

Emily Laro Quilts For Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

Making Strides press release

Close your eyes and imagine being wrapped in your favorite quilt. That quilt that comforts you when you are sick, that quilt that eases your worried mind after a stressful day, that same quilt that lulls you into sleep after a perfectly ordinary day.

You cannot wrap yourself in the giant quilt that will welcome you to Memorial Field at the 19th annual American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk on Sunday, October 16, but you will feel its comfort and love.

The quilt hangs on the Warren H. Doane Field House, where the opening and closing ceremonies of the walk are held. The quilt has become a symbol of encircling warmth and hope to all who participate in the day.

The quilt includes squares made by survivors, by members of area quilting guilds, by committee members, by walk teams, and by individuals. There is even a quilt square from as far away as Virginia. The makers of the three-foot

cer awareness, making a quilt square as part of her project.

Emily embraced the project and



Kat Hitchmoth (l) and Emily Laro with the quilt Emily made for Making Strides as part of her MVHS Senior Project.

learned a new skill while contributing a beautiful quilt square to the project. She encourages everyone to contribute a square. "What you might lack in experience, you can make up in heart. I found the particular quilt square I designed to be very challenging for someone who had never sewn before. But when I became frustrated and discouraged, all I had to do was remind myself that this was nothing compared to the challenges someone with breast cancer faces."

Emily's mentors for her senior project were her grandmother, Norma Laro, and the Making Strides quilt project coordinator, Kat Hitchmoth.

The Importance Of Early Detection

Emily's breast cancer awareness project, which she presented to a panel of judges and peers, focused on early detection. Breast cancer caught early has a survival rate of 98 percent. If diagnosed late, the survival rate drops to 23 percent.

Emily encourages early detection through breast self-exams, clinical breast exams, and yearly mammograms for women over 40. To enforce the importance of early detection, Emily shared the statistic that one in eight women will experience invasive breast cancer in their lifetime, and how that would impact the student body at MVHS. Eleven females in the senior class, 13 females in the junior class, 13 females in the sophomore class, and 14 females in the freshman class will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime, for a total of 51 female diagnoses. Males can also be diagnosed with breast cancer, and two males in the student body will be diagnosed. These facts are based on the current statistics.

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These quilt squares each measure three feet square and are a small part of the giant quilt displayed at the Making Strides event in Concord each fall.

by three-foot quilt squares have shared their stories through this project.

"The makers of these squares have entrusted their stories to us. They have stitched their stories of honor, remembrance, and hope into a beautiful portrayal of love for all to see and be inspired," says Andover resident Kat Hitchmoth.

Kat is the founder and coordinator of the quilt project, a member of the walk's planning committee, and Team Captain of Hope's Marvelous Mammograms. This will be the fourth year that Kat has coordinated the ongoing project that continues to grow.

MVHS Senior Project

The quilt this year will have a square donated by Merrimack Valley High School senior Emily Laro. Emily has been a member of Sarah's Soldiers for the past ten years, a team formed in memory of fellow senior Jacob Raney's mother Sarah. Emily is an active volunteer for Making Strides and chose to do her MVHS senior project on breast can-



Last month the East Andover Village Preschool held a "healthy bunny hop" - we counted how many times each child hopped in one minute. Children made bunny ears and "grew" a bunny nose and whiskers. We wrapped up the morning snacking on carrots and water. [Pictured here is Asa Gilman.] Photo and caption: Doreen Perreault



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