As we turn the page on the New Year, we celebrate the arrival of a big year for us at the Coalition. We turn TWENTY-FIVE!

I imagine it was an exciting day when the founders of the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester received their letter from the IRS stating that their application for the formation of their nonprofit had been approved. When they gathered around the table for their first Board of Director’s meeting in January of 1998, there may have even been champagne. They had a mighty vision that included a balance of our four pillars: advocacy, education, research, and support. One thing is certain:

They were ready to change the conversation about breast cancer.

Receiving a diagnosis of breast cancer was a powerful motivator to get to work and make the necessary changes in how we talk about the disease. We were ready to roll up our sleeves and focus on the “What now?”

What now, indeed.

Twenty-five years later, here we are. We can look back at all we have accomplished together – and the timeline on page 4 illustrates the greatest milestones – or we can forge ahead with the usual determination of survivor-advocates without a lot of time to bask in the glory of our silver jubilee.

We look forward to this new year knowing we have already made important changes. Diversity, equity, and inclusion have been foremost among our goals as we develop new programs at the Coalition. New programs require a deep commitment, as well as the necessary funding. We are grateful to the EnPro Foundation for awarding a grant that will allow us to develop programming specific to our Women of Color. We have been granted funds by the Saunders Foundation to develop a program that helps us integrate our gynecologic cancer survivors in a bolder, more meaningful way. And once again, the Marilyn Lichtman Foundation has committed to help ensure our future with the Emerging Leaders Program. This program offers historical context for our young survivor-advocates and provides training focused on advocacy and research. These are critical for our young survivors as they prepare to take the reins from our experienced leaders.

Finally, though there was a lot of attachment to the name of our annual Pink Ribbon Walk and Run, we begin our 25th year with a name change. The Pink & Teal Challenge is more appropriate to the part of our mission that compels us to cultivate community among those touched by breast or gynecologic cancer and to empower informed decision-making through education, support, and advocacy.

A fresh new year... a fresh page... fresh ideas... and plenty of gumption. We hope you’ll join us!
A PERSONAL JOURNEY: MEGAN M.
By Megan M.

I’VE GOT YOUR BACK

I had just stepped off my bike after a workout when I felt a pain in my left breast. Running my hand over the area that hurt, I was surprised to feel a squishy and moveable lump. I did regular breast self-exams, so this new lump seemed to have come out of nowhere. I was 35 years old and cancer was the furthest thing from my mind. I chalked it up to a hormone issue related to a medication I was taking, and decided to ask my OB-GYN about it at my routine appointment with her about a week later.

That appointment is one I will never forget.

My doctor examined the lump and told me it was a benign fibroadenoma and said “not to worry.” She then gave me a new prescription and a referral for imaging. As I walked to the car, I weighed my options: make an appointment for a mammogram and ultrasound – which would likely cost a significant amount of money because they wouldn’t be covered by my insurance; or wait it out and hope that the pain and the lump were related to the medication and would go away on their own. I decided to call the number on the referral form. In that moment, all I could think about was a dear friend who had been diagnosed with breast cancer the previous year at the age of 33. If it could happen to her, it could happen to me.

In retrospect, I’m glad I allowed myself to worry.

After two mammograms and an ultrasound, the doctor at the imaging center told me that the lump was probably cancer, and that it had spread to my lymph nodes. In that moment, my life changed. Due to pandemic restrictions, I had gone to the appointment alone. I didn’t know what to do. When the doctor left the room to gather equipment for a biopsy, I said to myself, “Be brave.”

The next week was a whirlwind of appointments and information. I was fortunate to be connected with an outstanding and compassionate medical team that helped me make sense of the chaos. I learned that I had invasive ductal carcinoma and ductal carcinoma in situ; two common subtypes of breast cancer. My cancer tested positive for estrogen and progesterone receptors and negative for a protein called human epidermal growth factor 2, or HER2; a profile shared by the majority of breast cancer cases. Taking this information into account, among other factors, my medical team determined that my cancer was stage II, meaning that the cancer was growing but had not spread beyond the breast or surrounding lymph nodes.

My treatment began with sixteen chemotherapy infusions over a period of six months. I then had a lumpectomy, followed by twenty-five rounds of radiation. Through it all, I was surrounded by the love of family, friends, colleagues, and the wonderful staff at the Breast Cancer Coalition. I will be forever grateful to every single person who walked this path with me.

When I was first in touch with the Coalition, one of the staff members who is also a survivor told me, “This is a club no one wants to be in, but it has the best members.” For me, a silver (or actually, gold!) lining of having had cancer is that I’ve met remarkable people. Some are mentors. Some are peers. All are friends. I’ve been able to lean on fellow survivors who understand all of the emotions that come with this process. I’ve been able to bond with members of the Young Survivors group. And I’ve been able to offer hope to individuals who are newly diagnosed as a mentor in the PALS program.

In my spare time, I teach and perform sketch comedy and improvisation. Before going on stage, my teammates and I always tell each other the same thing: “I’ve got your back.” I’m grateful that so many people had my back through my diagnosis and treatment. And now, I’m lucky enough to say to anyone who is part of this club: “I’ve got your back.”
25 YEARS, 25 MILESTONES
A timeline of just a few significant dates in the Coalition’s history.

July 1997 – The Beginning
Thirteen breast cancer survivors met at the home of Sylvia Cappellino to begin formally organizing the Breast Cancer Coalition.

January 1998 – Up and Running
Having received their IRS Determination letter, they met for the first Board of Directors meeting as a newly incorporated nonprofit organization.

May 1998 – On the Road
A group of five Coalition advocates traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the NBCC* National Advocacy and Training Conference, which has since been re-named the Advocate Leadership Summit. Coalition advocates have made this a priority in subsequent years.

June 2000 – Our First Home
Finding a P.O. Box and answering machine in a member’s home insufficient, the emerging group opened their first office at 200 Park Avenue, in the heart of Rochester.

October 2001 – New Leadership
In the challenging aftermath of 9/11, Holly Anderson began her tenure as our Executive Director. She had taken an active leadership role at the Coalition after her breast cancer diagnosis in 1999, and is still at the helm today.

May 2002 – Heart and Sole
The first annual walk and run was held on Mother’s Day in the pouring rain at St. John Fisher College. At first called Heart and Sole, the event was re-named the Pink Ribbon Walk and Run in 2004. It is a signature event for the Coalition that has continued to evolve through the years.

September 2002 – Another New Home
To accommodate developing services and programs, we moved into a more spacious location just a mile away at 840 University Avenue.

Spring 2003 – Funding Research
Our Breast Cancer Research Initiative awarded its first $25K grant to Mesut Muyan, PhD, a University of Rochester researcher.

September 2003 – A Survivor/Legislator’s Legacy
The first annual Terri Schmitt Legislative Reception was held and continues annually in memory of this early Coalition Director. Terri saw the importance of collaborating with legislators on matters that make a difference for cancer survivors, laying a strong foundation for our Advocacy Committee.

March 2004 – Addressing Metastatic Disease
The first annual Cindy Dertinger Advanced Breast Cancer Seminar: Tools for the Journey was held. Cindy, a cherished member of the Coalition’s survivor community, died of metastatic breast cancer in 2003. In collaboration with her employer, M&T Bank, this seminar continues to be offered every year.

March 2005 – A Landmark Victory for Coalition Advocates
Coalition Advocates were successful in the passage of the 48-hour Neighbor Notification Law in Monroe County, which requires prior written notification to the owners of adjacent properties before commercially sprayed pesticide applications.

