

# VOICES OF THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Great Lakes Division, Inc.



Sharing Stories of Hope, Progress, and Answers Across Michigan and Indiana

v.9, 2007

## LOCAL AREA SPOTLIGHT

A special event to promote breast cancer awareness is put on each year by the American Cancer Society's Mid-Indiana Area Service Center. Read their story in the local area spotlight.

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## OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Log on to [www.cancer.org/cps3](http://www.cancer.org/cps3) to learn about Cancer Prevention Study 3. This American Cancer Society research project is setting out to discover what causes and prevents cancer by tracking the lives of 500,000 racially, ethnically, and geographically diverse people. Enrollment dates in Michigan and Indiana are still being determined.

## RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

Your American Cancer Society offers books and kits that you can order online, by mail, or over the phone. Check it out at [www.cancer.org/bookstore](http://www.cancer.org/bookstore).

## community focus and volunteerism

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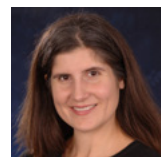
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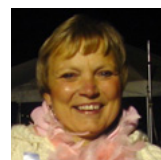
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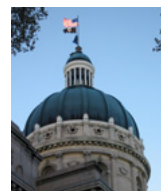
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No matter who you are, we can help.  
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## • community focus and volunteerism

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### Community appreciates American Cancer Society volunteers

American Cancer Society volunteers serve all over the country and their efforts are not unacknowledged. In Dearborn County, Indiana, the local Chamber of Commerce puts on a luncheon recognizing Women of Distinction. Over 30 women were nominated for the inaugural award, and several were or have been volunteers for the Society.

The purpose of the award is to give acknowledgment and gratitude to the many women serving the Dearborn community. Over 200 people attended the luncheon honoring the nominees.

“It’s an opportunity for us to salute individuals who make a tremendous impact on our com-

munity and often go unrecognized,” said Connie Cleary of the Dearborn Chamber of Commerce. “So many times we’re out there volunteering and giving our time. It’s nice to be recognized. It’s a thank you from the community.”

Nominees were dedicated women who made a positive impact on Dearborn County, exemplified commitment to their organization, and were role models to others. They were teachers, entrepreneurs, business owners, health care professionals, community leaders, and volunteers.

The nominees’ involvement with the American Cancer Society has taken different forms. One nominee was Jan Tyler, who is a breast

cancer survivor and local support group leader, as well as a Relay for Life co-chair and team captain.

Another nominee was Dr. Adrienne Lane, who distributes American Cancer Society brochures to the people she serves through her mobile mammography unit and clinic.

Five women received the award. Bev Henry, a Society volunteer and Women of Distinction recipient, recently lost her battle against breast cancer. She was an active volunteer with Relay for Life. Friends and co-workers claim her uplifting attitude never changed despite her battle with cancer.

Her daughters attended the luncheon to receive the award given to their mother. They explained that they learned of their mother’s recognition 30 minutes before her passing, evoking tears and strong emotions from the crowd.

Volunteers of the American Cancer Society will continue to serve their communities, and all are appreciated. To further your involvement with the Society, call 800-ACS-2345 or visit our website at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).



## • community focus and volunteerism

### A family unites through Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

Some families are spread across the country. Melissa Nichols, for example, lives in Brownsburg, Indiana, but has a sister in Michigan and a brother in Florida. Luckily, when Melissa was diagnosed with breast cancer in August, her siblings didn't let the distance between them get in the way of giving her support.

Melissa's sister, Michelle, learned about Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, the American Cancer Society non-competitive walk for which teams raise awareness and dollars to combat the disease. Even though she lives far away, Michelle decided to form a team for the Indianapolis event in honor of Melissa. After the word spread, family and friends signed up to join them. Before long, Team Sweet Melissa grew to over 100 people.

"A lot of it is friends and family, and friends of our family," Melissa explained. While everyone was coming together she was beginning



chemotherapy, but her focus was on the outpouring of support from the people in her life. "It's so awesome that you still have those friends that are there for you," she said.

Team Sweet Melissa also honored participants' other loved ones who have battled cancer. Three young team members lost their mothers to the disease so the team wore buttons during the event in memory of them. "The team wasn't just for me," said Melissa. "It was for everybody, everybody got a lot out of it."

