

Local community turns pink to support breast cancer awareness

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home

Turn Springville Pink has become a tradition that the St. Clair County community looks forward to every October. In observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the city embraces the color pink and displays pink ribbons to create awareness, support those battling the disease and honor those that have lost the battle to breast cancer.

“It’s rewarding to see how the community has embraced our efforts,” said Kathy Ronderos, a retired teacher and former Junior Beta Club sponsor at Springville Middle School. “To see the pink bows up and down Main Street is just a beautiful sight to see. Then to see the middle school students involved is amazing. They work to sell the t-shirts each year, and it’s honestly rewarding to see the kids engage in something that benefits others. It helps them build a lifelong character trait of empathy and learning to care for something that is bigger than they are. Kids can be so wrapped up in other things especially at their age, so to see them so committed makes being a part of this so gratifying.”

The idea of Turn Springville Pink was brought to the Junior Beta Club by eighth grade student Olivia Hutto in 2010. She was inspired by a friend who created Turn Trussville Pink in honor of his parents’ battle with breast cancer.

Hutto did not have anyone in her family who had dealt with breast cancer, but she desired to bring the idea to Springville because she felt it was a good way to raise funds, support those in the local community



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who are dealing with breast cancer and support a great cause. She has now outgrown her days in middle school, but the impact she made has developed into a great tradition in the school and community community.

Ronderos retired from teaching three years ago, but she continues to help the current sponsor, hand-make the ribbons for the city, sell t-shirts and show up wherever she is needed, as the event is very near and dear to her heart.

"In the Junior Beta Club we call Ms. Ronderos the community liaison as she continues to volunteer even while retired," said Gabriel Higdon, eighth grade science teacher and current Junior Beta Club sponsor. "Some of the kids and their parents help to make bows, but the majority of the bows are made by her. I applaud her for being able to sit down and get them done by hand. With just a few bows in, my hand will start to cramp up, but she has the patience to do many which is a great help. For me, being a part of this event is truly a full circle moment. Ms. Ronderos was my science teacher and Junior Beta club sponsor when I was in school. She's my mentor."

Higdon added that when she knew Ronderos was retiring, she "called dibs" on the club sponsor's position and started shadowing her and learning the ropes, and she is grateful for Ronderos' trusting her to take over.

In September, the club begins selling t-shirts for October, and the money raised is given to the AKW Foundation in Trussville. AKW are the initials of the young man's mother and father who started Turn Trussville Pink. The two events combine their contributions and donate the amount to the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Research Center.

Higdon said that last year the club members sold about 500 shirts and this year have sold just under 700, with the hope of selling more as the month continues. Each year they have been able to contribute about \$7,000 in proceeds, but their goal is to one day soon reach \$10,000.

Both Ronderos and Higdon agree that the shirt for this year's observance are "very special and one of a kind." The shirt is light pink; the front reads "Support the fighters, Admire the survivors, & Honor the taken" in two different fonts, one bold in different hues of pink and then cursive. The back is a pink outline of a breast cancer ribbon, and the special aspect is the inside of the ribbon that has about 50 signatures of members from the Springville community of those battling breast cancer. Within those 50 signatures are the signatures of two men that have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

"The themed word for this year's shirts is 'warrior,' and that word is very important to me," Higdon said. "It says a lot for someone that has encountered breast cancer. So this year we are honoring the warriors of the community."

Ronderos said that the official Turn Springville Pink day this year was October 6. On that day, everyone was encouraged to wear their pink shirts. A Springville High School football game saw the players, cheerleaders and spectators wearing pink. The Junior Beta Club decorated the town pink, and Highway 11 was lined with bows. Then the middle school hosted a program honoring breast cancer survivors.

On October 13, a breast cancer volleyball game was organized between the Junior Beta Club students and the faculty. All wore pink in support of breast cancer, and the proceeds generated from the event will be added on to those accumulated from t-shirt sales. The 2022 volleyball game raised \$800.

"I believe that this year we will likely either reach the goal of \$10,000 or we will become very close, and I could not be more excited," said Higdon.