May 2005 – Yoga
A pilot program of yoga classes for breast cancer survivors held at the Coalition quickly became one of our regular program offerings due to its popularity.

Spring 2006 – Young Survivors Gather
The first networking group for young breast cancer survivors began meeting at the Coalition. This group morphed into the quarterly Young Survivor Gatherings, which were initiated in 2008.
contribution toward the installation of this unit located in a city neighborhood where access to screening is limited.

January 2014 – Welcome New Friends: Gynecologic Cancer Survivors
After holding a series of focus groups that identified a strong need for support among gynecologic cancer survivors, the Coalition opened its support programs to those facing this group of cancers. They have become cherished members of our survivor community.

June 2014 – Enacting Medical Marijuana
Coalition advocates were instrumental in the passage of New York’s medical marijuana bill. This law allowed cancer survivors access to a botanical remedy to alleviate the effects of their disease and/or treatment, and paved the way for further legislation.

January 2016 – Another Move
When it became clear that a location with off-street parking would benefit our survivor community, we moved two blocks to our current home at 1048 University Avenue.

January 2016 – Reaching Out to a Wider Region
After conducting a series of roundtable discussions with survivors throughout Central and Western New York, we extended our reach into the nine-county region surrounding Monroe County. Today, we serve 27 counties.

October 2018 – Ethics Matter
We were honored to be selected as the recipient of the 2018 Ethies Award by the Rochester Area Business Ethics Foundation (now Elevate Rochester). We are proud of our high ethical standards and strive to build on that strong foundation in all we do.

March 2020 – COVID Shutdown
When Covid-19 struck, the Coalition remained open. Staff quickly pivoted programs and services to virtual platforms. They were inventive, flexible, and compassionate in ensuring that survivors would have access to our programs without interruption.

July 2022 – $1 Million Awarded to Research
With the awarding of a $25,000 grant to a Cornell post-graduate student, the Coalition surpassed $1 million dollars in the provision of funding to regional researchers since the program’s inception.

May 2023 – Pink and Teal Intertwine
This year, the re-imagined walk and run combines the pink ribbon of breast cancer with the teal ribbon of gynecologic cancers, and introduces a brand-new name: The Pink and Teal Challenge! We hope to see you there!

*The Breast Cancer Coalition is unaffiliated with any national groups, including the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC). We choose to support NBCC’s public policy agenda.
I was diagnosed with metaplastic breast cancer in August of 2018. Metaplastic breast cancer is a rare sub-type of triple negative disease*, which is itself only 10-15% of all breast cancers. I distinctly remember the oncologist telling me they would need to use all the tools in their toolbox to treat me, including a mastectomy and the “big guns” of chemotherapy. I completed my treatment in March of 2019. But by August of 2021, my cancer was back; this time as metastatic disease.

Hearing that I had metastatic breast cancer was a gut punch. I immediately thought of my son, my husband, my 81-year-old father, my 100-year-old grandmother, my friends, and my colleagues. How would I share this awful news with them? How would I handle their emotions and mine? Would I continue working? If so, for how long? How much time would I have left? How much longer would I feel OK? It is really easy to go down this rabbit hole, and I did – for a couple days. Then I took a deep breath and had some difficult conversations with my family and closest friends. And cried a lot of tears. I made a conscious decision to make the most of the time I have. For me, dwelling on the negative is just not in my nature. I needed to find my way back to seeing the glass half full.

But the honest truth is that living with metastatic disease is like playing a high-stakes game of whack-a-mole, that silly arcade game. For me, it first showed as a bone metastasis in my scapula. What I thought was a rotator cuff injury was revealed by MRI to be a cancer lesion. I was treated with radiation and monthly injections of a bone-strengthening medication. I felt good for a couple months and if I’m honest, a bit cocky. Then, three months later, routine scans showed lesions in my lungs and pancreas. I started a new chemotherapy regimen in January, 2022. In July, when vomiting issues developed, my Nurse Practitioner sent me for a brain MRI, just to be safe. Eleven brain lesions were discovered. I’ve completed three sessions of stereotactic radiotherapy and am hopeful this treatment did the trick.

If that wasn’t enough of a challenge, my regular scans last August showed an enlarged lymph node under my arm. My oncologist and I are discussing whether or not to stay with the current chemo regimen or switch to another drug. There is a clinical trial I may be eligible for that sounds promising, but it is not yet open. The
good news is that with every metastatic occurrence, there has been a treatment option. For that I am exceedingly grateful.

I have grudgingly come to terms with my mortality and am committed to living in the moment. I try very hard not to worry about the things I can’t control. I’m doing things that make me happy – like puttering in the garden, reading, hiking, traveling, and most importantly, prioritizing time with family and friends. I don’t feel guilty about saying no anymore. My time is precious and I want to use it in ways that bring me joy. I’m finally prioritizing myself, although I wish I hadn’t learned that important lesson from having this disease.

The Breast Cancer Coalition has provided an incredible support system. I first found my way to the Coalition in 2018 and, after attending a Breast Cancer 101 session, I took yoga classes, participated in a writing workshop, and appreciated all the resources and information available. I am now a member of Common Ground, a group for individuals with metastatic disease. The women from this group are inspiring, funny, knowledgeable, loving, and strong. It may be a group no one wants to join, but wow, am I grateful Common Ground exists. We can rage, rant, console, laugh, and cry with each other with no judgement; only love and support.

I found it helpful to write in a journal during those first weeks and months. I was able to process my anger, grief, and fear by writing about it. I also repeated a couple of mantras when I felt myself freaking out. One is “I am not going to die today and I am not going to die tomorrow.” It has become my reminder to live for today.

For others who are facing metastatic disease, it is important to be your own advocate. Ask lots of questions. Seek out health care providers who will listen and respond to your specific needs. You and your wellbeing are the priorities.

Be kind to yourself. It might feel like your body has betrayed you, but remember to love and appreciate what your body can do. Do the little things that bring you joy. Go for a walk in the park, eat your favorite meal, treat yourself to a massage, attend a concert, meditate, buy a pretty outfit, buy cute shoes! Don’t wait to take that trip, to use the good china, and to tell people you love them. I find myself saying “I love you” a lot more than I used to.

Finally, I encourage others to take advantage of the many resources offered by the Coalition. You are not alone. There are many, many individuals who are here to listen, offer support, and extend a helping hand.

* Triple negative breast cancer is a sub-type of the disease in which the tumor cells do not have any of the three features commonly found in breast cancer: estrogen receptors, progesterone receptors, and human epidermal growth factor 2 (HER2).
Finding Joy Wherever the Road May Lead

by Kathryn Z.

A survivor-speaker at our second annual Gynecologic Cancer Seminar on September 16, 2022, Kathryn Z. spoke of her life with advanced-stage disease, offering her perspective on the challenges while holding to her pre-diagnosis way of life in unique and resourceful ways. This one-of-a-kind world traveler shares her story here. Although edited, is true to the resilience, honesty, and humor that have defined this remarkable woman from the beginning.

I'm Kathryn, also known as “Bag Lady.” It’s a name I acquired when I hiked the Appalachian Trail and that's how many people refer to me. I was born and raised in Rochester, earned my CPA, had a corporate career in finance at Xerox, and raised two daughters on my own. I retired early at age 57 and, for me, that's when my life began. It's been quite an adventurous life. I've hiked trails all over the world. Then, in 2014, I sold my house in Fairport and took off on my bike. I biked here and in southeast Asia, Africa, Mexico, Cuba, twice across the US, and Australia and New Zealand.

