased visibility.**

**Good luck!**

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*\*Patch.com and NextDoor are not used in all parts of the country; don’t worry if you aren’t familiar with these sites or if they aren’t active in your community!*

**Section 1: Lights of Hope Pre-event Press release**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Name
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network 
Phone:
Email:

***The document below could be submitted as a drop-in article via Patch (instructions on using Patch on Page 13) or sent to the editor at your local hometown paper.***

**Community to Gather to Honor Lives Touched by Cancer**

CITY, STATE – MONTH XX, 2024 –[CITY] resident and cancer [survivor/advocate] [volunteer’s full name] invites the community to join him/her in honoring lives affected by cancer with a heartfelt display/ceremony at [PLACE]. The event is part of the Lights of Hope Across America campaign urging [STATE] and national lawmakers to make cancer a top legislative priority. [VOLUNTEER’S LAST NAME] will represent [CITY] in a national event in Washington, D.C., this September, where tens of thousands of Lights of Hope bags representing the countless lives touched by cancer will serve as a powerful reminder of the critical role Congress plays in the fight against cancer.

1-2 sentences on personal cancer connection/story. [Volunteer’s last name] is fundraising for Lights of Hope so that the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) may continue advocating for everyone affected by cancer, including the estimated [NUMBER OF CANCER PATIENTS IN STATE, ex: 23,300 Oregonians - [source](https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/annual-cancer-facts-and-figures/2024/2024-cancer-facts-and-figures-acs.pdf)] who will receive a cancer diagnosis this year.

“Every year, Lights of Hope sends an important message to lawmakers that their support is critical to ending cancer as we know it, for everyone,” said [NAME]. “I look forward to getting my neighbors, family members and friends in [TOWN/CITY] involved in this heartfelt event to honor and remember our loved ones and their cancer fight, as well as remind them of the importance of implementing policies that ensure everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat and survive cancer.”

[IF APPLICABLE: DETAILS ABOUT YOUR LOH DISPLAY – Who, What, Where, When. If not, delete.]

For details on how to dedicate a Lights of Hope bag, please contact [volunteer name] at [email, phone] or visit (LOH page).

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**About ACS CAN**

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) advocates for evidence-based public policies to reduce the cancer burden for everyone*.* We engage our volunteers across the country to make their voices heard by policymakers at every level of government. We believe everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. Since 2001, as the American Cancer Society’s nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN has successfully advocated for billions of dollars in cancer research funding, expanded access to quality affordable health care, and advanced proven tobacco control measures. We stand with our volunteers, working to make cancer a top priority for policymakers in cities, states and our nation’s capital. Join the fight by visiting [www.fightcancer.org](http://www.fightcancer.org).

**Section 2: Lights of Hope Across America Letters to the Editors (LTE)**

***Need help editing or guidance on how to best submit to your local paper? Contact your media advocacy staff partner for more information. Don’t forget to share your letter on social media if it’s published!***

***With personal story and LOH details*

LTE #1**To the editor,

1-2 sentences on personal cancer story/cancer. This September, I’ll be honoring/remembering my loved ones during Lights of Hope Across America. This heartfelt event features thousands of lit bags decorated with the names of people who’ve fought cancer as a powerful message of hope.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is hosting hundreds of displays across the country in addition to the Hope Walk in Washington, D.C., on September 17, 2024. More than 70,000 bags will be displayed on front porches, backyards and parks in communities across the country, including here in [hometown/state].

Your contribution will help me honor those fighting cancer and remember those lost to the devastating disease—while supporting ongoing efforts to fight cancer in (state). To dedicate a bag, contact (Name) and (EMAIL) or visit ([www.fightcancer.org/hope](https://www.fightcancer.org/hope) or your LOH web page).

Sincerely,

Name
Hometown

***With personal story and LOH details***

**LTE #2**

To the editor,

Every day, volunteers like me with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) continue our lifesaving work to fight cancer through public policies that reduce suffering and death from cancer. We work to ensure everyone here [state] and across the country has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat and survive the disease.

