

REACH OUT FOR LIFE

BREAST CANCER NEWSLETTER

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TRI-COUNTY REACH OUT FOR LIFE CELEBRATES ONE YEAR

By ED HILT

Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Tri-County Community Action Partnership launched the pilot program for the Komen *Reach Out for Life* initiative last year, and the results were impressive. Some 70 women from Cumberland, Salem and Gloucester counties were screened and more than 150 women used the toll-free number.

This year, in the first full year of the partnership between Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Tri-County, the goals in this life-saving program are set even higher. Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Tri-County are determined to have 150 women receive free mammograms and educate at least 600 women on breast cancer awareness.

"Our goals are very realistic," said Faye Wright, Tri-County's coordinator for the *Reach Out for Life* program. "We learned so much from the pilot year of the program. We know where we need to go, where to focus our efforts. We also have an excellent staff in place."

The *Reach Out for Life* staff serves residents Cumberland, Salem and Gloucester Counties. Wright said that familiarity of the region will be helpful when performing outreach. The *Reach Out for Life* staff also has a bi-lingual member, something the program did not have last year.

"We also have the visibility and good reputation of Tri-County working for us," Wright said. "That will help spread the message of the program in the three counties."

October is...

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Tri-County Community Action Partnership will inject some "fun" into a serious program to combat breast cancer with a series of events that will appeal to participants of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Reach Out for Life initiative.

The first activity, in conjunction with Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, is **Oct. 29 at the Marino Ballroom at 6:30 p.m. in Bridgeton**. The evening will feature dinner, a fashion show, free make-up sessions, music and various vendors. Women who participated in the pilot year of the program are invited, and they are strongly encouraged to bring family members and friends who would benefit from the program.

Fun will come first at these events. The idea is to deliver the Reach Out for Life message in a comfortable and non-threatening environment.

"Even in a program like this that deals with such a serious issue, we still feel that it is important for the women in the program to enjoy themselves," said Faye Wright, Tri-County's Reach Out for Life coordinator. "We want them to feel special for doing something so significant in their life." Fun nights such as the one on Oct. 29 will increase the visibility of the program, which in turn will increase participation in this life-saving program.

"About 85 percent of the women who will be screened are fine," Wright said. "But it is essential that women get that first mammogram."

Although there will be vendors available, nothing will be for sale the night of the event. If participants want to purchase something, they can contact the vendor on their own.



What Causes Breast Cancer?

Although the precise causes of breast cancer are unclear, we know what the main risk factors are. Still, most women considered at high risk for breast cancer do not get it, while many who do have no known risk factors.

- Among the most significant factors are advancing age and a family history of breast cancer.
- Risk increases slightly for a woman who has had a benign breast lump and increases significantly for a woman who has previously had cancer of the breast or the ovaries.
- A woman whose mother, sister, or daughter has had breast cancer is two to three times more likely to develop the disease, particularly if more than one first-degree relative has been affected.

Researchers have now identified two genes responsible for some instances of familial breast cancer — called BRCA1 and BRCA2. About one woman in 200 carries it. Having the gene predisposes a woman to breast cancer but does not ensure that she will get it.

Generally, women over 50 are more likely to get breast cancer than younger women, and African-American women are more likely than Caucasians to get breast cancer before menopause. A link between breast cancer and hormones is gradually becoming clearer. Researchers think that the greater a woman's exposure to the hormone estrogen, the more susceptible she is to breast cancer.

A woman's exposure to estrogen and progesterone rises and falls during her lifetime, influenced by the age she starts and stops menstruating, the average length of her menstrual cycle, and her age at first childbirth. Current information indicates that the hormones in birth control pills probably do not increase the risk. Some studies suggest that taking hormone replacement therapy after menopause may increase risk, especially when taken for more than 5 years. Heavy doses of radiation therapy may also be a factor, but low-dose mammograms pose almost no risk.

The link between diet and breast cancer is debated. Obesity is a noteworthy risk factor, and drinking alcohol regularly — more than a couple of drinks a day — may promote the disease. Many studies have shown that women whose diets are high in fat are more likely to get the disease. Researchers suspect that if a woman lowers her daily calories from fat — to less than 20%-30% — her diet may help protect her from developing breast cancer.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/breast-cancer/guide/what-causes-breast-cancer>

Reach Out For Life Announces Toll-Free Number

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure *Reach Out for Life* program, in conjunction with Tri-County Community Action Partnership, has a new toll-free number (1-877-MAMMOS1 or 1-877-626-6771) that will make it easier to access information to obtain a free mammogram.

The *Reach Out for Life* program has received a very positive response from women who have called the new number. Problems such as unanswered calls and extremely long hold times have been eliminated. The Susan G. Komen for the Cure hired more staff to handle calls, and that has resulted in a better turnaround time for the program.

"Time is a critical issue, especially for women who work outside the home and often must make the call on their lunch break," said Faye Wright, Tri-County's program coordinator for the *Reach Out for Life* Program. "We can't have women on a 30-minute lunch break waiting 20 minutes to be connected to a case manager. The new number has eliminated the waiting problems.

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