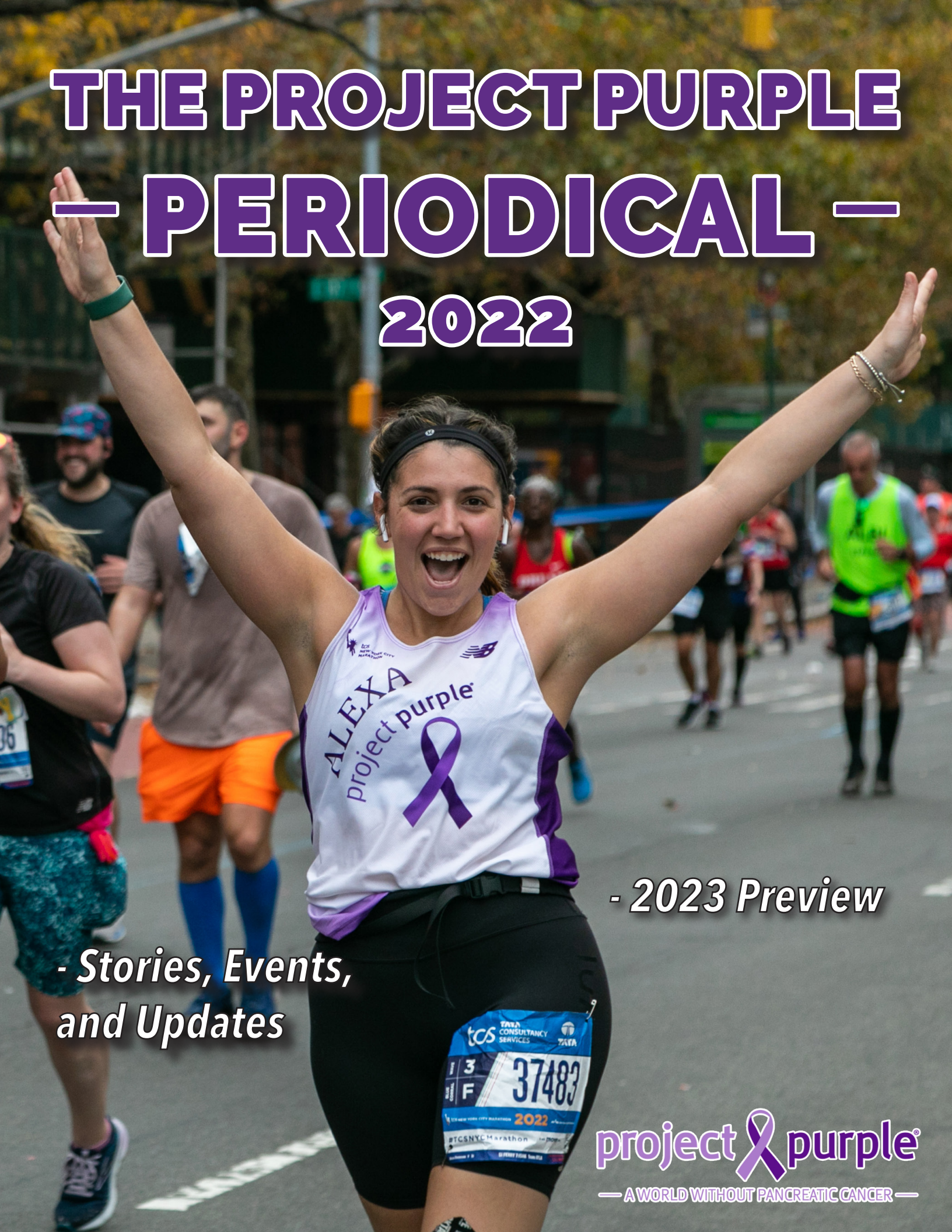


# THE PROJECT PURPLE — PERIODICAL — 2022



*- Stories, Events,  
and Updates*

*- 2023 Preview*

**project purple**  
— A WORLD WITHOUT PANCREATIC CANCER —

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# A Letter From the Project Purple Staff

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Thanks to our wonderful community, the Project Purple team finished 2022 with the organization's most successful fundraising year ever. We were able to raise over **\$1.8 million** with the help of our running teams, donors and the entire Project Purple community. In the past year, the survival rate of patients with this disease increased from 11 to 12 percent. While the progress is encouraging news, our team acknowledges there is much more work to be done and remains dedicated to the mission.