Soon after the Indianapolis team was formed Melissa's brother in Florida, Mike, decided that Team Sweet Melissa should have another team in his state. He rallied more people to participate and bought plane tickets for Melissa and other family members to join him in the walk. It was recently announced that Team Sweet Melissa received the event's Spirit Award.

The family prepared for both events by taking advantage of their Making Strides Against Breast Cancer team websites at [www.cancer.org/stridesonline](http://www.cancer.org/stridesonline) to learn who was signing up and track online donations. Melissa checked the website each day. "It kept me busy, a good busy," she said. Preparing for the walk also created a reason for Melissa and her siblings to talk daily.



"She was just excited everyday," said Michelle. "She kept saying, 'I don't know what I'm going to do when the walk is over.'"

Team Sweet Melissa became the top online fundraisers for both the Indianapolis and Broward County, Florida, events. Their total donation to the American Cancer Society amounted to over \$16,000.

Melissa recently completed her chemotherapy treatment and knows that her team will be back next year. "We did something so wonderful out of something that was so horrible," she said. "We knew it was something we all had to do, we're all in it together."

To learn more about Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, call 800-ACS-2345.

Pictured above: Members of Team Sweet Melissa at the Indianapolis event

Pictured left: Members of Team Sweet Melissa in the Florida event

## • local area spotlight

### An event to promote breast cancer awareness

On October 7, 2006, more than 350 people gathered in mid-Indiana for the annual Hope for Howard County Pink Ribbon event, including about 115 breast cancer survivors.

Speeches given by a local survivor, a local caregiver, and Dr. Annette Moore, a new oncologist in the area, helped to support the event's focus.

"In one morning, over 300 people heard a very important message regarding the early detection of breast cancer and were encouraged to share that message with their mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends," Lane Robinson, a planning committee member, said.

Participants were asked to bring a completed Tell A Friend form. Tell A Friend is a program that is designed to increase early detection of breast cancer. Through the program, trained volunteers contact five friends or acquaintances to encourage them to get a mammogram. Those that brought a completed form were entered into a drawing for a pair of pearl earrings donated by a local jeweler.

Another highlight to the event was taking the pink ribbon picture. Participants at the event were each given a pink balloon, directed outside, and formed into a pink ribbon for an aerial photograph.



"Recognition of our survivors and breast cancer awareness are really the main highlights of the event," Tina Harland, area executive director of the Mid-Indiana Area Service Center, said.

Breast cancer survivors participated on the planning committee and this aspect helped to draw participants to the event. Having the event in October, Breast Cancer Awareness month, helped to increase the number of participants as well.

"I think for a lot of people, it is a way to support someone who is fighting breast cancer and for others, a way to honor someone who has succumbed to the disease," Robinson said. "There was a tremendous feeling of strength and determination in the room. Breast cancer was a bond that I'm sure none of us wanted to share, but it was comforting to know

that we aren't alone and that others present were there supporting us every step of the way."

The message that was given at the Hope for Howard County Pink Ribbon event is one that should be remembered every day of the year.

If you live in the mid-Indiana area and would like to participate in the event next year, contact your area service center at 888-635-9260. If you would like to learn more about Tell A Friend or breast cancer awareness events in your area call 800-ACS-2345.

Pictured above: Hope for Howard County pink ribbon picture

### Opportunities for young cancer survivors

A battle with cancer can often exclude children from many activities they would otherwise enjoy. The American Cancer Society Great Lakes Division hosts several camp programs, free to any child, ages 4-20, in Michigan or Indiana. To attend, campers must have had or currently have cancer, as well as receive a doctor's approval.

Deb Dillingham, director of quality of life for the Great Lakes Division, explained the many programs. "Their cancer isn't the most important thing in their life for one week. They can just be a kid again and have fun, make memories, laugh and be spoiled rotten by adults who want to be there with them," she said.

#### The programs

- **Camp Catch-A-Rainbow** (June 17-22, 2007): For ages 4-15. Campers may enjoy swimming, canoeing, archery, horseback riding, high adventure ropes courses, arts and crafts, and more.



