In August of 2008, A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation was incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit in the state of Minnesota. Our mission then and now is to fight lung cancer through research, education, and patient and family support.

We’re excited to turn 10 years old! We hope you will join us at a 2018 event where you will find an ongoing 10th birthday party theme as we continue to ‘shine a light’ on lung cancer.

Despite an aggravating lack of societal attention about lung cancer (which claims more lives than breast, colon, prostate and pancreatic cancers combined!!), there is reason to feel hopeful. For the first time in our ten-year history, the stats are changing, and disease awareness is growing - especially among nonsmokers. With new lung cancer treatments being approved by the FDA regularly and exciting advances being made in immunotherapy, lives are being prolonged, treatments are easier to bear, and a stage 4 diagnosis is not always the death sentence it was just a few years ago.

Preventative screening, while available for those with heavy smoking histories, is not available to most Americans. And sadly, screening is not being taken advantage of by those who are eligible. Late-stage diagnoses are an ongoing problem in the lung cancer field and lack of awareness is to blame in many cases. Stay tuned as we continue our work to fund cutting edge research, support patients and their loved ones, and most importantly – educate the public about the world’s deadliest cancer.
Patient & Family Support Programs—Introducing Amanda

It is an honor to work with lung cancer patients and their families at A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation. I feel fortunate every day to have the opportunity to support lung cancer patients and families during what may be one of their most difficult journeys. The personal connections I have made throughout my time at A Breath of Hope have and will continue to inform who I am.

Losing my uncle to lung cancer at the age of 12 had a profound effect on me and led me to a career in public health. A Breath of Hope has allowed me to realize my passion and use my skillset through my position as Patient Support Program and Advocacy Manager. I am able to utilize my personal passion to fight injustice in the lung cancer field while applying what I learned in my graduate work in Public Health Policy and Advocacy. Working with patients through the Ambassador Program has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my life and many of our volunteers feel the same. We are always in need of compassionate volunteers who are willing to provide transportation or companionship to lung cancer patients. If you would like more information, email amanda@abreathofhope.org.

White Ribbon Awareness Program—Introducing Anna

Last month, I joined the A Breath of Hope staff as the new Events and Awareness Coordinator. After starting my journey at A Breath of Hope in June 2017 as a summer intern, then continuing as a temporary employee to launch the first Shining Bright Gala in November, I am excited to officially join this small but mighty staff team. I look forward to putting my Bachelor of Science degree in Event Management to use by creating impactful events that will fight and raise awareness about the unfair disease that is lung cancer. If you would like to learn about volunteering at events or are interested in hosting a third party event to benefit A Breath of Hope, I would love to talk with you! I can be reached at 952-405-9201 or at anna@abreathofhope.org. I hope to meet you in 2018!

A Breath of Hope Screening and Research Grants

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation awards $10,000 Screening Grants to hospitals and clinics who show a commitment to screening for lung cancer. The goal of our screening program is to help our cancer partners improve access to low-dose CT scans, especially in low income communities where lung cancer is most prevalent.

A harsh truth about lung cancer is that it doesn't always cause symptoms until the cancer is advanced and difficult to treat. That’s why the idea of screening – looking for lung cancer in people who do not have any symptoms – is appealing. Visit abreathofhope.org/screening to learn more.

The U.S. Preventative Services Task Force recommends annual screening for lung cancer with low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) in adults aged 55 to 80 years who have a 30 pack-year smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years. Their recommendation is directly tied to the 2011 National Lung Screening Trial that showed a reduced mortality rate when those most at risk for lung cancer were screened.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death among men and women. Worldwide, it is estimated that there are 1.6 million deaths due to lung cancer annually and approximately 160,000 lung cancer-associated deaths in the U.S. While screening eligibility is limited to heavy or former heavy smokers for this cancer, we are hopeful that our awareness work (and the country’s growing understanding about the other causes of lung cancer) will continue to put pressure on the decision-makers to expand screening eligibility criteria.

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation recently announced the $150,000 Tona Vives Research Award named in loving memory of NBA Star, Ricky Rubio’s mother. Ricky came on board as an A Breath of Hope Ambassador one year ago and has been instrumental in raising money for this new award, as well as raising awareness about lung cancer across the U.S. and into Europe. Visit abreathofhope.org/research to read about this funding opportunity and its focus on understanding rising lung cancer diagnoses among women.
Survivor Highlight—by Rebecca Witikko

Four years ago, I decided I was bored with running marathons. I had met my life goal of qualifying to run in the Boston Marathon five times over. Eventually, I decided I needed to up the anti. I was going to run an ultra marathon. I loved it and I placed in the top ten. I finished that summer running the Ragnar for the second time, and then nestled in for winter. Much to my sadness, my home life blew up. My marriage of nearly 20 years was imploding, and I was under the most amount of stress I have ever experienced. I had been a stay-at-home mom for 14 years and I needed to get a job. I quickly got a job as a Special Ed Teacher in St. Paul with a Community Expert License, under which I was required to be enrolled in Grad School. In the course of a few months, I had become a single mother of three, a full-time teacher, and a Grad Student who was grieving and divorcing. In order to healthfully cope with the stress, I sought refuge in running. But, I could only get about a mile before I needed to walk. Between what I thought was the dust at work and ragweed season, I had developed a dry cough. It wasn’t until the cough started waking me up at night and getting in the way of me teaching a lesson that I finally caved. So I got an appointment and went in. During the x-ray, I could see the image through the control booth window, and it was clear there was something wrong. There was a white circle the size of a grapefruit on my right lung. There I was, a 38-year-old mother of three, Special Ed Teacher, divorcing, grad student, runner—with advanced lung cancer. How could this happen? I NEVER smoked. Who knew there was a type of lung cancer for a never-smoker? Not me. And not the general public, that’s for sure. Everywhere I look, I see lung cancer and smoking intertwined. True awareness is going to take some exposure to reality. People like me have no idea they can get lung cancer, no idea that the cough isn’t going away, and no idea that severe fatigue isn’t always a symptom of a stressful life. People like me are dying while the public stands by believing the misinformation that lung cancer is only a smoking disease. We can no longer ignore the need for improved preventative screening and research to develop new lung screening tools. The time has come to find the pap smear, the mammogram, or the “PSA” of lung cancer.

Inaugural A Breath of Hope Shining Bright Gala

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation hosted its first gala on November 5, 2017 at Orchestra Hall. It was an exciting and memorable night that featured a candle light vigil to remember loved ones lost to lung cancer, the launch of the first-of-its-kind Animated Patient Program, celebrity guest speakers, a live band, great food, auctions and more! A Breath of Hope is proud to announce that the gala raised $100,000 for lung cancer research and patient support programs. We look forward to hosting the second annual Shining Bright Gala in November 2018. A Breath of Hope events like the gala provide uplifting and inspiring opportunities for the lung cancer community to gather and support one another.
2018 A Breath of Hope Events

- **March 17**: A Breath of Hope Women’s Wellness Tea
- **June 8**: A Breath of Hope Golf Classic
- **August 11**: A Breath of Hope Lung Run/Walk Twin Cities
- **September 22**: A Breath of Hope Lung Run/Walk Duluth
- **November TBD**: A Breath of Hope Shining Bright Gala

A Breath of Hope Merchandise Store—*Open*!

In late November, A Breath of Hope launched an online store with a variety of A Breath of Hope merchandise for sale including: sweatshirts, bandanas, hats, shirts, quarter-zip jackets, mugs, *and more to come*!

To shop, please visit: abreathofhope.org/merchandise

Contact us!

Phone: 952-405-9201
Email: info@abreathofhope.org

*3rd Party Events*