



IBCCP Insider Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program

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Breast Cancer Awareness Pink Potlucks sent so far this year: 1,140!

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2015

This October marks the 30th annual Breast Cancer Awareness month in Illinois, initiated to promote education and awareness of breast cancer. As we work toward breast and cervical cancer prevention every day of every month, October represents a time to celebrate that effort and push for as much public awareness and involvement as possible in the fight against breast cancer. This month we put extra time and energy into community outreach to ensure our goals are met. From this outreach, our communities can benefit from better health and education for the future.

Quick Facts to Pass Along

According to the American Cancer Society,

- 40,290 women are estimated to lose their lives to breast cancer in the year 2015.
- 1 in 8 women in the US will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.
- An estimated 231,840 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in 2015.
- Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women, other than skin cancer, and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women, second only to lung cancer.

* These facts can be found at www.cancer.org

Signs and Symptoms of Breast Cancer

- swelling of all or part of the breast
- skin irritation or dimpling
- breast pain
- nipple pain or the nipple turning inward
- redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- a nipple discharge other than breast milk
- a lump in the underarm area

Pink Potluck

A Pink Potluck is a fun event that can save lives. It is an opportunity for women to talk with other women about the importance of screenings and early detection of breast and cervical cancer. Illinois kicked off the first Pink Potlucks by inviting women in congregations and community groups across the state to host the events. Just like a regular potluck, everyone coming to the event brings a healthy dish to share. We then provide the educational information you need to know about getting screened for breast and cervical cancer.



Tips for Hosting a Pink Potluck

- Don't forget to remind your guests about the event! Keep in touch with calls, emails, or social media.
- When guests arrive, enjoy conversation and food.
- Have your group gather around in a common area. The host should lead the conversation about the importance of women getting screened to prevent breast cancer.
- Pass out the Pink Potluck materials provided and discuss them.
- Don't be afraid to ask! If you do not know the answer to a guest's question, write down their contact info and questions and call toll free at 1-888-522-1282.
- Remember to have fun! Keep the campaign going and encourage your guests to host a Pink Potluck!

Steps to Host a Pink Potluck

- 1.) Decide how many people you want to invite. It can be a small group of women or a whole congregation.
- 2.) Pick a location and time.
- 3.) Register your Pink Potluck at <http://app.idph.state.il.us/owh/pinkpotluck/pinkpotluck.asp>
There you can order the information that you will need.
- 4.) Invite women through fliers, phone calls, emails or word of mouth. Let them know if the potluck is a breakfast, lunch or dinner and ask them to bring some food to share.
- 5.) Invite a speaker knowledgeable about women's health issues and, if possible, find a survivor to talk about their experiences.
- 6.) Be prepared to eat, have fun and get informed!

Great Things Happening in Montgomery County!

Alicia is a two-time survivor of breast cancer, and she gives back to her community with the Montgomery County Breast Cancer Support Group.

My name is Alicia and I am a survivor, a TWO-TIME survivor. My breast cancer story started 10 years ago, on February 9, 2005, as I was undressing for the day and caught the side of my breast, where I found “the lump.” Immediately, I knew that it wasn’t just any ordinary lump, rather it was concerning, so I contacted my doctor.

On February 14, I began my appointments at the OBGYN (romantic Valentines day with my hubby, right?). After the whirlwind of a mammogram, diagnostic mammogram, ultrasound, and a biopsy and diagnosis I discovered on February 21, “it’s cancer.” Emotions of hope, faith, and MANY prayers carried me through the next weeks as I continued my journey.

March 11, I went in for a mastectomy on my right breast and a prophylactic on my left breast. My son, around age 8 at the time, asked me, “Mom, did they just saw them off?” Oh honey, how I wish it could be that easy. The surgery went off without a hitch, as I am extremely grateful for my fantastic doctors. The margins were clear, but there was lymph node involvement of five lymph nodes. After consulting with my oncologist, it was decided that I would take four rounds of Adriamycin and Cytoxan, and twelve rounds of Taxol. In addition to chemo, I started the drug Herceptin due to my tumor producing a HER2 gene, which is an overactive gene. The Herceptin was an antibody that would bind itself so it could not reproduce.

After treatment I endured six and a half weeks of radiation to the mastectomy side armpit. Upon finishing all treatment, I started a hormone therapy drug, Arimedex. After a year of letting the mastectomy side rest, I started reconstruction with tissue expanders, followed with a latissimus dorsi flap.

This procedure was a removal of a portion of the latissimus dorsi muscle from the upper back; the fat and skin covering it are pulled

through a tunnel and relocated to the breast area. After the completion of my reconstruction, things began to seem “normal” again for my daily life.

The word “normal” no longer began to seem the same, but rather I found a “new normal.” The journey that I had just encountered was far from over, in positive ways. Besides, what’s a journey without a good ending? During my time in the



chemo room I met some of the most wonderful and inspiring men and women. These individuals are what inspired me to begin a breast cancer support group in my home county, Montgomery County, in 2008.