- **Young Campers Day** (June 17, 2007): A special one-day program for children ages 4-6 who may not enjoy an overnight camp-out like Camp Catch-A-Rainbow.
- **Young Adult Retreat** (June 12-15, 2007): A four-day retreat for those ages 16-20 offering young adults a chance to meet and socialize with others who have similar experiences. Activities may include card tournaments, miniature golf, a day trip to Chicago, shopping on Michigan Avenue, and late-night movies.

For all programs, there is a ratio of volunteers to campers of 1 to 6, and one-to-one assistance is available for campers with special needs. Our camp program is accredited with the American Camping Association and licensed through the State of Michigan.

Licensed health care professionals are available 24 hours a day. The majority of medical treatments, besides radiation therapy, can be done at the camp or a nearby cancer center.

Call the Cancer Control Department of the American Cancer Society at 800-723-0360 to volunteer. Sponsorship by companies and individuals is

encouraged in the form of gifts to be used during the week of camp.

#### Young Survivor's Scholarship Program

Additionally, there is a college scholarship program, funded by the Society's Great Lakes Division Foundation, available to cancer survivors up to age 20. Since 1997, this program has given over 350 first-time scholarships and about 300 renewed scholarships. If awarded the \$1,000 scholarship, a student is automatically eligible to renew their scholarship for up to three years.

Eligibility requires residency in Michigan or Indiana. The student must be attending or planning to attend a university in Michigan or Indiana as a full time student with 12 or more credit hours. The scholarship is for tuition only.

With this program we hope to express the belief of the American Cancer Society that life after cancer is rewarding. The scholarship program also encourages the recipients to become advocates for the American Cancer Society and raise public awareness on cancer related issues.

Applications are available to download in January at [www.cancer.org/scholarships](http://www.cancer.org/scholarships). The due date is April 17, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. (EDT)

### A point of pride: funding junior investigators

A major point of pride for the American Cancer Society is our research program, which specifically focuses on providing grants to junior investigators. These researchers are heading up a lab for first time and have the ability to develop novel research ideas that are important in making cancer discoveries.

Because it is their first time in charge of a lab and there is a lack of public funding, these researchers tend to have the hardest time getting their projects funded. This is another reason why, unlike many other granting agencies, the American Cancer Society focuses on funding junior investigators.

One recent junior investigator grant recipient is Dr. Lori Pile, PhD. Dr. Pile obtained a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, where she worked in two different labs: the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Services.

Dr. Pile received a grant from the American Cancer Society for \$665,000 that will continue through 2009 to conduct her research. Because cancer is an uncontrollable growth of abnormal cells, her research focuses on understanding cellular decisions that affect cell growth and how cells use energy.

“Hopefully our research will contribute to the understanding of basic cellular function and will help us to understand where the problems can exist in cancer cells,” Dr. Pile said. “We hope that it will help us to find new avenues to design therapeutics.”

### Other American Cancer Society work

After receiving her grant from the American Cancer Society, Dr. Pile has taken the time to discuss her research with others at various Society events. During speeches at the American Cancer Society events, including the Relay for Life Kickoff in Farmington Hills, Michigan, she spoke about her research and the funding process.

“I have a real appreciation to get this money because it allows me to do my research,” Dr. Pile said. “In some ways I feel obligated to give back and to explain to people where their money is going, but in no way is [speaking at events] a requirement.”

### Grant Cycles

The American Cancer Society continues to fund junior investigators with each new grant cycle. The next cycle, beginning on January 1, 2007, will give four new grants amounting to \$1,883,000 in our local division.



Along with these new grants, there are 25 grants that will remain in effect in the division that total \$20,674,000. Through the money donated to the American Cancer Society, many discoveries are being made. To learn more about current research visit [http://www.cancer.org/docroot/RES/RES\\_0.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/RES/RES_0.asp).

Pictured above: Dr. Lori Pile

### Why do people volunteer?

It is because of passionate volunteers that the American Cancer Society was able to rally 10,000 people in Washington DC this year to talk with lawmakers about cancer issues. It is the commitment of volunteers that causes dollars and awareness to be raised to battle the disease. It is people's desire to help others that those who have been touched with cancer can find support and help in their fight.

Why do people volunteer with the American Cancer Society? The answer, with many variations, is simple: volunteers want to make sure that they are doing what they can to help those who are going through a cancer experience and eliminate the disease.

