Rita Taylor and the Stayin' Alive Divas Fundraise for Cancer With Beatles-Themed Musical

The Stayin' Alive Divas twist and shout as they spread cancer screening awareness in Portland, Tennessee.

April 8, 2026 By Eva Lorenz

Here comes the fun! Rita Taylor, a two-time cancer survivor, once again leads the Stayin' Alive Divas in a cancer parody musical to raise money for the American Cancer Society (ACS). In their eighth annual show, The Stayin' Alive Divas on Abbey Road, Taylor and four other cancer activists sing about cancer screenings and prevention to the tune of the Beatles' greatest hits.

Taylor was first diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma, a type of blood cancer, in 1985 at age 30 after seeking a second opinion for a large lump growing in the middle of her forehead. She had no family history of cancer, and no known risk factors.

"I feel so blessed to survive at a time when there weren't many survivors," Taylor said. "So I've tried to raise awareness and money for the American Cancer Society to pay it forward."

Before founding the Stayin' Alive Divas, Taylor was active in Relay for Life, an ACS initiative celebrating cancer survivors that raised funds to improve the lives of people with cancer across the United States. Taylor was also active in Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center's Cancer Queens! A Cancer Prevention Musical Revue, a group of a dozen Tennessee health care educators who shared health messages in the form of "edutainment."

Eleven years ago, after the Cancer Queens disbanded, Taylor founded the Stayin' Alive Divas, a group of enthusiastic women who turn cancer awareness into jukebox musicals featuring parodies of popular songs. In their eight years of annual performances, the Divas have raised more than $100,000 for ACS. Last year's musical—which chronicled the Divas arrest for speeding on their way to a gig and their subsequent performance to raise money for bail—brought in over $36,000. This year, they hope to raise $40,000, Taylor said.

All proceeds directly benefit ACS, but much of the Divas' fundraising is done via auctions. Friends, families and area supporters of the Divas donate quilts, table runners, cakes and other items to auction at the show. Current auction items are listed on the Divas' Facebook Page; the highest

online bid will be the starting bid for the item at the show.

In this year's production, the Divas travel back in time to the 1960s, when cancer screening was nonexistent and cancer outcomes were bleaker. The musical features parody versions of Beatles songs about colonoscopies, mammograms, Pap smears and PSA (prostate-specific antigen) tests, in addition to prevention methods, such as using sunscreen, exercising and not smoking.

"Our shows are educational, because I feel strongly that people need to get their screenings," said Taylor.

Purchase tickets for the Stayin Alive Divas on Abbey Road show featuring divas Rita Taylor, Becky Jennings, Ashley Berry, Jackie Wilber and Jaska Russel here; tickets are $25 for adults and $10 for children. People living with cancer can attend for free.

"We have people in the audience who are dealing with really heavy stuff, so they can come and just spend a night where that leaves their mind for a moment, laugh and enjoy the show," said Jennings. "It's lots of laughs! We do not mind people laughing at our expense for the cause.

Performances take place at the Temple Theatre in Portland, Tennessee, Friday, April 10 and Saturday, April 11 at 6 p.m. and Sunday, April 12 at 2 p.m.

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http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/rita-taylor-divas-fundraise-cancer-beatlesthemed-musical