



Kathy & Ruth *Talk the Walk*

A Tale of Twin Cities

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. Actually, it wasn't the worst of times at all, but there were moments that weren't as great as others. Still, the overall experience was fantastic.

As you might have expected, Kathy walked the entire distance. As you also might have expected, Ruth got %#&* blisters again this year. What is up with that?

We had three beautiful, sunny days of walking. It began at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds after an inspiring Opening Ceremony. We walked along the banks of the Mississippi then later around most of Lake Phalen. Our 21.5-mile journey ended at camp at Harvest Park. Thanks to the creative Crew, we got to visit some unique places along Saturday's 22.7-mile route, including the Cari-boob Café and Bedrock (for

lunch with the Flintstones). On Sunday, after 17.3 miles, our three-day journey came to an end with a celebratory Closing Ceremony on the front steps of the State Capitol. The three days were filled with inspiring stories, wonderful people, and good times.

In the end, we raised \$5,248 toward the cause. The training, and the fundraising efforts, and even the blisters are all worth it if someday there is a cure.

Profile in Courage—Barbara and Bill Millard

A Couple's Story

Contributed by Barbara Millard

In April 2001, I was diagnosed with Stage 3 rectal cancer. I was 48 years old, recently divorced and without any family in Kansas City. A friend immediately told me about a cancer support group—which soon became my family. I had never met any of these women before. None of them had dealt with rectal cancer—90% were breast cancer patients and survivors. Yet, they started researching doctors, suggested books and taught me what questions to ask. With their encouragement and support, I was able to seek out the best treatment possible. During the next six months of surgeries, radiation and chemotherapy, they were there for me.

The next few years were very anxious every time I had tests and checkups. But, I felt incredibly blessed to have conquered this beast. As part of my celebration in 2006, I walked in the Breast Cancer 3-Day Walk in Kansas City and in 2007 the Avon 2-Day Walk in San Francisco. When friends would ask why—since my cancer was rectal—my response would be "I can't imagine there ever being a walk for our rectums, so I'll do what I can. When they find a cure for one...the rest will be close behind."

Fast forward to April 2007. I had remarried the prior year. My husband noticed a discharge from his nipple. Having heard stories and symptoms in the support group, I encouraged him to check it out. To our surprise, he was diagnosed with male breast cancer in his left breast and immediately underwent a mastectomy. Fortunately, the tumor was small and there was no lymph node involvement. He felt very self-conscious about being a male with breast cancer and was hesitant to talk to anyone about it. But, I had my support group to call on for questions.

In December 2007, I went in for my routine mammogram. I remember vividly my colorectal doctor saying "Keep up-to-date on your mammograms." But, I was still shocked when the nurse came back to the room saying they needed to



take a second picture, then an ultrasound. It didn't seem possible, but, yes, I was diagnosed with breast cancer nine months after my husband. During the initial diagnosis as to type and extent, there was a misdiagnosis and much confusion. My head was spinning. But, again, the women in the support group encouraged me and helped me know what questions to ask. In the end, my tumor was almost identical to my husband's! Same breast, same size, and no lymph node involvement so treatment "only" involved a lumpectomy and radiation.

I am so proud to say that my husband walked the Susan G Komen Race for the Cure with me this year. He wore his pink survivor shirt and said to me "You know, I need to do this because men need to know that it can happen to them." I'd like to think that he might do the 3-Day or Avon walk with me someday, but I am satisfied that he can now talk to people about it without feeling embarrassed and that he wants to educate other men.





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Susan G. Komen Story

Contributed by Kathy. The following article is provided based on feedback from our readers. Information for this article was obtained from the komen.org website.

What is the Susan G. Komen story? Susan G. Komen died of breast cancer at the young age of 36 after a three year battle with the disease. Her sister, Nancy, was there with her through the struggle as much as the distance and her schedule would permit. Several times during her illness Susan talked to her sister about doing something to help the other sick women in the hospital who had breast cancer. Nancy promised her dying sister that she would put an end to the shame, the pain, the fear and the hopelessness that breast cancer caused.

In 1982, Nancy Brinker, along with a handful of dedicated friends, founded Susan G. Komen for the Cure in her sister's memory. At that time, the words "breast cancer" were never said in public and could not be used in the press. Few treatment options existed and hardly any researchers focused on the disease. Within a few years, Brinker, who led a relentless, one-woman breast cancer information and awareness

campaign, succeeded in breaching the silence surrounding the disease, changing the way it is talked about and treated.

For the past 25 years, Komen for the Cure has played a critical role in every major advance in the fight against breast cancer—transforming how the world talks about and treats this disease and helping to turn millions of breast cancer patients into breast cancer survivors.



Banners at Opening Ceremonies.

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

Kathy's Cogitations

Thanks to all of you with your support and donations and a lot of luck, I completed another 3-Day walk. The walkers gave their heart, soul, sweat and tears for three days as we walked the 61.5 miles through the Twin Cities. Hey, I thought I signed up for 60 miles! We had three sunny, beautiful days as we walked through the city and on the beautiful trails. The community spirit and cheering stations were awesome.