For many, a personal experience with cancer is the reason to take up the fight. Linda Booker of Greenwood, Indiana, and Bonnie Eash of Midland, Michigan, are both survivors and volunteers for the American Cancer Society.



"I have just always felt like breast cancer was my opportunity to be a servant for somebody else, to get involved in my community," said Linda, who volunteers for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, Relay For Life, and Road to Recovery. Her Making Strides team donated over \$7,000 this year. "If everyone whose life has been touched by cancer did something, then we would find a cure."

She has seen how her involvement in the community has presented opportunities for others to ask how they can help with the cause. At the same time, Linda also sees a need for additional volunteers. "I'm trying to be out there and talk to anyone about how they can get involved," she said.

Sometimes the thought of asking people for help, to join a team or contribute donations, can be a struggle. Bonnie Eash volunteered as a Making Strides Against Breast Cancer team captain for the first time this year, but found it difficult to recruit team members and became discouraged. With support from her local American Cancer Society staff person, Bonnie stuck with it and was able to recruit seven walkers and raise over \$900.

All of her hard work and dedication paid off the day of the event.

"I felt good about myself, I felt good about the whole experience," she said.

She will be back at her Making Strides event next year with all of her inaugural team members and is optimistic she will be able to recruit more. To anyone who may also find it difficult to ask for support in team events such as Making Strides Against Breast Cancer or Relay For Life, Bonnie has this advice: "Just have hope, have faith that there's gonna be someone out there that will support you."

If you are an American Cancer Society volunteer, thank you for fighting cancer, whatever your reason may be. If you would like to learn how to start volunteering or want to find ways to get more involved, call 800-ACS-2345.

Pictured left: Linda Booker  
Pictured below: Bonnie Eash (wearing a white sweatshirt and pink lei)



### Indiana Lobby Day gathers lawmakers and volunteers to talk about cancer

Ginger Darwin-Vilmure, a 4-time cancer survivor from Elkhart, Indiana, is passionate about finding the cure for cancer. She and many other Hoosiers who care about cancer participate in Indiana Lobby Day, an annual American Cancer Society event that brings together volunteers from all over Indiana and state legislators to discuss making cancer a number one priority.

Ginger has been participating in the event for eight years. "Indiana Lobby Day is about constituency from all over the state coming in to talk to our legislators and let them know about the goals and aims of the American Cancer Society," she said. She also represented Indiana at this year's Celebration on the Hill, the Society's national advocacy event, in Washington DC in September.

#### The event

New volunteers for Indiana Lobby Day are always welcome! The Society makes sure volunteers are prepared to speak with legislators before the event.

This year volunteers will participate in a conference call a week prior to the event which will update them on our legislative priorities and train them on how to talk with their legislators. Society staff is on hand at the event to answer any questions that

volunteers may have. The day will be filled with fun and additional information and passionate speakers.

The meetings with the legislators last about ten minutes or less, so it is important for the volunteers to get their stories across. The volunteers meet with their state representative or senator if they are available but sometimes they speak with a legislative assistant.

According to Ginger, most legislators take the time to listen to the volunteer's stories. "They are very receptive and are just people," she said. "Many people think our legislators are different, but they come right out of our communities."

#### The importance of numbers

Ginger emphasized the importance of the number of people who turn out for the event. "I just think it is important that we come down in numbers," she said. "There's nothing like a physical presence of many people coming together to get their attention and let them know that we are serious."

At last year's event, almost 400 volunteers turned out to meet with Indiana lawmakers. The volunteers asked their legislators to support a bill that proposed the prohibition of smoking in public transportation



and another that proposed the increase of the tobacco tax by 50 cents, which both unfortunately did not pass.

This year, the event will take place at the Westin Indianapolis on February 6, 2007. Ginger's goal is to round up a whole busload of volunteers from north central Indiana to attend and the volunteers plan to revisit the tobacco tax increase issue. For more information about registering or getting involved with Indiana Lobby Day, please visit [www.acsgld.org/inlobbyday](http://www.acsgld.org/inlobbyday).

Pictured above: Ginger Darwin-Vilmure (right) with her friend and fellow Celebration on the Hill ambassador, Linda Burkett.