As the President of the Montgomery County Breast Cancer Support Group, it is my mission to help others experiencing cancer in all aspects: physically, emotionally, and financially. This opportunity has been extremely rewarding to see others receive help, and it became even more rewarding as I had a whole cast of “breast” friends going into my second

battle with cancer.

Eight and a half years later, after being in remission, I began not feeling well on a daily basis, and I knew something wasn’t right.

With a mixture of having side pains and a terrible cough I found that I had fluid on my lungs. After having the fluid drained it was discovered that the HER2-NEU cells were active in the fluid and my bones. Test after test came to the conclusion that I, yet again, would be taking chemotherapy.

Going into chemotherapy, I was dreading the feeling of being sick but I was so ready to whip this cancer yet again. I want to be a grandma, I want to experience the rest of my life, the best is yet to come, and that is exactly what I did and will continue to do.

So onto chemotherapy I went. This time around I did six rounds of Taxotere with Herceptin and Perjeta. After my six rounds, I continued Herceptin and Perjeta and will continue these two drugs as long as it keeps the protein HER2-NEU shut down.

So here I am now, healthy. Very healthy to be exact, and VERY happy. At the beginning of my journey I made the decision to take this as a learning opportunity to find out my true self. I am here to tell everyone that I am a strong woman that has fought cancer twice, and won. Life has many bumps in the road and this just seemed to be mine that I decided to face head on with a positive attitude. Life has so much to offer and at 38 years old, I knew that my time was not done, and I know now at 50 I am still not done. I am embracing my “over the hill” age and will continue to live the life that I love. With my family, friends, and most importantly the Lord I will conquer anything.

“I am here to tell everyone that I am a strong woman that has fought cancer twice, and won.”

New Staff

We Are Pleased to Welcome Joyce Hall!

Q: What interested you most about working in the health field?

J: My interests in the health field are directly related to my formal training both as a social worker and a public high school teacher. It was evident to me that the most important domains of a person's life had to do with education, having the tools to fully develop one's life goals in a socially meaningful way while contributing to the well-being of all peoples, and being in good health to successfully navigate life and all its challenges and victories.

Q: What do you like to do for fun?

J: I'm a vocalist and a keyboardist, love sports- both as a participant and observer, love to walk and bike. Our family gatherings for birthdays and "just because" are always fun. My folks are wickedly humorous and "a good time will be had by all." I guess I love a turn of the phrase also!

"This position is such an opportunity to actually see the fruits of your labor as you advocate for the obliteration of the worst scourge on the planet affecting women's health: breast cancer."
-Joyce

Q: A fun/interesting fact about you?

J: I have sung with secular and Christian artists such as Chaka Khan, Ashford and Simpson and Gospel music greats Richard Smallwood and Commissioned- as well as with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Q: What are you most excited to work on with IBCCP?

J: I am very excited about working with the passionate staff of IBCCP and the subsequent interaction with other like-motivated people across Illinois as well as on the national stage as well. This position is such an opportunity to actually see the fruits of your labor as you advocate for the obliteration of the worst scourge on the planet affecting women's health: breast cancer.



Pictured above:
Joyce



Pictured above:
Leigh

Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program Intern, Leigh Mosher

Leigh Mosher is the new Graduate Public Service Intern (GPSI) for IBCCP. Leigh's educational and professional background is from the University of Illinois Springfield, where she is currently studying for her Masters in Human Services. Leigh particularly enjoys creative projects as well as writing and planning. She has always been civic minded with a passion for volunteerism in her community, and she hopes to have the ability to impact positive change in her new position with IBCCP.

Looking Ahead...

Keep submitting your Outreach Calendar events to Leigh Mosher at Leigh.Mosher@Illinois.gov. If possible, include an informational flyer as an attachment to be added to the calendar with the event. We will be looking for particularly interesting and successful events to highlight in next month's newsletter, **send recommendations and photos** if possible!



Website Changes

Hopefully you have visited the IDPH and IBCCP website recently enough to notice that there have been many big changes! While the new website is a work in progress and will continue to change, it is important to familiarize yourself with its current layout. On our webpage are forms, publications, and the new Outreach Calendar. Below is a guide to locating IBCCP's new webpage.

The Updated Outreach Calendar!

The Outreach Calendar is updated, and should still be used to showcase the outstanding work our Lead Agencies are doing for outreach efforts. We would like to see all the Lead Agencies on this community calendar and keep it current. As soon as you have an outreach event to share, please email the information to Leigh Mosher at Leigh.Mosher@illinois.gov and she will make sure your hard work is accessible to the public. We are looking forward to filling the calendar with Breast Cancer Awareness Month events!



How to Find IBCCP's Webpage

- Go to <http://dph.illinois.gov/>
- Click "Topics and Services" near the top rleft of the page
- Then click on "Life Stages and Populations"
- Then click on "Women's Health"
- You will find the link to Illinois Breast & Cervical Cancer Program on the left sidebar of the page to click.
- Once on the IBCCP page, the Outreach Calendar is under "Resources" near the top right of the page.
- The direct link to the Outreach Calendar is <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/life-stages-populations/womens-health-services/ibccp/calendar>

