

BREAST CANCER Awareness



BREAST CANCER FACTS

- 1 in 8 women, or approximately 13% of the female population in the U.S., will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

- In 2024, an estimated 2,800 men will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in the United States.

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer in American women, except for skin cancers.

- It is estimated that in 2024, approximately 30% of all new female cancer diagnoses will be breast cancer.

- On average, every 2 minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States.

- Approximately 66% of breast cancer cases are diagnosed at a localized stage, before cancer has spread outside of the breast, when it is easiest to treat.

- The 5-year relative survival rate for cancer diagnosed at the localized stage is 99%.

- Approximately 15% of women diagnosed have a family history of breast cancer. Those with a first-degree relative (mother, sister, daughter) with breast cancer are nearly twice as likely to develop breast cancer themselves.

- In 2024, an estimated 310,720 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in the U.S., as well as 56,500 new cases of non-invasive (in situ) breast cancer.

- There are currently over 4 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

- An estimated 42,250 U.S. women will die from breast cancer in 2024.

- Risk of breast cancer recurrence depends on the type and staging of the initial breast cancer. Typically, the highest risk of recurrence is during the first few years after treatment and decreases over time.

SOURCE: National Breast Cancer Foundation

INSIDE:



THEY ARE NOT ALONE

Passionate For Pink plans third annual 5K to benefit breast cancer research.

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Steel Magnolias provides a community.

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October 26-27, 2024 • Special Section



A Survivor's Story

It was a few days before Christmas in 2022 when Jacksonville resident, Debbie Buzan, found a lump in her breast. She immediately went for a mammogram that was followed by an ultrasound, but getting results was painfully slow, especially during the holiday season.

Debbie and her husband, Tommy Buzan, decided not to share anything just yet with their three children — Megan, Tres and Katie. "I was filled with anxiety," she said. "I didn't want them to worry, too."

After Christmas, Debbie underwent a biopsy and waited nervously for the results. "I had just retired from my job," she said. She worked as the administrative assistant to the director of Disability Resources at Jacksonville State University. "My last official day was December 31."

Two days later, on January 2, 2023, the diagnosis was confirmed. She had breast cancer.

Hormone positive HER2 negative, to be exact. Stage 2 with one lymph node affected.

She was referred to a surgical oncologist at St. Vincent's Hospital in Birmingham. "He told me he was not a breast taker," she said. "That if he could get the cancer without taking the breast, he would."

Debbie underwent a lumpectomy the following month and waited to hear the pathology report. It was a long wait. It took three weeks to get the results, but it was good news. The margins were clear.

Chemotherapy and radiation treatments were then prescribed.

Debbie had a port put in for the chemo injections, receiving a strong drug nicknamed Red Devil.

"They put on two sets of gloves to administer it," she said. "Just watching how they handled it was scary."

She had three treatments of that strong chemo every other week and the side effects hit her right away. Nausea, hair loss, weight loss. "Food had no taste," she said.

Throughout her treatment, Debbie's children and husband were her trusted support system. "Tommy was my rock, my partner through every single minute of this journey," she said. "I couldn't have made it through without him."

She also felt the love from her closest friends who sat with her every day, all day. "They begged me to eat, brought me food, way too much of it, but I had no appetite. I lost 54 pounds," she said, and then added with a laugh, "Tommy gained weight."

Almost a month after her last

"Cancer lets you know how fleeting life can be."



Submitted photos

TOP: Tommy and Debbie Buzan. ABOVE: Debbie Buzan

Red Devil treatment, she was prescribed another set of 12 weekly chemo injections that her doctor told her would be easy — "a walk in the park," he told her.

Debbie had a serious reaction to it.

"It was definitely not a walk in the park," she said. "It almost cost me my life."

After the third injection, she went home and was feeling sleepy.

Her daughter came by for a visit, but when she saw how tired her mom was, decided to let her sleep. By the time Tommy got home from work, Debbie was running a high fever, but what alarmed him the most was her garbled speech. Nothing she said made sense.