Our running teams reached new heights as the New York and Chicago teams broke our previous fundraising records, raising over \$800,000. We additionally had teams participating in London and Berlin, marking our first-ever formal team involvement in international races. We also hosted our most successful virtual event ever in this year's Turkey Trot, where over 290 people participated to help spread awareness and raise over \$45,000.

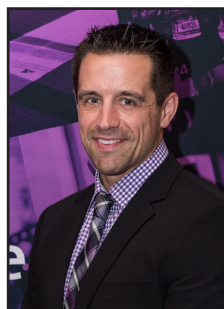
Thanks to the fundraising efforts of our teams and supporters, we were able to announce five grants totaling \$632,000, which will be made out to various research endeavors for early detection and curative treatment of pancreatic cancer. These grants would not be possible without the continuous support and hard work from the Project Purple community.

We are excited and determined to continue the fight alongside our patients, researchers, fundraisers and participants. Our organization continues to raise awareness, help fund research efforts in search of a cure, and provide a meaningful outlet for patients and their loved ones who are impacted. Thank you to everyone who made 2022 a special year. We look forward to 2023 and beyond.

## - The Project Purple Staff



Dino Verrelli  
Founder and CEO



Vin Kampf  
Program Director



Marci White  
Office Manager



Sam DaCosta  
Marketing Manager



Genesis Roman  
PFA Coordinator



Sam Fix  
Graphic Designer

# Research Grants

To close out Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, Project Purple announced five grants totaling **\$632,000**, made possible largely by the fundraising of the organization's marathon and half-marathon teams. This year, Project Purple teams raised over \$1 million participating in races including the Napa to Sonoma, SoNo and New York City half marathons; and the Lincoln, Chicago, Twin Cities, New York, London and Berlin marathons.

"Our team members really stepped up this year to help advance our mission of a world without pancreatic cancer," said Dino Verrelli, founder and CEO of Project Purple and host of the Project Purple Podcast. "Both the New York and Chicago teams shattered our previous fundraising records for those races, collectively raising more than \$800,000. At the same time, they helped amplify awareness for Project Purple to provide financial aid and care packages to people battling this deadly disease."

## The grants announced today include:

1. Pantelidis Family Grant, a grant totaling at least **\$262,000**, which will be dispersed over a four-five year period. Application details will be announced in early 2023.

2. **\$75,000** grant to Hartford HealthCare's Cancer Center in Hartford, Conn., to help develop a means for early detection of pancreatic cancer.

3. **\$100,000** grant to the Targeting Resistance in Cancer Cooperative (TRICC), led by Michael Jon Pishvaian, M.D., Ph.D., director of gastrointestinal, developmental therapeutics and clinical research programs and associate professor of oncology at John Hopkins School of Medicine; and Jonathan Brody, Ph.D., vice chair of research and professor in the department of surgery at Oregon Health & Science University.

4. The Rick Carone Research Grant of **\$75,000** to fund pancreatic cancer research for either early detection or curative treatment. The grant will be awarded to a research institution in the Chicagoland area. Application details will be announced in early 2023.

5. Innovations Grant, with total funding of **\$100,000**, which will fund research for early detection or curative treatment. Application

details will be announced in early 2023.

"Pancreatic cancer is one of the deadliest cancers in our country, largely because people are not aware of its subtle symptoms and because there's not a test for early detection," Verrelli said. "Much of this grant funding will go specifically to establishing a means for early detection."

Brody of TRICC said, "Thank you to Project Purple for supporting us and sharing our vision to put into motion a multi-institutional approach to staying one step ahead of an individual's pancreatic cancer to optimize therapies for patients. The base collaboration between Johns Hopkins on the East coast and Oregon Health & Science University on the West coast has the potential to be a global initiative that could hopefully benefit all patients with cancer."



Tara Petta, Dino Verrelli, and James Pantelidis

# Patient Financial Aid

# \$650,000

Since inception, we've given over **\$650,000** in Patient Financial Aid grants to over **1,000** pancreatic cancer patients and their families. In addition, we have sent out over **2,800** Blanket of Hope care packages.