Ronderos added, "For me breast cancer awareness is important because it affects so many people. I have a close cousin who was diagnosed at the age of 36 with breast cancer, and she had a radical mastectomy. I just feel like there's been such improvement in treatments over the years. Technology has advanced and been a lifesaver for many. This is why awareness is important, because it can lead to early detection. This is one of many reasons why this event is important to me because it contributes to awareness, research, and possibly even saving lives. It can affect anyone. We need to communicate with our doctors and have routine checkups, which increase chances of survival."



Members of Springville Middle School's Junior Beta Club

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Being a science teacher, Higdon said she understands the harshness of the disease and wants to be a part of the cure, and would love the cure to come from Alabama. She also went on to say that breast cancer awareness is personal because she is a woman. "For most women, our breasts are a part of our confidence and to raise awareness is an important cause because it benefits not just one woman but all women."

Ronderos said, "I hope that Turn Springville Pink will be around forever. As long as I am around, I know I will push for it to happen. The community truly rallies around it, and it has become a great tradition of ours. I also hope that we can inspire other cities and groups as well to start a new tradition that supports a great cause in their cities."

"I have been doing this now for four years, and the most rewarding thing is giving back to something much greater than I am. As a collective of the Junior Beta Club, the Springville community, neighboring cities and donors, we play such a small role in something bigger than us, and together we can continue to contribute to something great."

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Citizens Baptist offers special incentive during Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home

Save 20 percent, get 50 percent off, or buy-one-get-one-free are often deals that retailers use to attract customers to their businesses. It isn't as often that health care providers offer similar specials, but that's exactly what Citizens Baptist Medical Center in Talladega is doing for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The local hospital has been a pillar in the community for more than 50 years, providing the Talladega and neighboring cities with surgical services, orthopedics, rehabilitation, psychiatric care, home health services and more. With its mission to provide the best care and quality treatments, the hospital is front-and-center when it comes to advocating for breast cancer awareness.

To encourage more women to get their mammograms done, Citizens is offering mammograms for \$125 throughout the month of October. Citizens has recently installed a new 3D mammography machine that takes multiple x-ray images and creates a three-dimensional image of the breast. The level of technology used is regarded as the most modern diagnostic tool and form of screening available for detecting breast cancer early.

According to studies, the 3D mammograms combined with standard mammograms reduce needing additional images and possibly increase the number of cancers that can be detected during the screening.

Asked why Citizens decided to offer special pricing for mammograms this month, CEO Frank Thomas said, "These initiatives help educate our community on an important topic, and we are proud to help raise awareness of this disease that has impacted so many throughout the world and here at home. This is an important awareness month that is observed nationwide, and we're happy to participate here at Citizens."

For more encouragement to get tested, the Citizens Volunteer Auxiliary

sponsors Breast Cancer Awareness-themed goodie bags that are given to any patient who has a mammogram at Citizens during October. This annual tradition is done as a token of recognition and care of doing what needs to be done. Sometimes what needs to be done works better with a little encouragement, and that is what Citizens is doing.

The staff is ready to inform, be supportive, and provide quality care no matter if it's someone's first mammogram or their 30th. October may be Breast Cancer Awareness month, but Citizens want patients to know that breast health is a year-long and every-day focus. It wants patients to know that they have local and convenient care at hand when they need services.

Citizens is also raising money and helping save lives of others currently battling breast cancer around the world. The medical center will be donating to the Susan G. Komen Foundation in observance of Breast Cancer Awareness month. For more information about donating, visit www.citizensbaptistmedicalcenter.com or the hospital's Facebook page.




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Look for ways to support breast cancer awareness

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home



Susan G. Komen is a nonprofit organization known across the world, but what presence does it have here in Alabama?

Sixty-seven counties in our state are provided breast cancer services by the Susan G. Komen foundation. As many as 832 people request information weekly, and \$1.1 billion has been invested in breast cancer research since 1982.

The nonprofit does more than just raise money for research and advocate for those fighting the disease. It encourages the community to get involved, pushes for good overall health and offers services beyond providing information. Some services include financial assistance, help finding diagnostic facilities and local screening, care and clinical research trials.