He rushed her to the ER where her blood pressure measured 69/30. She was diagnosed septic, with double pneumonia and spent ten days in the hospital, going back and forth between the oncology and cardiac floors, due to periodic episodes of a-fib.

Before being released from the hospital, she had to pass a physical therapy requirement.

"The therapist said, 'all I need you to do is scoot down the bed and stand up,'" she remembers. "And I couldn't do it. My muscles were so deteriorated. I had to use a walker to stand and to take a few steps —

and that was Day One."

At that point, she refused any more of the "walk in the park" chemotherapy and began her radiation treatments — 25 of them.

In August of 2023, done with treatments and free of cancer, she rang the bell.

Looking back, Debbie sees how cancer reprioritized things in her life. She learned not to take things for granted. "Situations that used to bother me just don't seem very important anymore. I don't sweat the small stuff like I used to," she said. "Cancer lets you know how fleeting life can be."

Her faith in God played a big role in her recovery. "Having friends and family from many different churches and areas say that they were praying for me was such a strong blessing for me," she said. "God doesn't cause these difficult journeys, but he is there to see us through them."

When Debbie hears of someone being diagnosed with cancer her advice is to take it one day at a time. Don't focus on the treatment or how long it will take, or what tomorrow might bring. "Just put one foot in front of the other and fight through it each day," she said. "It's not a death sentence and it's not an easy journey, but it is a survivable journey."

Breast cancer survivor performs Comedy For The Girls

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Daily Home correspondent

Carla Youngblood saw her breast cancer diagnosis as an opportunity to exercise her faith.

"I made a deal with God that if he healed me, I would tell the story of how he healed me all over the world," she said. "You can talk about faith all you want, but when something like this happens to you, then you know where you really stand."

A Birmingham-based author, comedian, motivational speaker, and eight-year breast cancer survivor, Youngblood was surprised by her diagnosis back in October of 2015. She never thought she was exempt from cancer, but it was certainly nothing she ever expected, especially since she had no family history of breast cancer. With no warning about the hand she would be dealt, she took the initial news with shock but didn't let her diagnosis equal defeat.

"With so much unknown, I just focused on not giving up," she said. "I must say that it was a long journey and I did get tired, but never once did I consider giving up. I was determined to win and the blessing of not getting sick during chemotherapy certainly helped to make things easier to bear, if you will. After undergoing 16 rounds of chemotherapy, a double mastectomy, and 26 rounds of radiation, I successfully beat breast cancer in 2016."

Youngblood describes life after surviving breast cancer as

"a great feeling, and it feels good" to be able to share her story to encourage others. She added that once a patient is cancer-free, the goal is remain cancer-free, and she is "blessed to not look like what I have been through. As I look at my scars, they remind me of the goodness of God. When I face something now, I remind myself of my strength, the battle I have already won, and see everything that might come against me as small stuff."

The old saying of "when one door closes, another opens" has proven to be true for Youngblood. She took a trying time in her life and found the brighter side of the situation. She always had a love for comedy, but taking the risk of incorporating a serious matter into a material designed to make people laugh was one she wasn't sure about.

"I was doing comedy four years prior to my diagnosis, but after my cancer journey, I did a one-woman show titled The Truth About Cancer. I was nervous about the show initially because I didn't want to offend anyone, because it is such a sensitive subject, but it was well received. I was praised for my courage to be so vulnerable and transparent, and fellow survivors saw it as encouragement."

Youngblood says that her comic approach to breast cancer combined with her own personal story has opened many doors for her and has been a blessing to so many others as well. She has per-

formed at medical conferences, breast cancer fundraisers, and other awareness events.

"All of my comedy sets are not about breast cancer," she says, "but observational of everyday life experiences. I have done comedy shows from Las Vegas to New York to Boston to Chattanooga to Atlanta. The most unique place I performed in was Winner, South Dakota, for a fundraiser. For the month of October, we kicked off Breast Cancer Awareness Month with a show called Comedy For The Girls. I am more than grateful for the opportunity and am happy to have had a good turnout and show. One of my missions now in life has become to inspire and encourage with laughter."