# 2023 Preview

## FEBRUARY

## MARCH

## APRIL

18th-19th: Purple  
Paddy's 5k

19th: NYC Half Marathon

21st-23rd: Grand  
Canyon Hike

23rd: London Marathon

## MAY

## JUNE

## JULY

6th: My Big Fat Greek Style  
Pizza Eating Contest

21st: Chicago Half Marathon

21st: Denver Colfax  
Marathon

5th: 3rd Annual Charity  
Golf Classic

17th: Grandma's Marathon

TBD: Dino's Double Mile

## AUGUST

## SEPTEMBER

## OCTOBER

TBD: Horner Hustle

24th: Berlin Marathon  
24th: Chicago Half Marathon  
30th: Twin Cities Marathon  
TBD: Work Harder It's  
Not Chemo

8th: Chicago Marathon  
12th-16th: Italy Experience  
15th: Detroit Marathon

## NOVEMBER

## DECEMBER

## Year Long

5th: NYC Marathon  
16th: World Pancreatic  
Cancer Day  
23rd: Turkey Trot

Push Pull for P.C.  
Purple 360°

**Be on the lookout for more events!**

# A Story of Love, Family, & Running

When Bridget's dad was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2005, her sister Maureen signed up to run a marathon in his honor. When their mom was diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer in 2019, the sisters decided they wanted to run the 2020 New York City Marathon together. Bridget would run for Project Purple and Maureen for Team Fox. But the pandemic ensued. Soon their mom lost her life to pancreatic cancer in 2020 and shortly after, Maureen herself lost her life to esophageal and brain cancer. In 2022, Bridget knew she wanted to run for her parents and for her sister, whose birthday fell on the New York City Marathon.

"Marathon training has helped so much with the grief," Bridget said. "If I weren't training, I wouldn't want to do much. Training has given me a positive outlet to keep going and feel a sense of accomplishment. It's been really healing."

When Bridget committed to this race, it was March and Maureen was really sick.

After, the race was a big celebration in her honor. It was like a big family reunion cheering on Bridget and Maureen's oldest son, who is running for Team Fox.

"There's so much good that comes out of training and fundraising. It's uplifting seeing other team members, interacting with families, and Project Purple staff," Bridget said. She even inspired her neighbor, Sarah, to run with Project Purple too.

As a mom of three, Bridget says her kids are in awe of how much she runs. When she told them the marathon will take about four and a half hours, they replied, "That's like two and a half movies!" Her kids are starting to understand why their mom runs and why it's important to the family. They are seeing how you can turn negative energy into positive.

100 days before the New York Marathon, Bridget created a video sharing her family's story. She said it reinvigorated her training process knowing she captured her dad, mom, and sister's story. It was also the method that helped her bring in the most donations for her race fundraising goal.

Bridget said running with Project Purple helps you run with purpose and reminds you to do your best despite the hardship.

"We can go through hard things and feel the feelings, yet still get out there and live with gratitude," she said.



Maureen (left) and Bridget (middle).

# *Attitude* is EVERYTHING

**P**ancreatic cancer doesn't discriminate. Kevin Grodzki was a life-long athlete: A college football and basketball player, and an avid runner. His love for athletics amplified with his almost 30-year career at Life Fitness. He ran the Chicago Marathon multiple times and carried great enthusiasm and zeal toward leading an active life. He planted this seed with his son, Ryan, who is part of the Project Purple community. Ryan shared with us the legacy of his dad, Kevin, who passed away in 2021 after a two-month battle with pancreatic cancer.

As Ryan got ready to run his first ever marathon in honor of his dad, he told the story of his father and the importance of having something to channel your energy toward after you suffer a loss. "Up until the day he passed, my dad would get up at 3 am, even in retirement, and go workout, do yard work, go for a run or a swim. He had an incredibly energetic life," Ryan said. Kevin even had a hip replacement and a knee injury, but he didn't let that stop him. He got an elliptical and kept up with his



Ryan Grodzki running the 2022 Chicago Marathon.



active days. As time passed, Kevin retired from working. It was 2020 and the world shut down so he wasn't able to take the trips he had wanted. But he kept up with his active lifestyle.

However, about a year ago, he started having abnormal pains and weakness. He noticed he was losing muscle mass despite lifting weights and training. Something was off.

On June 3, 2021, he went to the doctor and they discovered a growth so they ran tests. The doctor examined him and said he had a stellar BMI and was healthy as a horse, but that he had stage 4 pancreatic cancer. "You're an overachiever, but so is this cancer," the doctor said. "But let's fight it. Let's try different treatments and do the best we can."

Kevin underwent three rounds of chemo, the third one being extremely aggressive. Ryan visited his dad at the hospital, knowing he didn't have very much time left with him. The pair talked about

running and Ryan promised him he would run a marathon. His dad enthusiastically shared tips about the Chicago marathon, training, and nutrition. Running became a father-son bond in Kevin's final weeks.

