

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

The Greater Richmond Affiliate

Volume 1, Issue 4
Fall 2006

The Greater Richmond Affiliate Susan G. Komen

Breast Cancer Foundation
4905 Radford Avenue, Suite 209
Richmond, VA 23230
Phone: 804-358-7223
www.komen.org
www.richmondrace.org

Executive Director – Judy Adams Board of Directors

Susan Quisenberry, *President*
Barbara S. Brown, *Secretary*
Denise Holmes, *Treasurer*
Frank Bates, *2006 Race Co-Chair*
Jen Merritt, *2006 Race Co-Chair*
Kerry Depew, *Finance Committee Chair*
Diane Keith Jones, *PR/Marketing Committee Co-Chair*
Dr. Stephanie Micas, *Member at Large*
Frank Robinson, *Vice President and Grants Committee*
Lisa Sims, *PR/Marketing Committee Co-Chair*
Julie Tea, *Education and Outreach Committee Chair*
Dr. Diane Baer Wilson, *Edd, MS, RD, Grants Committee*



For Co-Survivors

There are as many ways of being a co-survivor as there are people! Thoughtful gestures big and small mean so much to survivors, whether they've just been diagnosed or completed treatment years ago. Thanks for the strength, love and support you show in ways big and small by being a co-survivor.



What can I do? What can I say?

Is someone you know battling breast cancer or stepping back into "normal" life after treatment? Sometimes it's hard knowing what to say or do. Handy fact sheets and breast cancer information about the disease and its emotional impact can help you reach out and meet the real needs of a survivor. Such information is readily available at www.komen.org.

Learn how friends, co-workers and neighbors can join together to assist your loved one in their time of need by creating a private online group calendar at www.lotsahelpinghands.com.

Help me understand what you're going through.

Breast cancer is complex and baffling. It changes lives, relationships, goals and priorities. Information outlining what you might expect along the way is very important in traveling the breast cancer journey alongside a friend or loved one. Again, the Komen website has a host of tools that can help.

Sharing your story – connecting with other co-survivors.

As a co-survivor, you provide much-needed support for your loved one's fight against breast cancer. You need support, too. By sharing your story and connecting with other co-survivors, you can be part of a group connected by strength, hope and love. Utilize message boards to talk with others. You are not alone. Every three minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. Each diagnosis affects everyone in that person's life. The co-survivor message board ("Family and Friends") is a place for you to share ideas and support with people who know how you feel. Visit it at www.komen.org/forums/.

Free Cancer Survivors' Symposium!

- WHO: Cancer survivors and their families
- WHAT: "Staying Cancer-Free: Reducing Your Risk Through Healthy Lifestyle & Screenings," the first of a five-part symposia for survivors of all types of cancer, featuring a panel discussion led by three experts in cancer survivorship addressing how diet, exercise and standard health screenings reduce the risk of cancer recurrence and improve health status as a cancer survivor
- WHERE: Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
- WHEN: November 9, 2006 from 7-9 pm
- HOW: Presented by the VCU Massey Cancer Center and the Greater Richmond Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Visit www.massey.vcu.edu or call 804-628-1917 to register.
- WHY: To receive free, valuable health information!

Points of Interest

- For Co-Survivors, page 1
- Stories of Support, page 2
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month Events, page 3
- Becoming a More Effective Co-Survivor, page 3

Stories of Support: Strength Comes in Numbers

Inspiring Stories of Hope & Encouragement from Co-Survivors & Breast Cancer Survivors

Bob (Co-Survivor) & his wife, Becky (Survivor):

I was deployed to Kosovo with my National Guard unit in November 2003. My wife provided amazing support for me during my deployment. We cried when I left. We celebrated when I returned. We had an old normal before I left. We had a new normal after I returned. Less than five months after I returned, my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. We cried when she was diagnosed. We will celebrate when her "cancer deployment" ends. We will have another new normal when the treatment ends.



