

Sona Mehring

Why I Started CaringBridge

Each day, 300,000 people trust CaringBridge to provide comfort, hope and healing during a loved one's health journey. CaringBridge is a nonprofit that helps bring family and friends together to foster healing when it's needed most. Whether you [start a personal website](#) or follow someone else's journey, we make it simple. Thanks to our generous donors, CaringBridge is available to anyone, any time at no cost.

The first CaringBridge website started in 1997 after close friends of mine had a premature baby. They asked me to let everyone know what was happening. Instead of making dozens of emotional and time-consuming phone calls, I decided to create a website.

The same night their baby Brighid was born, so was the idea that became CaringBridge. That first website allowed Brighid's family to communicate information to family around the world, regardless of time or place, by posting daily journal entries. The guestbook allowed concerned friends and loved ones the ability to send messages of hope and support.



A Lifeline for Family and Friends

The name CaringBridge rose organically out of “caring for Brighid.” It also struck me as ideal because it served as a bridge of caring between Brighid's parents and their concerned friends and loved ones. Indeed, it was not only a bridge but a lifeline.

I discovered that CaringBridge could help any family going through a life or health journey by letting those who care know what's happening and respond with messages of love and encouragement.

My appreciation for the power of CaringBridge to facilitate the exchange of information, love and support during serious health challenges grew exponentially when I started websites for my ninety-four-year-old grandma, Bessie, and for my mother, Bonnie, who was diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer in 1998. In 2001 I reactivated my mother's website when she was stricken with liver cancer, which took her life that year. Those intensely emotional firsthand experiences spurred me on even more.

The Power of Community

Not a day goes by that I don't feel blessed to know that the work I do brings comfort, love and strength to others in their hour of need.

Going back to the first website started for Brighid to today, I have learned how essential the power of community is in the healing process. An overwhelming majority of users say CaringBridge made their health journey easier. To have the opportunity to work at something that so powerfully and positively impacts people's lives makes me very grateful.

Sona Mehring is the founder of CaringBridge and is the author of [Hope Conquers All: Inspiring Stories of Love and Healing from CaringBridge](#).