

‘Floating Buckeye Nation’ Sets Sail and New Fundraising Record

When the Buckeye Cruise for Cancer returned from its 11th voyage last February, organizers at Travel Partners in Dublin and The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute (OSUCCC – James) were elated.

Thanks to the generosity of the ship’s enthusiastic passengers, the cruise raised \$3 million—exceeding the previous \$2.5 million record set the year before. The annual fundraiser primarily benefits the Urban and Shelley Meyer Fund for Cancer Research and supports other cancer research funds at the OSUCCC – James. Says Travel Partners in Dublin President Lisa Cisco, who founded the Buckeye Cruise, “Somehow the cruise just keeps getting stronger. It’s hard to believe, because each year has been so special, but Buckeye Cruisers never stop amazing us and just keep setting the bar higher and higher.”

The ship has been dubbed the “floating Buckeye Nation,” with more than 2,300 Buckeyes from around the country descending on Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to board Royal Caribbean’s *Serenade of the Seas*. The Buckeye faithful were joined by more than 30 former Ohio State football greats, including A.J. Hawk, James Laurinaitis and Ezekiel Elliott, as well as current and former members of the Ohio State football coaching staff, such as Kerry Coombs, Stan Jefferson, Larry Johnson and Mark Pantoni. Together, players and fans soaked up some poolside sun, enjoyed dueling pianos under the stars and other Buckeye-themed entertainment, and stopped by places such as Labadee, Haiti, Royal Caribbean’s private island, and Key West, Fla., for some on-shore fun.

Through it all, the reason they are gathered is never far from the cruisers’ minds. “Go Bucks, Beat Cancer!” is commonly heard during the cruise, which includes a recognition of the more than 300 cancer survivors aboard the ship and presentations from several

physicians whose work has benefited from funds raised by previous cruises.

There is no shortage of opportunities for inspiration to support cancer research. From an exciting live auction to a survivor breakfast, from a race/walk that more than 700 cruisers participated in during a stop at Key West to a celebrity horse race that raised more than \$70,000 for the OSUCCC – James, participants had ample opportunity to give generously while having a great time.

“Cancer is such a terrible enemy,” says Stephen Chaykowski, assistant vice president for development at the OSUCCC – James. “I’m proud to see Buckeyes coming together during the cruise to say, ‘We’re going to beat cancer, and we’re going to do it together through our traditions and the strong relationships we’ve created.’”

Planning is already underway for next year’s cruise, which will set sail for CocoCay, Bahamas and Grand Cayman. Joining the cruise for the first time will be former Ohio State football assistant coach and NCAA coaching legend Lou Holtz, J.T. Barrett, Billy Price, Raekwon McMillan, Rex Kern and more! Visit buckeyecruise.com for more information about the Feb. 23-28, 2019, cruise and to book your cabin.



The pool deck is packed for an exciting game of “Heads or Tails,” another creative fundraiser on board the Buckeye Cruise.



More than 300 cancer survivors are celebrated on stage by former Buckeye athletes, a live band performance and a full theater to kick off the 2018 Buckeye Cruise for Cancer.

CRUISERS SUPPORT “FUND A NEED” FOR CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

Fund a Need, one of the fundraising highlights on the Buckeye Cruise for Cancer, enables cruisers to chip in to purchase important shared research equipment and technologies for the more than 340 researchers at the OSUCCC – James. Says Sara Cole, PhD, associate director of the Campus Microscopy and Imaging Facility, “One of the amazing things about the Buckeye Cruise for Cancer is they can help fund state-of-the-art instruments that we couldn’t get through other avenues.”

This year’s Fund a Need raised \$400,000 to purchase a Thermo Scientific TSQ Altis Triple-Stage Quadrupole Mass Spectrometer. This technology offers researchers—most notably those who focus on detecting and treating cancer cells—unparalleled ability to analyze the most complex molecules and to detect cancer at its earliest stage. This robust scientific tool will enable the world-renowned cancer experts at the OSUCCC – James to improve cancer diagnosis, prognosis and treatment.



Cruisers celebrate completing the 3-mile walk/run held during the Buckeye Cruise’s stop in Key West, Fla.



Ohio State alumni cheerleaders get the “floating Buckeye Nation” amped up for a week of fighting cancer during the Buckeye Cruise Sail Away Party.