



Shenell Thompson (far right) with Stylists Monica Howie, Myra Adams and Temeshia Brown of Hair Elegance II.

Expanding the Circle

Breast Cancer benefit geared for black women

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Every day for the last three months, Shenell Thompson has added the same accessory to her wardrobe: a pair of pink ribbon breast cancer awareness earrings. It's just one of the many things Thompson is doing to try to spare others from the heartache her family has suffered as a result of the disease.

"I'm just an advocate of women taking care of themselves," she related. "...everyday that we wake up as women and we're not having to deal with the disease, that makes us survivors, too."

Thompson, the director of Education at Consumer Credit Counseling Services, has lost two aunts to breast cancer in the last two years. One of them, Doris Mickens, was only 57 when she was diagnosed with the disease. Mickens passed away in July.

"I saw the impact that it had on my family," Thompson said. "...that was devastating to me."

As Thompson, 34, watched Mickens in her final days, she vowed that she would work to make a difference in her own community.

"I realized at that point that there was nothing I could do for her, but I said 'I have to do something to make sure that her life matters,'" Thompson related.

Though she has always paid attention to her own health, making sure she did monthly breast self examinations and scheduling mammograms as recommended, Thompson says she hadn't given much thought to raising the awareness in the community at large until her aunts were diagnosed. She began researching breast cancer in black women, and stumbled upon some unsettling information.

"Once I started doing research, it really just changed my perspective," Thompson related. "...the myth is that we (black women) don't get exams and we don't take care of ourselves, but statistics show that we develop a more aggressive form of the disease."

The more she learned about breast cancer and how deeply it affected the women in her community, the more Thompson says she wanted to reach out and affect positive change. She is hopeful the Circle of Promise Brunch slated for Oct. 24, will help her do just that.

"What I really want to do is just to bring together 100 black women to talk about how we can change the outcome," Thompson said.

Especially for the African American community, when we're diagnosed, it's as if a bear is on our backs; we don't have time to play with it."

The name for the brunch was borrowed from the Susan G. Komen Foundation's Circle of Promise initiative, which is also geared towards mobilizing African American women in the fight against breast cancer.

"For some who have lost loved ones, it's going to be a healing process," Thompson said of the event. "For others, it'll be a way to talk to the people they care about."

The event will be held at Greater Faith Deliverance Center, where Thompson's father, Dr. John McClurkin, is pastor, and will feature a candle lighting ceremony in memory of those who have been lost to breast cancer; a panel discussion with a handful of survivors; and a pinning ceremony, where each woman will receive a breast cancer awareness lapel pin.

"We'll make a promise that we'll be our sister's keeper," Thompson said. "Every woman is going to pin the woman beside her, and that's the Circle of Promise."

Thompson's hair stylist, Monica Howie, is one of the sponsors for the Circle of Promise.

"I've always supported breast cancer awareness," said Howie, who has owned Hair Elegance II salon for the last decade. "I've had several clients of mine be diagnosed with breast cancer."

Despite its prevalence, Howie believes breast cancer is still a taboo subject for some.

"A lot of black women have a stigma of talking about it; it's almost like a hush-hush subject," she related. "(But) it's something dear to my heart."

Thompson hopes to start an online dialogue about breast cancer in black women, and plans make the Circle of Promise an annual event.

Circle of Promise Brunch will be held Saturday, October 24, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at Greater Faith Deliverance Center, 520 Glenbrook Drive. Tickets are \$10.00 and \$5.00 of each donation will be given to Susan G Komen foundation for additional research. Tickets will be available for purchase through Oct. 20 at the church, (336) 723-1777.

News Clips

"BBQ & Boogie" fundraiser to benefit Special Olympics

Forsyth County will hold its first-ever "BBQ & Boogie" fund-raiser on Saturday, October 17, from 6 to 11 p.m. at Corpening Plaza in downtown Winston-Salem.

Mr. Barbeque will provide the barbecue dinner, and two local bands (Katelyn Marks and Knuckles Deep) will provide the boogie. The event also includes a beer/wine bar and a silent auction, says Lisa Kiser, the coordinator for Special Olympics Forsyth County.

Advance tickets are \$25 each or \$20 when purchased in groups of two or more, and are on sale through the Special Olympics Forsyth County office at 2301 N. Patterson Ave., Winston-Salem, by calling 727-2425 or online at www.firstgiving.com/bbqandboogie. Tickets at the door will be \$30.

CROP Walks planned for Saturday

CROP Hunger Walks will be held on Sunday, Oct. 18 at three Forsyth County locations: Corpening Plaza in downtown Winston-Salem; Fourth of July Park in Kernersville; and Tanglewood Park in Clemmons. Registration begins at 1:30 p.m. and the

walks begin at 2:30 p.m.

The walks support the national and global work of Church World Service, as well as local hunger alleviation programs of Crisis Control Ministry and Sunnyside Ministry. More than 140 congregations, businesses, community organizations and school groups have pledged to walk. The goal is to attract 1,300 walkers and raise \$67,000.

There are 37 CROP Walks held across North Carolina during the month of October. Nationally, over \$264,859,600 has been raised by CROP walkers over the past 20 years.

For additional information, go to www.crisiscontrol.org.

WFDD one-day fund drive receives overwhelming support

On Wednesday, Oct. 7, 88.5 WFDD, the public

radio station licensed to Wake Forest University, attempted to condense its normal ten-day pledge drive into just one day. As of 5 p.m. on Oct. 8, the station had raised 1,303 pledges toward its overall goal of 1,800 pledges.

WFDD General Manager Denise Franklin stated, "Wednesday, October 7th, was our single most successful pledge drive day in station history. Our on-air efforts on that day brought in an unprecedented 934 pledges equaling \$94,103.

During the pre-drive promotion we received 340 pledges equaling \$40,841. Our total amount raised so far is \$138,723. While we didn't quite reach our goal, dozens of listeners told us they appreciated the abbreviated pledge drive. A one day pledge drive is a huge change in the giving habits of our listeners. I am confident they will rise to the occasion and help us make up the remaining pledges we still need."

Public invited to learn at evening and weekend degree programs at WSSU

Winston-Salem State University's Evening-Weekend Programs (EWP) will host an open house for prospective students on Thursday, Oct. 22, from 6 - 8 p.m. in the Chancellor's Dining Room of the Albert H. Anderson Conference Center.

During the session, prospective students will have the opportunity to explore various degree options and be provided information on how they can earn their four year degree entirely during evenings and weekends. Dress for the session will be casual, and completed application forms will be accepted from prospects.

Evening-Weekend Programs offer motivated adult learners the opportunity to earn their bachelor's degree after work in four years or less.

To learn more about WSSU's Evening-Weekend Programs, visit www.wssu.edu, call 336.750.2709, or contact Larry Arhagba at 336-750-2250 or email him at arhagbala@wssu.edu.



Franklin



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