Susan G. Komen also understands that change happens better together and reaches out within the community and partners with individuals, businesses and companies to work towards a greater impact towards putting an end to breast cancer. The annual More Than Pink walk is worldwide, and a lot of people look forward to the walk. Not everyone may be interested in walking or running, but everybody loves to eat. For instance, Raise Some Dough for Komen is one of the latest ways the community can eat, get involved, donate and make a difference in someone's life. The year-round fundraising opportunity has partnered with Mellow Mushroom across the country - including Alabama - to help raise money for breast cancer awareness.

Mellow Mushroom has committed to donate a minimum of \$25,000 from sales of featured menu items and \$1 for each purchase of a featured item. For a limited time, customers that want to give someone special in their life or their favorite co-worker something nice will get something in return. Through Oct. 16, Mellow Mushroom (including the Oxford location) will donate \$5 for every \$25 gift card purchase, and the purchaser will receive a bonus of \$5. For more information on donating, what are the featured items, or to find a location near you, visit www.mellowmushroom.com or www.komen.org and scroll to the Local Events section.

Though the Mellow Mushroom sells more than pizza, the family could be craving

something quick or sweet, and either route can result in contributing to breast cancer. There are many restaurants, businesses, and stores that probably are a part of an average day that are incorporating specials, deals and ways to donate. So the options to give are plenty. If a pink ribbon is not in sight, it doesn't hurt to ask just in case.

To collaborate with the places people like to eat and shop makes donating convenient. If a person is not tech savvy but wants to give, just something as simple as eating from their favorite restaurant could serve a greater purpose. To eat good food while contributing to help save lives is double the win.

When it comes to research, studies, trials, testing and more, it costs. In order to know and improve on what's available, it takes trial and error, and that's not free to do. It takes donations and sponsors to continue helping families that need information, to provide assistance to those that need it, to do community outreach, to educate the community, and more. There's no way for the foundation to fight towards a cure without the help of communities coming together to make an impact.

As the old phrase goes that change starts with the individual, so does being selfless and giving to a cause much greater than self. Breast Cancer Awareness Month may be in October, but breast cancer is a daily battle for many. To give is a way that gives them hope and support to become the survivors loved so dearly today.

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Successful scholarship fund honors breast cancer fighter from south Talladega County

By CJ KNIGHT

Special to The Daily Home



The short life of Masie Knight started and ended in lower Talladega County.

Mom was a true advocate of the outdoors. I still remember the stories that she would tell of her childhood. Her memories as a child and young adult life centered around the banks of Kahatchee Creek and Cedar Creek, which are portions of Lay Lake in Fayetteville.

She would always speak of barefoot adventures, fishing, wading creeks and playing with the other local kids in ponds and springs near their home front. Mom and her brother Shane were quite the pair. They were very close, and they traveled and grew up together in a very tight setting.

My Uncle Shane still swears that Masie could "hold her on" with anybody her age or older. He jokes about how stern and strong she was. I am sure they were a handful for small-town Fayetteville.

The kids during this timeframe relied on outside activities for pleasure and fun. Mom and Uncle Shane always said that they were very poor when it came to money growing up. They also claim that they never knew how poor they were, because they didn't need much to have fun and enjoy childhood. Outside activities in and on creeks, mud puddles, woods, pastures and backcountry roads were all they needed.

From what I have gathered, Mom loved to help others at a very early age. She seemed to have everyone's respect. Why, I am not completely sure. It could have been her personality, attractive looks or her demeanor. To this day, people approach me and ask if I am Masie Knight's son. That is something that really makes me proud. I know that others loved her very much.

I truly believe she impacted the lives of so many, even on her darkest of days. Mom was well known for her musical talents locally and abroad. I can remember as a young boy traveling to Nashville, where she would record music. Her dream was to make the big time and be a country singer, a dream that was not far-fetched. She was very good. During her short musical career, she started a band called The Cutting Edge. She and her fellow band members would practice and put on shows locally. She truly



Masie Knight

loved to perform in front of others, and she was very good at it. I wish that her illnesses would have allowed her more time to pursue her dreams. I believe she could have made it.

Growing up as a kid in rural southern Talladega county had many advantages. As a family, we lived a very simple life. Both of my parents, Masie and Chris Knight, could be considered average middle class. We had everything we needed, but we were not rich by any means. My mom was a very loving person. She would always let multiple friends come over and spend the night with us. She was known as the mother to many in our area. It would not be uncommon to have 10 or 15 kids at the house at any given time.