For Ryan, as one life was ending, another was beginning. Ryan's daughter Celia was born on July 14, 2021, in the midst of his father's illness. The day Ryan picked up his daughter's birth certificate was the same day his family decided to move Kevin into hospice care. He passed away on August 3rd, exactly two months from the day he first came to see the doctor. "That's the thing about pancreatic cancer," Ryan said. "It comes out of nowhere and at late stages like this there's nothing you can do to stop it."

Shortly after, Ryan's wife found Project Purple online and Ryan decided it was time to run a marathon in honor of his dad and to help raise funds for early detection. He knew his family wasn't unique in witnessing a loved

one's quick deterioration of health. Ever since he started marathon fundraising for Project Purple, Ryan was greeted by the generosity of strangers. His posts on LinkedIn and word of mouth triggered many of his father's acquaintances and co-workers to give a hand of support. Ryan was blown away by how much his dad had meant to so many people.

As Ryan geared up for the 2022 Chicago Marathon, he said all his training helped him stay connected to his dad. The race was a special moment for him and his family. Channeling his sadness, energy, and hope into impacting something positive was life-changing for him. Knowing the Project Purple community was there by his side at all times meant everything to him.

If we can learn something from Kevin, it is the inexhaustible energy to stay active. He was even on the treadmill with a catheter on, said Ryan. He'd make jokes with the nurses despite knowing he didn't have much time left. Kevin lived life with joy. Despite it all, his attitude of strength was unwavering. Ryan is committed to continuing that strength through an active life and through running like his dad did.

Kevin's story is why Project Purple is dedicated to funding critical research for early detection. Pancreatic cancer oftentimes goes undetected, as it did for him, and when caught in the late stages, it's hardly treatable. From marathon fundraising to recurring donations to our Purple 360° Patient Financial Aid program, there are many opportunities to get involved and support patients and families.



Ryan Grodzki passing a Project Purple cheer zone at the 2022 Chicago Marathon.

# Spreading Awareness Through Powerful Stories

In pursuit of a world without pancreatic cancer, we've come across some of the most powerful and important stories of survival, love, and hope. Over the past few years, we've made it a part of our mission to share these stories to educate the public, empower patients, and inspire others to take action. In 2023, we're looking to make this even more of a focus by ramping up our multimedia efforts.

## The Project Purple Podcast

The Project Purple Podcast started as a small project we took a chance on back in 2018. Since then, we've recorded over 225 episodes, amassing 70k plays and counting. With episodes coming out on a weekly basis, we've been honored to host survivors, caregivers, advocates, running/fitness coaches, and people from all walks of life who share the same goals as us. You can subscribe and listen on Spotify, Apple Music, SoundCloud, or anywhere you listen to your favorite podcasts. We also recently made the leap to film full episodes for YouTube for those who prefer a visual experience.



[youtube.com/@project\\_purple](https://youtube.com/@project_purple)

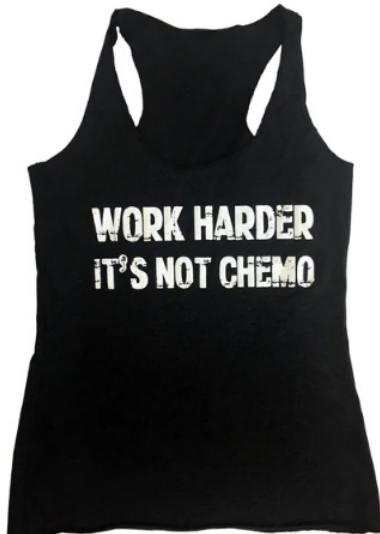
## Sharing Stories Through Video

Whether it's via YouTube, Instagram Reels, Facebook Watch, or Tik Tok, we're bringing heartfelt content to our supporters through video. While nothing compares to being there in person, we try to help viewers feel the energy of our biggest events and experience the passion of caregivers and patients sharing their stories.



# Project Purple Merch!

Order yours today at  
[bit.ly/ProjectPurpleStore](http://bit.ly/ProjectPurpleStore)



# Marathons and Half Marathons

# \$1,060,000

This year, our marathon and half marathon teams raised over **\$1,060,000** through their fundraising efforts!

Special thanks to our two largest teams, NYC (**\$423,783** raised) and Chicago (**\$385,777** raised)!



