



# Maine Breast Cancer Coalition News & Views

fall 2009

[www.mainebreastcancer.org](http://www.mainebreastcancer.org)

1-800-928-2644

## **Take Action!**

October, “Breast Cancer Awareness Month,” is a time to reflect on the impact of breast cancer nationwide and in Maine. **This year more than 1,000 Maine residents will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 180 will die of this disease.** Breast cancer patients and those close to them will be affected by the medical, emotional, and financial impact of a breast cancer diagnosis.

Awareness is a first step toward change, but **it will take more than awareness to make a difference.** Actions by individuals and groups will have an impact on breast cancer. Even small actions make a difference.

*Consider the following ways you can make a difference during this Breast Cancer Awareness Month:*

**Be part of the solution!** Consider joining the Dr. Susan Love/Avon Army of Women, whose goal is to recruit one million healthy women of every age and ethnicity, including breast cancer survivors and women at high-risk for the disease, to partner with breast cancer researchers and directly participate in the research that will eradicate breast cancer once and for all. For information visit [www.armyofwomen.org](http://www.armyofwomen.org)

**Let our lawmakers know that breast cancer is important.** Keep informed of legislation related to breast cancer and urge your lawmakers to support these bills. Go to the *National Breast Cancer Coalition* site [www.stopbreastcancer.org](http://www.stopbreastcancer.org) for updates on breast cancer related legislative priorities.

**Consider becoming a member or making a tax-deductible contribution to the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition.** Our award-winning *Support Service Fund* has provided financial assistance for breast cancer or breast health related services to more than 1,200 Maine residents during the past nine years.

*Our membership/donation form is on the back page of this newsletter.*

## **A Case for Breast Cancer Prevention**

*by Sarah Dunagan of the [Silent Spring Institute](http://www.silent-spring.org) (October 2009 press release)*

Every October, we’re awash in a sea of pink ribbons. Information about breast cancer risk factors swirls through the media, but when it comes to environmental factors, it’s often radio silence or claims that there’s “no evidence.” If there’s no evidence, then we don’t need to take action, right? Maybe it’s time to reconsider how we think about public health evidence.

“How do we know the gunshot killed the victim?” asked Julia Brody, Executive Director of Silent Spring Institute, during her testimony to the President’s Cancer Panel. “The gun was raised and fired, the bullet entered a vital organ, and the victim fell to the ground.” But how do we know environmental factors contribute to breast cancer? In this case, it’s much harder to establish a clear cause and effect relationship.

Each year, the President’s Cancer Panel—a watchdog group of advisors charged with monitoring the National Cancer Program—holds a series of meetings to gather input from experts and the public on a particular theme. While in past meetings the panel has focused on topics such as lifestyle and treatment, this year they are focusing, for the first time ever, on environmental factors. The panel will present a report with its recommendations to President Obama later this year.

At the panel’s meeting on Air Pollution and Water Contamination, Brody advocated a new strategy for environmental health sleuthing. Taking the traditional “innocent until proven guilty” approach—which requires waiting for definitive proof that a given chemical causes breast cancer before taking action—hasn’t been working. This is because it can take many years after an exposure for breast cancer to develop, women are exposed to a toxic soup of chemicals, and it’s difficult to untangle the many interwoven genetic and environmental factors that can contribute to the disease.

With medical research, we can dispel some of this ambiguity by using clinical trials to test, for example, the safety of a given drug. But we can’t apply this model to study the effects of pollutants on women’s health because it would be unethical to test a toxic chemical on a group of women and wait to see if they get sick. So what, then, are we to do?

We don’t have to throw up our hands in the face of this challenge. Instead, we can work to build the case for a “better safe than sorry” approach that would rely on animal and cell studies that illustrate how chemicals can contribute to breast cancer, and studies showing humans are exposed to those same chemicals. Taken together, this evidence would create the

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foundation for preventive action to reduce our exposures to harmful chemicals.

“We see substantial evidence of links between environmental pollutants and breast cancer, enormous knowledge gaps that we can fill immediately, and opportunities for precautionary action,” said Brody. “If we take steps to protect ourselves and our children from chemicals that cause cancer, we will also see benefits for numerous other health endpoints, including diabetes, obesity, neurological disease, and infertility.”