When asked what advice she would give based on her journey, she said that she would tell all women "to come to learn and know your body, to pay attention to it, and if you notice any type of change, don't dismiss it. Early detection is the key to any problem, especially breast cancer. Secondly, live a full life that includes your spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social self. Make a little time for everything you enjoy, but focus on me-time. To focus on yourself and making sure you are okay and healthy all around is the only way to be available for those who may need you."

To learn more about Youngblood's comedy and efforts to encourage breast cancer awareness, visit www.keepingyoulaughing.com.



Submitted photo

Carla Youngblood



Logan Martin to host Yoga by the Lake for Pink

12th annual event benefits Breast Cancer Foundation of Alabama

BY MICHELLE LOVE

Daily Home correspondent

Rhonda Gann has always felt a connection with yoga. It's something she holds dear to her heart and loves to share with others, so it was no surprise when she chose yoga to raise awareness about something else close to her heart.

Gann is the coordinator of Yoga by the Lake for Pink, a fundraising event that benefits breast cancer research. Participants enjoy an hour of yoga led by Gann's instruction on the shoreline of Logan Martin Lake, followed by a delicious brunch on Gann's patio. The event allows people to donate to the cause and also meet others in the community who have a similar passion for yoga and fighting the battle against breast cancer.

This year's event, scheduled for October 26, is rooted in some heavy personal experiences for Gann: she has three close friends who were diagnosed with the disease. Her former college roommate was diagnosed with stage 3B breast cancer at the age of 45, and some years later so was her younger sister and another close friend.

It was one day after helping Rosalind Griffin, her former roommate, get home after a chemotherapy session that Gann was inspired to raise awareness.

"One day I was the one taking her home, and we got back to the car and we talked about how she was already getting involved with the Breast Cancer Foundation of Alabama, of which she eventually became a board member and



Yoga by the Lake.

served for a while," Gann said. "I told her that day in the car that I was going to start doing something to raise money for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama and that I was going to do it for as long as I was physically able."

Gann had moved to the lakeside area a little over 13 years ago, establishing Yoga by the Lake shortly after. She decided that a Yoga by the Lake for Pink would be the perfect way to raise money for the Breast Cancer Foundation of Alabama while getting people

moving outside. This is the 12th year the event has been held, and Gann said there has been a huge outpouring of support each year.

"There's plenty of great people in this community that support it for their own reasons, and even if they don't come, they still make donations to the foundation," she said.

Since Gann had been teaching Pilates and yoga for about 25 years, using yoga to benefit breast cancer was a natural choice.

"It was really a thought pro-

cess of, 'Okay, what can I do to make good on my promise to Rosalind, and also what is the most attractive thing I can make to make people want to come and contribute to the cause?' It just seemed like a great way to get people outside in the fresh air and experience yoga in a different setting."

The event is open to anyone who is interested, regardless of experience level.

"The people who come are wonderful," she said. "Some people bring fantastic food, and

everyone just stands around and talks about their experiences and meets new people. We just have a good time — it's structured yoga, but there is a big social aspect of it so everyone can get to know each other."

Doing yoga outdoors gives more of a freeing mindset, according to Gann, and people often tell her they enjoy the relaxed atmosphere.

"I think it brings a new aspect to it," she said. "I don't use music or a microphone because I want people to be very honed in about being in a different space. I think any time you join yourself with the elements and with the breeze and the blue water to the sky... I think it's just a totally different vibe outside. It's more relaxed, more open to people... people can really make their choices to really engage in every aspect without distractions than in a studio. It really frees you up to really get the good you need out of it as an individual."

Being able to help raise awareness is something that will always be important to Gann, and being able to spread a love of yoga is an added bonus.

"I just wanted to do something that was more meaningful and to give back," she said. "I wanted to do something where I felt I was doing something to serve. It's just a lifesaver."

Yoga by the Lake for Pink will begin at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 26 at 864 Fishers Way, Vincent. The fee to participate is \$20. Attendees are encouraged to register by calling or texting Gann at 205-789-6101 or emailing her at Rhonda@fitour.com.