1-2 sentences on personal cancer connection. If cancer has also touched your life, you can make a difference through ACS CAN’s Lights of Hope Across America—an annual, moving tribute to fight back against cancer. This year, I will join countless volunteers from all 50 states who will illuminate their neighborhoods with lit bags featuring the names and photos of cancer survivors and those we’ve lost to cancer.

This is an excellent opportunity for (TOWN/CITY) to participate in this heartfelt event.

To learn more about dedicating a bag and displaying it in your neighborhood or personalizing a bag to be included in a local display, visit ([www.fightcancer.org/hope](https://www.fightcancer.org/hope) or your LOH web page) or call insert phone number.

Sincerely,

Name
Hometown

***Without personal story***

**LTE #3**

To the editor,

As a [cancer patient/survivor/caregiver/advocate], I’m calling on readers to join me in bringing hope and support to cancer patients and their families.

For over 20 years, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) has empowered volunteers from across the country to rally together and advocate for policies that promote ending cancer as we know it for everyone.

Each year, ACS CAN holds its annual Lights of Hope Across America fundraiser to honor and remember those touched by cancer through a tribute with thousands of illuminated bags featuring the names of loved ones and their cancer stories. Here in [city], the public display is being held [brief event details – remember to keep the overall LTE word count under 250], and I invite my friends and neighbors in the community to join me!

Let’s show the world that we stand with cancer patients/survivors like myself (remove ‘like myself’ if not applicable) and our/their families. To dedicate a Lights of Hope bag, visit ([www.fightcancer.org/hope](https://www.fightcancer.org/hope) or your LOH web page) or call (number).

Sincerely,

Name
Hometown

***General***

**LTE #4**

Until we end cancer as we know it for everyone, we must keep working towards a cure. Has cancer impacted you or a loved one? There’s an easy way to make a difference.

I’ll be participating in the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network’s (ACS CAN) Lights of Hope Across America, helping advance its mission to end cancer as we know it for everyone. This is an opportunity to honor cancer survivors and remember those lost to cancer by decorating a lit bag with their name and showcasing them around our homes and communities.

More than 70,000 Lights of Hope bags will be displayed nationwide. I want to ensure that (CITY/TOWN) is represented and will host a local display on [exact date or month]. I invite others in the community to come together to show their support.

Please add your name and story to a Lights of Hope bag to help our fight. You can dedicate a bag at ([www.fightcancer.org/hope](https://www.fightcancer.org/hope) or your LOH web page) or by calling (phone number).

Sincerely,

Name
Hometown

***General***

**LTE #5**

To the editor,

Cancer patients, their families and caregivers need to know we’re here for them. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) and its volunteers haven’t stopped advocating for critical research funds and access to health care. I’m proud to have a visible way to raise awareness and bring hope to everyone who has been touched by cancer.

ACS CAN’s annual Lights of Hope ceremonies display thousands of lit bags decorated with the names of cancer survivors and those lost to the disease. Volunteers will showcase Lights of Hope on our front porches, kitchen tables and front lawns as we bring hope home to communities nationwide. I look forward to displaying Lights of Hope bags right here in {TOWN/CITY} and bringing this powerful display to our backyard.

If anyone wants a Lights of Hope bag, please get in touch with me at [EMAIL ADDRESS OR PHONE]. Donations for a Lights of Hope bag can be made online at ([www.fightcancer.org/hope](https://www.fightcancer.org/hope) or your LOH web page).

Sincerely,

NAME
HOMETOWN

**Section 3: Lights of Hope Sponsor “Thank you” LTE**

***Submit this LTE to thank a sponsor. You can also include more than one sponsor in the same letter, assuming they are covered by the same newspaper.***

**LTE #1** – ***(Thanking a Sponsor)***

To the editor,

Every day, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), alongside volunteers like myself, has continued our lifesaving work to fight cancer through public policy.

[Short personal story, ex: “My husband is a cancer survivor, diagnosed a year before we were married”]. This experience compelled me to join the ACS CAN team and further their lifesaving mission. While we've made incredible progress in our fight against cancer, there is still much work left to be done. That's why my commitment to the mission is stronger than ever.