We just celebrated during the Race for the Cure® last weekend. We celebrated being halfway through with chemo. We celebrated the love and support of family and friends. I've learned to hold her hand and listen. I remember worrying about what the scars would look like. I remember worrying about what her bald head would look like. I've learned that little things like that don't really matter. What matters is she's beautiful and I love her. It's that simple. I can't fix it or solve it. I'm learning that there are certain things I can control and certain things I can't. I still cry. I cried at the Race for the Cure®. But I can control how much I love my wife. She supported me when I was 6,000 miles away. I can easily support her during her deployment. It's all about holding her hand and listening and thinking long-term.

Irene (Survivor) & her husband, physician, & many more (Co-Survivors):

In September 2003, I was diagnosed with bilateral breast cancer. In October 2003, I underwent a bilateral mastectomy. Chemotherapy and reconstruction followed. That is the simple summary of my journey through breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. Happily, it was not a journey that I navigated alone. Those people who love me, care about me, or, in some cases, just cross my path on a regular basis shared this journey with me. I think my story will sound familiar to other women who have traveled this same road.

My two biggest supporters were my husband and my physician. Each of them gave so much more that I ever could have imagined. My husband consistently cared for me physically and emotionally, encouraged me and kept his chin up. He operated outside his emotional comfort zone for long periods of time without complaining. I always thought that I had a good marriage to a good man, but the experience of sharing my breast cancer journey deepened and expanded our marriage. The extraordinary care that I received from my internist is beyond description. From the moment she told me the lumps were malignant, she also assured me she would be with me throughout the whole experience, and she was. This is a woman who is not only a great doctor but also a great human being. She answered each of my questions honestly and patiently, explained that the worst part was waiting to get started, listened to me cry in frustration when I thought the drains would never get removed from my armpits and regularly called just to see how I was doing. There are not words or deeds that can fully thank her for all that she gave me throughout those months.

I am sure that lots of women acknowledge their husbands and physicians as inspirations and as people with whom they have a special bond as co-survivors. I would also like to celebrate as co-survivors those people on the periphery of my life who spontaneously offered their support, time and good wishes, even though many of them didn't know me very well. Their support was fundamental to my recovery. My friends at the pool where I swim called and sent gifts and cards from the day I was diagnosed until my return after chemo. The man who has cut my hair for 30 years gave up a day to help me to select a wig. The woman who sells me tea every morning in the local bagel shop volunteered to come clean my house since I looked under the weather. A trainer at the YMCA taught me tai chi and chi gong and worked with me sitting down when I was too tired to stand up – we never missed a week. This paragraph would be even longer if I tried to mention all of those who gave so thoughtfully throughout. They all made a difference.

Support the Greater Richmond Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and get tied to the cause with a 2005 Limited Edition Lilly Pulitzer Silk Scarf! The exclusive Lilly design symbolizes the spirit of hope, courage and life that people who participate in Race for the Cure® exemplify. The 100% silk scarf features a colorful print of pink chrysanthemums and blue daisies on a green background. Purchase for \$30 (retails for \$35) online at www.richmondrace.org.



Do I have a special bond with each of them? You bet. Now, after my hair has grown back and my energy has returned, our greetings are just a little warmer and more knowing. In our way, we have shared something very important. Some have said to me that I have been an inspiration to them in the way I have handled having breast cancer. In fact, the reverse is true. They were and continue to be an inspiration to me.

When I started this journey through breast cancer I thought it was a trip I would basically travel on my own. I was very wrong. There have been lots of supporters, expected and unexpected, cheering me on along the route. In a strange way, it has been a journey well worth taking.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month!



Panera Bread Celebrates National Breast Cancer Awareness Month with Pink Ribbon Bagels™



In honor of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Panera Bread bakery-cafes throughout Richmond, Virginia will offer a special, limited-time-only Pink Ribbon Bagel. For each Pink Ribbon Bagel sold during the month of October, at participating bakery-cafes, Panera Bread will donate 25 cents to The Greater Richmond Affiliate.

