

October Is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By Kimberly Laro

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

When I think of October, I think of the beautiful fall foliage and the color pink. For me October is pink because this is the month that the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks are held. This year's walk is being held on Sunday, October 17, in eight communities across New Hampshire. October is also National Breast Cancer Awareness month.

The first National Breast Cancer Awareness Month took place in 1985. It was designed to provide a platform for breast cancer charities to raise awareness of their work and the disease and to promote early detection of the disease. But as I push my cart through the grocery store or any other stores for that matter, it seems to me that this awareness campaign has also turned into a marketing campaign.

Now don't get me wrong – I understand that these large corporations are donating money to the fight against breast cancer, and that is a good thing. I just want buyers to consider a few things. How much of the product's purchase price is being donated? Is there a maximum contribution the company has allotted to this marketing campaign? Where is the money going? I am

always curious when the beneficiary is "breast cancer research."

So if you are in need of a spatula, and you want to buy a pink spatula, then by all means buy a pink spatula. I actually like the color pink, and I own a pink spatula. But if you are buying a pink spatula because you want to make a difference in the fight against breast cancer, may I suggest donating the purchase price of that item directly?

I would suggest making a donation to the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, or register to participate in Making Strides Against Breast Cancer at Memorial Field in Concord on Sunday, October 17.

The American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer is a non-competitive walk that unites communities to honor and celebrate breast cancer survivors; to remember those we have lost to this disease; to educate women about prevention and early detection; and to raise money to help people stay well, get well, find cures, and fight back against the disease. The American Cancer Society is helping people get well and stay well by providing answers to questions day and night through 800-227-2345 and Cancer.org. Breast cancer is the number one reason people call the American Cancer Society's toll free line.

Sarah's Soldiers Continue To Fight For A Cure

By Kimberly Laro

Sarah's Soldiers

Sarah's Soldiers invites you to experience the gift of a Making Strides event. We are all connected by two words: Breast Cancer. Either those two words have directly or indirectly touched your lives, or you want to be sure that they don't.

For our team, it is about being inspired by a beautiful young lady, Sarah, who we lost to breast cancer at the age of 26. It's about Sarah's mother, Donna, who we also lost to breast cancer. It is about Donna's friend Paula, who is a breast cancer survivor. It is Sarah's cousin, Bethany, who is living beyond breast cancer. It is about all of us who have been left behind to carry on the fight.

There have been many moments that have inspired me to make strides, like when I sat in that church and watched a little boy, the same age as one of my children, say good-bye to his mother because of this horrid disease. This mother, a few years younger than me, had lost her life to breast cancer. This could not be happening. I was still trying to figure out the nap schedule and what I want my children to be when they grow up. The thought of not being there was paralyzing. My heart was bruised, but I could get up

and continue to fight for all mothers.

This year is a big year for Sarah's Soldiers. Sarah's son Jacob is a senior at Merrimack Valley High School. He was four when he lost his mother to breast cancer; he was 11 when he lost his grandmother to breast cancer.

Jacob has inspired us, and we are not sure how this little boy is now old enough to be entering his senior year and playing on the football team.

Jacob has always been at every Making Strides event, walking with the team and raising money. As a footnote, he usually passes in his money at the last minute, all crumpled up and out of order, with a smile and a laugh, but we do cut him some slack.

I recall a particular walk when my children were allowed to bring friends to the walk; friends being anyone willing to raise the \$75 to be part of the team. They were in Junior High, and this was the first time that they walked the walk alone – as alone as you can be with 5,000 people.

They walked with Jacob, as they had many times before, but during that drive home, we were talking, and I think for them that this was the first time that it clicked. Sarah was not only the inspiration for our team, but Sarah was their friend Jacob's mom, and she

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