She cooked for, disciplined and looked out for us all. She was the best mom ever. Her relationships with all of my friends gained her tremendous respect. All of my childhood friends' parents loved Mom. She never gave

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up on her kids or any of my friends.

During her struggles with breast cancer, Mom would give testimonies to churches and other places of interest. She was very involved in her community during these dreadful times. She even published small articles in local publications that would give testimonies and hope to others during times of hardship.

She always gave more than she received, even till the end. I can remember her giving money to homeless people after she would get cancer treatments in Birmingham. She probably didn't have much to give, but she did it anyway. Those actions defined her character as a person. It was not uncommon for Mom to just stop on the street and start praying with someone, just because she had a feeling they were in need. I always felt like her godly calling was to help others and to use her situation as an inspiration to help others. Her presence is still felt today in the lives of many people.

Masie was diagnosed with aggressive breast cancer in early 2002. She would undergo procedure after procedure for the next 3 1/2 years. These procedures included radiation, chemo, gamma knife and amputation. She was in the fight of her life.

These times were very difficult for her and for the family. I can remember as a very young kid the pressures and sadness that came with

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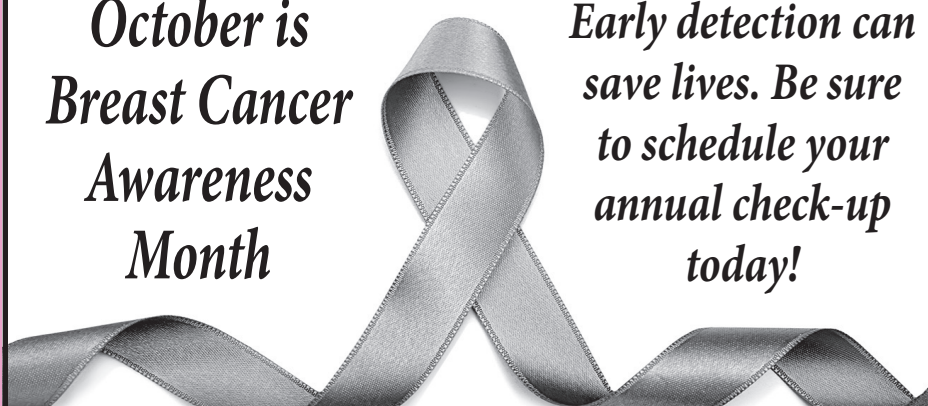
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this illness. It was horrible in so many ways. Mom was a fighter and remained faithful, even after receiving news that she would have less than a year to live in 2004. She fought a losing battle for a very long time, but she never gave up. She fought for her kids, family and others until her last breath. And that is why I believe Masie Knight will forever be a local hometown hero.

This brief biography is one of the hardest things that I have ever written. All of the details bring back so many memories, both pleasurable and painful. The testaments of what she went through, in that short amount of time, were often unbearable. I can only hope that this will help others in some form or fashion in the future. It is so hard for me to muster up the words to explain my mother's legacy. As her oldest son, I feel obliged to help others in her memory and what she stood for. That's why my family and I

started the Masie Knight Memorial Scholarship Fund Inc.

The 501 (c) nonprofit was established in January, 2022. With the help of yearly fundraisers, our nonprofit is able to give scholarships to high school seniors in my mother's name.

Since 2005, more than \$82,000 in scholarships has been awarded. This past year, the scholarship fund awarded \$24,000 to high school seniors from B.B. Comer, Fayetteville, Winterboro, Sylacauga and Childersburg high schools, as you can see in the accompanying photos. This is all possible due to the support of participants in our annual squirrel rodeo and raffle fundraising events.

I encourage you all to participate and support our annual fundraising events. Our fundraising events are yearly from January to the first week of March. All details can be found through our social media pages and our website. All

proceeds go directly back into our communities and for the fundraising supplies. We appreciate everyone's contributions and help. We simply could not keep her legacy alive without the local communities' help.

We are very proud of the 2023 Masie Knight Memorial Recipients, and all of the graduating seniors. We feel like these deserving students will represent the Masie Knight Scholarship to the fullest. In an ever-changing world, these high school students will go on to impact their society in a positive way.