In October 2019, I returned to Rochester from a hike across Europe. I was planning to drop off my backpack, pick up my bike, and head to South America. But I was experiencing bloat and thought, "This is odd. Is this some kind of IBS?" I started an IBS diet, trying to get it under control. Finally, I ended up in the emergency room, which led to a diagnosis of a high-grade serous, advanced-stage ovarian cancer.

It felt like I was seeing the stop sign of my life. I didn't know if I could buy a new pair of pants because I didn't know if I'd be alive in three months. Then I started thinking, "Well, this is kind of similar to traveling around the world." I felt I'd been dropped into a foreign country where I needed to acclimate to the culture, to the language – everything was different.

From my perspective two-and-a half years down the road, the first thing I would say to newly diagnosed women is, "Take a breath." I would suggest interviewing oncologists. Not that you would know what questions to ask, but you're going to find out if there's rapport between you. It's an important relationship, where you can ask questions and receive answers that are deep enough for you. I was assigned a doctor and, a couple of months in, asked to change. I'm someone who needs deep answers. I want to know everything.

My diagnosis was an abrupt stop of a life I loved. You can't travel the world like I did when you're medically vulnerable. For me, it's a big challenge. I'm still a nomad; I don't own a house. Luckily, I have a friend here in Rochester who's given me his house to live in. I often choose to sleep in a tent in the back yard, trying to keep up part of my nomadic lifestyle.

I can't travel on my bike, so I bought a mini-van and converted the back into a camper. Then I decided to do a cross country trip last summer. At the time, my only treatment was a drug called Avastin that slows the growth of blood
vessels. Luckily, I have a doctor in Houston who has colleagues in Minneapolis, Denver, and San Diego – all cities I would be visiting. He put referrals in the system, and I was able to connect with these three doctors and get my treatment during the months I was on the road. I drove 10,000 miles around the country. For me, life is quality over quantity. These travel breaks add to the quality of my life.

The Coalition was first mentioned to me by my massage therapist. I wasn't sure if it was what I needed, but I thought "Well, let's just see what this has got." I picked up the phone, made that call, and soon connected with the Common Ground group. What I love about this group is that we all have advanced stage cancer. They're role models for living your life. It's so good to sit and talk about what's going on, to talk about the challenges, and get that support that it's okay to advocate for yourself. When we're able to have social gatherings, it's just time together and the friendships get deeper. Of course, I travel, so I'm away for months at a time. I do the Zoom meetings while I'm on the road. It is wonderful to have the Coalition, an organization full of people who understand each other – we're all in the same boat. This isn't the life you pick, but it is the life you have. And you learn to live with it as best you can, and bind your old life into your new life.

I have a dear friend – the one who has given me his house to live in – he's my rock. He walks with me to chemo, goes with me to my appointments, and listens when I ramble about death and dying and fear and drugs, or whatever's going on. He listens and bounces things back. I don't need anything from my family and friends but to listen and let me talk. It's in that talking, that verbalizing what's in your head, that lets it out. And sometimes it just dissipates. They can't solve my problems. But they can open their ears and that helps a whole lot.

It has been a challenge to find out how to live with my cancer, how to treat it, how to cope, how to incorporate it into my life and find those happy things. I've always said I never wanted life to be too easy, but this is not what I meant. Still, I've done a lot of hard things. I hiked the Appalachian Trail, which is a 2200-mile trail from Georgia to Maine. You don't look at the whole trail because if you did, it would blow your mind. You look at the day ahead and find joy in the hard work. It's really one day at a time, one step at a time.
ADVOCACY CHAIR UPDATE

Advocacy in Action

By Christina Thompson

The Advocacy Committee of the Breast Cancer Coalition has completed an extremely busy end to 2022 while strategizing for the differences we want to see in 2023!

Highlights include:

Marianne Sargent and Rachel Studley represented the Breast Cancer Coalition at a family health fair sponsored by Josh Jensen; NYS Assembly District 134. These committee members answered attendees’ questions about the Coalition and discussed legislation we support.

Seven Research and Advocacy Committee members traveled to Cornell University on Saturday, October 22, for “The Science of Cancer Research,” a full-day conference featuring interaction with researchers in training.

Three committee members met virtually with Jennifer Lunsford, NYS Assembly District 135. This meeting helped us better understand the legislative process as it applies to A134/S3331 (the New York State Safe Cosmetics Act) and how the committee can effectively advocate for the bill moving forward.

Three committee members met virtually with Richard Gottfried, retiring NYS Assembly District 75, Assembly Health Committee Chair. Mr. Gottfried discussed the progress of A134/S3331 during the previous legislative session, and where the committee could concentrate efforts moving into a new session.

Members researched established groups with similar policy agendas including Environmental Working Group, Clean & Healthy New York, Breast Cancer Action, Silent Spring Institute, Breast Cancer Prevention Partners, and National Breast Cancer Coalition. At monthly committee meetings, members discuss the opportunities they provide to understand the science involved or chances to collaborate.

Committee members helped staff hang “Lives Touched, Lives Changed” black and white survivor portraits along the walls of City Hall during the month of October to highlight Breast Cancer Awareness Month. On October 26, Mayor Malik Evans held a ceremony to celebrate the exhibit.

Advocacy Committee members welcomed over 45 participants to the 19th Annual Terri Schmitt Legislative Reception. Legislators and their staff, as well as survivor constituents from the community, were invited to visit the Coalition. This evening provided an opportunity to discuss the programs and services offered by the Coalition while celebrating the milestone of $1,000,000 awarded in regional breast cancer research grants (see page 11).

This dynamic committee of advocates meets monthly via Zoom. If you would like to learn more or attend a meeting, please contact info@bccr.org.

*Despite the similarity in our names, the Breast Cancer Coalition is an independent, local organization unaffiliated with any national group, including the National Breast Cancer Coalition. We choose to support NBCC’s public policy agenda because their goal is our goal: doing all we can to END breast cancer. We join hundreds of other grassroots, independent, community-based organizations in doing so because TOGETHER we’re stronger.
As a member of the Coalition’s Advocacy Committee, I was honored to attend the 19th Annual Terri Schmitt Legislative Reception on October 20th—which was appropriately scheduled during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. By now, most people are aware of the disease; what we need is for people to act. Specifically, our team of Coalition advocates has been working on two important initiatives: making sure our New York State elected officials bring bill S3331A, which would help ensure the safety of cosmetics and personal care products sold in our state, to the floor for a vote; and, at the national level, we need our representatives to pass the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act so people with this disease who need Medicare coverage get it as soon as they need it.

At the reception, I was able to meet local representatives who continue to back us in our efforts, such as State Assembly members Harry Bronson, Marjorie Byrnes, Sarah Clark, Jennifer Lunsford, Brian Mantelkow; and State Senators Samra Brouk and Robert Ortt. My fellow advocates, Ayanna, Erin, Kate, and I shared our personal stories and thanked our legislators for their support. We’re happy to have allies in our fight to live our healthiest lives and to help others prevent cancer in theirs.
Breast or GYN Cancer 101 & 201
These are one-to-one sessions to assist newly diagnosed individuals in managing the complex tasks and emotions of a breast or gynecologic cancer diagnosis. We empower individuals to be self-advocates as they proceed through treatment, recovery, and survivorship. Our professional facilitators provide a safe, comfortable atmosphere where information can be absorbed and assimilated while the individual formulates a personal strategy for making informed decisions. Also valuable for a gynecologic or breast cancer survivors at any stage of their journey.
Contact us for an appointment.

