



Kathy & Ruth *Talk the Walk*



Training has begun! This is Kathy and Ruth immediately following a walk at the gym.

Destination: Seattle; The Journey Continues

The Seattle Breast Cancer 3-Day is now 159 days away. Training has officially begun. Well, barely. We only have a few days under our belts, but it feels good to have started.

We are pleased with how our fundraising is going. We really didn't expect that we would be more than halfway to our goal this early; \$4,400 seems attainable, now.

We hope to continue to find ways for our friends and family to be part of this

journey with us— without having to buy a plane ticket to Seattle. Many of you participated in the Brackets 4 Breast Cancer event. We hope you enjoyed it...even if you didn't win! We had fun with it and we raised a fair amount of money in the process!

We've received a pretty positive response to this newsletter. We hope you enjoy it. Remember, if you don't want to receive it or would rather get it via e-mail, we will accommodate you.

Why We Walk

This year, more than 200,000 women and men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 will lose their lives to the disease. A woman is diagnosed with breast cancer every 3 minutes. Every 13 minutes, the disease claims another life.

Profile in Courage—Mary Jo Nelson

Contributed by Kathi Monter, in honor of her good friend and hero.

In 2001 Mary Jo found a lump and was told it was nothing more than a cyst. However, that "harmless cyst" began to get bigger and she was diagnosed with breast cancer a year later in October 2002. Her bilateral mastectomy was anything but routine as she developed severe infections in both breasts. Mary Jo made the choice to have reconstructive surgery at the same time as her mastectomy which turned out, for her, to be a bad decision as her recovery was lengthy and painful.

She began a routine of chemotherapy since several lymph nodes were affected. After her second round of chemo her husband and 7-year-old son found her on the hallway floor nearly unconscious. You see, Mary Jo had suffered a massive stroke, a very uncommon side effect of chemotherapy. That day Mary Jo's life was changed forever.

The news was grim. After months of physical therapy and recovery, Mary Jo did not regain use of her left arm or leg, some brain function (short term memory) was diminished and she was left with no peripheral vision.

This year her husband of 15 years asked for a divorce. Mary Jo, who is in a wheelchair most of the time and dependent on someone to help with personal care, transportation and other things we take for granted, picked herself up and bought a condo and is now living on her own. This is something many said could never happen given her disability. Her spirit and determination have kept her moving forward despite her setbacks.

Some might say that any one of these things would be enough to extinguish the spirit that keeps us going, but not Mary Jo. Her faith in God and His promise to never forsake her is what keeps her moving forward. Her positive attitude is nothing less than amazing. When I call to see how she is doing her response is always "I'm good, how are you?" She rarely complains and seems more concerned about my well-being than her own.

Mary Jo is an inspiration to me! She is my friend. She is my hero. She is a "survivor" in more ways than one.



Mary Jo and Kathi

Mary Jo Nelson was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 37 in October of 2002.

Today she is cancer-free.

Ladies, Don't Forget Your Monthly Breast Self-Exam!!!

Training Training Training Training

Training has officially begun! If you don't believe us, just look at that beautiful picture of us on the front page. One week down and 23 more to go. We have a long way to go (quite literally!), but we'll get there—one step at a time.

There are many other 3-Day walkers in the Kansas City area. Only a few of us will be going to Seattle. Many are going to Chicago or one of the other ten host cities. We will have the opportunity to participate in training walks with them. That will help us keep on track. Plus, we're good at nagging each other, so that helps.

Kathy's Cogitations

It's me, Ruth, again! As you may have guessed, Kathy the CPA is even busier now than she was last month. I won't make you read my ramblings again this month. Instead I'll let the picture below speak for her. I'll make her write something next month.



Note: Kathy asked me to clarify that the above picture is only meant to represent how busy she is. She maintains that she is not nearly as grumpy as this picture might lead you to believe.

Mo' Money Mo' Money Mo' Money Mo' Money

Brackets 4 Breast Cancer was quite a success! We raised another \$440 for our cause. Thanks so much for your participation! Overall, thanks to your support, we have raised \$2,395 of our joint \$4,400 goal! \$1,140 were from the "Big Game" fundraiser and \$815 were from individual donations (including matching corporate contributions).

For those of you who have been to our fundraising pages and wonder why all that money isn't showing up in our accounts, there are a few reasons. Some of the donations were mailed to the Breast Cancer 3-Day and have not been posted to our site, yet. In some cases we just haven't collected all of the monies, yet. The largest outstanding portion is corporate matching funds. We feel confident all of the monies will be received and posted well before the walk takes place.

Thanks again for your support. We couldn't do it without you!

Ruth's Reflections

It seems like just last week I was walking a kerjillion miles every weekend to prepare for last year's walk. In reality, it's been just over six months and it's time to get going again. We'll be starting off slowly, walking only three miles a stretch to start.

Some of you may remember that last year I was only able to walk 33 miles due to a tibial stress fracture I developed during training. While 33 miles is far short of 60, I was proud to have completed that much under the circumstances. This year, I'm determined to walk it all.

My orthopedist prescribed some inserts that will help correct my flat-footedness and hopefully ease the stress on my tibia. It seems ridiculous that these inserts cost \$300. For that price they should come with flashing lights or some sort of recorder that says "you are Superwoman" every five miles. But, I guess if they help prevent another stress fracture they will be worth \$300. I'll just have to make Kathy call me Superwoman every five miles.

Our next fundraiser:

Mom-o-Grams for Mother's Day

See enclosed flyer for more details.

If you would like to donate

You can visit our personal fundraising pages
<http://www.the3day.org/seattle07/kathyungerer>
<http://www.the3day.org/seattle07/ruthriggs>

or mail checks to

Kathy & Ruth
c/o Ruth Riggs
8400 W 131st Place, Apt 817
Overland Park, KS 66213

Your donation is tax deductible.
Make checks payable to "Breast Cancer 3-Day."