Mom asked one thing from her family, and that was to never let her legacy be forgotten. We are very proud to serve high school graduates in our local community with these opportunities.

CJ Knight is president of the Masie Knight Memorial Scholarship Fund Inc.



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Think beyond the ribbon

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home



Have you ever wondered why a ribbon is used as a symbol for breast cancer, or any other cause?

A ribbon is a symbol of connecting, support, raising awareness and remembrance. It can be a fashion statement, but it's a power staple that carries great meaning and the various colors are indications of different causes and illnesses.

For instance, red represents heart disease awareness, and orange can represent leukemia, multiple sclerosis or kidney cancer. Depending on the shade of yellow, the represented awareness could be childhood cancers or bladder cancer. Purple for alzheimer's disease or epilepsy, light blue for prostate cancer, green for liver cancer, pink for breast cancer, and the list goes on.

The pink ribbon for breast cancer is not just for awareness for Nancy Brinker, who is the sister of the late Susan G. Komen. For Brinker, that ribbon was a part of the promise to her sister to do all she could to end breast cancer. In keeping her promise, pink ribbons have become a global phenomenon that people of every creed have adopted in support of breast cancer. It does not have to be one's own personal diagnosis but can be in support of someone they know, they once knew or may have lost to breast cancer.

Wearing a pink ribbon during the month of October says boldly to the world that the individual is supporting a cause that is much bigger than they are. It can also suggest awareness or a reminder to someone. The list of possible impacts are endless of how a small ribbon can say so much. The great thing about the advancement of technology and the evolution of the world is the way the message continues to spread. Pink

ribbons probably will forever be the classic icon of symbolism for breast cancer, but the message to make a difference and help fund the fight to breast cancer has amplified.

With social media, women have outlets, support and information like never before that they can utilize to help them during the journey to survivorship. They can share their journey, be encouraged by real life testimonies and have the reassurance that there is a life after breast cancer. No longer is breast cancer the end of life for women or men, but an obstacle in the path of their journey that can be overcome. So for some the ribbon can be a fashion piece, but to the next woman or women in general it can be a reminder to stop putting off getting that mammogram, a reminder to stop making excuses, a reminder to stop justifying all the ways why you should not get a mammogram or a reminder to make sure their appointment is scheduled.

Breast cancer does not have show preferential

treatment. It can affect a woman or a man, someone up in age or someone young. It doesn't follow trends, so you can't count on not getting it because no one in your family had it. That's not how it works. But we can make a difference! So wear those ribbons with pride, get involved, and make a difference. You don't have to be diagnosed for it to be personal. As long as you have breath, fighting to end breast cancer should be personal!

If there is an opportunity to be involved in your neighborhood, community or city, take the initiative. Make ribbons and pass them out to neighbors, have a bake sale, have an all-pink fashion show, have a pink pumpkin contestant or a fitness event. The disease itself is serious, but finding ways to show support, create awareness, and raise money to donate doesn't have to be. Get creative, have fun and give hope to those fighting and who have fought. Let them know that their fight is not silent and they are not alone.



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Admiring the survivors,
Honoring the taken,
and never, ever giving up



STRONGER.TOGETHER.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Understanding the truth about breast cancer

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home



Do you fully understand breast cancer? Are you just familiar with the basics, or what you may assume the basics to be?

There is more to understanding breast cancer awareness than just scheduling an appointment for a mammogram. Yes, they are important; however, a misconception may keep someone from thinking they are safe from being diagnosed with breast cancer or needing a mammogram. With so much information online and people sharing their stories, how can you determine what to believe or not?

A common statement made is that because no one in your family has ever had breast cancer, you will likely not get the disease. According to breastcancer.org, that is a myth. A known or unknown family history of breast cancer is not a determining factor. The National Institute of Health have disclosed studies that show that percentages in the low teens contribute to women that were diagnosed with breast cancer that had a family history of breast cancer. Whereas those have been diagnosed with breast cancer likely range from the 80th percentile of those that did not have any family history of breast cancer. This is why routine check ups, self exams, learning one's body, and mammograms are important.

