

# Cardinals CRUSH Cancer

Community Awareness Project Campbell Jenzen, Evan Zabel, Ning Zhang



Alexandria Area High School 4300 Pioneer Rd SE, Alexandria, MN 56308 04/28/2025

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### I. Executive Summary

#### PROJECT OVERVIEW -

The Cardinals CRUSH Cancer Team partnered with the American Cancer Society for the 2024-2025 Community Awareness project. The Team aimed to raise overall knowledge of cancer and how to support cancer patients in the Alexandria, Minnesota community. Each member of The Team has had personal experiences with cancer but didn't know how to help these loved ones through a tough process, thus finding it necessary to educate individuals in the community and support cancer patients.

#### ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The American Cancer Society is one of the most prominent non-profit cancer awareness organizations globally. They strive to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support. Additionally, they strive to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. With over 3,400 regional and local offices, the American Cancer Society provides resources and assistance throughout many communities. The American Cancer Society plays critical roles in education and prevention, funding research, and providing support to cancer patients and families.



To improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

**American Cancer Society Mission Statement** 

#### PROBLEMS

Cancer is on the rise, becoming the third leading cause of death in the United States (*National Institutes of Health*), and impacts thousands of individuals in the Alexandria, Minnesota community. The Community Awareness Team has pinpointed three specific issues in the community.

Cost of Treatment for Cancer Patients

High Demand for Support

3) Lack of Awareness Throughout the Community

#### GOALS -

To address the previous problems, The Team created three campaign objectives to ensure the project stays on schedule. This was split into an overall goal, a primary goal, and a secondary goal.

#### Overall Goal

Inform Alexandria residents of the impacts and importance of cancer awareness

#### **Primary Goal**

Raise funds for the American Cancer Society **Secondary Goal** 

Care for those impacted by cancer

#### CAMPAIGN ACRYONYM AND ACTIVITIES

The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team kept five campaign milestones in mind. The campaign is split into five main objectives: Create Funds, Raise Awareness, Unite Community, Support Cancer Initiatives, and Heighten Knowledge.





Table 1: Activities Overview				
Activity Description				
C.1 T-Shirt Sales	Selling Cardinal CRUSH Cancer t-shirts to Cardinal fans.			
C.2 Sporting Events	Fundraising events held at basketball and football games.			
R.1 Halftime Video Interview	Interviewing and creating a video with a local cancer patient.			
R.2 Speaking at Sporting Events	Speaking about the prevalence of cancer and importance of cancer awareness.			
U.1 Wake-Up Alexandria	Speaking to local business owners.			
U.2 News Articles	Promotional article in the newspaper.			
U.3 Cardinal Connection	Posting about upcoming events on the school district website.			
U. 3 Social Media	Promoting and posting about upcoming events and projects.			
U.4 Radio Interview	Speaking on local radio and promoting upcoming events.			
S.1 Fishing For a Cure	Volunteering at a local cancer fundraiser.			
S.2 Support Bags	Making bags of items to support cancer patients.			
S.3 Cards For Cancer	Writing cards for local cancer patients.			
S.4 NextStep Silent Auction	Supporting an online silent auction.			
S.5 Orange Envelopes	Assembling cards with vouchers for childhood cancer patients.			
H.1 Volunteer at Chemo Center	Providing support to cancer patients during chemotherapy.			
H.2 Meet With Cancer Society	Meeting with a representative to plan and support future cancer events.			

#### BUDGET

Throughout the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team raised funds to support cancer initiatives. Listed below is a detailed breakdown of each fundraising activity. No expenses were incurred due to corporate sponsorships.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Throughout the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team learned valuable lessons. These lessons guided The Team in creating recommendations for future projects for continued success.

Start Early & Plan Ahead

Incorporate Volunteer **Hours into National Honors Society** 

Partner With Clinic for Cancer Detection Event

Closing the Project

#### **Human Resource Management Plan**



**NING ZHANG** Project Manager

#### Responsibilites:

- Monitors Progress Plan Future Events
- Meeting Deadlines

**Strengths:**  Determination · Problem-Solving · Critical Thinking

### **EVAN ZABEL** Communications Officer **Strengths:** Communication Networking Public Speaking Responsibilites: Communicate With Businesses Lead Meetings

Networking

# CAMPBELL **JENZEN** Marketing Manager Strengths: · Creativity · Attention to Detail Organization Responsibilites:

**Create Graphics** 

**Create Presentations** 

Promote Project

The Cardinals CRUSH Cancer project's success and effectiveness are due to utilizing the project management process. The Team has raised \$6,180.26 for the American Cancer Society and has impacted more than 10,000 individuals, effectively reaching two-thirds of the Alexandria *community.* These funds were generated to support local cancer patients in the Alexandria, Minnesota community. After all activities were completed, the board of directors from the American Cancer Society met with our team to personally thank The Team for their hard work and effort. *This project* allowed The Team to support those in our

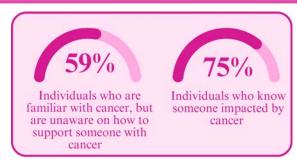
community who are battling cancer and increase overall cancer awareness.



### II. Initiating

#### A. Statement of the Problem

Cancer is on the rise, becoming the third leading cause of death. By 2030, there will be an estimated 26 million new cancer cases and 17 million cancer deaths per year, equivalent to almost 5,500 new daily diagnoses (*National Cancer Institute*). Each member of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team has felt the impact of cancer on loved ones and individuals around them. *The words, "You have cancer," will be said to over 40% of men and women living in the world today.* (*National Cancer Institute*). It is tough for these individuals to wrap their heads around such difficult information. A survey was sent to families within



the Alexandria School District, which received 650 responses to gain insight into the Alexandria, Minnesota community's knowledge of cancer. The survey received a 72% participation rate. The results showed that 59% of the respondents knew what cancer was, but didn't know how to support someone with cancer and the risk factors associated with cancer. Additionally, 75% of the respondents knew an individual impacted by cancer.

