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one VOICE
Giving Virginians a Voice in the Fight Against Breast Cancer

VBCF’s 15th Anniversary
Ribbons & Roses Reception
Save the Date!

Date: Saturday, October 28, 2006
Place: Virginia Institute for Architecture, Richmond
Time: 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Featuring the unveiling of VBCF’s 15th Anniversary Quilt:
Faces Behind the Fight and a silent auction of Virginia treasures. An invitation with more details is forthcoming.

Health News Review by Etta Boyd, RN, Central VA Chapter Member

At the National Breast Cancer Coalition’s Annual Advocacy Conference, speaker Gary Schwitzer, Assistant Professor at the University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communication, presented Do Media Get the Breast Cancer Story Right? He is concerned that the public is inundated with hot news of potential cures and stories about stopping breast cancer, but asked whether these stories are helping or are harmful?

Professor Schwitzer started the Health News Review, which can be found at www.healthnewsreview.org, to grade health stories on the ABC’s of good journalism – accuracy, balance and completeness. The goal is to grade news stories to support excellence in health journalism and to support consumers’ informed decision-making. Professor Schwitzer and a team of multi-disciplined experts from different nationwide university faculties look at top news reports, audit them, and give feedback. The team rates health news and articles, makes their comments, a report to provide guidance to readers.

Health News Review, at the time of the conference, was only two weeks old and had a limited database, but the team had already reviewed a number of news stories about raloxifene and its use in breast cancer patients. Their research showed that only 14% of the stories had a satisfactory grasp of the subject. I reviewed three news stories and the Review’s comments on each.

The data on the Review’s website is to the point and honest reading. It examines the stories with ten criteria, tells the reader why or why not the stories were satisfactory, and rates the stories on a one-to-five star scale. The Review also allows you to read the original article and offer your own comments. The Review encourages you to question stories and not let them be your sole support for medical decision-making.

The Review also warns readers that this is a tool to guide journalists, not just to bash them. It is an attempt to help improve the reporting that acclaims novel ideas in healthcare. The Review is not intended to berate the work of well-intentioned journalists. Even though the Health News Review is very young, I believe it shows great promise and I give it a five star rating.

VBCF and the University of Va Breast Care Center will present a conference on September 30. See page 5 for details.
It is hard to believe it is summer already. We have certainly been busy as we entered our 15th year of existence. Lately, I have had many opportunities to reflect on where we started and how far we’ve come. I bet the co-founders hoped we would have eradicated breast cancer by now, but I know they are proud of all the VBCF has accomplished. Our goal for the organization continues to be ambitious, but we know we must be if we are ultimately to eradicate breast cancer. Two of our top priorities are to expand our grassroots advocacy network and to assess and provide access to quality care for all Virginians.

Toward that end, we had a very successful state lobby day with some 50 supporters informing our state legislators of the many political issues surrounding breast cancer. This year the day culminated in a photo opportunity with Governor Tim Kaine. Our Board members and other supporters also continue to gain seats on local, state, and national decision-making boards that expand our advocacy efforts.

Our third annual teleconference, “Cancer in the Workplace: Understanding Your Rights,” featured top-notch speakers, Ann Hodges, Professor of Law at the University of Richmond and Craig Curwood, an employment lawyer. The two provided very useful information about individuals’ healthcare rights. As I listened to their presentation, I kept thinking to myself how fortunate I am, since I know my treatments cost thousands of dollars a week. I continue to worry about all the people in Virginia who don’t have insurance or who don’t have enough insurance to get the care they need and deserve. Many of these people work full time and still have problems. This is just one of the access to quality care issues that keeps me awake at night.

The National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) Fund’s Annual Advocacy Conference and Lobby Day took place April 29 – May 2 this year. VBCF attendees had a terrific opportunity to hear about the latest in breast cancer research, about quality care, about problems at the Food and Drug Administration, and about how the media deals with breast cancer. There were also a number of outstanding workshops. I was so impressed with all the speakers, it’s difficult to pick one best one, but I guess it would be Gary Schrizer. He told us about a new project that actually grades how well the press covers breast cancer issues. As someone who has really tried to emphasize evidence-based information, I think this website at www.healthnewsreview.org is sorely needed.

This year’s national Lobby Day was also a tremendous success. A bus brought a record number of advocates from around the state to Washington, D.C. to join those of us who were already here to dialogue with our Senators and Representatives. Both our Senators and a majority of our Representatives support all our national and legislative priorities. I think this is a testament to the credibility of our organization. I recall not so many years ago when it was difficult getting most of our federal legislators to work with us.