The determining factor of why women get breast cancer has yet to be determined and still remains to be discovered. Nevertheless, if there is a strong history of breast cancer in one's family history, it should not be taken lightly.

Another myth that needs to be corrected is that eating right and maintaining your weight excludes one from the possibility of contracting the disease. Those practices can help to lower the risk of the disease, but does not stop a person from getting breast cancer.

Then there's the support system that comes in cotton, satin, lace, push-up, t-shirt, padded,

strapless, underwire, no wire and more that has been a controversy of whether having support can contribute to breast cancer. There's no evidence that shows wearing one causes problems. So for the woman that needs some extra support... be comfortable, cute, and continue getting that extra lift. The National Breast Cancer Foundation released information that says that no matter the type, bras do not cause cancer.

Speaking of bras...for women the bra provides more than support. It is also used as a purse and pockets for many, as it's convenient and conceals all stored items well. Including a cell phone, and it has been a question for years if a phone placed in the bra could cause breast cancer due to the radiation that it puts off. Thusfar, the verdict, according to breastcancer.org, says that there is no proven evidence that carrying a cell phone in one's bra can cause breast cancer. Nevertheless, doctors do not recommend using your bra to holster your cell phone.

The most important thing when it comes to lowering the risk of breast cancer is the importance of getting a mammogram. The problem is, many have the misconception that a mammogram is a 100 percent guarantee that breast cancer will be detected early, and that is false. The machine has a 99 percent accuracy of catching breast cancer early, but there have been cases where a false negative was given or it was missed during the screening. The American Cancer Society said in 2022 that only about one in eight mammograms screenings miss detecting breast cancer initially. This is why regular screenings are necessary and should not be skipped due to receiving one good report. This is not a scare tactic, but one that is an indication that it is better to be safe than worried.

There are more myths that doctors, scientists, survivors, those dealing with breast cancer have heard, but it is important to know the facts. The old saying of a person can't believe everything they hear is advice that continues to be true. Breast cancer may be one of the most talked-about cancers among women, but the misconceptions are still out

there. Do not be misled with wrong information!

More breast cancer myths are as follows according to various breast cancer organizations, websites and studies. These assumptions are completely false.

- Consuming too much sugar can cause breast cancer.
- A lump that can be felt is always an indication of having breast cancer.
- Everyone that experiences breast cancer has the same experience.
- When breast cancer is detected early and treated it rarely will recur.
- Breast cancer only affects older women.



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Life after breast cancer

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home



The survival rate for women who have been given a diagnosis of breast cancer has increased significantly! To be diagnosed with breast cancer used to seem like doomsday, bad news with no positive outcome. Times have changed, and more women are able to plan for life after breast cancer.

The five-year relative survival rate for women with non-metastatic invasive breast cancer (when cancer spreads from the site in the breast where it initially started) in the U.S. is 91 percent, while the 10-year relative survival rate for women with non-metastatic invasive breast cancer is 85 percent, estimates Cancer.net.

With higher survival rates due to early detection and treatment methods, across the country numbers have risen to about 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the U.S. The increase of breast cancer awareness, continuing routine check-ups, self exams and annual mammograms have become empowering tools for individuals to make better decisions for the sake of their health.

The next question at hand becomes, with positive outcomes on the spectrum, how long does breast cancer last, and when is it considered the end?

The length of enduring breast cancer is based upon the stage when breast cancer is detected and the choice of treatment. It is also based upon the individual, as everyone's body is different. No one journey will be the same. As for the end, when all signs and symptoms of cancer no longer exist and cancer becomes undetectable in the body, it is called complete remission. According to the National Cancer Institute, if complete remission lasts for five years or more, a doctor may presume the individual as cured.

To reach that end of the journey might seem like a victory within itself, and it is; however, there is so much more to the fight. The question now becomes, is there such a thing as returning to

normal after battling breast cancer?

Research shows that though in some cases complete remission after five years or longer is considered cured, some cancer cells can still remain in the body even after treatment.

So do you stop getting mammograms? Do you stop doing self breast exams? Do you start skipping routine doctor visits? The answer is no. It's important to remain watchful because it could come back one day.

