



*November 2015*

## MISSION GRANT STORY

### **CANCER CARE PACKAGES—PHIL'S FRIENDS \$50,000**

Going through cancer once, let alone a second time, there are moments that can be blanketed by feelings of hopelessness. In 2004, Phil Zielke was diagnosed with cancer. After receiving treatment he showed no signs of cancer but in 2005 the cancer reappeared. It was during this two year period while Phil was undergoing aggressive chemotherapy and then stem cell transplantation that he often felt alone.

While he had great support from his family, friends and the Lutheran church, there were times he couldn't have visitors and often there were times when he didn't want visitors. He kept a journal of his experiences of how God showed up in such amazing ways during his cancer journey. He saw great needs and how God met those needs in powerful and often tangible ways. The only reason he had true hope and peace was because he knew through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior.

While hospitalized, a group of people put together a care package for him full of items he desperately needed and they all signed their names to it. The care package showed that people were praying for him while others sent cards each week of encouragement that included Bible verses to show they cared. But as challenging and dark as these trials were, something hopeful and positive was about to be born. Using his illness and what he had learned through that journey, God equipped him to help others in similar situations. It was from Phil's hospital bed that the vision of Phil's Friends was born.

Today, Phil's Friends engages an army of volunteers that enables the organization to support thousands of cancer patients every week across the United States through free care packages, weekly cards and prayer. Through Phil and his wife, this organization carries forward the bold vision of supporting cancer patients in homes and hospitals across the world.