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Steel Magnolias provides a community

BY FAITH DORN

Special to the Star

Since 2001, local breast cancer support group Steel Magnolias has provided a community for people who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Lenora Johnson, founder, had undergone a mastectomy in 1999 and looked for a support group in Calhoun County, but there were none. The first meeting was attended by five breast cancer survivors, RMC chaplain Jim Wilson and Prentiss, Lenora's husband. Each survivor at the initial meeting shared their stories and wanted to help others dealing with a breast cancer diagnosis, but they had no idea that their work would affect patients across Alabama.

In 2007, the members of Steel Magnolias were disturbed to discover a loophole in the 2001 Medicaid Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act that would deny the treatment of a patient if she was first diagnosed by a medical doctor rather than the health department. Two years later, with the assistance of Representative Lea Fite, Alabama HB147 was passed through the Alabama State House and Senate and signed into law. That same year, Steel Magnolias honored Representative Fite by naming their golf tournament fundraiser after him.

RMC provides an office for Steel Magnolias next to the chaplain's office on the fourth floor of the Physicians Center. Steel Magnolias also has a "PINKS Boutique" across from their office that provides wigs, mastectomy bras, breast prostheses, turbans, hats and Knitted Knockers for underinsured or uninsured cancer patients. The group also offers care packages to newly-diagnosed cancer patients.

Steel Magnolias provides snacks for the RMC radiation and oncology departments and to Clearview Cancer Institute in the Physicians Center. Prior to COVID, the group presented its Breast Cancer Awareness Program to local high school



Bill Wilson/The Anniston Star/File

Margaret Taylor and Elaine Johns hold up a sign that cancer survivors signed.

girls.

Steel Magnolias meets monthly in the private dining room at RMC at 5 p.m. every fourth Tuesday from January through October. RMC provides the main dish, and attendees bring side dishes and desserts. Members of Men of Steel, a support group for men who are breast cancer survivors or whose wife or girlfriend is a survivor, also attend these meetings. Anyone that would like to attend the meetings is welcome and encouraged to bring a friend.

Donations to Steel Magnolias are tax-deductible and allows the organization to continue to help local breast cancer patients. The Lea Fite Golf Tournament is the group's largest fundraiser. Sunny King Automotive Group generously donates \$50 per new

or used vehicle sold in October at the Ford, Honda and Toyota dealerships.

Steel Magnolias President's Personal Experience

"I was diagnosed with breast cancer in late 2011. My cancer was caught early, and I had a lumpectomy a week following my diagnosis," shared Elaine Johns, Steel Magnolias president. "I had a great support group including family, friends and my work family. I will go ahead and tell you when I found out, I had myself dead and buried. I think most people that find out they have cancer feel that way."

Johns' friend gave her a copy of "Jesus Calling", a Christian daily devotional book.

"[...] I found that a positive

attitude is the best medicine of all. [...] I started doing my daily devotions, and while reading, the Lord let me know I would be OK no matter how this turned out.

Our hope and trust are in Him, and He will never leave your side," Johns said.

Johns found out in January that she would have to have chemo and radiation.

"The only choice you have is to go through it. There is no way around it," said Johns.

An aunt of one of Johns' friends told her about the Steel Magnolias and gave her their phone number.

"I went to my first meeting and met these wonderful ladies! I found a group of loving Christian people trying to find ways to raise money to help others. I had people around me that

understood what I was going through, and they were there for me," Johns said.