The world's largest breast cancer organization, Susan G. Komen, states that life after breast cancer may include either late or new side effects from treatment. Some side effects may include mental adjustment to a new body and look, symptoms similar to those of menopause such as hot flashes, fatigue, chronic breast/chest wall pain, sexual dysfunction and lymphedema (a buildup of lymph fluid in fatty tissues under that skin that may cause discomfort and swelling). To say when

side effects will take place is a hard call, because pain and healing differs among individuals.

Despite the possibilities of things to still monitor and what could happen, the quality of life after complete treatment has been said to be good. Studies define quality of life as a person's overall well being that includes pain, fatigue, sexual function, ability to perform daily tasks and mental and physical health.

The other positive aspects of life after breast cancer can include the journey of reaching survivorship, friends that can be made along the way and unexpected support that can be received, and the best part is that you will never be alone in the walk. There have been women before diagnosis, women during diagnosis and women who have reached overcoming diagnosis that can understand every phase of what is being endured.

A breast cancer diagnosis is no longer a death sentence!



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Are you familiar with the Donna Foundation?

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home



October is no longer just the month of pumpkins, hay rides and Halloween.

As the month begins, pink starts to appear everywhere in support of breast cancer. Whether it is to contribute to awareness, in memory of someone who had breast cancer, or knowing someone currently battling breast cancer, pink ribbons are the signature for the month.

Organizations, clubs, and individuals sponsor events throughout the month to create awareness and raise money to donate to research, studies and the overall goal of identifying a cure for breast cancer. The largest and best-known breast cancer organization is the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation that was founded in 1982. Nancy Brinker started the nonprofit organization on behalf of her late sister Susan G. Komen, who lost the battle with the disease. The foundation is the world's largest source of funding for those fighting against breast cancer.

Yes, it is the largest but it is not the only nonprofit organization that is helping fight to end breast cancer. The list is extensive, but one group that also has a reputable name when it comes to supporting breast cancer is the Donna Foundation. The Jacksonville, Florida, organization has helped 17,494 families, donated \$3.3 million in support of breast cancer research and provided \$4.9 million in financial services to help those living with breast cancer and towards furthering breast cancer research.

The Donna Foundation was established by journalist and three-time breast cancer survivor Donna Deegan in June 2003. The nonprofit was created to help those living with breast cancer by providing financial and emotional support.

In an effort to continue to raise money for families and fund research, the foundation partners with various organizations and businesses and

hosts an annual marathon. Before the marathon, it has a challenge in place called the Donna 110 Mile-a-Day challenge. This challenge was first launched in 2022 and it challenges participants to walk or run one mile a day leading up to the weekend of the Donna Marathon. Research says that exercise reduces treatment related effects and reduces up to 50 percent cancer specific and mortality in breast cancer. Aside from just supporting breast cancer, the foundation aspires to encourage the community by promoting health and wellness locally and across the nation.

The Donna Marathon weekend takes place during the weekend of Feb. 2 - Feb. 4 in Jacksonville. The weekend will include the Donna Dash, a 5K, marathon, ultramarathon, half marathon and health and wellness expo. There are also more events that draw people in from all over the country pertaining to the support of breast cancer throughout the month of October. The full list of events, gatherings, and discounts can be found on the foundation's website.

On the contrary, the efforts of the Donna Foundation have made groundbreaking progress that has benefited a variety of areas. Their donations in

2015 helped one of their partners, the Mayo Clinic, to be able to announce the widely publicized triple negative breast cancer vaccine trials. The money raised from the marathon makes it possible for state-of-the-art research to be done and provides genomics support for research with all cancers.

As a way to make a greater impact to help families, in 2015 the foundation was able to expand their reach to families nationwide. Through partnership, donations, and money raised more components of the nonprofit organization have been able to branch out more services that benefit families dealing with breast cancer.

When impacted by breast cancer herself, Deegan fully understood how expensive and a financial burden it can be. So for those dealing with the disease, her mission was and still is to relieve those dealing with breast cancer of financial debt. Each year the foundation participates in a variety of educational programs, fundraising events, partnerships, and engages in community outreach to continue to support their mission.

The Donna Foundation aims to move families from a place of fear during the unknown and uncertain times to a place of relief, support and love.



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