PALS Project
In this peer mentoring program, individual breast and gynecologic cancer survivors reach out to those who are more recently diagnosed, providing the reassurance of one-to-one contact with someone who’s “been there,” helping them connect with needed resources, and instilling confidence during a difficult time.
Call today to learn how to join the program and be paired with a mentor who has been there, or if you would like to become involved as a mentor.

HEALING ARTS INITIATIVE
Our evidence-based Healing Arts Initiative is offered in block series of 4 - 6 weeks throughout the year. Call or email us today if you are interested in registering for these beneficial offerings.

Gentle Yoga
Gentle Yoga includes breathing exercises, restorative yoga postures, and mindfulness exercises. Yoga activates a relaxation response and can help relieve feelings of anxiety. The goal of the class is to relax, be mindful, and to improve range of motion and flexibility. Participants benefit most when they are present for the full duration of each class. Classes are 1 hour and 15 minutes.
Sessions are VIRTUAL unless otherwise noted.
New sessions begin in JANUARY and MARCH.
Offered throughout the year on:
- Mondays at 10:00am with Susan
- Mondays at 5:30pm with Susan
- Tuesdays at 10:00am with Susan (IN PERSON)
- Tuesdays at 4:00pm with Susan
- Saturdays at 9:00am with Raksha
- Sundays at 10:00am with Sunni

Voices & Vision
A writing class to thinking creatively while recording personal experiences, memories, feelings, and thoughts. Each week you respond to prompts that challenge you to reflect on the broader aspects of life. Classes are 2 hours. Sessions are VIRTUAL.
- JANUARY 4 - FEBRUARY 1, 1:00-3:00pm with Elizabeth
- FEBRUARY 7 - MARCH 7, 6:00-8:00pm with Ren
- MARCH 29 - APRIL 26, 1:00-3:00pm with Angelique
- MAY 9 - JUNE 6, 6:00-8:00pm with Nancy

Mindfulness & Meditation
Connect with your mind and breath to bring calm to self with a goal to improve your ability to relax, concentrate, and be in the present moment. Classes are 1 hour and 15 minutes. Sessions are VIRTUAL.
New sessions begin:
- Wednesdays at 6:00pm with Rick beginning in JANUARY
- Saturdays at 10:00am with Rick beginning in MARCH

Qi Gong
A traditional Chinese practice combining meditation, controlled breathing, and movement to balance the flow of energy (qi) within your body. The goal is to improve overall health, combat stress, and promote healing. Classes are 1 hour and 15 minutes. Sessions are VIRTUAL.
New sessions begin:
- Saturdays at 10:00am with Raphaela beginning in FEBRUARY

Tai Chi
An ancient martial art that consists of a series of small, specific movements combined with deep, relaxation breathing. Tai Chi’s goal is to improve your ability to relax and de-stress, and has other benefits such as decreasing falls in the elderly and reducing arthritis. Classes are 1 hour and 15 minutes. Sessions are VIRTUAL.
New sessions begin:
- Tuesdays at 3:00pm with Jean beginning in MARCH

See BreastCancerCoalition.org for Healing Arts dates and registration details.
GIVE AND GET SUPPORT

Our Support/Networking Groups can be an important resource for people diagnosed with breast or gynecologic cancer. Some support groups are led by professionals. Others are more informal and discussion based.

**Breast & GYN Cancer Group**
Gather, support, network, and discuss your journey with others diagnosed with breast or gynecologic cancer. Professionally facilitated.

**VIRTUAL Discussion Groups:**
- 2nd and 4th Mondays at 5:30pm
- 3rd and 4th Tuesdays at 5:30pm
Virtual links online.

**IN PERSON Discussion Group:**
- 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 5:30pm

**Brown Bag Discussion Group**
A weekly discussion group over lunch!

**IN PERSON Lunch Group:**
- Every Friday at 12:00 noon. Bring your lunch; dessert is on us!

_We are grateful to our Brown Bag sponsors who provide a tasty dessert every week!_

**Newly Diagnosed or In Active Treatment Networking Group**
A professionally facilitated group to discuss your experience/questions.

**VIRTUAL Discussion Group:**
- 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 10:00am
Virtual links online.

**Partners/Spouses, Family & Friends Networking Group**
Find camaraderie with others supporting a loved one diagnosed with breast or gynecologic cancer. Professionally facilitated.

**IN PERSON:**
- 1st Tuesdays at 5:30pm
**VIRTUAL:**
- 3rd Tuesdays at 5:30pm
Virtual links online.

**Young Survivor Gatherings**
An informal and fun way to connect with others who walk a similar path.
- **Call or email to be added to our invitation list.**

**Common Ground:**
Living with Metastatic Breast or Gynecologic Cancer
Join others coping with a diagnosis of metastatic breast or gynecologic cancer. Professionally facilitated.

**Register** with Christina@bccr.org.

**IN PERSON Lunch:**
- 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 12:00 noon

**VIRTUAL Discussion Group:**
- 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 1:00pm

**Common Ground Partners:**
Partners of Metastatic Individuals
Professionally facilitated group.

**Register** with Christina@bccr.org.

**VIRTUAL Discussion Group:**
- 3rd Tuesdays at 5:30pm

**Lymphedema Networking Group**
For those living with lymphedema, caregivers, therapists, medical personnel, and at risk for developing lymphedema. Professionally facilitated.

**2nd Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm.**
Virtual links online.

**Book Club**
4th Thursday of the month at 6:00pm. Virtual links online.

- **JANUARY 26:** Rochester Reads book, "Hell of a Book" by Jason Mott, facilitated by Ren vanMeenen
- **FEBRUARY 26:** TBA, check website
- **MARCH 23:** TBA, check website

**Surviving & Thriving on Aromatase Inhibitors**
Through increased movement, stretching exercises, and nutrition, this program provides information, support, and empowerment for those prescribed aromatase inhibitors who are experiencing joint pain or other side effects. VIRTUAL, contact Christina@bccr.org to register.

_Registrants must commit to all four sessions in a series._

Check website for upcoming dates and registration details.

See BreastCancerCoalition.org for more information and registration details.

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With this issue, I want to highlight a flagship program of the Breast Cancer Coalition: Brown Bag Friday. This casual, drop-in-style networking group began in 2002. Each Friday at noon, the Coalition welcomes participants to bring their lunches (brown bag optional!) and enjoy a scrumptious dessert provided by us. Brown Bag Fridays are open to those who have experienced a breast or gynecologic cancer diagnosis, and the topic-driven discussion is centered around survivorship.

When facing a new diagnosis, it can be helpful to meet others who have been there. Many undergoing active treatment enjoy being surrounded by people who get it. Individuals who are years out continue to be involved, and connect with others by joining us every week. I looked forward to Brown Bag Friday when my breast cancer diagnosis was new, and I now enjoy attending each week to hear from others!

Conversations during Brown Bag Fridays have inspired change within the Breast Cancer Coalition! Items that were deemed helpful for recovery from surgery are now included in PALS Paks, the tote bags we provide to those who engage in a Breast Cancer 101 or Gynecologic Cancer 101 session. These items include a lanyard for drain management and a soft seatbelt cover for more comfortable car rides following surgical interventions. Discussions surrounding the numerous side effects of hormone-blocking medications helped root the Surviving & Thriving on Aromatase Inhibitors program. Participants discuss upcoming Evening Seminar topics and generate questions for the presenting providers. Friendships are made.

Will YOU join us this Friday?
As a young survivor one year and a half out from my breast cancer diagnosis, the cancer world is still a new experience for me. Even more so, the world of science can be very daunting to enter. I am not alone in this, and with our group of Advocates and Emerging Leaders, I attended the NBCC* Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C., this year. For me, the most impactful plenary session during the summit was “The Artemis Project® – What Have We Accomplished and Where Do We Go Next?” presented by Cyrus Ghajar, PhD, Director of the Laboratory for the Study of Metastatic Microenvironments at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington.