Wacoal Fit for the Cure® (for all women...all ages and shapes): Join Wacoal as it brings the right fit and the right cause to women everywhere. For every woman fitted at a Fit for the Cure® event in Wacoal, Donna Karan Intimates, and DKNY Underwear, Wacoal will donate \$2 to the Komen Foundation. No purchase is necessary! A specialist will provide a private consultation and be on hand to help women make their selections. Wacoal is launching an additional element to the program entitled "Support the Girls". For every Awareness Bra and iBra purchased during October, Wacoal will donate an additional \$2 to the Komen Foundation.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--|------------|
| • Tuesday, October 24 | Dillard's at Southpark Mall | 11am - 6pm |
| • Wednesday, October 25 | Dillard's at Chesterfield Towne Center | 11am - 7pm |
| • Thursday, October 26 | Dillard's at Virginia Center Commons | 11am - 7pm |
| • Friday, October 27 | Dillard's at Stony Point Fashion Park | 11am - 7pm |
| • Saturday, October 28 | Dillard's at Short Pump Town Center | 10am - 4pm |

Race to Arby's® to Help Find a Cure!

During October, Arby's will promote a special Market Fresh™ Tuscan Chicken Sandwich at 16 of its Richmond area sites in support of Breast Cancer Awareness month. Ten percent of its purchase price will be donated to the Greater Richmond Affiliate.

Yoplait

Save Lids to Save Lives®

Save Yoplait's pink lids through October 31, 2006, and Yoplait will donate 10¢ per lid (up \$1.5 million!) to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Please contact jadams@richmondrace.org or call 804-358-7223 to receive a Save Lids Save Lives® collection box and Pink Lid collection envelopes so you can start today!

Lake Monticello Breast Cancer Luncheon

Lake Monticello Cancer Support Group Luncheon will be held on October 6 at the Lake Monticello Club (41 Ashlawn Boulevard, Palmyra, VA) for in support of the Greater Richmond Affiliate. For reservations and details, email pagraham512@cs.com

Becoming a More Effective Co-Survivor – Ideas from Those Who Have Been There:

Jenni, Co-Survivor: When my mom was diagnosed and was scheduled for a bilateral mastectomy, I recruited friends and family to help me put together a scrapbook of cards, prayers, well-wishes, jokes – anything to brighten her day. I gave it to her in the hospital. Now it's at home to help her through tough days as she recovers. Contributions keep flowing in – I may even have to get her a new book!

Sandi, Co-Survivor: When my close friend was diagnosed again after five years, I gathered all of our co-workers and we turned her small backyard into a healing garden. We pulled together and planted flowers, and added a birdbath and wind chimes. We gave her a reason to go out and enjoy looking at the birds and flowers.

Malu, Co-Survivor: When I learn a friend or family member has cancer, I find out who knows, then send those people a square of white cotton fabric and ask them to sign it in permanent marker. I use the squares to whip together a quilt to surround the patient with love, literally. If others quilt, it's a wonderful group exercise.

Kelly, Co-Survivor: When my aunt was diagnosed, family throughout the country wanted to do something special for her. We mailed a sheet to each member, who added their handprints in paint to it, along with a short message and their name. After everyone's handprints were added, we made the sheet into a quilt. Our hands showed her we cared, were thinking of her, and were pulling for her to get through treatment.

Julie, Survivor: When I went through breast cancer this past year, just a simple card being sent to me would really brighten my day. When I was having a bad day and did not feel great, I could pull my cards out and they would bring a smile to my day.

Jeanie, Co-Survivor: I found I could help my friend going through surgery and chemo by cataloguing all the kind notes, food and other goodies that she received. I created a whole index card system of names and addresses with gift/thoughtfulness noted on one. I also created all the thank you notes for her to sign and send.

Phillip, Co-Survivor: Be a good listener and resist the urge to solve everything. Many breast cancer questions don't have answers, so just letting my wife talk out her feelings or fears helped her.

Stories of Support *continued*

Co-Survivor: Jaime

Breast cancer has always been an issue that is important to me. My mother had several scares, and she and I have done the Komen Race for the Cure® every year for the past nine years. The strength and courage of survivors have always touched me, but last October, breast cancer touched me in a completely different way. Jennifer is someone I consider a mentor. She's 40 (15 years older than me) with two small children, and someone I aspire to be like, both professionally and personally. When she told me she was sick, she didn't tell me she had cancer (much less breast cancer) but from everything she said and didn't say, I figured it out. I think on some level, she wanted to protect me because she knew how upset I would be.

