
Women's Cancer Task Force

September/October 2002

Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center

Mission Statement: Empowering women, through knowledge and support, to gain optimal health.

Secret Sister Society Inaugural Luncheon and Style Show raised over \$30,000 to help local women receive mammograms.

A very special thank you to the community for your support of this event !

The Wednesday, September 25th Secret Sister Society Luncheon and Style Show was a great success, with more than 625 people in attendance at the University of Notre Dame, Joyce Center. The Women's Cancer Task Force of Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center hosted the affair, which featured thirteen cancer survivors modeling the latest fall fashions from local retailers.

The efforts of Linda Stewart-Herter, chairperson, and a dedicated planning committee resulted in \$33,000 in underwriting for the event. In addition, the event successfully launched the Secret Sisters Society, which already has grown to over 300 members and continues to seek new members. Through a \$50.00 donation, each "sister" helps women without insurance coverage or with inadequate insurance to receive mammogram services. For more information, you may call the Task force office at 574/472-6095 or you can find a membership form at www.womenstaskforce.org and join online.

**Save the date for next year's Secret Sisters Society Luncheon and Style Show:
Wednesday, September 24, 2003!**

MAMMOGRAPHY PROGRAM TO BEGIN IN JANUARY 2003.

The committee planning for the disbursement of funds from the Secret Sister Society Luncheon met Friday, October 11, 2002. At that time, most expenses had been paid and it is estimated that \$30,000 will be available to fund mammography services for underserved women in our community. The funds will be administered through the Saint Joseph Care Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center. Vice President of Development Tim Sexton's staff has worked tirelessly in keeping accurate and detailed

records of contributions and will continue to serve this community effort as the costs of mammograms are reimbursed to providers through a voucher system. The Women's Task Force salutes their generous dedication to this undertaking!

Basic guidelines developed at this time indicate that the program will serve women ages 40-64, with the possibility to expand the program in the future. The "points of entry" for the program will be the Saint Joseph Health Center on Chapin Street, The Healthy Family Center in Mishawaka, Saint Joseph Family Practice Residency Program and The River Bend Cancer Society (UHS).

Over the next two months, the committee will work to refine the guidelines for eligibility, develop the voucher system, meet with mammography centers and publicize the program. We will continue to keep our Secret Sister members, friends of the Task Force and the community informed of our progress. Carol Norris, R.N., Senior Director, Oncology Services for Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center and Michael Method, MD, medical advisor to the Women's Task Force are spearheading this effort along with members of the task force.

Website UPDATES

Look for our new website. We can be reached through

www.secretsisters.org
www.secretsisterssociety.org
www.secretsisterssociety.com

We will be posting information on upcoming Secret Sister Society events at "To Your Health" and you will find both our PSA used to promote our luncheon and style show and our "Faces" video shown during the event.

Beginning November 6th our home page www.womenstaskforce.org will have a new face. With the premiere of our new women's health initiative, entitled "You Need to Know", you will find links to important information regarding myths and misconceptions held by women concerning cancer.

Look For Our New Commercials

You will see a series of three commercial messages running on local networks and cable during November and December. You may recognize some of the faces in the message. They may be friends or acquaintances. That's great you can look for the names if you aren't sure, but please don't miss the message!

All of these women came together to run, walk and urge you to "arm yourself with knowledge and **TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR.**" The primary goal is to dispel commonly held misconceptions and myths regarding women and cancer. Ultimately, your doctor can only help you if you voice your concerns, make a point of learning the facts and separate fact from fiction.

A big thank you to Lou Pierce from Big Ideas Company for his dedication and professionalism in the production of commercials and PSA's for the task force. The task force would not have been able to put the message on the air without Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center and their marketing department, which receives special thanks for the purchase of airtime. We also greatly appreciate the efforts of Nancy White, a task force member who has been the point person in the development of the commercials. She has worked with the production company, arranged for participants and worked in the editing process.

Production costs for all commercials have been paid for through the Women's Cancer Task Force Fund. The fund was established in September 2001 with dollars raised by the 2000 Faithful Lives Celebration, which featured Stefanie & Chris Spielman. The Spielman's, who faced a breast cancer diagnosis and treatment for Stefanie in her 30's, led both Stefanie and Chris (an NFL player) to become activists for breast cancer awareness and education. They are founders of the Spielman Foundation, which has contributed over a million dollars to breast cancer research.

SEEKING GRANTS

In the task force office we are working with Saint Joseph Care Foundation to submit a grant to the Trinity Community Health Fund for future health initiatives. Maria Harding, grant specialist with the Foundation, is busy putting the finishing touches on the application, which is due November 1st.

The possibility of sharing the success we have achieved to reach a wider population, as we have done with our ovarian cancer campaign, makes this work even more important. The National Ovarian Cancer Coalition adapted our commercial and it is now being seen in over 40 areas of the country where NOCC has outreach.

Partnering with Trinity Health Initiatives, with ideas like Secret Sisters and future initiatives of the task force gives our work special significance. Although we have decided not to increase the number of task force members at this time, we plan to extend our collaboration to the larger community and foresee the growth of an advisory board and the establishment of focus groups to aid the task force in fulfilling its mission.

Submitted by Joan Lennon, Coordinator

GROWTH OF "GYNA GIRLS" AND OVARIAN CANCER EDUCATION

The "Gyna-Girls"! have been busy the past few months trying to increase awareness of ovarian cancer. We, along with the N.D. Women's rowing team, passed out over 2000 N.D. cookbooks along with flyers and our bookmarks with facts about ovarian cancer. We stood outside the Eck Visitor Center on Friday and Saturday before the N.D.-Purdue game wearing Ovarian Cancer T-shirts that were made especially for us by Adidas. We raised \$500 for the task force at this event by selling aprons and ovarian cancer pins.

We also have just completed (after 1 year of hard work!) ovarian cancer packets for newly diagnosed patients. These packets (full of valuable information) will be distributed by Nurse Educators at both St Joseph Regional Medical Center and Memorial Hospital. They will also be available at Dr. Rodriguez and Dr. Method's office or through the Gyna-Girls. We are very proud of this project.

We also had a display with educational materials at a Plymouth Health Fair and a church event in Goshen. The Gyna-Girls sold aprons and pins at the Secret Sister Society luncheon and took in \$800 for the task force.

We've had a busy first year and we will continue to increase awareness of ovarian cancer in 2003. We had our first meeting one year ago with 3 members and we have now grown to 28 members.

Remember, we meet the 1st Monday of each month at Edison Lakes Women's Center (across from Honkers Restaurant). The next meeting will be Monday, November 4, at 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm.

Submitted by Nancy White 574-259-4922

NEXT MEETING DATES

Wednesday, November 6th

Wednesday, December 4^t

VISION

The Women's Cancer Task Force is made up of women cancer survivors who have come together to raise awareness and develop initiatives regarding women's health issues. Initiatives include recommending and implementing programs that relate to women and cancer, promoting early detection, explaining treatment options, providing supportive care and celebrating survivorship.