The Artemis Project®, launched in 2010, is an advocate-led collaboration of researchers and advocates that has made steady progress. The project was accepted into the National Cancer Institute’s PREVENTION program in 2020, which will help researchers investigating a preventive vaccine advance to a Phase I clinical trial; a HUGE step forward for everyone!

Learning of a vaccine that could lead to the prevention of breast cancer has ignited hope in me that previously was nonexistent. With the focus continuously on the ‘cure’ of the disease, especially around product marketing, I never considered an intervention that could prevent breast cancer from occurring altogether. I had it burned into my mind that a cure would come before any prevention discussions. To be closer to the possibility of preventing breast cancer prior to finding a cure gives me great hope for our future.

Later that same day, I was able to attend a Speaker Meet-up Session with Dr. Ghajar. These meet-ups provide opportunities for survivor-advocates to ask questions and interact with scientists and researchers. Having the opportunity to speak with Dr. Ghajar in a small group setting allowed for a more intimate backdrop where questions and follow-up questions could be heard, and where we could receive an immediate answer. Learning about dormant breast cancer cells within our own bodies that can sometimes be triggered to become metastatic made me want to become more knowledgeable about the biology of cancer. My interest in learning about how and why these dormant cells are awakened has provoked a sense of fear, impatience, and a drive to advocate for more partnerships between survivor-advocates, researchers, clinicians, and laboratories within our own communities. How wonderful it would be to work together and build on established results rather than competing against one another!

My yearning for a stronger role in advocacy, education, research, and support has been fueled with the absolute knowledge that goals that once seemed unattainable are, in fact, closer to becoming goals achieved.

*The Breast Cancer Coalition is an independent, local organization unaffiliated with any national group, including the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC). Many of our goals are the same; thus, we support NBCC’s public policy agenda.
WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP:

Cornell Researchers and the Survivor Community

By Silvia Gambacorta Hoffman

On October 22, the Coalition participated in a day-long seminar at Cornell University called The Science of Cancer Research. Designed to connect community members with cancer researchers in training, this informal and interactive event was attended by members of the Coalition’s Research Committee, Advocacy Committee, and Emerging Leaders program, who traveled to Ithaca on a beautiful autumn day. In attendance were Erin Bowman, Silvia Gambacorta-Hoffman, Nancy Gramkee-Cuer, Jill Gress, Wendy Grottorff, Kate Gugliandro, Liz Hoyler, Leni Rayburn, and Alexis Stein.

Our participation in this event came about thanks to Bob Riter, a breast cancer survivor, retired Executive Director of the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, author, and member of the Coalition’s Research Advisory Board. He and Dr. Robert Weiss, Professor of Molecular Genetics at Cornell, have developed a program that brings together students, researchers, and community members: the Cornell Community Cancer Partnership.

The seminar was open to people interested in any type of cancer, but breast cancer was the primary focus of the day. Two students gave presentations on their studies and research.

Jack Crowley presented “Reading the Human Blueprint,” a talk on the history of DNA research. DNA consists of four building blocks; A (adenine), C (cytosine), G (guanine) and T (thymine). In 2003, scientists sequenced the entire human genome. This was an enormous accomplishment that took many years to complete, since the human genome sequence is more than three billion letters long. The double helix structure of DNA contains the instructions for assembling proteins that are responsible for all the biochemical processes in the body. For example, one set of DNA instructions would ultimately synthesize proteins to build the enzyme used to digest, break down, and extract nutrients from your last meal. Crowley also briefly covered the liquid biopsy, a blood test, as a less invasive method of cancer screening and detection for the future; it is not yet ready for “prime time.”

Garrett Beeghly spoke on “The Tumor Microenvironment” (TME), the environment around the tumor which includes blood vessels, cells, and molecules. While most research is focused on molecular diversity of tumor cells, the TME is highly complex and plays an important role in tumor progression and metastasis. It can allow cancer cells to become invasive and sometimes, in a complicated and multistep process, to travel to distant locations in the body.

A Q&A session with Dr. Claudia Fischbach, the Director of Cornell’s Physical Sciences Oncology Center, and Dr. Robert Weiss followed the presentations.

Afterward, our group visited some of Cornell’s research laboratories, which I especially enjoyed. In one of the labs, we had some hands-on experience. One of us placed healthy bone cells and bone cells and post-chemo bone cells on glass slides and we viewed them under the microscope. The chemo cells appeared enlarged when compared to the healthy cells. Then Shola, one of the students, showed us cancer cells from a triple negative breast cancer donor interacting with bone cells after chemotherapy with doxorubicin. The cells had lost their distinctive margins and instead appeared clustered together.

The Cornell Community Cancer Partnership provides researchers-in-training with opportunities to interact with members of the survivor community, whose lives can be directly impacted by their work. We are grateful to have participated in their 2022 Cancer Research Education Day.
A new year means a new beginning! The Coalition is excited to announce our walk & run is back with a new name: the PINK & TEAL CHALLENGE!

Why did we change the name? To be more inclusive of the breast and gynecologic cancer community we serve. We hope you share this excitement and join us for our 22nd annual walk and run, now called the Pink & Teal Challenge. Don’t worry, this is still a two-in-one event, offering a virtual option as well.

**What’s the Challenge?** The Coalition challenges YOU to help us make this year’s event bigger and better than ever! Challenge your friends, family, and coworkers to join us in raising funds for cutting-edge programming, education, and support, available free-of-charge for anyone facing a breast or gynecologic cancer diagnosis. Help us celebrate Coalition's 25th anniversary year!

**What are you waiting for?** Register now and join the Challenge SATURDAY, MAY 13th for raffles, music, fundraising, and of course, FUN!

This is a hybrid event, offering a virtual component welcoming participation from anywhere around the world. You may register and fundraise online at www.breastcancercoalition.org.

All proceeds from this event benefit the Breast Cancer Coalition. Contact Karissa@bccr.org with any questions.
ACTOBER
Because Awareness Was Never Enough

By Carly Euler

Here at the Coalition, Breast Cancer Awareness Month is every month. That is why we asked you to move beyond awareness, and instead to take ACTion this ACTober. To kick off this initiative, we hosted a celebration on Friday, September 30th, and we daresay it was a hit!

Back in person for the first time since 2019, the ACTober event brought sponsors, board members, survivors and supporters together for a fun night of reflection, celebration, and anticipation of what’s to come for the Coalition. Doug Phelps, Master of Ceremonies and 2022’s Funniest Person in Rochester, led our show with wit and comedic genius. Honorary Chairs SoccerSam and Linda Fantauzzo shared their story of ten strong years supporting the Coalition through Salvatore’s Pink Pizza Box Campaign, and through the Rochester Lady Lancers. The night continued with inspirational remarks from Kitty Van Bortel, this year’s Presenting Sponsor.

Our annual awards were presented to:

Kelley Madden, PhD, recipient of the 2022 Harriet Susskind-Rosenblum Advocate’s Spirit Award

Avice O’Connell, MD, FACP, FSBI, FRCP, recipient of the 2022 Laurie Pask Heart & Hands Award

Both recipients came highly recommended and their awards were extremely well-deserved. The night concluded with a word from our very own Holly Anderson, as well as an exciting live auction and paddle call. For those who could not attend in person, an online silent auction took place afterward.