When she told me, I stopped breathing. When I started again, everything had changed. She was so young, and looked healthy, and it was completely unexpected. All I could think was, "It's not supposed to happen like this. Not to her." Her outlook, on the other hand, was so optimistic and so positive, that she encouraged me to hold on to hope. I was terrified. Just thinking about it or hearing talk of breast cancer on television, the radio or at work would drive me to tears. The fear and uncertainty were so strong that sometimes I didn't know how I would be able to feel it all. She meant so much to me and I never expected anything like this to happen to her. I felt helpless, because I knew I couldn't make this go away and I couldn't absorb any of the pain.

I'm a graduate student in a health psychology program at a medical school, so I read every oncology textbook I could from the library. Somehow reading about the molecular makeup of cancer was easier than wondering if Jennifer's hair was falling out or if she was in pain. I devoured journal articles, I read every book I could find on breast cancer, I signed up for the Breast Cancer 3-Day and my research projects for school were about psychosocial aspects of breast cancer. All of this helped alleviate some of the helplessness, but I wanted to do more.

After her lumpectomy, Jennifer started chemotherapy. Every other Friday, when she got her treatments, I would wonder if she was scared, if she had someone to go with her and if the chemo was making her sick. Every other Saturday, I'd wonder how she was holding up. We kept in touch by e-mail, and I burned and sent CDs to keep her occupied during chemo and cards or articles to read of things I found interesting and thought she would, too. I didn't know if any of this helped, but I hoped that they were at least a diversion from the world of chemotherapy.

Jennifer has been an inspiration. This past Mother's Day, I ran the Komen Race for the Cure® in honor and celebration of her. It's because of her that I broke through my own personal denial and started doing BSE every month. I spoke with her on the phone after she finished her radiation treatments and she sounds wonderful. She says she's doing well, and I hear her strength in her voice. Every night I pray for her health. She is my role model. She once told me something that she lived throughout this whole experience. She said, "Jaime, we can't always control what happens to us. What we can control is how we respond to what happens to us." Amen. Read more stories at www.komen.org.

Susan G. Komen Foundation's new year-round fundraising and education program launches October 1 to coincide with **National Breast Cancer Awareness Month**. Just choose an October day, make a \$5+ personal contribution to the Komen Foundation, and wear a pink outfit as a way of sharing our promise for the cure. Just choose the date...choose the outfit...and make a difference!

**PASSIONATELY
PINK
FOR THE CURE**

Companies, schools, organizations, social groups and individuals can register at www.komen.org, which also offers tools to make a Passionately Pink for the Cure™ day a success. Groups of 5+ receive a free participation kit with an introductory letter, idea sheet, educational materials about breast cancer, program poster and pink ribbons. Need pink attire? Check out Ford's Warriors in Pink Gear at www.fordcares.com.

Quilt Pink™ Day is September 30, 2006! Quilters of all skill levels can support the fight against breast cancer on September 30, 2006, at quilt shops and participating retailers nationwide. **Here's how you can help:** Bring a friend and visit **Quilters Corner** (1318 Sycamore Square, Midlothian; 804-794-1990), **Quilting Adventures** (7121 Staples Mill Road, Richmond; 804-262-0005), **Water and Queen Studio** (P.O. Box 999, Tappahannock, VA; 804-445-8484) or **Rachel's Quilt Patch** (40 Middlebrook Avenue, Staunton; 540-886-7728) on Quilt Pink Day to make a pink-and-white quilt block. Your block will be stitched to those created by other quilters and sent as a finished quilt to *American Patchwork & Quilting*® magazine for an online auction in Spring 2007, with net proceeds to benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Oreck – Clean for the Cure®. Oreck is committed to supporting the Komen Foundation through the sale of its Special Edition Clean for the Cure® vacuum cleaner package. For each pink Clean for the Cure® Oreck XL upright vacuum sold, Oreck will make a \$50 donation to Komen. For each XL21 model sold, it will donate \$70. The Glen Allen Oreck Store will also donate 10% of your purchase to the Greater Richmond Affiliate. Just print a copy of the Oreck Flyer at www.richmondrace.org and take it to **Oreck Store**, 9699A West Broad Street, Glen Allen; 804-270-6277.