### 1. Cost of Treatment for Cancer Patients

Cancer patients can receive many types of treatment, whether it be surgery, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, or stem cell transplants, throughout their journey. Even after a patient is cancer-free, they still have various expenses such as lab testing, medicine, and in-home care. The expenses associated with this can be formidable and have risen consistently. According to AARP The Magazine, the total cost of cancer on average is \$150,000. Whether this cost is paid out of

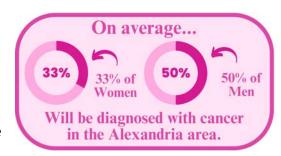


pocket or through insurance, it can be a large obstacle in a patient's journey. Similarly, the American Cancer Society states, "Over 70% of cancer patients are worried about affording care and have made significant life changes to be able to afford care". When diagnosed with cancer, it can become a large financial burden on families and drastically change lifestyles. In many cases, individuals who have not been impacted by cancer are not aware of the significant costs associated with cancer treatment.

### 2. High Demand for Support

When an individual is diagnosed with cancer, it is vital for the community to provide adequate support for those diagnosed with cancer. Sherri Maanum, a local representative from the American Cancer Society, compiled statistics on local rates of cancer. According to the local American Cancer Society's research, in the Alexandria area community, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 2 men will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lives. Along with that, there are 2,800 cancer survivors in

the Alexandria area. With a population of 7,432 adult women and 6,968 adult men (*US Census Bureau*), this means approximately 2,477 women and 3,484 men will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lives. *The demand for support for cancer patients is at an all-time high, with more and more individuals living with this disease and its long-term effects*. Cancer patients experience not only physical hardships but also emotional distress. They can also often feel alone and misunderstood. Practical needs such as transportation, daily care, medication, and food are also critical to a cancer patient's healing and treatment process. Many



Alexandria area residents do not know how to support those living with cancer, feeling helpless when a loved one is diagnosed.

# 3. Lack of Awareness Throughout the Alexandria Community

After an analysis of the survey results from the Alexandria community, The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* team identified that the Alexandria community needed an increase in cancer awareness. The Team concluded that many individuals living



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Many individuals understand the definition of cancer, but not its far-reaching effects.

American Cancer Society

in the Alexandria area may understand what cancer is, but are unsure how to support someone affected by cancer. According to the *American Cancer Society*, an estimated 1.9 million people are affected by cancer in a year, but many people do not know the impact that cancer has on the individual and their support system. When an individual is diagnosed with cancer, it not only affects them but also the ones around them as well. *A representative from the American Cancer Society said*, "Many individuals understand the definition of cancer, but not its far-reaching effects." Many young children and adults often do

not understand this complex disease.

B. Project Scope

PURPOSE

The American Cancer Society is a non-profit, cancer awareness organization. They strive to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. The purpose of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign is to highlight the importance of cancer awareness to as many individuals as possible with the help of the American Cancer Society. Additionally, the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign plans to generate the maximum number of funds possible to support the local American Cancer Society and local cancer patients. *The Team believes that the Community Awareness project is not only focused on raising funds but also on spreading awareness and educating the Alexandria community and schools on cancer's widespread impacts.* The mascot of Alexandria Public Schools is the Cardinal. In alignment with the mascot, the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign was created.



The mission of the American Cancer Society is to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

RATIONALE -

Each Cardinals CRUSH Cancer Team member has witnessed the impact of cancer in their lifetime. Evan Zabel has had multiple experiences with cancer in his life, more recently with his football coach and long-time mentor Mike Quist, who was recently diagnosed with Osteosarcoma, a fast-spreading bone cancer. Mike has played an important role in Evan Zabel's development not only as a football player but as a person. Evan Zabel has to live knowing that he might lose him in the near future. Campbell Jenzen and Ning Zhang have not had any personal experiences with cancer, but have seen the impacts of cancer with other community members. When each team member was faced with this devastating news, they didn't know how to react. The many experiences with cancer have led The Team to feel deep sympathy for others in the Alexandria community dealing with cancer. When looking at the intense and overwhelming impact of cancer on our community and the lack of awareness on how to support someone with cancer, the Community Awareness Team identified this as a significant issue. The Team recognized the widespread impact of cancer on their immediate community and the increased need for support.

#### EXPECTED BENEFITIS -

The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign plans to raise funds for the local American Cancer Society and local cancer patients. Raising funds for the American Cancer Society will help provide the Alexandria community with numerous benefits, such as reducing the stigma associated with cancer and increasing general understanding of the disease.



Understanding more about cancer can help individuals and their loved ones feel empathy for those diagnosed with cancer. Additionally, individuals in the Alexandria community will understand the risks associated with cancer and how to better support those affected by cancer. By raising funds and supporting local



cancer patients, this will make a direct impact on their lives. The Cardinals CRUSH Cancer Team will learn valuable information on how to support local cancer patients.

# III. Planning and Organizing

The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign goals are divided into overall, primary, and secondary goals.

**OVERALL GOAL** 



Inform Alexandria Residents of the Impacts and Importance of **Cancer Awareness** 

PRIMARY GOAL



Raise Funds for the **American Cancer Society**  SECONDARY GOAL



Care for Those **Impacted by Cancer** 

### **2** Overall Goal: Inform Alexandria residents of the impacts and importance of cancer awareness

The Team's overall goal is to inform Alexandria residents of the impact of cancer and the importance of cancer awareness. Many individuals in the Alexandria community lack a clear understanding of this complex disease and its extensive impact on individuals and communities. The Team will emphasize the importance of early detection, prevention strategies, and support systems, making sure community members will be well-informed and compassionate when a loved one is diagnosed with cancer. With an increase in awareness throughout the community, the American Cancer Society and other cancer organizations will see an increase in donors and volunteers. In addition, when an individual's loved one is diagnosed with cancer, they will know how to offer the best support. *The Team will evaluate this through the number of* individuals reached throughout each activity. The Team aims to reach 7,000 individuals, which is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the Alexandria area population. The activities in the Raise Awareness and Unite Community portions of the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer campaign will be focused on reaching this goal.