ACTober Committee members would like to thank The Highline for hosting a gorgeous event; the Bill Tiberio Band for the jazzy atmosphere; AVVINO for providing an incredible spread of food; as well as all of our fabulous donors. Whether you attended the event, bid in an auction, donated an item, or joined our 2022 Warrior Wall, YOU helped make this event a massive success. Thank you for taking ACTion this ACTober!

Amazing!

We are proud to report that, altogether, this autumn event raised more than ever before - nearly $180,000!

Thank you Sponsors!

PRESENTING Sponsor: $15,000

GOLD Sponsors: $5,000

BreastCancerCoalition.org
Photography courtesy of Ria Tafani

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Winter 2023 • 19
Grief

I had my own notion of grief.
I thought it was the sad time
That followed the death of someone you love.
And you had to push through it
To get to the other side.
But I’m learning there is no other side.
There is no pushing through.
But rather,
There is absorption.
Adjustment.
Acceptance.
And grief is not something you complete
But rather, you endure.
Grief is not a task to finish
And move on,
But an element of yourself –
An alteration of your being.
A new way of seeing.
A new dimension of self.

~By Gwen Flowers

Friends Remembered

We celebrate all who set an unwilling foot on this path, along with our friends and supporters.

Monserati (Taty) Cordero
Dana Gellert
Cyndy Harnett
Tommalee Hicks
Judy Roth
Andrea Bornslaeger Scheuerman
Mary Weed
Gladys Weed
Anne Wells
John P. White, Jr.
Sandra Zimmer

Raquel B Stilwell

By Kathy Simpson

If you have ever been inspired by someone who faced adversity and mortality, and who responded by living life to the fullest, then you may have met Raquel Stilwell. Raquel was among the rare few who developed leukemia following her treatment for breast cancer, and it was during that period that her inner strength shone.

After the initial shock and anger from the leukemia diagnosis, Raquel got busy living. She made memories for her husband, Daniel, and daughter, Annabel, to cherish long after she was gone. An avid user of Facebook, Raquel posted tons of pictures of her family adventures. Camping, horseback riding, indoor water parks, adopting a new puppy – she did it all.

Even her multiple hospital stays were memorable. Raquel’s husband, Daniel, held up signs from the parking lot below her hospital room window where she could see him. Nurses helped order her favorite take-out food. She endeared herself to her medical team and, at the same time, she was a fierce advocate for herself.

I was lucky enough to be Raquel’s PALS mentor. She was only 44 years old, yet Raquel has been an amazing role model for me to embrace life. Her spirit lives on.
Tracey Wilt (3rd from left) with her family at the 2022 ACTober Gala

Ever since her breast cancer diagnosis in 2019, Tracey Wilt has been a caring presence and a powerhouse volunteer at the Coalition. Always one to show up when and where she is needed, Tracey has been the face of the Coalition at a number of community events. Her knowledge of the organization and willingness to share our mission with others have made her a wonderful ambassador for us.

Several years ago, while her daughter was a member of the Fairport Varsity Field Hockey team, Tracey spearheaded a special event – the Breast Cancer Awareness Game – that raised funds for the Coalition. We were blown away by the energy, enthusiasm, and generosity of this group, and the game has been an annual event ever since. Even though her daughter is now in college, Tracey continues to lead this tradition. At their 2022 game, in addition to raising funds, the team collected an array of items from our wish list for PALS PAKs.

Our 2021 ACTober gala was held virtually, and Tracey jumped on board the committee that planned and executed the event. An invaluable member of the team, Tracey stepped up in 2022 as Co-Chair of the ACTober Committee. Returning to an in-person event after two years of virtual events required a high degree of efficiency and ingenuity, and Tracey flourished. She excelled at keeping committee meetings on agenda and brainstorming the most efficient ways to execute tasks. Tracey stepped in when we needed more centerpieces for tables than had we were able to procure. She knew what flowers to order, and our volunteers were able to fashion beautiful centerpieces. Her suggestion to seek donations of lottery tickets for the silent auction resulted in the creation of several items that raised substantial funds.

We are grateful for Tracey, a bright light in our community. Thank you!
Personal care and beauty products can contribute to our overall well-being in many ways. From ensuring basic cleanliness to caring for our bodies to enhancing our aesthetic sense of who we are, and so much more, these products are part of the daily self-care routines of virtually everyone in our society. For some, just a few basic products will do, while others may use a dozen or more every day. Each individual product can consist of many ingredients, all of which come in direct daily contact with our bodies.

While it might seem reasonable to presume that the ingredients in cosmetics and personal care products have been thoroughly tested and are overseen by a regulatory agency, this is not the case. The federal law designed to ensure that personal care products are safe was enacted more than 80 years ago and has not been updated. Under current law, the FDA does not require safety testing of the ingredients in personal care products before they are sold.

Some of the ingredients in personal care products have been linked to concerns such as endocrine disruption, reproductive harm, and even cancer. For example:

**Phthalates**

Phthalates are endocrine disruptors, meaning they can interfere with or mimic the action of hormones in the body. A class of chemicals used to make plastics more durable, phthalates are a common ingredient in fragrances used in personal care products and cosmetics. Fragrance ingredients are considered trade secrets and, as such, are exempt from labeling requirements.

To avoid phthalates, choose fragrance-free products over those with fragrance on the ingredient list. (Note: “unscented” products are formulated to have no detectable scent, and may actually contain fragrance to achieve that end.)

**PFAS**

PFAS, or per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances, is a group of thousands of chemicals that can linger in the body for years and in the environment for centuries. These chemicals, which are also used in non-stick cookware, are sometimes added to cosmetics to increase their durability and water resistance. The health effects of only a few PFAS are known, but those compounds have been linked to high cholesterol, thyroid diseases, reduced vaccine effectiveness, lowered fertility and birth weight, as well as testicular and kidney cancer. In one study*, 52% of over 200 products tested contained PFAS, with mascaras and lip products topping that list.

To limit cosmetic-related exposures to PFAS, avoid waterproof and water-resistant products. Read ingredient labels, and don’t purchase products with PTFE or “fluoro-” listed.

**Lead**

Lead is a potential impurity in many cosmetic colorings, including lipstick. A known neurotoxin that is linked to learning and behavioral problems, there is no safe level of lead exposure. It is banned for use in cosmetics in Canada, Japan, and the European Union, and restricted in the U.S. Since lead is a contaminant in many cosmetic colorings, from high-end to affordable brands, and even natural brands, it is not often listed on ingredient labels.

The best strategy to avoid cosmetic-based lead exposure is to save colored products for special occasions, and to encourage young girls to wait to use lipstick.

*By Pat Battaglia*
PARABENS

Parabens, another class of chemicals, are commonly used as preservatives in cosmetic and body care products. Parabens are endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) that are absorbed through the skin into the body, where they act like estrogen. This can lead to the disruption of male and female reproductive systems, including reproductive development, fertility, and birth outcomes. EDCs are associated with the development of endocrine-related diseases, including breast cancer.

To avoid these chemicals, check ingredient labels for words ending in “paraben,” such as methylparaben, propylparaben, ethylparaben, butylparaben, isobutylparaben, and isopropylparaben.

TOLUENE

Toluene, a substance found naturally in crude oil and in the tolu tree, is used in many products including paint thinners, adhesives, rubber, and hair dyes. It is also used in nail polish to suspend the color and form a smooth finish. While the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has set limits for worker exposure to toluene, many nail salon workers may be exposed to unacceptably high levels of the chemical during long shifts in salons that may lack proper ventilation and monitoring equipment. Without the right safety precautions, toluene can cause a number of symptoms ranging from skin irritation and headaches to neuromuscular changes and reproductive system damage.

