



Maine Breast Cancer Coalition News & Views

fall 2008

www.mainebreastcancer.org

1-800-928-2644

For each of the thousand-plus recipients of the Support Service Fund there is a compelling story. Here are a few:

- ❖ A 55-year-old woman had a bilateral mastectomy and needed two prostheses. She had insurance with deductibles that had just been met and then went into effect again with the new calendar year. She and her husband were barely meeting daily expenses, as she had to leave her job while in treatment. We awarded \$700 for prostheses and travel expenses.
- ❖ A 35-year-old woman needed a mammogram and reading due to an extensive family history of breast cancer. She had no health insurance and limited income. The Support Service Fund awarded \$360 for a mammogram and reading.
- ❖ A 90-year-old developed lymphedema and recurring cellulitis infection as a result of her 1965 breast cancer surgery. We awarded \$552 toward compression garments not covered by Medicare.
- ❖ A 40-year-old was in treatment for breast cancer and qualified for MaineCare, but had high copays or deductibles. Awarded \$700 toward medication co-pays and travel expenses.

Eight Years : \$500,000 : 1,000 Recipients A Support Service Fund Milestone

October, “Breast Cancer Awareness Month”, is a time to reflect on the impact that breast cancer has on the lives of many Maine residents. The need for research leading to eradication of this disease is urgent. But there is also a need to take action to assist those currently dealing with a breast cancer diagnosis or in need of breast health services. The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition’s [Support Service Fund](#) has been striving to fill this need for Maine residents.

For the past eight years the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition’s Support Service Fund has been the premier “safety net” program for Maine people needing breast health and breast cancer assistance and who have nowhere else to turn. This month marks an important milestone for the Fund: ***During the past eight years we have helped more than one thousand Maine residents with a total of more than a half million dollars in grant awards.***

The Support Service Fund began as an idea among a group of MBCC volunteers. When we published our first *Maine Breast Cancer Resource Guide* in 1997 and distributed the free guide around the state, we began to get phone calls from Maine women who desperately needed help and did not know where to turn. Some needed mammograms; some had been diagnosed with breast cancer and needed prostheses, mastectomy bras, or other items or services. Some of the people who called were uninsured, but many had insurance policies that didn’t cover what they needed or had high deductibles or co-pays.

A group of women from Maine Breast Cancer Coalition started talking about how we might help. What if there were a program to provide financial assistance to people who had exhausted all other possibilities? How would our small group of volunteers develop and manage such a program? How would we raise the money?

Around the same time as these conversations were taking place, Dan DeLuca, a champion Maine swimmer, was thinking about a way to honor his mother, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer, by raising money for a breast cancer cause. Dan contacted the president of Maine Breast Cancer Coalition and told her that he would swim the 32 miles across Moosehead Lake as a fundraising event to benefit those diagnosed with breast cancer.

Dan DeLuca’s first Moosehead swim in 1999 was marked by extreme weather, wind, and whitecaps that made Moosehead Lake look like the English Channel on a bad day. Halfway through the event, the swim had to be called off, but Dan still raised \$17,000. The next year, he tried again and completed the first-ever swim across Moosehead Lake, raising \$25,000 for the fledgling Support Service Fund. (cont. on p. 2)

Maine Breast Cancer Coalition had also written our first grant proposal to the Maine Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. The \$15,000 Komen grant and the funds Dan DeLuca raised from the Moosehead swims became our seed money. In 2000 the Support Service Fund was launched.

During its first year the Support Service Fund awarded close to fifty grants. Now in its ninth year, the demands on the Fund and the number of applicants have steadily grown, but we continue our mission to provide prompt, confidential, and compassionate service to all applicants. Since the beginning of 2008 we have already received more than 150 applications, and expect to help an unprecedented number of per-year applicants by the end of this 2008.

The Support Service Fund is an innovative and unique program that meets the applicant at her or his point of need. We have helped applicants with a wide range of essential services or items including but not limited to breast imaging (mammography or ultrasound), chemotherapy, radiation treatment, lab/pathology fees, radiologist readings, surgery/ biopsy, physician/surgeon, hospital bills, anesthesia, travel expenses to treatments, lymphedema compression garments, medication costs, genetic testing, prostheses/bras, wigs/turbans, and many other support services. We also have provided emergency temporary living expenses such as rent, utilities, heating oil, or health insurance payments to people in active treatment and too ill to work.

To find out more about the Support Service Fund or to apply for a grant, visit our website at www.mainebreastcancer.org to download an easy-to-complete application or call toll free 800-928-2644. We can provide phone assistance for completing the application if needed.

The Support Service Fund is currently supported by generous contributors including the Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen For the Cure, the Maine Cancer Foundation, the Borman Family Foundation, York Hospital Breast Cancer Survivors Group, the Fraternal Order of Eagles Pink Sock Foundation, the Greater Bangor Women's Ski/Snowboard Club, PATCO Construction "Pink Key" Project, Stonewall Kitchen, Inverness Medical Innovations, dedicated fundraisers by individuals, organizations, or businesses, and individual contributions by members and supporters of MBCC.