As I write this, our Program Committee is working hard on the details for our fall educational conference entitled “Moving On, Moving Forward,” which we will co-host this year with the University of Virginia September 30th in Charlottesville. In addition, please save October 28th and plan to join us for a reception at the Virginia Institute for Architecture on historic Monument Avenue for our 15th Anniversary Ribbons and Roses Commemoration. While we have a lot of work left to do to fulfill our mission, we have many women and men we must remember and honor for all they have done to get us to where we are today.

Karin Decker Noss

The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation is a grassroots organization committed to the eradication of breast cancer through education and advocacy.

Educate. Advocate. Eradicate.
The Blue Ridge Chapter and the Girl Scouts Virginia Skyline Council presented a Breast Cancer Awareness Workshop on March 11 in Weyers Cave. The event brought organizations together to provide information on breast health and breast cancer to the girl scouts. This marked the first time that a breast cancer workshop for girl scouts has taken place in Virginia.

The Hampton Roads Chapter has actively done outreach by staffing a YBCF educational table on April 8 at the Las Amigas Health Fair in Portsmouth and by assisting with the Sisters Network lunch, Let’s Talk about It, on April 22 in Portsmouth. The Chapter also attended the Peninsula Chapter Fashion Show as shown above. Pictured are (l-r): Brenda West; Sadiea Norfleet; Recording Secretary of the Hampton Roads Chapter; and Tuwanna Okafor, Vice-President for the Hampton Roads Chapter.

The Blue Ridge Chapter enjoyed a sold-out crowd at their 2nd Annual Pink Ribbon Hi Tea on April 1 in Staunton Draft. Everyone enjoyed tea, homemade refreshments and entertaining tales of Victorian ladies.

The Peninsula Chapter’s Annual Fashion Show, Woodland Wonders, took place March 25 in Newport News. The sold-out crowd of 500 enjoyed lunch, bid on silent auction items, and viewed fashions modeled by Peninsula Chapter Members. Pictured are (l-r): Sandra Parker of WVEC Channel 13, the M.C. of the show; Jackie Coffman; and Diane Wymer.

The Central VA Chapter presented an educational program, Breast Cancer: Care Options and Reconstruction, on February 25 in Chester. The event included three separate presentations on the topics of breast reconstruction, VCU Massey Cancer Center Cancer Survivorship Clinic, and palliative care/hospice. Many thanks to Nadia Blanchet, MD, Alton Hart, MD, and Jill Laird, RN, for sharing their expertise and information.
Volunteer Spotlight: Tuwanna Okafor

This issue's Volunteer Spotlight focuses on Tuwanna Okafor, Vice-President of the Hampton Roads Chapter. Tuwanna was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000 and had a lumpectomy of her left breast plus radiation, five years of Tamoxifen, and now Femara. Prior to her diagnosis, Tuwanna had a benign tumor discovered in her left breast in 1993.

Tuwanna comes from a family with a history of breast cancer. Her paternal aunt was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1956 and again in 2000. Tuwanna's paternal first cousin was diagnosed in 2000 and died of breast cancer later that year. Also, it is believed that her paternal grandmother died from breast cancer without a doctor's diagnosis in the late 1920's or early 1930's.

After her diagnosis Tuwanna learned of VBCF from Beblon Parks, a former VBCF Board Member who helped found the Hampton Roads Chapter. Tuwanna attended initial meetings about the creation of the chapter and immediately got involved by working on committees and attending activities supported by the chapter. Tuwanna has a desire to learn all she can about breast cancer for herself so she can educate others.

Tuwanna currently serves as Vice-President of the Hampton Roads Chapter and Chair of the Chapter Program Committee. She is also responsible for the chapter scrapbook and acts as the chapter photographer. In addition to VBCF, Tuwanna participates in two breast cancer support groups, attends breast cancer fundraisers and is actively involved with multiple organizations.

Professionally, Tuwanna is a fourth grade teacher for Norfolk Public Schools at St. Helena Elementary School in the Berkley section of Norfolk. During her career she has taught Special Education in middle and high school, kindergarten, first, and second grades. She also has been a counselor for children and adults in residential settings for 18 years.

Tuwanna is married to her husband, Josiah, and has one son, Alvin. She was the 12th child of 15 born to her parents. She is originally from Southampton County near the Emporia Airport.

Tuwanna is known for her dedication to VBCF and has traveled throughout Virginia to attend chapter and statewide events. She has been a true asset to VBCF, and her support and hard work are greatly appreciated.

For more information about the Hampton Roads Chapter, please contact Eunice McMillian, Chapter President, at 757-393-2829 or at Afrumpy@aol.com.

Project LEAD: Which One is for You?