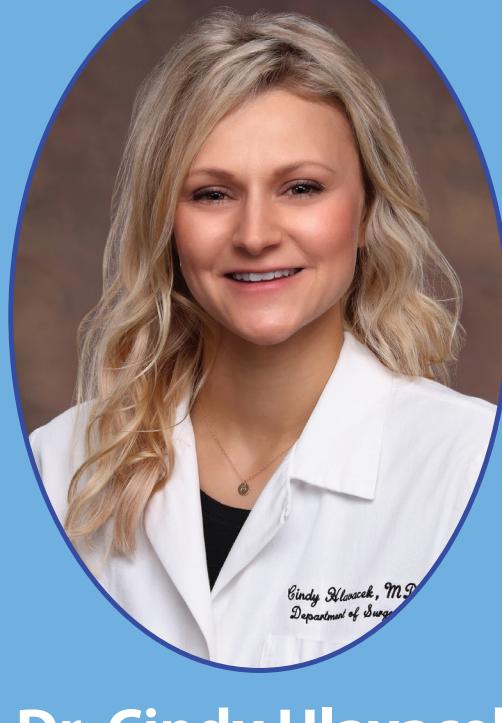
"I got involved working on [the golf tournament], and it helped to take my mind off my problems [...]," said Johns.

"I want to see this group grow. You do not have to have breast cancer to be a member. All you must do is have a desire to help others," Johns said.

To learn more about Steel Magnolias, visit steelmagnoliasinc.com or find the group on Facebook. The group's office is located at 901 Leighton Avenue in Suite 406.

To make your tax-deductible donation, send your donation to Steel Magnolias, P.O. Box 2208, Anniston, AL 36202.

Faith Dorn is a freelance writer in Anniston, Alabama.



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Support breast cancer awareness while driving

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Daily Home correspondent

In Alabama, the breast cancer specialty license plate has become one of the top 10 most popular specialty plates to be issued to motorists since first being introduced in 2006.

The license plate was designed by the nonprofit Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama (BCRFA) as a way to create awareness throughout the state while simultaneously working to raise funds for breast cancer research.

The license plates are issued by the Alabama Department of Revenue, and the annual fee is \$50. The BCRFA receives \$41.25 of that fee donating the proceeds to the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center for breast cancer research.

BCRFA has invested \$15 million in breast cancer research projects in the effort to develop a cure since 1996. With the involvement of the community, donors, fundraisers, and partnerships, the organization has been able to make a strong impact in the lives of many.

One of the organization's creative means to generate awareness and gain more involvement from the community was the development of the breast cancer research license plate. Over the course of 18 years, the license plate has helped to raise more than \$5 million for breast cancer



research.

A license plate is used as a way to identify the owner of the vehicle, as well as an indicator that the car has been registered within the state. It can also serve the purpose of creating awareness, supporting a cause, encouragement to other motorists, a reminder for some, or even the chance to contribute to research.

No disease is allotted to just one month. The person that is given a diagnosis endures the ups and downs of the ailment over the course of the years. Awareness months are like reminders set in place during a designated month, but true support and the goal of achieving a cure is a year-

round mission.

The Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama's breast cancer research specialty license plate is a great way to give support, create awareness, and help to make a difference all year long. The license plate is available for boats, cars, motorcycles, and trucks.

According to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, to contribute to research is an investment that doesn't just help towards finding a cure but helps to save lives. The financial burden can weigh heavy on individuals and families, but with funding in the latest technology and tests, it can be the saving grace needed to help give

financial relief, assistance with treatment, and overall improvement of one's outcomes.

To contribute to the cause and work to put an end to breast cancer, start with changing out your current Alabama license plate to the breast cancer research specialty license plate. The \$50 fee is tax deductible, and the switch is simple. When it's time to renew your license plate, select breast cancer research if the renewal option for the individual county offers an online portal, or ask for it at the Talladega County or St. Clair County tag office. For more information, visit www.bcrfa.org and select specialty tag.

Passionate For Pink plans third annual 5K to benefit breast cancer research

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Daily Home correspondent

Tangelia Williams is well aware of what chemo and radiation treatments can do to the body.

"Nevertheless, this disease is affecting mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts...the core of the family," she says. "For those who have to still continue to provide for their families and children despite their battle, it's not easy. So this is why we walk: to let survivors and those battling the disease know that we hear them and they are not alone."

Williams is the president of the non-profit Passionate For Pink. While the group is still small in number and working towards obtaining 501c status, it has a mission to educate, support, and create awareness about breast cancer. It came about through Williams' desire to lend a helping hand to a neighbor.