Look for toluene-free brands of nail polish; bring your own polish to the salon; and limit polish use, especially for children. Or skip the polish altogether and buff your nails instead.

FINDING SAFER ALTERNATIVES

There are a number of websites and apps to help consumers choose personal care products and cosmetics that are safe, affordable, and work well. Here are a few to get you started:

- The Environmental Working Group offers Skin Deep, a searchable database and app: ewg.org/skindeep/ or search for EWG’s Healthy Living in your app store.
- The Detox Me app was created by scientists at the Silent Spring Institute to help people make healthier choices in cosmetics and much more. Go to silentspring.org or search your app store.
- The Think Dirty – Shop Clean app is another searchable database to help consumers evaluate beauty products. It can be found in your app store.

ESPECIALLY FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR

For Black and Brown people, to whom a disproportionate share of cosmetic and personal care products containing ingredients of concern are marketed, and who bear a greater burden of the consequences of chemical exposures, the Non-Toxic Black Beauty Project was created by BCPP’s Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. This database of non-toxic, Black-owned beauty products is one measure to address the environmental injustice of Black beauty. Learn more at safecosmetics.org/black-beauty-project.

TAKE ACTION!

Members of our Advocacy Committee are working with legislators to advance laws that will help safeguard the public when it comes to personal care and safety products. To learn more or join them in their work, email info@bccc.org.

Resources:
- pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs. estlett.1c00240
- bcaction.org
- safecosmetics.org
- ewg.org
- nieshs.nih.gov/research/supported/assets/ docs/1_q/phthalates_the_everywhere_ chemical_handout_508.pdf
- consumerreports.org/toxic- chemicals-substances/how-to-avoid- pfas-a8582109888/
- cdc.gov/biomonitoring/Parabens_ FactSheet.html
- doi.org/10.1210/endocr/bqac034; Published: 23 March 2022
- osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ OSHA3646.pdf
I am a daughter, a mom, a sister, a wife
I am a thought, an idea, a voice
I am a strength, a weakness, a support
I am a home, a shelter, a nomad
I am a legacy and a beginning (Amy)

I am the Twilight moon that glistens in the dark sky above.
I am a strong oak tree that stands proud and tall. (Jennie)
I am a rock
Grounded to the earth on which I rest
Unmovable
Unless, at times, I am pushed hard
Onto my tippy side
Unstable
Until I land again on my base (Gunhilde)

I am the brilliant fuchsia of the Japanese peonies in full bloom.
I am the lush green grass that continues to grow in spite of weekly mowing.
I am the shoreline that changes with the tides. (Jacquie)
I am the lightning bug of my Child’s Soul and the Firefly of my Adult’s flitting back and forth Through Time, and memories that can never stay still enough to be captured for too long, because if they are, they die (Katrina)
I am. I am here.
I am a woman with many faces.

I am a woman living with cancer.
I am a woman of the woods.
Do not call me a survivor.
I am living every day
Appreciating the gifts of life
Despite or maybe because of
My steady companion
I am. I am here right now.
Do not call me a survivor. (Gunhilde)

I am the fish that swims against the flow.
I am the uncomfortable truth that no one wants to know.
I am the question no one wants to hear.
I am one of thousands of living testimonies that prove that Wellness is 75% heart, mind, and soul, and the rest is just flesh. (Katrina)

I am the peace filled brightness of a fresh new morn.
I am the black-blue clouds against a captivating blue horizon
I am the cool morn unfolding with the warmth of coffee in my cup
I am a woman breathing deeply; meditating on boundless blessings.
I am the gift to myself to steel for the day about to begin.
I am beautiful, smart, kind, and interesting.
I am not any less than I was before having a double mastectomy.
I am a woman with a new lease on life! (Elizabeth)

*To be continued in our spring 2023 issue.
Introducing our Marketing and Outreach Director

Mary Manard Reed

Three years ago, I learned I had breast cancer. I was frightened, angry, and confused when I entered the Breast Cancer Coalition.

During my Breast Cancer 101 session, Holly took the time to inform me about my specific diagnosis, outline the road ahead, and discuss my options. I left that meeting full of hope, strength, and relief, knowing the Coalition was here to support me.

As I left, Holly gave me a PALS PAK filled with practical information, resources, and goodies to help me on this life-changing and frightening endeavor. Next up - join a Friday Brown Bag Lunch. I had no idea how profoundly these sessions would impact my journey and life. I walked into a room filled with women who knew first-hand the fears, anger, and struggles I faced each day. They gave me support and strength, and encouraged me to make the most of each day. Together we laughed, we cried, and we ate fabulous desserts!

I jumped at the chance to use my skills and talents to further the Coalition’s mission - a refuge for me and thousands of others facing breast and GYN cancer. It was my dream opportunity. I’m thrilled to report that I joined the small but mighty Coalition team as the Marketing & Outreach Director in September of 2022.

I look forward to building on our community outreach initiatives and connecting with those touched by breast or gynecologic cancer. I welcome your comments and suggestions, and can be reached at mary@bccr.org.

“Hope is stronger than fear,” Anonymous.

BreastCancerCoalition.org

HAIR THAT CARES

For a $25 donation to the Coalition, the Monroe County Sheriff’s department employees were able to grow a beard for October; gals were able to color the bottom 2” of their hair pink. Over 300 rose to the challenge resulting in a “hair raising” donation of $8,285. Thanks, Monroe County Sheriff’s office, for your support – we hope you had fun!

BEYOND AWARENESS TO ACTION

The Fairport Girls’ Field Hockey Team is a fundraising powerhouse! The Varsity and JV teams hosted their annual Breast Cancer Awareness game, which raised $250 for the Coalition and collected over 500 items for our PALS Pak program. These committed girls collected fuzzy socks, sleep masks, journals, boxes of tea, lip balm, and much more. But they didn’t stop there. This fantastic group also donated four gift baskets to our 2022 ACTober online auction. Thank you, Fairport Field Hockey Team!

REAL FOOTBALL PLAYERS WEAR PINK

The Webster Thomas Football Team hustled on the field and hustled to raise money for the Breast Cancer Coalition with the sale of pink t-shirts like those pictured on some team members. This driven team raised $1,000 for the Breast Cancer Coalition. Thank you, Titans football team!

CHARACTER STRIPES

Master Kim’s Taekwondo allowed students to earn pink character stripes to benefit the Coalition. For each $1 donated, the student received a pink character stripe. Talk about eager students; this initiative raised $2,495. Way to go, students!
PINK DRINKS

Our friends at Untamed Nutrition Rochester created two specialty pink drinks. They sold raffle tickets for one week during Breast Cancer Awareness Month to support the Coalition’s local breast and gynecologic cancer community, raising $350. Thank you so much, Untamed Nutrition Team!

QUILTING FOR A CAUSE

Avid quilters Bernice Rayburn, Janie Morello, and Andrea Porter made this beautiful quilt using photos printed by Victor Ciaccia. Then the Irondequoit High School Class of 1971 raffled off the quilt, raising $1,600 for the Coalition and honoring classmates facing breast cancer. We appreciate your talents and thinking of the Coalition.

SPIKE OUT CANCER

The Webster Schroeder Volleyball Team promoted their “Spike Out Cancer” game for a full week. They sold pink ribbon shirts and secured donations from students, staff, and parents on the day of the game, raising a total of $941. Thanks, Webster Warriors Girls Volleyball team!

