

## CR Magazine sheds light on the burden of cancer on the streets

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An article published in the Ffall 2010 issue of CR, the AACR's magazine for cancer survivors and their families and caregivers, details the immense challenges faced by those who suffer with cancer and lack the necessary resources for proper treatment and care — the homeless.

CR magazine contributing writer Cynthia Ryan, Ph.D., who is an associate professor of English at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, took to the streets over the last year to offer a glimpse into the lives of homeless cancer patients struggling to obtain treatment while being confronted by daily uncertainties about life's most basic necessities.

What makes this story even more unique is that Ryan, a 17-year breast cancer survivor, can relate firsthand to the harbored fears and uncertainties that many patients experience when diagnosed with cancer.

"Those who experience cancer on the streets brave a constant struggle to find a place where they can belong. ... And while all survivors embark on a journey unlike any other when diagnosed with cancer, the homeless trudge a more treacherous path," Ryan wrote in CR.

Along her journey, Ryan learned more about the complexities of this population than she had thought she would. She developed unique bonds with many homeless cancer patients, but one in particular — 46-year-old Edwina Sanders, a stage 4 breast cancer patient — left a lasting impact.

"[The homeless] have challenges beyond just the effects of cancer. People like Edwina simply struggle to find a way to get to their appointments and to get 'home' after chemotherapy," Ryan said in a video podcast with the AACR.

Ryan said that writing this article confirmed her belief that simplifying the experience of cancer to a single narrative of diagnosis, treatment and recovery is not only misleading, but also harmful to those who aren't represented in purely 'hopeful' profiles of survivorship.

"You go into these communities assuming you are going to lift these people up; you're going to help them. What you find in return is they give a lot back to you," she said. "When I see Edwina, I see the face of cancer in all its rawness. She reminds me that [cancer](#) is a formidable opponent and that our fight is far from over."

**More information:** To read Ryan's story "Homeless With Cancer," in the Fall fall 2010 issue of CR magazine, please visit:

[www.CRmagazine.org/archive/Fall...HomelessWithCancer.aspx](http://www.CRmagazine.org/archive/Fall...HomelessWithCancer.aspx)

Provided by American Association for Cancer Research

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