"My neighbor was a young lady by the name of Clovis Richards," she says. "She's older now and no longer lives in Alabama, even. I've tried for so long to find her, because she's the reason behind the start of all this, but she was struggling with breast cancer. Of course I had heard of breast cancer, but never had I ever witnessed someone so young battling the disease. She had two energetic little boys who she couldn't care for properly due to what she had

going on, so I stepped in. I decided to lend a hand and help with the boys — they're grown now — and I even started going with her to chemo treatments for support. I was blown away by the many things she experienced during recovery, and I was all in at that point."

Williams was in awe of the courage and fight within Richards and knew she wanted to find a way to help breast cancer survivors, those newly diagnosed, and caregivers. In helping her friend, she gained a newfound respect for the village it takes to get through a challenging time.

"Over the last 10 years, I have attended many breast cancer awareness walks through the American Cancer Society," she says. "I decided that I wanted to do this in my city for our breast cancer warriors and survivors. I wanted a way to celebrate life with them, and God said I could. Here we are in our third year."

Passionate for Pink was created in October of 2004, but its first race didn't happen until 2002. Joshua Green, volunteer and cousin of Williams, says that during the first year of the race, it was just Williams, himself, and his mother who got everything lined up. The second year, the word spread more, and they gained more volunteers. Now in the third year of the event, they have more volunteers than they could have imagined.

"I believe it was important to my cousin for this event to happen because it is honestly just the type of person she is and how we are as a family," he said. "We are selfless people. We put ourselves last. We're people people and all about the community. We have a heart for the community, and we know that in doing this event, this isn't about us. We're doing God's work, standing with survivors, those battling breast cancer, and showing the community love."

Green and Williams have witnessed many individuals battle breast cancer and survive, as well as some who have lost the fight, but neither has experienced cancer. Their commitment and dedication to the event comes from a place of wanting to show up for their community and create breast cancer awareness, not just through the event but also by taking the time to educate and provide encouragement others.

"I believe that this event has made an impact where it has brought more people out and made them eager to be involved in the community while finding a way to give back, and have a sense of involvement," Green said. "It's creating awareness, but in a fun way. A lot of people don't get tested or don't like going to hospitals, so it changes their perspective and makes them put their fears and hesitations behind and their health at the forefront. It's not all educational and

awareness, but like a party. There's music and overall just a good time of coming together."

Funds raised by Passionate For Pink are donated to the St. Michael's Clinic, where the group is partnered with a program called Never Surrender that helps patients get medical supplies, mammograms, and access to other services.

According to Green, last year's run had a turn out of about 40 participants, and the hope is that this year's will be even bigger. The run consists of a 5K and recognition of the breast cancer survivors in a special way. "The reason I enjoy being a part of this event every year is because I like helping people, educating, and I know that what we are doing has the potential to save lives," he said.

Williams added that the impact the event has made within the community is being able to raise money to help those who can't afford mammograms.

"Mammograms save lives because early detection is so important. Aside from this event or the month designated to create awareness for breast cancer, I would really advise every woman and man to do self checks. See your doctors for regular screenings, eat well, exercise, and don't hesitate to ask questions," she said. "Don't wait until it's too late. Early detection is key."



BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

(Left to right) Jennifer Silvers 256.452.3136, Kaley Thrower 256.368.8394, Kisha Dorman Ball 256.525.1376, Jennifer Chaplin 256.282.3906, (Middle) Angie Bentley 256.310.8952

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Citizens Baptist's lead mammographer has found joy in helping patients for more than three decades

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Daily Home correspondent

Denise Mattox serves lead mammography tech at Citizens Baptist Medical Center in Talladega, which she believes is her calling in life. She has been doing mammography for 31 years — including 25 years at Citizens — and enjoys making patients feel comfortable and relaxed during a time when they are often nervous and uncomfortable.