### Primary Goal: Raise Funds for the American Cancer Society

The Team's primary goal is to provide financial support to the local American Cancer Society. The primary and secondary goals were identified to ensure that the overall goal was met. When an individual is diagnosed with cancer, the costs associated with treatment and care can be drastic. There are lofty expenses not only for treatment, but also for diagnostic, transportation, lodging, and out-of-pocket costs. The American Cancer Society provides those affected by cancer with resources, as they already have much stress with paying for treatment. Additionally, the American Cancer Society funds revolutionary and lifesaving cancer research. Even though cancer is a tough, harsh disease, innovative research can help a cancer patient's treatment and recovery process much smoother. Due to the tremendous demand for cancer research and support, The Team recognized the need to support the American Cancer Society. The Team aims to raise \$7,500 in support of cancer patients. The activities in the Create Funds portion of the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer campaign will be focused on reaching this goal.



#### **Secondary Goal: Care for Those Impacted by Cancer**

The Team's secondary goal is to care for those impacted by cancer in the Alexandria community. This goal was necessary for the overall success of the project. The Team decided to focus the Community Awareness project on showing the community how to support those in need. In addition, The Team plans to promote ways for the community to get involved in helping those in need around the Alexandria area. Supporting cancer patients is crucial in promoting a better environment for patients. This means more patients will feel cared for during a traumatic and life-changing event. *This* will be evaluated by measuring the amount of materials donated by the community, the participation in activities by the end of the project, and the time spent supporting cancer patients. The Cardinals CRUSH Cancer team aims to create 40 support bags, write 100 cards for cancer, and volunteer for a total of 10 hours across fundraising events and at Alomere



Health, a local hospital, to care for those impacted by cancer. The activities in the *Support* and *Heighten* portion of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign will be focused on achieving this goal.

B. Human Resource Management Plan

The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team found it crucial to assemble a strong task force. These positions include a Project Manager, a Communications Officer, and a Marketing Manager. Each member of The Team brought a diverse set of skills and contributed to the overall success of the project.



Ning Zhang's strengths include her entrepreneurial views, determination, problem-solving skills, and project assertiveness. Ning uses these strengths to ensure the team is efficient and up-to-date throughout the project. In this project, she guides The Team, brainstorms future activities, pursues new ways to reach out to the community, and surveys group progress. As the Project Manager, she has the final say in a project decision.



Evan Zabel's most significant contributions to the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team are his communication skills, networking, and his ability to establish relationships. As the Communications Officer, Evan is responsible for connecting and collaborating with community partners and documenting project meetings. Some of his responsibilities include leading discussions with community members and following up with past community relationships.



Campbell Jenzen's greatest strengths are creativity, collaboration, and organization. Campbell uses these strengths to generate ideas and control issues that arise. As the Marketing Manager, Campbell's responsibilities include creating graphics and presentations needed for various activities. Her skills in connecting with community members, providing leadership, and problem-solving are vital to The Team's success.

#### C. Schedule

#### I. MILESTONE -

The Community Awareness Team further continued the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign to combat the issues previously addressed. The *CRUSH* acronym stands for Create Funds, Raise Awareness, Unite the Community, Support Cancer Patients, and Heighten Knowledge. Activities associated with achieving these objectives are milestones towards achieving the project goals. Each milestone contains activities that fit the created acronym and connect back to the ultimate goal of raising awareness. By reaching these milestones, The Team better understood the success that was reached in the Community Awareness project.





# **CREATE FUNDS**

The first objective of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team is to *Create Funds*. *This portion focused on donation amounts and funds raised*. The American Cancer Society has a high demand for funds to support cancer patients and provide the necessary resources. To create funds, the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team sold t-shirts at sporting events and school lunches, donation baskets were passed throughout the stands at sporting events, raffle baskets were created with the generosity of local businesses, and a halftime contest at a basketball game.



### RAISE AWARENESS

The second objective of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team is to *Raise Cancer Awareness*. *Members of the community were greatly educated by The Team on the effects of cancer and the need to support local cancer patients*. To raise awareness, a video interview was conducted with Alexandria graduate Nolan Morical, and The Team spoke during halftime at sporting events.



# **UNITE COMMUNITY**

The third objective of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team is to *Unite the Alexandria Community. When the community is brought together around a common cause, this can contribute to their overall knowledge and empathy for cancer.* This portion focused on community support and involvement. To Unite the Community, The Team attended Wake Up Alexandria, a twice-monthly meeting with business owners, was featured in an Echo Press news article, a local newspaper, was interviewed on the local radio, was featured in the Cardinal Connection, and utilized social media platform Instagram to bring together the Alexandria community.



# SUPPORT CANCER INITIATIVES

The fourth objective of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team is to *Support Cancer Initiatives*. *Throughout the year, the American Cancer Society requires assistance to support cancer patients*. The Team supported the American Cancer Society and Pinky Swear, a Minnesota children's cancer charity. This objective was demonstrated through various activities such as Fishing for a Cure, helping with fundraising events, creating gift bags, assembling orange envelopes, and card writing through Cards for Cancer.



# HEIGHTEN KNOWLEDGE

The fifth objective of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team is to *Heighten Knowledge*. *The Team gained valuable knowledge from activities that involved caring for cancer patients*. Utilizing the expertise and resources of the American Cancer Society helped The Team create activities that aligned with the American Cancer Society and directly supported cancer patients. The activities in this section are volunteering at Alomere Health and meeting with the American Cancer Society.

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The Team stuck to a firm timeline to ensure that the project was progressing effectively and efficiently. The graphic on the following page shows the project's timeline and demonstrates the activities needed to meet The Team's goals.





#### D. Quality Management Plan

To ensure the project's success, The Team utilized key performance indicators (KPIs). *The Team utilized these key performance indicators to ensure the quality and effectiveness of each activity.* Specific criteria were established to measure the success of each of the activities described above. Listed below are the quantitative key metrics for each *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign activity.



The *Create Funds* section's activities revolved around raising funds for the American Cancer Society and for local cancer patients. The table below displays how each activity was measured by performance and success in the *Create Funds* portion.

Activity	Description	KPI	Poor	Good	Excellent
T-Shirt Sales	Creating funds by selling t- shirts to Cardinal fans	Number of t-shirts sold	<150 -	<b>- 150-250 —</b>	- >250
Sporting Events	Creating funds through various activities at athletic competitions	Funds Raised	<1,000 -	- 1,000- 2,500 -	>2,500

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The *Raise Awareness* section involved informing and educating the community about the risks and prevalence of cancer. The table below displays how each activity was measured by performance and success in the *Raise Awareness* portion.

