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Breast cancer foundation marks 25 years of funding research, education



Breast cancer survivor and Race for the Cure volunteer Ruth Austin has received several medals for her work with Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Austin has had breast cancer twice.

Survivors, supporters band together

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Ruth Austin has survived breast cancer twice. A Center Grove area wife and mother of three grown children, Austin's first episode with breast cancer was 21 years ago. She was 42. She found the tiny lump in her breast while she was showering. It was hard and didn't move. She underwent a lumpectomy and radiation treatments.

Austin had never had a mammogram. It was 1986, and the medical profession had just started recommending mammograms, she said.

After her experience with breast cancer, she scheduled yearly mammograms. Thirteen years later, during her annual mammogram, another tumor was discovered. She had a mastectomy of her left breast.

"The whole key is finding cancer early," Austin said.

Her experiences have prompted her to join the growing ranks of volunteers who raise funds and increase awareness in the fight against breast cancer through education, screening and treatment.

Eight years ago, Austin became an active volunteer with the Indianapolis affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, the annual 5K and 1-mile run/walk on the IUPUI campus.

The event allows people to rally around family and friends who are survivors, Austin said. Her husband, Harv, her son and two daughters either run or walk the race with her.

"The first time I did the race, it was very emotional," she said.

There were 8,000 people participating in the race; 202 were survivors.

"That's what was so touching the first time," Austin said, "seeing all the people with signs on their back in honor or in memory of someone."

Last year, 35,000 people ran and walked; 2,000 were survivors.

Of the net proceeds from the race, up to 75 percent stays in central Indiana to fund screenings, follow-up care to underserved women and men, early detection and outreach programs. The remaining proceeds go to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Award and Research Grant.

While many men participate in support of their wives, mothers, sisters or other family members, Austin is meeting more men who are survivors.

Last year, Austin became a member of the Pink House Honor Roll as one of the top 100 individual fund-raisers. This year, she accepted the challenge to raise \$3,000. She would like to raise more and hopes to have more people join her team, "Courage and Hope."

To help raise money, she designed a pamphlet to send to everyone she knows, along with a Race for the Cure entry form.

This year is the 25th anniversary of the national Komen Race for the Cure, and medical science is improving the odds for breast cancer patients.

"There are a lot of positives now," said Dr. Peter Garrett, medical director of cancer services at St. Francis Hospital and Healthcare. "In the most recent data, the incidence of breast cancer has gone down."

The majority of cases of breast cancer are curable, he said.

"There have been a lot of strides in the last few years," Garrett said. "Women should feel good about it."



Above: Ruth Austin displays Susan G. Komen for the Cure memorabilia. Austin wants to raise at least \$3,000 during this year's Race for the Cure. Below: Sallie Bruns, a 15-year survivor; Susan Gillim, a five-year survivor;

Joreen Cadwell, a 53-year survivor; and Ruth Austin, who has survived breast cancer twice (1986 and 1998), from left, are year-round volunteers and fund-raisers for the Komen foundation's Indianapolis affiliate.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

SUSAN G. KOMEN RACE FOR THE CURE

What: 5K or 1-mile run/walk to raise funds for breast cancer education and research

When: April 21

Where: IUPUI, University Library Lawn and Military Park, all in downtown Indianapolis

Entry fees: \$25 for participants, \$23 for survivors, free for children

Deadline: Fees must be post-marked by April 2. Team registration deadline is March 23.

Registration: race.komenindy.org or 638-2873

CURE IS GETTING CLOSER

Research statistics

- Every two minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer
- One woman in eight who lives to age 85 will develop breast cancer during her lifetime.
- Breast cancer is the leading cause of death in women 40 to 55.
- 1,600 men are expected to

be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, and 400 are predicted to die.

- Eight out of 10 breast lumps are not cancerous. If you find a lump, call your doctor.

- Mammography is a low-dose X-ray examination that can detect breast cancer up to two years before it is large enough to be felt.

- When breast cancer is found early, the survival rate is 96 percent.

- Seventy percent of all breast cancers are found through breast self-exams. Not all lumps are detectable by touch. The National Breast Cancer Foundation recommends regular mammograms and monthly breast self-exams.

Detection and prevention advice

- Get clinical breast examinations every three years from ages 20 to 39, then every year thereafter.
- Do monthly breast self-exams beginning at age 20. Look for any changes.
- Get a baseline mammogram by age 40.

- Get a mammogram every one to two years for women 40 to 49, depending on previous findings.

- Women 50 and older should have a mammogram every year.

- Eat a low-fat diet, exercise and don't smoke or drink.

SOURCE: National Breast Cancer Foundation

TO YOUR HEALTH

Cholesterol, blood pressure checks offered

Wellness checks will be available for the community at scheduled times from 7 to 10 a.m. March 12, 14 and 16 at Franklin Cultural Arts and Recreation Center, 396 Branigin Blvd.

Each participant will complete a survey to gather information on family history, medical history, lifestyle choices and habits.

Height, weight and blood pressure will be taken, and blood will be drawn to check total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides and glucose. Lab results will be mailed to each participant.

For the most accurate results, participants must fast at least eight hours prior to testing.

Cost is \$20.

Preregistration is required at 346-1198.

Cancer seminar open to patients, families

Oncologist Stephen Eberwine will be the guest speaker at Cancer 101, a free seminar for cancer patients and their families at St. Francis Hospital Mooresville, 1201 Hadley Road.

The session from noon to 2 p.m. March 9 includes lunch for all registered participants. Caregivers are welcome.

Registration is required by March 6 at 782-4422.

Siblings can prepare for arrival of new baby

New Baby Day Camp is an interactive program designed to help siblings prepare for the arrival of a new baby in the family.

The two-hour classes are conducted at St. Francis Hospital Indianapolis and includes activities and a tour of the newborn nursery.

The program is designed for children ages 3 to 8.

Cost is \$15 per family.

For dates and registration, call 865-5554.

Sex educator to give workshop at United Way

Planned Parenthood of Indiana is sponsoring a workshop by Bill Taverner, one of the country's pre-eminent sex educators.

The workshop, "Making Sense of Abstinence," will help educators assist youth in making decisions about sexual activity and abstinence.

The workshop will take place from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday at United Way of Central Indiana, 3901 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

The workshop is designed around 16 lessons described in a manual that each participant will receive. Educators will learn to approach sexuality, personal values, decision-making and communication.

Registration is \$55 and includes a free copy of Taverner's book, "Making Sense of Abstinence." Taverner is co-editor of the American Journal of Sexuality Education and an adjunct professor of human sexuality at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Information: www.ppin.org or 637-4364

Registration: register@ppin.org

Workshop to address open adoption, costs

The Independent Adoption Center will host an adoption information session from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 3 at the center's Indiana office, 5162 E. Stop 11 Road, Suite 1, Indianapolis.

The session will discuss open adoption from initial stages through finalization, as well as costs associated with adoption.

Reservations are required by calling 887-2015.

Buy fresh flowers to support cancer research

Johnson County residents can support cancer prevention, detection and patient-service programs by buying flowers during the Daffodil Days fund-raiser.

For a donation of \$10 or \$15, the American Cancer Society will provide individuals and area businesses with a bouquet of 10 fresh-cut daffodils or daffodils and a glass vase.

The society also will offer to deliver daffodils delivered anonymously to local cancer patients, treatment centers and nursing homes in central Indiana for \$25.

Flowers will be delivered March 13 to 16. The minimum order for delivery is \$50.