We would like to express our appreciation to the following groups, organizations or businesses that recently held fundraising events or made in-kind donations to MBCC or the Support Service Fund:

Laurie Clark of **Higgins Corporation** made an in-kind donation of identification badges for the MBCC board and active members.

The Smiling Cow of Camden donated \$1,000 in honor of Clair Frye.

Stonewall Kitchen of York, Maine selected the *Support Service Fund* as the recipient of their annual charity initiative and donated more than \$5,200 so far this year. They recently made an additional donation of \$383.

Maine Eye Care Center contributed \$90.63.

Inverness Medical Innovations of Scarborough has selected the *Support Service Fund* as the recipient of their fundraising efforts this year and recently sent an additional contribution of \$313, bringing their total contributions to more than \$2,500.

The **PATCO Pink Key Project** made an additional donation of \$5,500 to the *Support Service Fund*. (See the article on page 4 of this newsletter.)

We recently received generous individual donations for the Support Service Fund from:

Deb Pingree in honor of Clair Frye

Daphne Marinopoulos

Ro LeGasse through her quarterly United Way contributions

David Ward through his quarterly United Way contributions

New Maine Breast Cancer License Plate Available on October 1

As of October 1, 2008 the new Maine Breast Cancer specialty license plates are available. The plates help support breast cancer education, research, and patient support here in Maine.

The proceeds will be split equally between three beneficiaries: The [Maine Breast Cancer Coalition](#) for our [Support Service Fund](#); the [Maine Cancer Foundation](#) for their Women's Cancer Research Fund; [Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program](#) for their mammogram fund.

The plates will be available from BMV branch offices and most town offices. The plates cost \$20 for the first year and \$15 for renewal.

If you reserved one of the first 2,000 plates, the state has been notified and you will receive a voucher before October 1. The plate is now available for anyone who would like to order one, thanks to the commitment of the first 2,000 people.

For more information call 207-624-9000, extension 52149.

MBCC Receives Grant from Borman Family Foundation

For the fifth consecutive year, the Borman Family Foundation has awarded a generous grant to the Support Service Fund. This year's grant for \$3,000 demonstrates the Borman Foundation's ongoing commitment to helping underserved Maine residents.

We greatly appreciate the Borman Family Foundation's support.

Maine Leadership Awards for Breast Health Presented At Blaine House

Local Individuals Honored for Dedication and Commitment

(Press release from American Cancer Society)

TOPSHAM, ME – The Maine Leadership Awards for Breast Health were presented at the 11th annual Silver Tea hosted by First Lady Karen Baldacci at the Blaine House in Augusta on Thursday, October 2, as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This year the Leadership Awards was presented to two women who have made extraordinary contributions as volunteers, and one woman with exceptional records as a health care professional.

This year's recipients are Chriss Hayden and Meredith Strang Burgess, both of Portland; and Anne Palmer of Belfast,—all recognized for their leadership in advocating for the breast cancer needs of Maine women.

In her current capacity as the Cumberland County Coalition Coordinator for the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program, Chriss Hayden has worked extensively with the Homeless Program in Portland to increase their awareness of breast health issues among women. She has spent countless hours building the MBCHP into one of the nation's leading breast screening programs for uninsured/low-income women. She has spent hours meeting with the Somali population in both Androscoggin and Cumberland counties to learn about their culture in terms of breast health. As a result, she has produced a non-offensive, highly effective brochure that this culture of women could understand. Chriss' co-worker at MBCHP, Megan Croteau nominated her for this award because, "She has been a valuable asset to the program in helping discover barriers women have and brainstorming on creative ways to overcome them. She works tirelessly, to help women in Maine understand and receive these important breast health screenings."

Meredith Strang Burgess and Anne Palmer are co-winners of the 2007 Breast Health Leadership Award for volunteers. Burgess was a member of the Maine Cancer Foundation board of directors, serving as President from 2002-2007. Through her business, Burgess Advertising, she was instrumental in improving the public's awareness of the Foundation. She is responsible for Launching the Cure Breast Cancer for ME Luncheon that is held every year in conjunction with Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The funds raised from this event are designated for research, education, and support programs for breast cancer. In 2007, Burgess wrote, proposed, and introduced the bill that created the pink breast cancer awareness license plate. In her letter of support nominating Burgess for this award, Meredith Skinner, President and CEO of Mercy Health System of Maine, said that, "Meredith Burgess embodies the term community leader...she has provided significant support to and leadership for those suffering from breast cancer and has used her standing in the community to bring greater awareness of the issue."

Anne Palmer's leadership role in the breast health arena began in 1989; she created the Yarmouth Breast Cancer Support Group, a program that is still functioning today. She started as an American Cancer Society volunteer for the Reach to Recovery program two years later. Maureen Leary of the American Cancer Society praises Anne's dedication, "Anne has served in almost every capacity available here at the Society; she has served in leadership positions for our fundraising events, visited newly diagnosed breast cancer patients, and planned conferences. Anne often serves as a speaker at our events-the whole gamut...with every new endeavor; she brings breast cancer to the forefront." In addition to her contributions to the Society, she is one of the founders of the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition, and has represented all breast cancer survivors from Maine as an ambassador to Washington D.C. where she lobbied legislators to increase funding for cancer research.