Activity	<b>Description</b>	KPI	Poor	Good	Excellent
Halftime Video Interview	Video of local cancer patient played at sporting events	Number of viewers	<2,000	- 2,000- - 3,000 -	_ >3,000
Speaking at Sporting Events	Speaking about the prevalence of cancer and the importance of cancer awareness	Number of listeners	<2,000 -	2,000- 2,500	- >2,500





The *Unite Community* section involved getting the community acquainted with the upcoming events, educating community members on how to support cancer patients, and the importance of cancer awareness. The table below displays how each activity was measured by performance and success in the *Unite Community* portion.

Activity	Description	KPI	Poor	Good	Excellent
Wake-Up Alexandria	Spoke briefly to local business owners	Business owners present	<40 _	40-50	>50
News Article	Promotional article in the Echo Press	Number of readers	<1,400 _	1,400- 1,600 -	>1,600
Cardinal Connection	Reached out to Alexandria, Minnesota District 206 families	Number of readers	<250 -	- 250-400 —	<b>&gt;400</b>
Social Media	Utilizing social media platform Instagram to market activites	Number of followers	<400 -	- 400-450 —	>450
Radio Interview	Spoke about upcoming events and was interviewed about the project on Open Line	Number of listeners	<200 -	- 200-300 —	- >300

For the *Support Cancer Initiatives* section, the activities revolved around helping out with fundraisers in the community and items that directly supported local charities American Cancer Society, and Pinky Swear. The table below displays how each activity was measured by performance and success in the *Support Cancer Initiatives* portion.

Activity	<b>Description</b>	KPI	Poor	Good	Excellent
Fishing For a Cure	Helping out with the Fishing For a Cure fundraiser	Hours spent volunteering	<2	_ 2-4	_ >4
Support Bags	Making bags of items needed to support cancer patients	Number of bags made	<30	_ 30-40	<b></b> >40
Cards For Cancer	Alexandria, Minnesota District 206 students wrote cards for cancer patients	Number of cards written	<75	<b>-</b> 75-100	<b>- &gt;100</b>
NextStep Silent Auction	Supporting a silent auction fundraiser	Number of hours volunteered	<1	_ 1-3	_ >3
Orange Envelopes	Making cards to support childhood cancer patients	Number of envelopes created	<6	6-8	>8

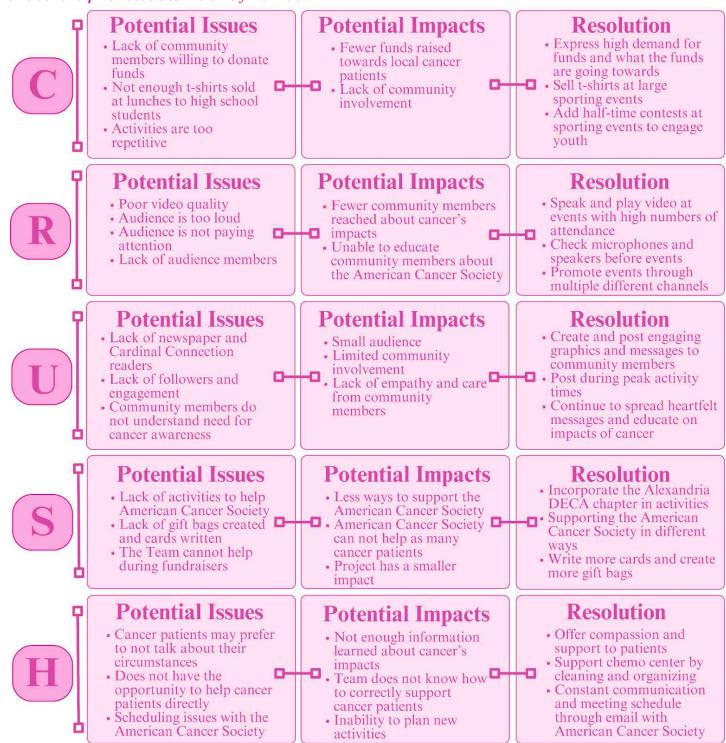
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For the *Heighten Knowledge* section, the activities revolved around understanding what local cancer patients need and furthering knowledge surrounding cancer. The table below displays how each activity was measured by performance and success in the *Heighten Knowledge* portion.

Activity	<b>Description</b>	KPI	Poor		Good	Excellent
Volunteer at Chemo Center	Assist local cancer patients through chemotherapy and learn about their cancer journey	Hours spent volunteering	<2		2-4	 . >4
Meet With Cancer Society	Updating and tracking the current needs of the American Cancer Society	Number of meetings	<3	_	3-5	>5

#### E. Risk Management Plan

A risk management plan was implemented, allowing The Team to quickly identify and solve any issues that occurred throughout the campaign. *Identifying potential risks and challenges and solving them before allowed The Team to stay on track and finish activities in a timely manner.* 



#### F. Proposed Project Budget

To keep an account of the raised funds, The Team utilized a proposed project budget. The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team raised funds for the local American Cancer Society and cancer patients by selling t-shirts and various activities at sporting events. Local businesses, Sanford Health and Aagard aided in funding the t-shirts. Each business donated \$1,000 to help finance the purchase of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* t-shirts. This emphasized the importance of building relationships with local businesses and community members. Local financing group, Geneva Capital, also funded



the support bags and cards, donating \$500. Each business provided vital funds and advice to ensure the success of the campaign. There were no expenses incurred during the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer campaign due to the support of corporate sponsors and the American Cancer Society.