MAKING A REAL IMPACT

When the First American Equipment Finance Company held its Company Impact Day, a team of thirteen dedicated colleagues in our area donated $1,000 in supplies and their time to assemble 50 bags of items selected from our wish list for inclusion in PALS Paks. Samantha Spooner, who coordinated this effort, said, “We appreciate being able to give back to such an important cause that many of us have been affected by.” We are grateful to this great group of volunteers for impacting the lives of newly diagnosed individuals who receive our PALS Paks. Thank you!

PINK GLOVES

The Chick-fil-A in Irondequoit decided to wear pink gloves as a fundraiser in honor of breast cancer awareness month and raised $100 for the Coalition. Thanks, Chick-fil-A Irondequoit for thinking of us.

DONATIONS AND DECORATIONS

Once again, Dave Lippa decorated his yard for Halloween and added a QR code for visitors to make donations directly to the Coalition. On top of that, Daniel and Todd Rohnke ran football squares for the Bill’s Monday night game. They donated $700 to the Coalition in memory of their cousin, Jennifer Goyette, and Dave’s mom, (Enrica) Ricky Lippa. A great team effort by all – thank you!

RACING TO BEAT CANCER

Batavia Downs hosted a dinner and a night of racing fundraiser to benefit the Coalition. Local businesses and individuals sponsored several races that night. At the same time, the local harness racing community of owners, trainers, and drivers donated a portion of their earnings. Several raffles, auctions, and donations were collected throughout the event. The donations totaled $23,605, 20% over the prior year. Thanks to our former Coalition Board of Directors Chair, Patti Cataldi, for representing us at this event. A HUGE thank you to our former Board member Melisande Bianchi and her husband Richard for initiating this annual event several years ago, and to Henry Wojtaszek, Mary Bucceri, Donna Beane, and the entire Batavia Downs family, especially the racing teams and the Batavia Downs Gaming Board of Directors, for creating a fun and fantastic evening!
REFERRAL RAFFLE
The team at Crossroads Chiropractic in Lima held a patient referral raffle in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month and raised $500 for the Coalition! Thanks for your support!

BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
For the fourth year, Gina, from Salon Roc has honored her best friend, Jennifer Carlson – a 4-year breast cancer warrior – by donating 20% of the retail sales for the month of October. Thanks, Gina and the Salon Roc team for raising $251 for the Coalition

LOST AND FOUND
For the month of October, Get it Straight Orthodontics designated all “lost retainer fees” to the Breast Cancer Coalition, resulting in a $3,935 donation. A big thanks, Terry A. Giangreco, DDS, and the entire team – we appreciate your support.

KICKING IT FOR CANCER
The Hilton Girls Soccer Team has promoted breast cancer awareness for twenty years and actively spreads the word about the Breast Cancer Coalition’s many services and programs. This incredible team sold t-shirts and bracelets and held a 50/50 raffle. A video showcased personal, heartwarming messages stating the person(s) they were playing for (check it out here). Due to their efforts on and off the field, this dedicated team raised an impressive $4645.25 - way to go, Lady Cadets!

FUNDRAISING CONGREGATION
The congregation at Restoration Church of God held a fundraiser on behalf of the Coalition that resulted in a donation of $606! Thanks, Church of God for blessing us with your donation.

LIBERTY PUMPS
In support of breast cancer awareness month, Liberty Pumps alerted all their customers that for each 230, 240, 250, and 450-series pump sold, they would donate $.25 to the Coalition in support of breast cancer research, donating $2,079.50 to the Coalition. That’s a lot of pumps – thanks Liberty Pumps team.

PINK OUT - DIGS FOR A CURE!
The Irondequoit Girls Volleyball Team held their 3rd Annual PINK OUT Fundraiser and it was an amazing success! This year, the Irondequoit Boys Volleyball Team joined the fun! The teams had a goal of raising $1,500 – they surpassed that and raised $3,734 for the Coalition. Way to score Eagles!

COOKIES4CANCER
Marina Compitello, Lilly Brumfield, and Alissa Murrell, 9th graders at Eastridge High School, tested their culinary and marketing talents this summer by baking and selling dozens of cookies and some pies. Their hard work and yummy products resulted in a donation of $1,620 to the Coalition. Next year they promised to add brownies to the mix – yum! Thanks, Marina, Lilly & Alissa!

Thank You Friends
Each year the Coalition benefits from hundreds of individuals participating in multiple fundraising events created for us by people like you. Your donation will help us continue to provide our programs and services free of charge! Contact us today at info@bccr.org or (585) 473-8177 for more information.
IN HONOR OF:
All breast cancer patients and survivors
Mary Reed
All women who have had breast cancer
Carol Loughner
All the “Peeps”
Robin Trimble
Holly Anderson
Jacqueline Davis
Annie Murphy
Dorothy Pecoraro
Holly Anderson and Valerie Pasquarella
Annie Murphy
Our Nonny, Holly Anderson
Evangeline Anderson
Finley Hamman
Owen Anderson
Lachlan Anderson
Rory Hamman
Anna Bauer
Elizabeth Jackson
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We are grateful to all donors for their valuable contributions and their commitment to our mission. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize for any errors. Please join us in thanking the following individuals, companies, and organizations for their contributions between July 1, 2022 - September 30, 2022.

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Correction to Autumn 2022

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BreastCancerCoalition.org
Wish List

- Breast cancer stamps
- Burt’s Bees Lip Balm (sealed, no mint)
- Coloring books (pocket or travel size preferred)
- Sleeping masks, lavender or unscented only
- Computer paper, white, 20 lb
- Joann Fabrics gift cards
- Journals for writing
- Lotion - Aveeno
- Warm, fuzzy socks

Support the Coalition whenever you shop on Amazon! Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Just go to smile.amazon.com to get started!

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The Coalition recognizes individuals who have made leadership level annual fund or United Way gifts of $1,000 or more in the calendar year through the President’s Circle.

Coalition GEMs

are a special group of dedicated supporters who help the Coalition throughout the year by making a monthly gift. Monthly gifts offer a steady and cost-effective source of income.

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are individuals who make an annual fund or United Way gift – of any amount – for two or more consecutive years are part of our Coalition Loyal Giving Society.

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Breast Cancer Coalition Mission Statement

To cultivate community among those touched by breast or gynecologic cancer; to empower informed decision-making through education, support, and advocacy; and to advance research in our region with the goal of eradicating breast cancer.

Voices of the Ribbon is published quarterly by the Breast Cancer Coalition to provide encouragement and inspiration to those facing a breast or gynecologic cancer diagnoses, their supporters, and care providers.

In addition, it is intended to impart accurate, evidence-based information to enlighten and empower our readership.

Our in-house editor, graphic designer, writers, and support staff work together to ensure our publication is economically produced and our printers assure us that we are getting the best rates possible.

All contents of Voices of the Ribbon are the sole property of the Breast Cancer Coalition, and are not to be reprinted or copied, in whole or in part, without the express permission of the Editor. Direct all inquiries to pat@BreastCancerCoalition.org or phone (585) 473-8177. If you prefer to receive Voices of the Ribbon via email please let us know.

Telephone: (585) 473-8177
Fax: (585) 473-7689
E-Mail: info@BreastCancerCoalition.org
Online at www.BreastCancerCoalition.org

To keep up to date on all BCCR happenings, follow us on social media:

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Breast Cancer Coalition Inclusion Statement:
Just as cancer does not discriminate, the Breast Cancer Coalition recognizes the importance of a culture that strives for diversity. We honor individual differences whether color, race, religion, political viewpoints, socioeconomic status, physical abilities, gender, gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. We are committed to increasing the diversity within the Coalition and welcome you to our safe, inclusive community.

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Saturday, May 13, 2023
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See page 17 for more info. or check out the website!

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