

Breast cancer survivors to come together for tea

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Gloria Gregg plans to attend the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Survivors Tea next week in spite of being a victim to a recent house fire that put her and her 14-year-old daughter out of their home for the time being.



Gregg

The annual event will be held April 10 at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Arts (SECCA) and will bring together women from all walks of life who will share their stories of struggle and survival with the disease.

Gregg said that it was an honor to attend past teas and be in the company of other women who have survived breast cancer as she has.

"We've all survived. You hear so many tragic stories of people who have not. It's something about a woman who has had breast cancer. You can tell she pampers herself and really takes time for (herself)."

After having faced bouts with cancer three times since 1997 when she was first diagnosed with breast cancer, Gregg has endured countless rounds of chemotherapy and numerous other tests and treatments, many imposing massive side effects on her system.

"It's good to share with those women. I find strength there and I listen to women who have survived 25 years, and I always hold onto every bit of hope that there is. To be at the tea is a real honor because so many people do not make it year to year."

Just 37 years old, Gregg has survived a mastectomy, cancer of her lymph nodes and a bone marrow transplant over the past five years. Gregg spent most of January in the hospital after doctors detected another tumor in her back in December.

Since that time, Gregg said, her health has been better but still she is unable to work

due to neuropathy - a disorder of the nervous system - in her hands and feet. Gregg said that she doesn't work currently and tries to volunteer to keep busy until she is up to speed to work full time again.

As young as Gregg was when she was first diagnosed with cancer, one would have thought she was not a likely candidate for the disease, especially because Gregg's family history did not include cancer, at least not until her sister also was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 34.

"I had never thought about getting a breast exam or mammogram at 31. But I think the age needs to be lowered," said Gregg about the recommendation that women begin receiving yearly mammograms at age 40.

Thankful for her family support and the help of friends, doctors and staff at the Comprehensive Cancer Center and members of Agape Faith Church in Clemmons, Gregg said there is nothing that she really ever needs, particularly after being temporarily removed from her home after it caught fire two weeks ago.

"I thank God for a really loving family and just try to stay positive," said Gregg, who explained that being well enough to attend her daughter Erica's sporting events is the best dose of medicine for her. Gregg's daughter is a member of the JV basketball and track teams for Reynolds High School.

Gregg hopes to educate the public on cancer and the importance of early detection, especially in the African-American community, where Gregg feels many allow their

fears to cause them to ignore signs of the disease.

"(Cancer) is more aggressive in our race than any other race. I think that ignorance is a death trap, a death sentence. Cancer is not a death sentence. Here I am five years later still going strong. I put my faith, not in the doctors, but in God, and I am thankful for that," Gregg said.

Linda Miller, patient advocate for Cancer Services Inc., said the cancer tea is a big to-do for survivors.

Local television news personalities Cindy Farmer from Fox 8 and Kimberly Van Scoy from News Channel 12 will emcee the special event. Oncologists from the Forsyth Medical Center Regional Cancer Center and Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center will be on hand to address the group and to offer encouragement.

Miller said the tea is a significant fund-raiser for the local affiliate because 75 percent of the money raised stays right here in the Piedmont. The tea is open to breast cancer survivors only and gives women in all stages of breast cancer a chance to be together to share experiences and encourage one another.

"It is so moving to see women come together and participate in this," said Miller, who is a breast cancer survivor. "For women who are in treatment now, they're different when they leave from when they come to the tea. The neat thing is that so many of us now, we're living with breast cancer and not all dying from it."

If you are a breast cancer survivor and would like to sign up for the tea, call (336) 721-0032. The tea will be from 4-6:30 p.m.

Cancer Services Inc. will hold a silent auction for breast cancer research on April 11 at Allegacy Federal Credit Union at the Westbrook Plaza location from 6-8:30 p.m.



Eggtraordinary

Krispy Kreme and the Winston-Salem Children's Museum gave young people a lot to smile about Saturday. In honor of Easter, a special day of fun was staged at the future site of the museum on Brookstown Avenue. Activities included face painting, a petting zoo, arts and crafts and lots of Krispy Kreme products. Hundreds took part in the activities, including Sandra Palmer, at right, and her children, Danielle and Maurice. Julia McMillian, an employee at Krispy Kreme's Stratford Road location, showed kids how doughnuts are made at the company.



ESR community forum focuses on affordable housing

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

ESR conducted the first of five interactive community forums on the evening of Tuesday, March 26, at Winston-Salem State University's Anderson Center, as part of the agency's ECHO grant from the Winston-Salem Foundation to help build social capital in the community.

Dr. Harold Martin, chancellor of the university, opened the forum after a period of informal networking and information gathering from display booths. Next came a series of workshops and facilitated discussions related to the topic of affordable housing. More than 125 participants attended the event, including ESR clients and community leaders.

"ESR, the agency that empowers people to become self-reliant, was awarded a \$50,000 ECHO grant by The Winston-Salem Foundation to help build relationships between people who are different from each other across racial, social and economic lines," said Twana C. Wellman, executive director of ESR. "We at ESR are grateful for this wonderful opportunity to help build social capital."

The series of community forums - called "ECHO SoundByte's" - which also will cover the topics of living-wage employment, vocational education, health care coverage for the low-income, and re-entry of the incarcerated into society, will culminate in a Community and Cultural

Summit this fall. Core participants in the entire series of events will comprise a range of individuals from the socioeconomic spectrum. The next scheduled forum on employment is set for Saturday, April 27, at 9 a.m. at the Wachovia Park Building, on the corner of First and Cherry streets.

"Our vision is to help form relationships among people of different socioeconomic circumstances, and, in the process, promote understanding and better the quality of life for all of the community - particularly those our agency serves," Wellman said.

"ESR is uniquely positioned to help build social capital across socioeconomic lines," said Dr. Frank James, current chair of the ESR board of directors and chair emeritus of the anesthesiology department of Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. "Our low-wealth clientele, combined with our longevity in the community, has fostered strong institutional relationships over the years."

ESR was chartered as the Experiment in Self-Reliance in 1964 as one of a network of Community Action Agencies across the nation established as grass-roots organizations to alleviate poverty and fight injustice. The agency now typically serves some 725 households annually within Forsyth County through its self-sufficiency and transitional housing programs.

ESR also administers the county's Individual Development Account (IDA) collaborative, a nationwide program that promotes asset building among the low-income by providing incentive matching funds for individual savings toward first-time homeownership, small business start-up, or college education, as well as training sessions in eco-

See ESR on A10

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