### IV. Execution



#### **C.1 T-Shirts**

The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team held two cancer awareness nights, one for a football game and one for a basketball game. During these cancer awareness nights, a "purple out" theme was created for the student section. Students who attend these sporting events would wear purple clothing and accessories in support of cancer awareness and the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign. To boost participation, The Team sold purple shirts that could be directly worn at these events. On the t-shirts was printed "*Cardinals CRUSH Cancer*" with a fist in support of the project and cancer awareness. Local businesses Geneva Capital and Sanford Health aided in funding the shirts. In appreciation for each donation, Geneva Capital and Sanford Health's logos were featured on the t-shirts. Cowing Robards, a custom apparel company, created and screen-printed the shirts. High schoolers, Alexandria Public School staff, and community members could purchase these shirts during lunch and before the football and basketball games. Each shirt was priced at \$15, and all funds raised were



donated to the American Cancer Society, which supports local cancer patients. The Team promoted the t-shirts through designated *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* social media platforms, the Cardinal Connection, and announcements during lunches. In total, The Team has sold 200 t-shirts, raising \$3,000. *The overwhelming amount of support showed the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer project's thoughtful impact on the Alexandria community.* 

#### **C.2 Sporting Events**



During a football and basketball game, the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer team* hosted a cancer awareness night. *The overall goal of these events was to raise funds for the American Cancer Society and further engage community members.* To coordinate these activities, The Team requested permission from the Alexandria Area High School athletic director. Various fundraising activities occurred during sporting events. These include raffle baskets, free-will donations, and a halftime contest. Four raffle baskets were created with items donated by local businesses Aflac, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, The Edge Co., 6th and Broadway, and Kindred People. Each basket included trending items and gift cards. Raffle tickets were priced at one for \$5, three for \$10, and seven for \$20. One minute before halftime, tickets were

drawn and the winners were announced from the press box. These baskets were placed near the concession stand at a football game, a high-traffic area. At the football and basketball games during halftime, pink light-up buckets were passed through the stands. These buckets were for voluntary donations. The crowd was eager to donate funds when the free-will donation baskets were passed around. At a basketball game, for \$2, audience members could participate in a contest to win a \$10 gift card by making a half-court shot. In total, \$200 was raised from the raffle baskets, \$2378.26 was raised from the free-will donations, and \$102 was raised from the half-court contest. *Not only did this spark interest about the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer project, but the competitions alone were an excellent way for people to be entertained and have fun.* 



R.1 Video Interview with Nolan Morical

# Cardinals Crush Cancer



The Cardinals CRUSH Cancer Team met with Nolan Morical, a 2021 Alexandria Area High School graduate. While Nolan was in high school, he played football, ran track, and played percussion in the Symphonic Band. Nolan graduated high school with high honors, having a 3.8 cumulative grade point average, and making multiple appearances in the state tournament for track and football. Nolan left an indefinite impact on the Alexandria community, often being described as a kind, strong leader. Post-high school, Nolan continued his track and field career at Concordia College, located in Moorhead, Minnesota. In November of 2023, at the peak of his athletic career, he noticed a small growing nodule at the base of his neck. When he went to the doctor, he was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma, a fast-spreading, but treatable bone cancer. For Nolan's treatment process, he had chemotherapy for three months at the Mayo Clinic, a specialized world-renowned hospital in Rochester, Minnesota. He noted that this time was especially troublesome for him, constantly worrying about his scans, his future, and what could go wrong. After three worrisome months of chemotherapy, his scans came back cancer-free. Continuing, Nolan has many follow-up visits and scans to make sure his cancer doesn't regress. Nolan and his family were eternally grateful when people reached out with encouraging messages.

During this interview, The Team filmed a video of Nolan explaining his cancer journey. This video was played during halftime at football and basketball games and sent out through the Cardinal Connection. *The video interview highlights the reality that cancer impacts individuals of all ages and emphasizes the importance of encouragement and compassion in providing support to those diagnosed*. 3,486 football fans attended the Cancer Night football game and watched the interview video during halftime. 1,528 basketball fans attended the Cancer Night basketball game. In total, 5,014 sports fans watched the halftime video interview. The video interview effectively **Raised Awareness** about the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project and the importance of a supportive community to help those undergoing cancer.

#### **R.2 Speaking at Sporting Events**

At basketball and football games, The Team spoke directly to the audience during halftime from the press box or announcer's desk. The Team spoke at highly anticipated sporting events that drew large crowds and reached more community members. The Team spoke about current Alexandria area cancer statistics, how to make a visual difference, and how to support cancer patients. Sporting events gather a wide range of individuals in one place, offering an opportunity to reach a broad demographic. Each member of the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer Team shared their deeply personal and heartfelt stories of cancer's impact on their lives. The Team also shared the motivations behind the Cardinals



CRUSH Cancer project. By linking the project to the school's mascot, the Cardinal, it fostered a sense of community, encouraging local support.



**Unite Community** 

#### **U.1 Wake-Up Alexandria**



The Community Awareness Team attended Wake-Up Alexandria, a twice-monthly event held by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce. Members from the community meet in the morning twice a month on Fridays at a member's business to discuss their current events. The Team spoke about the upcoming *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* football game on October 11th and the different fundraising events occurring during the game. At the end of the presentation, The Team received a standing ovation from the member businesses, recognizing the powerful impact of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign. In total, 71 business owners were present. This event helped *other business owners and community members from all demographics gain valuable knowledge of the impact and importance of cancer awareness*, effectively Uniting the Community.

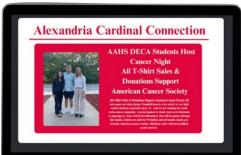


#### **U.2 News Article**

The Team contacted the local news station in Alexandria, Minnesota to communicate more effectively with the community. The Echo Press is the number one news source and newspaper in the Alexandria area. After communicating with a reporter about the motivations and creation of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, the news station published two articles. These articles included information about fundraising goals, upcoming events, and educating on current cancer statistics. A total of 1,549 individuals read these articles.



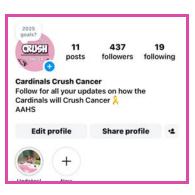
#### **U.3 Cardinal Connection**



The Cardinal Connection is a daily newsletter posted on the Alexandria school district website. This newsletter is used to update parents on current events, school activities, school announcements, and athletic event results. This allowed The Team to effectively communicate with families about upcoming events. The Cardinal Connection posted short paragraphs about the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign events, such as t-shirt sales and cancer night-themed sporting events. A total of 437 individuals read the posts of the Cardinal Connection. Posting on the Cardinal Connected helped **Unite the Community**, rallying Alexandria, MN families around cancer.