# Runner Testimonials

"IT'S REALLY AN HONOR TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF THE PROJECT PURPLE TEAM, NOT JUST BECAUSE IT GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO CROSS AN ITEM OFF MY BUCKET LIST BY RUNNING THE NYC MARATHON, BUT ALSO BECAUSE YOU GUYS CLEARLY HAVE PUT A TON OF TIME AND ENERGY INTO MAKING THE ORGANIZATION AS WELCOMING AND SUPPORTIVE OF A PLACE AS POSSIBLE."

- MATT

“It was amazing meeting you and running for the Project Purple team on Sunday, something I will remember and cherish forever. Looking forward to continuing to support the team and the mission!”

- Ryan

**“One of the most memorable experiences of my life!”**

**- Sarah**

“If you will have me, count me in for next year!”

- Shaun

“Thank you for keeping my family entertained and making them feel welcomed at the cheering zone. They were all so excited.

- MacKenzie

“I really, really love running for Project Purple. From the mission, to the team, to the camaraderie with the other runners, it's a great experience.”

- Erin

# Virtual Runs and Walks

## Purple Paddy's 5k

Purple Paddy's 5k is 100% virtual, allowing you to walk, jog, or run your 5k from wherever you are, while raising important awareness and funds for pancreatic cancer. We encourage you to set up a team and invite your friends and family to join you in making a difference.



## Dino's Double Mile for Detection

The 5-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer is only 12%, in part because it can go undetected for so long. Dino's Double Mile for Detection aims to raise much needed awareness for a disease that desperately needs more attention and advocacy.



## Work Harder It's Not Chemo

"Work Harder It's Not Chemo" is a slogan that Project Purple has adopted to encourage you to do more and push harder. Making your movement matter to raise awareness for pancreatic cancer is nothing compared to what someone facing chemotherapy treatments has to go through. Join the "Work Harder It's Not Chemo" campaign and put your body to work for those that cannot!

**WORK HARDER  
IT'S NOT CHEMO**



## Turkey Trot

Over 290 people trotted with us this Thanksgiving to raise awareness for Pancreatic Cancer around the globe! **Together they contributed over \$45,000, making it our most successful virtual event ever!** Make sure to join us next year!



**Participate in all four of these events to earn the Virtual Series Master Medal!**

# Charity Golf Classic

The second annual Project Purple Charity Golf Classic was held on June 6th, 2022 at the Shorehaven Golf Club of Norwalk, Connecticut. The event SOLD OUT with 144 golfers, and raised over \$82,000 for research and patient financial aid for pancreatic cancer.

The event gave prizes to the top-scoring foursomes, and also had prizes for closest to the pin and the longest drives. There was also a putting contest, dinner reception, multiple raffles and auctions, both in-person and online, with donations of dozens of items.

To cap off the night, we launched the Project Purple Hall of Fame with its first ever induction ceremony. James Pantelidis and Tara Petta were the first two inductees, due to the immense amount of time and attention they've given to Project Purple over the past years.

This event will return on Monday, June 5th, 2023, with foursome and individual tickets available, as well as numerous sponsorship opportunities. To reserve your spot or find out more, contact [vin@projectpurple.org](mailto:vin@projectpurple.org).



# Push Pull

As gyms began to re-open in person in 2022, over 250 participants at 20 gyms brought Push Pull back to pre-pandemic levels. We will look to build on our momentum throughout 2023!



# 3v3 Basketball



This year, we launched our first ever 3v3 Basketball Tournament! This local event aimed to raise awareness for pancreatic cancer and Project Purple around Connecticut.



# Third-Party Events

Founded in 2018, the Horner Hustle 5K Fun Run/Walk in Park Ridge, Illinois celebrated its FIFTH year! Big Stu's BBQ hosted another successful family event in the same state just a month before. On the East Coast, we got a new opportunity to be an official nonprofit charity guest for the Brooklyn Nets as they took on the Boston Celtics on December 4th. We also had many local families and businesses host their own fundraisers, including food and drink stands, restaurant Dine to Donate days, charity auctions, high school sport team nights, community runs, workouts, and more. Almost anything can make a successful Project Purple fundraiser, so be creative and host your own, and let us know how we can help!



# Social Media Stats

**3,700,000+**  
accounts  
reached  
via social  
media



**18,800+**  
Facebook  
followers



**5,400+**  
Instagram  
followers



**1,800+**  
Twitter  
followers



**21,800+**  
YouTube  
views

**1,500+**  
hours of  
YouTube  
watch  
time



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**THANK  
YOU!**

*You are Project  
Purple!*