I’m not alone in this. Generous businesses are stepping up to help ACS CAN as we reflect on the past year’s impacts on cancer. I want to thank [Business] of [Town] for recently sponsoring ACS CAN’s Lights of Hope Across America event.

Thanks to [business name]’s generous support, hundreds of lights of hope bags will be displayed across [city or state] to honor cancer patients and survivors. ACS CAN is armed with additional resources to advocate for cancer research funding, access to health care and other priorities.

You can help us make a difference. If you or your business would like to help fund the fight against cancer, please contact [[e-mail]](https://americancancer-my.sharepoint.com/personal/amber_herting_cancer_org/Documents/Desktop/NEW%20ENGLAND/MASSACHUSETTS/%5BEmail%5D) or visit ([www.fightcancer.org/hope](https://www.fightcancer.org/hope) or your LOH web page) to donate.

Sincerely,

Name

Town

Contact Info

**Section 4: Lights of Hope Drop-in Article**

***The document below could be submitted as a drop-in article via Patch or sent to your editor at your local hometown paper. For questions on how to submit or help editing, please contact your Regional Media advocacy Manager.***

 

**Help Fight Cancer in Your Community with Lights of Hope**

Imagine thousands of colorful lit bags, each decorated with a loved one's name and cancer story. Now imagine these displayed at the Constitution Gardens in Washington, D.C. and homes and neighborhoods across the country—including yours.

Each year, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) hosts its Lights of Hope event as a powerful tribute to remember loved ones we have lost to cancer and celebrate the millions of cancer survivors. This year, [town/city] residents are invited to participate.

[CITY] resident and cancer [survivor/advocate] [volunteer’s full name] invites the community to join him/her in honoring lives affected by cancer with a heartfelt [display/ceremony] at [PLACE]. The event is part of the Lights of Hope Across America campaign urging [STATE] and national lawmakers to make cancer a top legislative priority. [VOLUNTEER’S LAST NAME] will represent [CITY] in a national event in Washington, D.C., this September, where tens of thousands of Lights of Hope bags representing the countless lives touched by cancer will serve as a powerful reminder of the critical role Congress plays in the fight against cancer.

The community can get involved here in [town] by [Insert local details about your Lights of Hope plans and display.]

“Cancer affects everyone but does not affect everyone equally. Lights of Hope sends a visual reminder to our lawmakers that they must do more to help save lives from this horrible disease by ensuring everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat and survive cancer,” said [Name] of [Town]. “It’s an incredibly moving event and a great way to honor and remember those impacted by cancer. I look forward to getting my friends, family and community involved.”

As the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, ACS CAN works to ensure cancer is a top priority for policymakers at every level of government. The organization empowers volunteers nationwide to make their voices heard and influence public policy change that saves lives from cancer in [city] and nationwide.

If cancer has touched your life, you can sign up to participate in Lights of Hope at www.fightcancer.org/hope. Anyone interested in donating a bag to recognize a loved one should contact [Name] and [contact information] or visit ([www.fightcancer.org/hope](https://www.fightcancer.org/hope) or your LOH web page).

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**Section 5: Calendar and Event Listing**

***This template should be used strictly for calendar/event postings and events that are open to the public and the media. You can submit this to your local Patch.com event section, NextDoor or the “Calendar of Events” in your local newspaper.***

 

**Community to Gather to Honor Lives Touched by Cancer as Part of Lights of Hope Across America**

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) hosts its annual Lights of Hope event, a powerful tribute to honor and remember loved ones impacted by cancer. This year, the organization celebrates its 14th anniversary of the event in the form of 70,000-lit bags displayed in Washington, DC, and neighborhoods throughout the country, including right here in [TOWN].

**WHAT:** Lights of Hope Across America is a powerful display of more than 70,000 lit bags to honor and remember loved ones with cancer and serve as a reminder to (state) and national lawmakers on the importance of ensuring the fight against cancer remains a top priority. If relevant: Insert a sentence about your local activity/display.