#### **U.4 Social Media**

The Team utilized the social media platform Instagram to communicate information about current activities. Due to the large number of activities, upcoming events and their details had to be centralized in one place. Many students who attend sporting events are active on Instagram. The Team also shared the purpose behind the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project and ways to support those with cancer. Throughout the project, The Team posted 11 times, gaining an average of 2,000 views per post and 263 interactions per post.



#### **U.5 Radio Interview**



The Team contacted a local radio station in Alexandria, Minnesota to **Unite the Community**. KXRA FM & Z99 hosts an Open Line each day from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. The Team spoke with hosts Mark Antony and Patty Wicken on the talk show to bring listeners around a common cause and increase overall awareness and knowledge of cancer. When interviewed, The Team discussed the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project and its impacts and goals. The Team also provided updates on upcoming events, activities, and donation amounts. The Team highlighted the upcoming Cancer Night basketball game by explaining the event and how the community could be involved. In total, The Team's open-line segment had 496 listeners. Open Line helped **Unite the Community** by *increasing overall knowledge on how to support cancer patients and advertising upcoming events.* 

# Support Cancer Initiatives

#### **S.1** Fishing For the Cure

Fishing For the Cure is a local ice fishing tournament held by local manufacturing company Alexandria Industries and its employees. The fishing tournament was first held in 2006 after an employee of Alexandria Industries received a heartbreaking phone call during a lunch break. The first words he said after was, "I have cancer." Those around him felt uncomfortable and scared for him. It is shocking to hear such words spoken by someone. When Alexandria Industries employees did not know how to respond and support him, they recognized that something needed to be done to support their co-worker during this tough process. As a result, the employees started the Fishing For the Cure tournament in support of the American Cancer Society. As the tournament grew,



Alexandria Industries began organizing extra fundraising events during the year. Before the Fishing For a Cure tournament took place, The Team helped Alexandria Industries with organizational tasks, designing flyers, and setting up



booths. While going around each fish house, The Team asked each person to purchase raffle tickets. At the tournament, The Team spoke with many community members about their experience with cancer and their current knowledge of cancer. *Each attendee had a different story to share about cancer, and as a result, The Team felt great sympathy for each person affected.* Many Minnesotan residents who are not from the Alexandria area travel to the Fishing for a Cure tournament to support those who are fighting cancer, those who have fought cancer and won, and those who have suffered from cancer but are unfortunately no longer with us. Fishing for the Cure was held on February 15th, 2025 on Smith Lake. The Team spent four hours each volunteering.

#### **S.2 Support Bags**

When interviewing Alexandria graduate and cancer survivor Nolan Morical, he noted that during his chemotherapy treatment, gift bags always brightened up his day and contributed to his overall comfort. American Cancer Society representative, Sherri Maanum, provided The Team with a list of the most popular snacks and items that are used for support bags at Hope Lodge. The American Cancer Society provides a free, long-term housing program for cancer patients during their treatment called Hope Lodge. Many cancer patients in Minnesota have to travel over two hours to St. Paul, where Hope Lodge is located. Because cancer patients travel so far for their treatment, Hope Lodge often offers accommodations such as meals, housing, and laundry for each visit. Additionally, Hope Lodge offers a supportive, homelike environment and community. Noticing the impact of the support bags, The Team created 50. Items in the support bags include socks, chapstick, water bottles, gum, fruit snacks, and hard candy that were bought at Target. Local business Geneva Capital donated \$500 to cover the costs. *These gift bags contributed to the overall comfort and supported the American Cancer Society*.

#### **S.3 Cards for Cancer**

The mascot of Alexandria MN District 206 is the Cardinal, or for short, the Cards. The Cards for Cancer campaign entailed students writing cards to cancer patients. Fifth-grade students at Lincoln Elementary School were shown a video explaining the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign, where the cards are going, and phrases to include on the cards. This helped the students learn about cancer's effects and how they can best help those impacted. In total, students wrote 90 cards. *Writing cards for cancer patients is a meaningful way to offer support*,







encouragement, and hope. These messages can brighten their day and remind them that they are not alone in their journey.

#### **S.4 NextStep Homecare Silent Auction**



The Team helped with a local silent auction held by the American Cancer Society and NextStep, a local home care business providing around-the-clock support to those with medical needs. In November, NextStep, in partnership with the American Cancer Society, held an online silent auction. Gift baskets curated with items from local businesses that could be bid on, with the overall goal of raising \$5,000. These gift baskets were posted online. The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team supported the American Cancer Society by assembling each basket, taking pictures, posting online, and contacting the winners. The Team spent four hours volunteering. *Supporting the American Cancer Society through a fundraiser not only raises funds but also contributes to increased awareness and insight into the vital work the American Cancer Society does.* 

#### **S.5 Orange Envelopes**

Pinky Swear is a Minnesota-based children's cancer charity. The Team coordinated with the Donor Engagement Officer, Lacey Kraft. She informed The Team of their orange envelope program, which is sent to families newly diagnosed with childhood cancer. Each envelope contains substantial financial





support in the form of gift cards and a heartfelt letter of encouragement. The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team aims to support 8 families. The Team plans to have Alexandria DECA students and advisors assist in the creation. *These envelopes can offer hope and support during a challenging period and support the Pinky Swear organization*.

Heighten Knowledge

#### **H.1 Volunteer at Alomere Health**



During chemotherapy and cancer treatments, many individuals may experience feelings of loneliness. *The Team provided vital emotional support during this tough process. This experience is a deeply meaningful gesture because The Team directly contributes to the well-being of people facing challenging circumstances*. During The Team's time at Alomere Health's oncology center, The Team provided support by spending time with cancer patients to provide emotional support. The Team also assisted patients by bringing comfort items such as blankets and snacks. The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* Team also provided support for the oncology center by organizing materials, cleaning, and greeting visitors. During this process, The Team provides patients and families emotional relief, a sense of community, and compassion. In total,

The Team volunteered for six hours in two days. *Through this valuable experience, The Team gained important insight pertaining to cancer patients' needs and how to support them.* 

#### **H.2 Meet With the American Cancer Society**

Once a month, a meeting with the local American Cancer Society representative, Sherri Maanum, was conducted. At each meeting, The Team and Sherri kept track of finances and upcoming events. Sherri provided valuable assistance that ensured The Team's success. She brought crucial advice on potential activities, possible fundraising events, and contributed cancer statistics from the Alexandria area. Through her advice, The Team's knowledge of cancer as a disease, current events, and how to support the American Cancer Society was Heightened. Each monthly meeting with Sherri allowed The Team to improve their understanding of the American Cancer Society and cancer patients' needs. Sherri also informed The Team of the American Cancer Society's requirements for gift bags and cards, making sure



The Team was following the correct requirements. In total, The Team met five times for an hour with the American Cancer Society. *Meetings with Sherri Maanum significantly contributed to and were vital to the success* of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign.

