

## 'Plant Purple-Grow Hope' campaign digs in for third season

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More northwest Ohio garden centers this spring are teaming up with an Arizona-based biomedical research organization to fight pancreatic cancer through the sale of purple flowers, which symbolize the nation's fourth leading cause of cancer death.

The Maumee Valley Growers, who helped initiate the "Plant Purple-Grow Hope" campaign in 2011, are joined this year by The Anderson's Markets and Sautter's Markets in raising funds for pancreatic [cancer research](#) at the Phoenix-based non-profit Translational Genomics Research Institute ([TGen](#)).

Growers and retailers will raise funds for TGen during May and June by donating a portion of the sale of any purple flowers. Purple is the color representing pancreatic cancer.

"We're looking at expanding the program this year. It can only get bigger," said Toledo native Deanna Bobak, who lost her father, Donald Swicegood of Toledo, to pancreatic cancer. He died only months after his diagnosis, and Bobak hopes a method of early detection can be developed.

"People are excited. There's a lot of positive energy in moving the program forward," said Bobak, who is spearheading the drive again this year in the Toledo area.

Jim Sautter, owner of Sautter's Markets in suburban Toledo, buys from

local farms and likes to get involved in local causes. He views participation in Plant Purple-Grow Hope as a great opportunity to help his [local community](#).

While he doesn't have anyone in his immediate family impacted by pancreatic cancer, Sautter said he has known those who have. "It's a very serious disease, and it would be wonderful if TGen could make some headway toward better treatments, or even a cure."

Joe Perlaky, Executive Director of the Maumee Valley Growers, said, "Our 13 garden centers that developed the program have provided a great opportunity for location expansion and increased community awareness. This is important to us. It's really about the research and the pursuit of a treatment or cure. We all look forward to a time when this dreaded disease is only mentioned in the history books."

Kelly Kinney started Plant Purple-Grow Hope in honor of her brother, Bret Connors, a Scottsdale, Arizona, resident who lost his battle with pancreatic cancer in 2009.

"We are really excited to continue working with the Maumee Valley Growers, who have made a long-term commitment to us and who at the same time are open to others joining our community awareness efforts," said Kinney, who moved to Houston, from Toledo, and hopes to secure a major sponsor in the future that will enable Plant Purple-Grow Hope to become a nationwide program.

"We're really excited to initiate our third year. We've shown that we are able to sustain this effort, and are on pace to continue to grow and build relationships. I am more committed than ever, and really excited about the future," said Kinney, adding that Plant Purple-Grow Hope helps preserve the memory of her brother, Bret, who is survived by his wife and three sons. For more about Bret, please visit:

<http://www.tgen.org/get-involved/tributes/bret-connors.aspx>.

Michael Bassoff, President of the TGen Foundation, said that TGen scientists are inspired by the passion and commitment of Kinney and others involved in Plant Purple-Grow Hope.

"TGen's profound advances against pancreatic cancer have been fueled by the generous leadership of volunteers across the nation, and we are thrilled to continue to receive critically needed funding from this bold and creative initiative," Bassoff said.

To launch a Plant Purple-Grow Hope program in your community, please contact Erin Massey at the TGen Foundation at 602-343-8470.

Proceeds will fund TGen and its Pancreatic Cancer Research Team (PCRT), which includes leading pancreatic cancer scientists, physicians and researchers, armed with the most technologically advanced tools and resources, at 45 top-flight medical research institutions worldwide.

[Pancreatic cancer](#) annually takes the lives of more than 37,000 Americans, making it the nation's fourth-leading cause of [cancer death](#).

Provided by The Translational Genomics Research Institute

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