"Since the very first time of beginning to work here, I have always had a heart to help and a way with people," she says. "I know how to make patients feel comfortable and relaxed, and I am confident in what I do. In my role, I find it very gratifying, to know that you are part of the reason for finding something so small, even when the patients can't feel it yet. This is why early detection is our best protection."

Mattox describes what led her to working for Citizens as "almost like a domino effect." She came to the hospital for a surgery in 1998 while she was working for another facility doing mammograms, and while at Citizens she "absolutely loved" the staff and the facility. She then applied for a position, began working there the following May, and has continued to love the difference she has made in the lives of patients since.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the best way to detect breast cancer early is through a mammogram. A mammogram can detect cancer before it can cause symptoms or become big enough to feel. Regular mammograms can lower the risk of not surviving from breast cancer. American Cancer Society guidelines say that if breast cancer is found early, when it is small and has not spread, it is easier to treat successfully.

As a mammographer who has seen thousands of women over the course of more than three decades, she was more than willing to share her knowledge and give advice about

breast health. In an interview with Mattox, she had the following to say to The Daily Home.

Q: When should someone begin having mammograms regularly?

Mattox: Age 40, or even earlier if there are problems or a family history of breast cancer or ovarian cancer. If you have breast cancer or ovarian cancer in your immediate family, you should have a mammogram at least 10 years prior to that family member's age. So if you had a mom who had either cancer at the onset age of 50, you should start having mammograms at the age of about 35 or, at the latest, 40.

Q: What happens during a mammogram?

Mattox: I will give an explanation of what I do every step of the way. There is breathing instruction, positioning the breast, and compression of the breast — which can be uncomfortable, but it shouldn't hurt. If your breast is hurting at the time of the exam, it might be a bit more uncomfortable.

Q: How long does it take for results to come back?

Mattox: It usually takes about a week to receive results. If patients are on the myChart platform, it is about three days. If they aren't on myChart, then they will get the results letter in the mail. If we have to get the patient's previous mammogram from another facility, it might be up to two weeks.

Q: Does breast density affect mammograms?

Mattox: No, not in how we do each exam. With 3D mammography, the dense tissue is seen better through the slices of the tomography images.

Q: What general advice do you offer about breast cancer awareness?

Mattox: Please have your mammogram done yearly. We can see density and symmetric areas of concern before you ever feel anything that may be there. Early detection is our best protection. Check your breast monthly and if you feel a lump or nodule, see your physician.



How did pink come to symbolize breast cancer awareness?

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Daily Home correspondent

When the temperature begins to drop and the trees lose their bright green hues, replacing them with shades of brown and orange, you know it's fall. Pumpkins, football, hayrides, trick or treating... oh my — but you can tell it's also the beginning of autumn when you begin to see pink adorning various places.

Fall has always been a season of life, but the first Breast Cancer Awareness observance was organized in 1985. It originated as a week-long event founded by the American Cancer Society to create widespread attention for breast cancer. Eventually, the week turned into

a month-long event to raise more awareness, fund research, save more lives, encourage the importance of mammograms, and to promote early detection. If breast cancer awareness only lasted a week, there would be so much vital information that might not be dispensed.

Every year since, October has become pink, a month when people around the world wear the color pink or a pink ribbon to support breast cancer and/or raise awareness. But why is the chosen color pink?

Pink has long symbolized compassion, love, and nurturing. Its soft and welcoming hue evokes comfort, hope, and warmth. Pink is sometimes used to depict good health. However, when it comes to

breast cancer awareness, pink has not always been the representative color.

It came about in 1992. During a Race For the Cure run, Susan G. Komen handed out pink visors and ribbons to participants. At the time, it was more of a for-the-moment situation until Alexandra Penney, then editor-in-chief of *Self*, was inspired to create a ribbon for the magazine's second Breast Cancer Awareness issue. Cosmetics manufacturer Este Lauder went a step further and displayed the ribbon on its products and sales counters around the country. As the idea continued to grow, a total of 1.5 million ribbons with a laminated card describing a proper breast self-exam handed out at a makeup counter led to petitions urging

the federal government to direct more funding for research.