# V. Monitoring and Controlling

#### A. Monitoring

For the Community Awareness project to be successful, all aspects of the project had to be closely monitored and controlled. This was done by using timelines, a human resource plan, and a quality management plan to make sure that the

schedule, budget, and project quality were on track to meet the project's key metrics.

#### **Schedule:**

Early in the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, the Community Awareness Team recognized that organization was vital to the project's success. *To stay organized and on track, The Team utilized ClickUp, a project management app that can create and assign tasks to team members, set deadlines, and track progress.* Also, each team member can access *ClickUp* quickly, from an app on their phone or by opening it up on their computers. On *ClickUp*, each team member could see the other team members' progress on tasks and if they were stuck and needed help. During weekly meetings, The Team met and filled out the



calendar on *ClickUp* with upcoming group and business meetings, social media posts, activities, and project deadlines. By



clearly outlining upcoming events and priorities, a shared platform keeps The Team informed, avoids confusion, and ensures activities run smoothly.

#### **Budget:**

The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* team did not need substantial funds during the project, but when needed, The Team met with local businesses. Geneva Capital, Sanford, and Aagard generously donated, allowing The Team to complete activities and raise awareness. For the raffle baskets, local businesses Aflac, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, The Edge Co., 6th and Broadway, and Kindred People donated gift cards and items. Shown below are the in-kind and cash donations. The Team received and the current total revenue raised from the monetary and in-kind contributions.

Table 3: Budget Tracker							
Activity	Donation Items	In-Kind Donations	Cash Donations	Total Revenue Raised			
Sporting Events	Raffle Baskets	-	\$200	\$200			
(Football and Basketball)	Free-Will Donations	-	\$2,378.26	\$2,378.26			
	Halftime Contests	-	\$102	\$102			
T-Shirt Sales	T-Shirts	\$1,400	\$1,600	\$3,000			
Support Bags	Snacks, Small Gifts	\$500	-	\$500			
Cards for Cancer	Paper Cards						
	Total:			\$6,180.26			

#### **Project Quality:**

The *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project was carefully monitored by utilizing the Quality and Risk Management plans. These plans helped guide The Team and played a crucial role in keeping the project on track. The quality management plan helped The Team evaluate successes and failures after activities were completed. These adjustments were utilized to achieve improved results in future endeavors. This was done by identifying potential issues before activities were executed and reviewing them after. During each meeting, the Team would review key metrics and assess the project.



#### B. Controlling

Throughout the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team was faced with countless obstacles. When faced with these issues, The Team utilized the controlling aspect of the project management cycle to regulate and adapt to challenges and reach their goals.

Issue Encountered	Management Strategy
Difficulty to Track Community Knowlege of Cancer	Created Surveys to Measure Awareness
Technology Issues During Sporting Events	Spoke Directly From Press Box or Announcer's Table
Lack of Students to Write Cards and Make Support Bags	Had DECA Students Write Cards and Create Support Bags
Unable to Find a Cancer Survivor to Interview	Work With Alexandria Graduate Nolan Morical



# VI. Closing of the Project

#### A. Evaluation of Key Metrics

The evaluation of key metrics was essential to determine if the project was successful and that the goals were met. The project is considered successful if the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) fall into the good or excellent categories. The table below is used to measure the extent to which each activity was successful.

	Table 4: 1		n of Key Metri		
Activity	Key Performance Indicator	Poor	Good	Excellent	Evaluation
C.1 T-shirt Sales	Number of t-shirts sold	<150	150-250	>250	Good, 200 sold
C.2 Sporting Events	Funds raised	<1,000	1,000-2,500	>2,000	Excellent, \$2,680.26 raised
R.1 Halftime Video Interview	Number of viewers	<2,000	2,000- 3,000	>3,000	Excellent 5,014 viewers
R.2 Speaking at Sporting Events	Number of listeners	<2,000	2,000- 2,500	>2,500	Excellent, 5,014 listeners
U.1 Wake-Up Alexandria	Business owners present	<40	40-50	>50	Excellent, 71 business owners present
U.2 News Article	Number of readers	<1,400	1,400-1,600	>1,600	Good, 1,549 readers
U.3 Cardinal Connection	Number of readers	<250	250- 400	>400	Excellent, 437 readers
U.4 Social Media	Number of followers	<400	400-450	>450	Good, 438 followers
U.5 Radio Interview	Number of listeners	<200	200-300	>300	Excellent, 496 listeners
S.1 Fishing for a Cure	Hours spent volunteering	<2	2-4	>4	Good, 4 hours volunteered
S.2 Support Bags	Number of bags made	<30	30-40	>40	Excellent, 50 bags created
S.3 Cards for Cancer	Number of cards written	<75	75-100	>100	Good, 90 cards written
S.4 NextStep Silent Auction	Hours spent volunteering	<1	1-3	>3	Excellent, 4 hours volunteered
S.4 Orange Envelopes	Number of envelopes created	<6	6-8	>8	Good, 8 envelopes created
H.1 Volunteer at Chemo Center	Hours spent volunteering	<2	2-4	>4	Excellent, 6 hours volunteered
H.2 Meet With Cancer Society	Number of meetings	<3	3-5	>5	Good, 5 meetings



#### **B.** Lessons Learned

Throughout the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign, The Team overcame various challenges by following the project management cycle and seeking advice.









