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# Niagara County COVID-19 survivor included in Buffalo 60 Strong Calendar

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by Benjamin Joe ben.joe@niagara-gazette.com Oct 2, 2020



Gerry Buchholtz performs some quick pedaling in the canal for the Buffalo 60 Strong calendar that features active seniors and holds health tips, and workshop dates for Medicare patients. Buchholtz has survived cancer three times, and was diagnosed with COVID-19 in the middle of March. He continues to give blood in hope his antibodies will help others.

ELLIOTT CRAMER

Gerry Buchholtz is a Niagara County native whose passion for life at the age of 65 got him a spot on the Buffalo 60 Strong Calendar.

Buchholtz is a three-time cancer survivor, twice his kidney and once a kind of skin cancer on his leg that required surgery. He never had to go through chemotherapy, for which he's grateful, but in March he became one of the millions of COVID-19 patients. He survived that, too.

“There’s worse people than me. There’s people who didn’t make it through,” he said, noting he met one patient who was on a ventilator and woke up with no memory of who she was. She’s doing better now, he said.

“As far as I was concerned, it just became a nasty cold that was just elevated. The fevers, headaches, a lot of coughing, convulsive coughing I called it. It was tough. I lost my sense of smell and taste for a couple of weeks, they came back. I lost about 12 pounds,” Buchholtz said. “It was difficult and I was quarantined at home and I got a call from the county every morning asking for my temperature, for my wife’s and my son’s temperature, because I was in isolation and they were in quarantine. I was confirmed (as a case of COVID-19).”

Buchholtz said he likes playing hockey and golf and hopes that the pandemic will end so he can get back to playing them with his friends – who at the moment have been ribbing him for becoming a pin-up on the calendar.

“My primary care physician at Buffalo Medical Group, who was involved with this whole production, nominated me,” said Buchholtz. “They were looking for active 60 year-olds that had some health challenges during their life, and I’m in both categories.”

Buchholtz started running marathons in 1989 as well as coaching and training with runners with leukemia in 1998. He ran his last marathon in San Diego in memory of his father, Keith, who died of leukemia in 2011. He also donates platelets for those suffering from cancer.

The judging for the calendar occurred in September when a panel of celebrity judges voted on Zoom. Judges included Patrick Kaler, president and CEO of Visit Buffalo Niagara, Elizabeth Licata, editor-in-chief at Buffalo Spree magazine, Ellen Grant, deputy mayor of Buffalo, Keith Radford, news anchor at Channel 7, and Heather Ly, anchor/reporter at WGRZ. “They were moved by all the stories,” said Laura Nelson, Buffalo 60 Strong event coordinator. “All of them were excited to read stories of these unsung heroes. There were so many great ones.”

“We wanted to identify folks ages 60 to 69 who are strong, resilient, and giving back to others. The Buffalo 60 Strong calendar is a way to celebrate the local seniors, and show that life in your sixties can be a vibrant and active time,” said Dr. John Notaro, medical director of Senior Care Advantage One, a program launched in conjunction with the calendar. The contest was sponsored by Buffalo Medical Group.

Nelson said the calendar holds the dates of workshops for Medicare patients, as well as, health tips to help seniors, and anyone, stay fit and healthy.

After a vigorous photo session Thursday, which included some pedaling on a water bike, Buchholtz will be able to see his face on one of the calendar’s months along with 11 other active seniors. The calendars can be ordered on [www.buffalo60strong.com](http://www.buffalo60strong.com). All proceeds will go to Hospice & Palliative Buffalo.

“I feel positive, I stay positive,” Buchholtz said. “Bring on the next challenge.”