

Local Councilwoman Survives Breast Cancer



For Lynn Delfing, early detection, along with faith, family and a sense of humor were the key ingredients to surviving a recent diagnosis of breast cancer. After detecting a lump, Lynn was diagnosed with breast cancer in January, 2008, and she immediately underwent

surgery. Chemotherapy treatments started in May, leaving Lynn completely bald only weeks later. “I was not good-looking bald,” wryly commented Lynn. “I looked like Les Nesman from the television show WKRP in Cincinnati. But I had a great wig! I got more comments on how good my wig looked than I ever have on my real hair.”

Sussex County has the highest incidence of incurable diagnoses of breast cancer in the state. In fact, while the mortality rate for breast cancer in the state of New Jersey dropped -8.9% from 1997 to 2005, mortality in Sussex County rose +9.5% during the same period. Although the reasons for this disparity can be complicated, one fact is crystal clear to the Sussex County Breast Health Task Force. Early diagnosis is the key to a cure, and urging women to get a mammogram can be the difference between life and death.

Lynn Delfing is one of the breast cancer survivors currently featured in the “Mammograms Save Lives” Breast Health Campaign orchestrated by Project Self-Sufficiency, the Susan G. Komen for the Cure ® North Jersey, the New Jersey Herald, Intercar Mercedes Benz, Sussex Honda, the Sussex County Breast Health Task Force, and the Sussex County Cancer Coalition. Lynn’s smiling face gazes down from billboards and off of flyers as she declares the significance of receiving a mammogram, “I got mine for my children!”

One of Lynn’s biggest fears following the news of her diagnosis was breaking the news to her three teenage children. Surprisingly, the news did not have a huge impact on her kids. “One of the hardest things I had to do was to tell my family. Their generation has such a different perspective on this, because all of their experiences of breast cancer have been positive. Everybody they know has conquered breast cancer. That was an eye-opener for me.”

Now fully recovered, Lynn continues to serve as a Council Woman on the Andover Borough Town Council. She is also the President of the Andover Education Foundation at the Florence Burd School where she is employed as an office assistant.

Lynn continues to speak out about the importance of early detection in saving lives. Each October during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Lynn can be found at the front of her church, Andover United Methodist Church, extolling the virtues of annual mammograms and sometimes singling out those who may be lax in obtaining one.

Four times a year, Project Self-Sufficiency offers free mammograms to eligible women over the age of 40 who are uninsured or underinsured. The effort is funded by the Susan G. Komen for the Cure ® North Jersey. “Recent surveys have demonstrated that the incidence and mortality of breast cancer in Sussex County women is higher than that for women in other parts of the state,” noted Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. “Early detection is often the key to survival for these women, and by offering free mammograms to the women in our community we are hoping to turn the tide against this horrible disease.”

Sussex County women who are over the age of 40 and who do not have current health insurance are encouraged to call Project Self-Sufficiency at 973-940-3500 to find out if they are eligible for the free mammogram program. In addition, Newton Memorial Hospital will provide a free mammogram for women who qualify through the Newton Memorial Hospital Foundation’s “Mammograms Save Lives” program. Those without health insurance are encouraged to contact Newton Memorial Hospital’s Education/Outreach office at 973-579-8340 for more information.

