

American Cancer Society Reach to Recovery Program Celebrates 40th Birthday

Experienced survivors help newly diagnosed women cope with breast cancer so they can focus on getting well

ATLANTA 2009/10/28 -The American Cancer Society provides newly diagnosed women, men, and those living with breast cancer with a number of programs and services to help them get well. Among these is Reach to Recovery®, which helps newly diagnosed patients cope with their breast cancer experience by matching them with trained breast cancer survivors. In 2009, the program celebrates its 40th birthday of fighting for every birthday threatened by breast cancer in every community. Since its inception, Reach to Recovery volunteers have lent a comforting and supportive voice to hundreds of thousands of breast cancer survivors, including nearly 26,200 women and men last year.

After hearing the words “You have breast cancer,” a woman may feel overwhelmed, vulnerable, and alone. While under this stress, many women must also learn about and try to understand complex medical treatments and then choose the best one. Reach to Recovery is a nationwide American Cancer Society program supported by more than 11,000 highly trained volunteers who have personally experienced breast cancer. These volunteers provide comfort, emotional support and help to new breast cancer patients and by visiting with them face-to-face or by phone. Volunteers provide up-to-date information, including literature for spouses, children, friends and other loved ones. Most importantly, these volunteers offer understanding and hope as they are living proof that it is possible to live a productive and happy life and celebrate more birthdays after breast cancer.

“I spoke to many of my friends about my diagnosis, but no one had the compassion and understanding like someone who had been through this experience,” said Estelle Lux, an American Cancer Society Reach to Recovery volunteer since 2005. “The American Cancer Society volunteer had a powerful influence in lessening my fears; the comfort she was able to share was immeasurable. As I talk to new patients, I try to exemplify the compassion that volunteer showed me when I was emotionally distraught.”

To access a Reach to Recovery program in your local area, visit cancer.org and click on “In My Community,” or call the American Cancer Society toll-free at 1-800-227-2345. Breast cancer survivors who are interested in becoming Reach to Recovery volunteers can call their local American Cancer Society office or 1-800-227-2345 for more information.

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation’s largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing about \$3.4 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, more than 11 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

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