Margaret Welch, the director of the Color Association of the United States, says that pink is the quintessential female color. It is playful and life-affirming. She adds that studies have shown that it has a calming effect, a quieting effect, and it can reduce stress. Pastel pink is a shade known to be health-giving; that's why we have expressions like "in the pink."

When it comes to the color pink, one usually can't go too far wrong. Its welcoming nature and familiarity have become a part of the culture for both women and men in their support of breast cancer patients and creating awareness of the disease.

OCTOBER
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH



City of Talladega shows its support for those fighting breast cancer

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Daily Home correspondent

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "There is power in unity, and there is power in numbers."

More than 60 years later, those words continue to ring true in so many ways. In the essence of support, those words hold a lot of power for someone enduring a battle in which they might feel alone.

According to the National Cancer Institute's profile of Talladega County, between 2017 and 2021, the county has had as many as 70 cases of women diagnosed with breast cancer. The City of Talladega wants those warriors and survivors to know that their community is standing with them, not just for the month of October, but all year long.

As a close-knit community, to be there for one another as a community

that is blended like one big family, the city has opted to create more awareness for breast cancer and to boldly show support.

Social support is critical to emotional and mental well-being during and after a breast cancer diagnosis. Studies suggest that women with breast cancer who have more social support have better chances of survival than those without. In an interview with The Daily Home, City Manager Derrick Swanson had the following to say about how the City of Talladega strives to provide such support.

Q: How important is it to rally around and celebrate survivors and those battling breast cancer?

Swanson: It is critical. Studies indicate that having support and encouragement can help improve both mental and physical health outcomes among women who have breast cancer. We hope that seeing

the photo of city employees in pink on our lobby TV screen helps brighten someone's day. By promoting breast cancer awareness, we can also help save lives by encouraging early detection. According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer accounts for approximately 30 percent of all new female cancers each year. In 2024 alone, over 300,000 new cases will be diagnosed, and 42,250 women will die from breast cancer.

Q: How can the city support or create awareness for breast cancer?

Swanson: To prepare for the month of October, fellow city employees and I have worn pink to begin transforming the city with hints of pink in support of breast cancer. Our hope is that it will create awareness and serve as a reminder to get tested. We hung balloons, posted messages in our lobby, and even turned the lights on the Big Springs monument pink

to help promote breast cancer awareness.

Q: Does the city have any other plans to show support for breast cancer awareness?

Swanson: We are also planning an employee walk in pink for breast cancer day that is near the end of October. Eventually, we would like to make this a larger, city-wide event.

Q: What would you say to a breast cancer survivor or someone battling breast cancer?

Swanson: I am praying for you, I am so sorry you are going through this, and how can I help you? We have all had family members and/or friends who have received a cancer diagnosis. Often we are at a loss for words when someone says, "I have cancer." Though we might be afraid to say anything in fear of saying the wrong thing, I believe it is helpful to let people know that we care.



Breast Cancer Support Group

Steel Magnolias is dedicated to providing SUPPORT and HOPE to women whose lives have been affected by breast cancer.

*Pink ribbons on my clothing.
Scars across my chest.
Courage in my heart and
Steel in every step.*

I'm a STEEL MAGNOLIA!

Our Services

GROUP MEETINGS

Steel Magnolias meet on the 4th Tuesday of each Month (except Nov. & Dec.) at 5:00 p.m. on the 1st floor Private Dining room at RMC.

PINKS BOUTIQUE

We stock Mastectomy Bras, Breast Prostheses, Wigs, Hats and Scarves at NO COST to cancer patients.

CARE PACKAGES

Included are recovery, inspirational, and educational items that are provided to breast cancer patients on their day of surgery at RMC. Also upon request, packages are mailed in and out of state.

DINING VOUCHERS

RMC Cafeteria vouchers are provided to two family members of cancer patients in surgery.

SNACKS

Provided in the following: RMC Radiation Oncology, RMC Chemo and Clearview Chemo departments.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS PROGRAM

Available to girls in grades 9-12 to be taught at local schools by a trained volunteer under the supervision of a school nurse.



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