Other professional nominees included Kathryn Varney, Nurse Practitioner at Bennett Breast Care Center and a strong advocate for community education of breast health topics and for the uninsured; Dr. Lisa Rutstein, one of two surgical oncologists in the state, and someone who is active in community outreach; James Marc-Aurele, who holds a certificate in Manual Lymph Drainage and Decongestive Lymph Therapy and used his knowledge to open the Lymphedema Clinic at Mid Coast Hospital; a surgeon who specializes in breast diseases, Dr. Molly Collins was instrumental in the planning and establishment of the Beth C. Wright Cancer Center in Ellsworth and currently serves as the Center's Executive Director; and lastly, Sally Bilancia who oversees the coordination of the annual Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Race for the Cure.

Arline Fortier, a Sanford resident who spearheaded the necessary fundraising and organization for the Breast Cancer Treatment Center at Goodall Hospital was also nominated in the volunteer category.

The Maine Leadership Award for Breast Health, created in 1998, is a collaborative effort of the American Cancer Society, the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program, the Maine Cancer Foundation, the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition, Maine Breast Nurse Network, and Susan G. Komen for the Cure – Maine. Leadership Awards are presented annually during the month of October to recognize Maine residents who have made exceptional contributions to promoting breast health, improving understanding of breast cancer, and/or working toward the elimination of the disease at the national, state, or local level.

If you would like to receive the MBCC newsletter via email (3 times per year), please send your name and email address to czh1@roadrunner.com

MBCC respects your privacy. We will not share your name or email address with any other organization.

PATCO's Pink Key Project: When Getting There *Is* the Battle

(from a PATCO Pink Key Project press release)

From Maine to California, Americans have felt the effects of rising fuel costs. We've eliminated family trips, joined carpools, and held our breath as the gas gauge dips ever lower. For some, however, the challenge of getting from "here" to "there" is far more somber. In fact, meeting that challenge can mean the difference between life and death.

If you're battling against breast cancer, and live in rural Maine, getting to Bangor or Portland or another major treatment center can be a real hardship. The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition's [Support Service Fund](#) is striving to address this need.

Direct, local support was what prompted PATCO Construction of Sanford to select the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition as the recipient of funds generated by The Pink Key Project. Several members of PATCO's own "family" have faced, or are continuing to face, the devastating effects of breast cancer. PATCO has pledged to donate \$500 for every construction contract – residential or commercial – signed in 2008, to the Support Service Fund. PATCO co-owners, Mark and Greg Patterson, presented the first check, for \$2,000, to MBCC President, Pat Bredenberg, in March. PATCO's second donation, this time for \$5,500, has been earmarked to help ease the burden of transportation costs.

According to Bredenberg, "As of September 1, the Support Service Fund has helped 18 women with travel expenses for a total of \$4,301 so far in 2008. This doesn't include pending applications for assistance". A typical radiation regimen, explains Bredenberg, would be 5 days per week for 6 weeks, for a total of at least 30 round trips. One of MBCC's recent applicants is a woman suffering complications from her breast cancer treatments. She must travel daily, every day for 8 weeks, from the Pittsfield area to Bangor. This is an expense that is impossible for most people to afford.

"Through The Pink Key Project our company is helping make a difference," says Mark Patterson. "We hope other companies in Maine will be inspired to start their own fundraising programs. Together, we can beat breast cancer." For more information about PATCO or the Pink Key project go to www.patco.com.

How You Can Help

The **Support Service Fund** is only partially supported by grants from major foundations. MBCC also relies on contributions from local groups, businesses, or individuals. If your community group, business, or organization would like to dedicate all or part of the proceeds from a fundraising effort to the *Support Service Fund*, contact grants chairperson Christine Haiss at 207-938-4018 or czh1@roadrunner.com. One hundred percent of these donations will go to *Support Service Fund* recipients, as our low administrative costs are covered by our Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure grant.

Or please consider a tax-deductible donation of any amount. See the donation and membership form below for details. Checks should be made payable to MBCC. Please write "*Support Service Fund*" on the memo line if you would like your donation to be designated for the Fund.

Yes! *I want to support the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition's work.*

I want to be active in the *Maine Breast Cancer Coalition*. Please contact me.

I want to become a member of *MBCC*. Enclosed is a check for \$15 (individual) or \$100 (business or Organization membership) payable to *MBCC*.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (day) _____ (eve.) _____
Email _____
(if you would like to be on our newsletter email list)

The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.

I want to make a tax-deductible contribution. Enclosed is a check payable to *MBCC* for \$_____.
In honor/memory of _____

I want to donate the following gifts or services:

Please mail your check for membership and/or contribution with this form (or a photocopy) to:
Maine Breast Cancer Coalition
499 Broadway
PMB 362
Bangor, ME 04401-3460