By Elisa Romans, VBCF Program Coordinator

NBCC presented a workshop on its Project LEAD Program at the Annual Advocacy Conference to inform activists of Project LEAD training opportunities and what they entail and accomplish.

What is Project LEAD? Project LEAD is NBCC's premier science training course for breast cancer activists. Project LEAD prepares activists to engage in local and national forums where breast cancer decisions are made. Activists can help bring an educated consumer perspective to the important issues in breast cancer.

What does Project LEAD do? Project LEAD provides a foundation of scientific knowledge to empower activists. For instance, Project LEAD participants:

- Learn the language and concepts of the science of breast cancer;
- Discover how to critically interpret scientific literature;
- Acquire study skills to remain educated about scientific aspects of breast cancer;
- Study how breast cancer research decisions are made;
- Become familiar with available consumer advocacy opportunities;
- Gain the confidence to speak up, ask questions and work with scientists, public policy and healthcare decision makers.

Is more than one Project LEAD Course offered? NBCC presently offers three different Project LEAD Courses:

- Project LEAD, a five-day science course on cancer biology, genetics, epidemiology and advocacy;
- Quality Care Project LEAD, a four-day course that teaches how to improve the quality of breast cancer care through systems change;
- Clinical Trials Project LEAD, a four-day advanced course for Project LEAD graduates that helps them understand and improve clinical trials research.

Is Project LEAD for me? Project LEAD is for anyone affected by breast cancer who is involved in the activities of a breast cancer organization interested in learning the science and concepts of breast cancer to share with the community, and wants to sit at the tables where important breast cancer decisions are made.
what is the structure and cost of Project LEAD? Project LEAD is active and intensive, and each course is taught by faculty from renowned research and academic institutions. The course information is presented through lectures, large and small group study and discussion, and critical appraisal of scientific articles and research proposals. Tuition for Project LEAD is free, so advocates are only responsible for travel and accommodations. Scholarships are available through NBCC and VBCF to defray costs.

When and where is Project LEAD offered? The next Project LEAD course will be offered November 1-5, 2006, in Washington DC. The application to NBCC is due September 8, 2006. Please note that applications must be sent to NBCC, not VBCF. For an application, visit www.stopbreastcancer.org or contact NBCC at (800) 622-2838. Please check the NBCC website for information about when Project LEAD courses will be offered in 2007.

VBCF and Project LEAD: Numerous VBCF advocates have participated in and benefited from Project LEAD courses. Project LEAD graduate Becky Morris said, “It was an extraordinary learning experience for me and empowered me to continue in the fight, armed with new sponsors to advocate for change, better treatment options, and a cure.” As a Project LEAD graduate, Becky was selected to attend the Inaugural Scientist -Survivor Program Educational Workshop sponsored by the American Association of Cancer Research, has served as Consumer Reviewer for the DOD (Department of Defense) Breast Cancer Research Program, and presently acts as a patient advocate on the Cancer Control & Survivorship Clinic Planning Committee at VCU Medical Center.

Project LEAD graduate Vernal Branch said, “When I took the basic (Project LEAD course) it was a frightening undertaking, but then it soon gave me a sense of empowerment.” Vernal has utilized her Project LEAD experience in numerous ways, including designing educational outreach materials for minority communities and serving as Advisor on the National Cancer Institute’s Director’s Consumer Liaison Group.

Save the Date

Beyond Breast Cancer:
Moving On...Moving Forward

VBCF and the University of Va Breast Care Center present Beyond Breast Cancer: Moving On... Moving Forward, an educational event for individuals diagnosed with breast cancer, their family and friends, and healthcare providers.

Featuring:

Chris Desch, MD, National Medical Director of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network
Marcia Steele, Breast and Ovarian Cancer Survivor

Workshops presented by UVa Faculty and VBCF Advocates

- When: Saturday, September 30, 2006
- Where: Doubletree Hotel, 990 Hilton Heights Road, Charlottesville, VA
- Time: 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., registration and breakfast begin at 9:15 a.m.
- Price: $25, includes breakfast and lunch. Financial assistance is available.
- How to register? Call VBCF at 800-345-8223 or visit www.vbcf.org today.

VBCF has Moved!
Our new address is:
Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation
5004 Monument Avenue, Suite 102
Richmond, VA 23230
Breast Cancer Emerging Local Therapies
By Yvonne Eisenberg, Blue Ridge Chapter Member

This article discusses the workshop, Breast Cancer Emerging Local Therapies, presented at the NBCC Annual Advocacy Conference by Susan L. Troyan, MD, of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School.