**WHEN:** DAY, September ##, 2024 at TIME.

**WHERE**: LOCATION FOR YOUR LOCAL DISPLAY/ACTIVITY.

**WHY**: As the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, ACS CAN ensures cancer is a top priority for policymakers at every level of government. ACS CAN empowers volunteers nationwide to make their voices heard to influence policy change that saves lives from cancer in [city] and nationwide.

**HOW:** Visit: www.fightcancer.org/hope. To donate a Lights of Hope bag, contact [Name] at [Email/phone?] or visit ([www.fightcancer.org/hope](https://www.fightcancer.org/hope) or your LOH web page).

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**About ACS CAN**

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) advocates for evidence-based public policies to reduce the cancer burden for everyone*.* We engage our volunteers across the country to make their voices heard by policymakers at every level of government. We believe everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. Since 2001, as the American Cancer Society’s nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN has successfully advocated for billions of dollars in cancer research funding, expanded access to quality affordable health care, and advanced proven tobacco control measures. We stand with our volunteers, working to make cancer a top priority for policymakers in cities, states and our nation’s capital. Join the fight by visiting www.fightcancer.org.

**Section 6: Using Patch.com to Promote your ACS CAN Advocacy Work and Lights of Hope Events**

***You can use any of the templates shared above to personalize and promote your event or fundraising efforts on Patch.com.***





**What is Patch.com?** Patch is an independent local news platform operating in over a thousand locations nationwide. It’s community-specific news and event information. Patch welcomes and encourages community members to post directly to the site.

**Why use it?** Across the country, local news is going digital. Patch allows you to share your voice and ACS CAN’s mission in your community. **You can publish stories about your advocacy work or promote fundraising events in your community for free!** Your Grassroots or Media advocacy partner can often provide you with a press release template that you can modify to fit your needs, making it easy to copy and paste to create a story.

**How?** Ask your grassroots or media advocacy staff partner for a template press release about an event like Lights of Hope or advocacy ask. Or, craft your own material and share it with your ACS CAN staff partner for review/feedback before posting.

**When?** The possibilities are endless. Share your Lights of Hope fundraising event. Drop in ACS CAN’s templated press release about your attendance at Leadership Summit and Lobby Day. Share an article about that excellent volunteer award you just won (and don’t forget a photo!)

**What next?**

* *Share, share, share!* Let your grassroots and/or media advocacy partner know your story is posted.
* Share the link on your social media page using campaign hashtags; ACS CAN will share from our pages, too.

**Questions?** Don’t hesitate to ask your grassroots or media advocacy partner for help. The ACS CAN team can provide samples of past articles or template press releases, and we are available to review anything you create before posting. We can also provide logos and photos to post with your article or event.

**New Users: How do I make a Patch account?**

1. Go to [patch.com/register](https://patch.com/register) or click "Sign up" in the top right corner of Patch.com
2. Enter your town or zip code and select your nearest Patch site from the drop-down menu

**To post an event or press release:** [**https://patch.com/new-york/brooklyn/how-post-articles-events-patch-simple-guide**](https://patch.com/new-york/brooklyn/how-post-articles-events-patch-simple-guide)

**Section 6: Using NextDoor to Promote your ACS CAN Advocacy Work and Lights of Hope Events**

 ***You can use any of the templates shared above to personalize and promote your event or fundraising efforts on NextDoor.com.***



**What is NextDoor?** NextDoor is a phone application (NextDoor) and website (NextDoor.com) where you can instantly connect with others in your neighborhood to share relevant news and information—including promoting your Lights of Hope fundraiser or local display—exchange recommendations, receive updates from public agencies, borrow tools, sell couches and more.

**Why use it?** NextDoor has succeeded as one of the only social media platforms centered on the hyperlocal connection. As such, what better way to invite new neighbors to donate to your Lights of Hope fundraiser or share in your local Lights of Hope display?

Below, you’ll find clear instructions on how to share information and/or post an event, including templates you can easily modify to fit your needs.

**Instructions**: <https://help.nextdoor.com/s/?language=en_US>

**Questions?** Don’t hesitate to ask your media advocacy partner for help. The ACS CAN team is available to review anything you create before posting. We can also provide logos and photos to post with your article or event.