To read the full text of Brody’s testimony, visit the Silent Spring Institute homepage:

<http://silentspring.org/our-publications/invited-talks/everyday-exposures-and-breast-cancer>

## Maine Leadership Awards for Breast Health Presented At Blaine House

### *Maine Women Honored for Dedication and Commitment*

(from an American Cancer Society press release)

The Maine Leadership Awards for Breast Health were presented at the 12th annual Silver Tea hosted by First Lady Karen Baldacci at the Blaine House in Augusta on September 30 as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

This year’s recipients are Betsy St. Germain, MN, RN, AOCN, of Cape Elizabeth in the professional category; and Lisa Wahlstrom of Bangor in the volunteer category – both recognized for their leadership in advocating for the breast cancer needs of Maine women.

In her current capacity as Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist at Maine Medical Center’s Cancer Institute, **Betsy St. Germain** has dedicated her career to the support of and advocacy for cancer patients. In 1994, St. Germain developed the Breast Health Education Program at Maine Medical Center that led to today’s comprehensive Breast Care Program at the facility. The Maine Breast Nurse Network nominated St. Germain for her exemplary service in the area of breast health and cancer. She is a role model to other nurses and mentors, many who are new to the field of breast care. St. Germain is a longtime volunteer for the American Cancer Society and was a founding member of the Southern Maine Oncology Nursing Society in 1984.

According to Donna Green, Clinical Nurse Manager at Maine Medical Center, “One only has to see the many patients who come up to her and hug her like she is an old friend to know the impact she has on her patients and their families.”

**Lisa Wahlstrom** is committed to the vision of a better future: an end to breast cancer. Wahlstrom is known in the Bangor area as a valued volunteer and community leader having held key positions with the [Susan G. Komen for the Cure Maine Affiliate](#), Bangor-area Breakfast Rotary, and the Bangor Symphony. She and her family have been touched by the disease: her sister was diagnosed in 2000, Wahlstrom herself in 2002, and in 2003 her mother was diagnosed.

Wahlstrom first volunteered with the Maine Race for the Cure in 2001, and became the organization’s Grants Chair and Board Member in 2004. She spends countless hours researching, planning, and preparing for her work regarding breast cancer awareness, breast health, and fundraising. According to her friend, Judy Horan, “Breast cancer does not define Lisa Wahlstrom, but her passions do. Spreading the word about breast cancer and the need for a cure are of utmost importance to her.

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Other nominees for the 2009 Breast Health Leadership Award include Lisa A. Rutstein, MD, FACS Director of Surgical Oncology at Maine Medical Center in the Professional Category for consistently raising the bar regarding the treatment of breast cancer not only in Southern Maine, but in all of rural Maine through her statewide activities; and Robin Whitten of Portland in the Volunteer Category for her work in creating The Pink Tulip Project.

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 Affiliate](#).

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. Nominations for deserving volunteers and medical professionals are accepted year round. Visit [www.cancer.org/blainehousetea](http://www.cancer.org/blainehousetea) and download a nomination form, or contact Terry Baker, Community Executive for the American Cancer Society at 207-373-3716 or [terry.baker@cancer.org](mailto:terry.baker@cancer.org) for more information.

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](mailto:czh1@roadrunner.com).

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

## Bridging the Gap

### *Breast Health Program for Young Women*

[Caring Connections](#), a cooperative women's health program of the Bangor Y and Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC), supported through philanthropic efforts of Healthcare Charities, is home to a unique breast health program called *Bridging The Gap (BTG)*.

*Bridging The Gap* is a breast health screening, diagnostic and education program funded by the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Maine Affiliate. *Bridging The Gap* services are provided through Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor. *BTG* is thought to be the only program of its kind in Maine.

*Bridging The Gap* provides no-cost clinical breast exams, imaging and diagnostic services to uninsured and underinsured women in their 20's and 30's. Women in their 30's who are considered at increased risk due to personal or family history of breast cancer or have a breast health symptom are eligible for these services; women in their 20's who have symptoms may also qualify. Women must meet the financial guidelines of the program to enroll in *Bridging The Gap*. Guidelines utilized are those of the Maine Breast & Cervical Health Program. For more information visit Caring Connections online at [http://www.bangory.org/content/4012/Caring\\_Connections/](http://www.bangory.org/content/4012/Caring_Connections/) or call 207-941-2808.

## Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure *Another Record-Breaking Year*

This year's *Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure*, held at the Bangor waterfront on September 20, broke all previous Race records. More than 5,200 participants raised in excess of \$320,000! Thank you to the race organizers who worked so hard and to the race participants. Participation in the *Komen Race for the Cure* makes a real difference!

Since the Maine Race began in 1997, the Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure has granted more than \$1,000,000 to education, screening, and treatment programs in the state of Maine. The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition's [Support Service Fund](#) has been a Maine Komen grant recipient for the past nine years.

According to the Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure website, the Maine Affiliate "will be bringing the Race to Portland, starting in September of 2010. The Portland Race will happen concurrently with the Bangor Race, making this a truly statewide effort. The Bangor Race, now in its thirteenth year, is the largest 5K run/walk in the State of Maine. The Race has broken attendance and revenue records its last three years, but the key to future growth for this event will be making it accessible to the people of southern Maine. "

The Komen Maine Affiliate has already begun assembling a Portland Race for the Cure Committee. Anyone interested in volunteering year-round for this event can download a [volunteer form](#) and send it in.

For more information about the *Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure* visit [www.komenmaine.com](http://www.komenmaine.com).

## Cancer Community Center

*No Cost Support for Southern  
Maine residents*

The Cancer Community Center is a comfortable, friendly place where adults living with cancer and their families and friends gather to build social and emotional support as a complement to their regular medical care.

All activities, classes and support services are offered at NO CHARGE. There is no official doctor's referral needed and no income verification process. Drop in for a tour!

The Center offers:

- support and networking groups
- Maine Buddy Program™
- wellness classes
- creative expression workshops
- social activities
- workplace support
- resource library
- ...and more.

For more information visit <http://www.cancercommunitycenter.org>, call 207-774-2200 or email [info@cancercommunitycenter.org](mailto:info@cancercommunitycenter.org)

Cancer Community Center  
778 Main St. (Route 1)  
South Portland, Maine 04106



Do you have your  
*Maine Breast Cancer  
Specialty License Plate* yet?

Proceeds benefit the [Maine Breast Cancer Coalition](#) for our [Support Service Fund](#); the [Maine Cancer Foundation](#), and the [Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program](#).

The plates are available from BMV branch offices and most town offices. Call the Bureau of Motor Vehicles at 207-624-9000 for more information.

## Support Service Fund Update

The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition's Support Service Fund has for the past nine years been an important safety net for uninsured or underinsured Maine residents with breast cancer or breast health related needs. The Fund covers a wide range of items and services. It has covered mammograms and ultrasounds, hospital bills, physician bills, copays, bras and prostheses, wigs, prescriptions, lymphedema therapy and compression garments, genetic testing, transportation costs, and temporary living expenses for people in active breast cancer treatment, to list a few. The Support Service Fund Committee expects to award grants totaling \$80,000 to at least 200 applicants this calendar year. Since January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, 175 applications have been received. The foundations, organizations, businesses, and individuals who have contributed so generously to the Fund are making a real difference in the lives of Support Service Fund recipients. To find out more or to apply to the Support Service Fund, go to [www.mainebreastcancer.org](http://www.mainebreastcancer.org) and click on "Services".

### ***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 the Support Service Fund:***

The **First Annual Ladies Ride for Breast Cancer** took place on August 8 and raised \$2,543. Many thanks to **Andie Walker**, who organized the event, and to all the biker ladies (and men) who took part in the ride.

**Portland Shellfish** donated \$300 from a recent fundraiser, raising the total of their donations to \$1,150. Special thanks to **John Maloney** and **Emily Lane**.

**Nancy Jeffers** of **Camden National Bank** was honored with a service award from the bank. She, along with assistant vice president **Susan Brightbill**, designated the *Support Service Fund* for the \$250 matching grant.

Long-term supporters **York Hospital Breast Cancer Survivors Group** made a recent donation of \$2,000.

### ***We are grateful for the following recent individual donations for the Support Service Fund from:***

**Paul and Maureen Greene**

**Holly Gallant**

**Louise Caron** and other friends of **Beverly Gosnell**, who made donations to the Fund in honor of Beverly

**Sara Walbridge** in memory of **Anne Palmer**

We also received an **anonymous** donation of \$1,000.

### *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](mailto: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.

*MBCC is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.*

## ***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