One of my favorite signs along the walk was "Some angels have wings...some have sneakers." Some of those angels with the sneakers weren't able to walk all 61.5 miles because of blisters or other issues. Not all feet are made the same. Some feet are made for walking a lot and other feet don't fare as well even for the most determined angel. But the number of miles a walker completes doesn't determine their success or failure. The 3-Day walkers were successful when they expanded their hearts and became part of a greater purpose. Whether they walked 20 miles or 60 miles they took a bold step to move closer to ending breast cancer.

Again this 3-Day walk was an emotional incredible journey with some remarkable memories. I hope to walk again in 2009. If you have any interest at all in participating in a 3-Day walk as a walker or a crew member please contact us. Take care and God bless.

Fundraising Update

Below is the summary of our fundraising efforts. Note that the Brackets 4 Breast Cancer total was incorrect in our last reporting due to Ruth's calculation error.

Donations	\$2,892
SuperBowl	\$1,000
Brackets 4 Breast Cancer	\$ 468
Mom-o-Grams	\$ 170
Starlight Theatre	\$ 240
Uno Dough Raiser	\$ 478
Total	\$5,248

Thank you for your support!

Men Get Breast Cancer, Too

This article was obtained from www.komen.org. For more information visit their website.

Breast cancer in men is rare, but it does happen. After all, men have breast tissue also. The overall ratio of female to male breast cancer in the U.S. is 100 to 1. Although it sounds like a small number, that is still roughly 1,990 men who will be diagnosed, and about 450 who will die of the disease in 2008.

The most common symptoms of male breast cancer include a lump in the chest area, skin dimpling or puckering or nipple changes. Because breast cancer is so much more common in females, many men do not even realize they can develop this disease. Unfortunately, this can delay diagnosis and as a result, some cancers are not found until they have progressed to a later stage. However, when cancer is found at the same stage among men and women, the survival rates are similar. Because the male breast is much smaller than the female breast, it is more likely the disease will spread to the chest wall. For this reason, it is important to find the cancer early in order to successfully treat it. See your doctor if you have any persistent lumps or changes in your chest area.

A man's risk

Known factors that increase your risk of breast cancer include:

- a genetic condition such as Klinefelter's syndrome that is associated with high estrogen levels
- family members (male or female) with breast cancer, especially with a BRCA2 mutation
- chronic liver disorders, alcoholism and obesity
- getting older

How do I know if I have breast cancer?

The steps used to diagnose breast cancer in men include a complete medical history, clinical breast exam, mammogram and biopsy.

The types of breast cancer found in men are the same as those found in women, as are the staging system and patterns of how the disease spreads. Thus, treatments for breast cancer in men are the same as treatments for breast cancer in women. A mastectomy is a surgical procedure to remove the breast with the cancerous tumor. It is generally the treatment of choice for male breast cancer. Chemotherapy, radiation and hormone therapies are also used following surgery. For more information, please refer to the fact sheets on Breast Cancer Detection and Breast Surgery.



I swear I didn't whine until *after* I got the blisters.

Ruth's Reflections

Another year, another blister. I will admit that I was more than a little disappointed in not finishing...again! But, once the disappointment faded I was able to appreciate the experience and what the real goal is...to help find a cure for breast cancer.

Day 1 was 21.5 miles. As I sat at Pit Stop 5 revving myself up mentally for the last 3 miles, I found myself next to a woman who was presently going through chemo. Her body wouldn't allow her to go any farther that day and she opted to ride the SAG bus to camp, but I knew there was nothing holding me back from finishing that day. I think the last 3 miles of the walk that day were my fastest 3 miles. With the finish line in sight, there was no stopping me.

The blisters started toward the end of Day 1. I didn't think that much about them. I treated them that night and was ready to go on Day 2. It wasn't very far into Day 2 that they became a real issue. I went to the medical tent at Pit Stop 1 for treatment. It didn't get better from there. I did not make it through Day 2. I hoped to be able to walk a good portion or all of Day 3, but that didn't happen either.

So, the disappointment sat in. I sent my sister and her daughter a whiny e-mail with the subject line "I suck." My sister assured me that I didn't suck and that she was proud of me. That made me feel better. She is the reason my Breast Cancer 3-Day journey began in 2006 and the reason it has continued.

I haven't decided, yet, if I will walk again next year. Part of me hates the thought of asking people for money again when I haven't finished one of these, yet. Part of me wants to do it anyway because it's a good cause and because I want to prove that I can finish. Stay tuned to see which part of me wins that battle.

I know Kathy intends to walk somewhere, so at the very least I will provide support to her in whatever way I can. I don't know if that will be newsletter assistance, training walk support, travel partner and chauffeur or all of the above.

I have to say it again...thank you all so much for your support.

2008 Breast Cancer 3-Day—Twin Cities