Inititating

Planning & Organizing

Execution

Monitoring & Controlling

Importance of Community Involvement and Communication Finding a Cancer Patient Willing to Share Their Story is Difficult

Small Gestures Can Make a Significant Impact Track Project Progress
Using Performance
Indicators and Budget

**Initiating:** During the initiating section of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team learned the importance of community involvement and communication. Many activities required the coordination of many school officials, community members, and DECA students. These individuals donated hours of their time to make sure events ran smoothly. The Team learned to communicate effectively with organizations and local businesses through phone calls and emails. *Without the immense support of the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer community, the project would not have been as large a success.* 



**Planning and Organizing:** During the planning and organizing section of the

Cardinals CRUSH Cancer project, The Team learned that finding a current cancer patient or survivor who is



well-connected to the Alexandria area is difficult. Cancer is a sensitive and often traumatic topic, and many cancer patients find it difficult to share their stories. The Team knew of an Alexandria graduate who had recently been diagnosed with cancer and reached out to him. With the support of his family, he came forward and shared his story. Meeting with a local cancer patient helped The Team create activities that make a direct impact on cancer patients and educate others on how to support those suffering from cancer around them. *Meeting with a cancer patient allowed The Team to better understand the devastating disease of cancer and how to support cancer patients and survivors through a tough process.* 

**Execution:** During the execution section of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team learned that small gestures can make a significant impact. During the project, The Team learned that donating large amounts of money is helpful, but doesn't help local cancer patients directly. *Doing simple activities to support cancer patients is meaningful, such as sitting and speaking to them during treatment, writing letters, and making gift bags.* Simple activities such as speaking on the radio, posting on the Cardinal Connection, and posting on social media contributed to an overall increase in awareness.





**Monitoring and Controlling:** During the

monitoring and controlling section of the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team learned to monitor and track project progress using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and budget. KPIs helped The Team stay aligned with the project goals by providing clear targets. During each activity, The Team learned to evaluate for successes and weaknesses using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Utilizing the budget helped The Team track finances and stay organized throughout the project. *Together, KPIs and budget provided a framework for the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer project by ensuring progress is measurable, goals are achievable, and resources are used wisely.* 

#### C. Recommendations For Future Projects

Throughout the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team reviewed for successes and areas of improvement. For continued success, The Team established recommendations for future *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* projects.

### Start Early & Plan Ahead



To maintain goals, spread awareness, and raise funds, meeting with advisors and community members early in the process is key to success. Larger events, such as football and basketball games, and designing and selling t-shirts took many hours of planning to execute. *Meeting with advisors and community members early in the process helped The Team gain a jump start and was key to success in raising awareness and funding.* Additionally, the American Cancer Society hosts many summer events, such as the Relay For Life. When searching for activities, The Team could not attend

Relay For Life because of conflicting events. Each member of The Team takes college classes, is involved in varsity-level athletics and other extracurriculars outside of DECA. It was challenging for The Team to delegate time for the 16 activities in the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* campaign. The Team found it difficult to find a healthy balance between DECA and personal life, therefore, a head start is crucial to effective planning and not having many events within the same period.

# **Incorporate Volunteer Hours into National Honors Society**

After closing the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team met with the Alexandria District School Board. They recommended incorporating volunteering hours within the Alexandria High School's National Honor Society Club for future *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* projects. National Honors Society is an exclusive academic service organization that requires each member to have a grade point average of 3.4 or higher. Within the Alexandria National Honor Society chapter, members are required to complete 20 volunteer hours. *The Team recommends that future projects include two hours of volunteering at the local hospital's chemotherapy center and provide comfort while patients undergo their chemotherapy treatment. This will further incorporate the Cardinals CRUSH Cancer project into Alexandria High School and leave a lasting impact while promoting awareness among younger individuals.* 

# Partner With Local Clinic for Early Detection Workshop



When speaking with local cancer patients while volunteering at Alomere Health, many cancer patients expressed regret, wishing they had not ignored the signs of cancer and met with a doctor earlier. In cancer's early stages, the cancer has not metastasized and spread to other organs. Early treatment results in increased survival rates and a higher likelihood of treatment success. For future projects, *The Team recommends partnering with a local hospital or clinic to organize an early detection workshop, teaching individuals how to recognize the early signs of cancer, risk factors,* 

and when to see a doctor.

# VII. Bibliography

Project Consultants	Paper Consultants	Internet Sites
Eric Hartmann: DECA Advisor	Rachel Bowen: AAHS	Alexandria
Megan Jacob: DECA Advisor	DECA President	Demographics
Sherri Maanum: American Cancer Society Representative	Brenna Eggebraten:	The American Cancer
Lacey Kraft: Pinky Swear Representative	AAHS DECA President	Society
Chad Duwenhoegger: Alexandria Area High School Principal	Brooke Overland: AAHS	AARP The Magazine
Ben Kvidt: Alexandria Area High School Activities Director	DECA Cabinet Member	US Census Bureau
Mike Tripp: Geneva Capital Director of Portfolio Services	Lauren Revering: AAHS	National Institutes of
Mark Watkins: Geneva Capital Owner	DECA Cabinet Member	Health
Tim Bush: Bell Bank Senior Vice President		
Nolan Morical: Cancer Survivor		



# VIII. Appendix

After successfully closing the *Cardinals CRUSH Cancer* project, The Team met with the board of directors from the north region of the American Cancer Society and Sherri Maanum. *They personally extended their gratitude and thanked The Team for all of their hard work and efforts*. Later, Sherri Maanum, an American Cancer Society representative, sent The Team a heartfelt and thankful email.

Dear Ning, Evan, and Campbell,

On behalf of the American Cancer Society, I am grateful for the dedication, creativity, and hard work you have demonstrated over the past months. Your commitment to our cancer awareness mission and supporting those impacted by this disease has been inspiring. The initiative and care you've put into your proposed activity are truly commendable, and I am confident it will leave a lasting impact on our community.

Your vision and collaborative spirit shine through in every detail of your efforts. The innovative approach you've taken shows not only a deep understanding of the challenges we face but also a passion for driving meaningful change. It's evident that you've poured your hearts into this endeavor, and we are thrilled to see how your project unfolds. We're proud to have such bright and driven individuals championing our cause.

As you look toward the future, I do not doubt that each of you with your talents and determination will achieve great things. Whether it is through your continued involvement in advocacy or other pursuits, you are set to make a significant difference in the world.



#### Sherri Maanum

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Charity Navigator Four-Star Charity