

Andover Teams Help Making Strides Walk Top \$588,000

Concord's seventh year of raising over \$500,000

Kimberly Laro, Making Strides

On October 20, the 21st Making Strides Against Breast Cancer event was held at Memorial Field in Concord. Over 5,000 participants raised \$588,561 to fund critical research, programs, and patients services of the American Cancer Society. In 1993, the



Sarah's Soldiers is another Making Strides Against Breast Cancer team that has deep connections with Andover.

first Making Strides events were held, and the Concord event raised \$3,000. This year, over 300 events will be held across the country.

Three teams with Andover roots – Sarah's Soldiers, Hope's Marvelous Mamo-grams, and Heidi's Fight for a Cure – were among the top 20 fundraising teams. Along with Just for Jill and Judy, Too! and Proctor Hornets Taking the Sting out of Cancer, they were five of the 151 teams that took part in this year's event along with hundreds of individual participants.

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer unites us all in the common cause. We make strides to remember those we have loved and lost; we make strides to give support to those currently battling; and we make strides to celebrate.

The money raised at Making Strides Against Breast Cancer has a very real impact on the disease. The American Cancer Society is the leader in the fight to end breast cancer and all cancers, investing more in research to find, pre-



Another team with connections to Andover: Heidi's Fight for a Cure.

vent, treat, and cure cancer than any other non-governmental organization.

Unlike some organizations that support only breast cancer research,

the American Cancer Society funds research to find cures for all types of cancer; discoveries in one area can often help find answers in another. As a result, the American Cancer Society has played a role in nearly every major breast cancer research breakthrough in recent history.

Every 30 seconds, someone calls the American Cancer Society. Trained cancer information specialists are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at 800 227-2345. They answer an average of one million calls each year. Breast cancer is the number one reason people call.

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer also has a real impact on the hearts of all its participants.

Heidi's Fight for a Cure was formed by Heidi Page. Heidi's motto was Live2BeWell, and live her life she did. This past July, Heidi lost her battle with breast cancer. Heidi's family and friends are continuing her fight for a cure. With smiles on their faces and tears in their eyes, they were Making Strides Against Breast Cancer so others could



Members of the Just for Jill and Judy, Too! team include Julie Gaudette, Kathy DeGrassie, and Jennifer Bent.

live to be well.

When participants arrived at Memorial Field to Make Strides, they were greeted by a giant quilt, made up of individual quilt squares, each three feet square. The Stitches of Comfort and Hope quilt project was the vision of Andover's Kat Hitchmoth, team leader of Hope's Marvelous Mamo-grams.

This quilt project led Lisa Marie of Florida to New Hampshire to walk with sisters on a friend's team, Stitching Hope. Each of her sisters contributed quilt squares. Lisa Marie was diagnosed this past July, and her daughter has been very worried about her. Seeing all the survivors participating in the event, from the newly diagnosed to those years beyond their diagnoses, was a blessing to her. "They say that you are only as happy as your saddest child, and my child has been very sad. Now, after this event,



Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Volunteer Committee members show the crowd the 2013 fundraising total of \$588,567 for the October 20 event in Concord. This marks the seventh consecutive year that the Concord event has raised over half a million dollars. Over the past 21 years, the Concord event has raised a total of over \$5.9 million. Andover resident Kimberly Laro is holding the dollar sign; Kat Hitchmoth is in the front row, second from the right.

Photo: Michael St. Germain

she and I have more hope."

The Just for Jill and Judy Too! team formed for Jill, who is now a six-year survivor and mother of a beautiful little boy and expecting a daughter; and for Judy, mother-in-law of team member Jen Bent.

This year, the team thought that they wouldn't actually make it to the walk, as they were out of state at team leader Kathy DeGrassie's brother Will Well's funeral, who had lost his battle

to cancer. Kathy's granddaughter, Katie Bent, convinced them otherwise. "It doesn't really matter what type of cancer it is, does it?" so they made strides for Uncle Will, too.

Practical matters of the heart, everyone has their own reasons for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, and the money that those reasons inspire will be hard at work making a difference in the lives of those touched by breast cancer in our community. 



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Sunday, October 19, 2014


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