Sentinel Lymph Node Dissection: I began working in the Operating Room (OR) 35 years ago and what wonderful changes have taken place regarding breast cancer surgery over the years. I can remember women coming into the OR for a breast biopsy, waking up to find out they had cancer and that a breast had been removed, and then they would sometimes return to surgery to have their ovaries removed. Chemotherapy also had bad side effects at that time.

Breast conservation surgery with sentinel lymph node procedure may be an option that is offered now if the cancer is within certain guidelines. In theory the sentinel lymph nodes are the nodes that get the first drainage from the cancer site and are the most likely to have a tumor in them if any tumors cells are found in the lymph nodes. Prognostic information obtained from the sentinel lymph node procedure is used for staging of the tumor and deciding on treatment options. Increased lymph node involvement, both in the amount and number, worsens the prognosis. Clinically positive axillary nodes require dissection (possibly in addition to radiation). Mapping techniques used to identify the sentinel nodes include the use of a blue dye and/or radiocolloid, which is a radioactive material that is injected just prior to surgery.

Dr. Troyan shared that surgical complications can happen with a sentinel lymph node procedure. The possible complications include the following: Anaphylactic, or severe allergic and life-threatening reaction, to the blue dye (which occurs in .1% of the population); wound infection (1%); axillary seroma or fluid collection under the armpit (7.1%); axillary hematoma or blood or blood clot collection under the armpit (1.4%); complications occurring six months later may include paresthesia or the sensation of numbing, tingling, or pricking of the skin (8.6%); decreased range of motion (3.8%); or proximal arm lymphedema (6.9%).

Partial Breast Irradiation: According to Dr. Troyan, this is promising but still investigational and should at present only be used within a clinical trial. Radiation therapy decreases the risk of local recurrence following a lumpectomy for DCIS (ductal carcinoma in situ) and early stage cancer. Clinical trials on lumpectomy and radiation used whole breast radiation with or without a boost of radiation to the tissue surrounding the lumpectomy area.

The optimal amount of radiation has not been established for partial breast irradiation, but targeting smaller areas for radiation could allow the use of higher doses over shorter periods of time. The use of partial breast irradiation may help men and women, who do not have the ability to access radiation on weekdays for 6 weeks and would otherwise have to undergo a mastectomy, to have a short course of radiation lasting a few days to a week. This could make these patients eligible for breast conserving therapy.

Other partial breast irradiation technique options include the following: (1) Interstitial implants (brachytherapy) where needles/catheters are inserted around the lumpectomy bed and the radioactive material is placed in the catheters; (2) Mammosite system where a balloon with a double lumen catheter has one lumen filled with salt solution to expand and fill the lumpectomy cavity and the other lumen filled with radioactive material; (3) Intraoperative radiation therapy or a single dose, which early trials show is promising and has a low incidence of fat necrosis; and (4) 3D conformal external beam, which is noninvasive, uses current commonly used techniques, and with which there is a need to compensate for "target movement," or normal movement that occurs during breathing. Early studies show it is well tolerated.

The last breast cancer emerging local therapies presented were the newer breast reconstruction techniques, which included expander/implant, latissimus flapp, tram flapp, gluteal flapp, DIEP flapp and nipple reconstruction.

This was a very informative workshop and worthwhile attending. I am glad there are options available for those wanting reconstructive surgery. Thank you to VBCF for the opportunity to attend this conference.

"If we live to be a hundred, this is a battle that we will always be proud to have fought, and prouder still of those who have fallen." – Vickie Girard
Virginia Legislators: Who Supported VBCF's National Priorities?

**Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act HR 2231**

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**DoD Breast Cancer Research Program $150 Million Appropriation for FY 2007**

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*These tables are based on the most current information available at print.

VBCF advocates met with Senator George Allen to thank him for his support and discuss breast cancer issues.

VBCF Blue Ridge Chapter Members met with Representative Bob Goodlatte to advocate for national legislative priorities.

According to NBCC President Fran Visco, breast cancer advocates have helped raise over $2 billion so far for the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program. Our efforts are making a difference!

The following article originally appeared in the February 1993 newsletter issue:

Backlash: We Welcome It
by Mary Jo Kahn

There has been an interesting phenomenon taking place since October 1992 when breast cancer advocates won the increase in breast cancer research money. The phenomenon is a backlash.

Within weeks after the money was signed into law, both the Washington Post and the New York Times ran editorials condemning the politization of research funds. There has been criticism from the highest levels of the National Institutes of Health that movements such as ours will surely destroy the fabric of the entire institution. Breast cancer researchers, whom we thought would be overjoyed, have derided the National Breast Cancer Coalition for improperly trying to influence the direction of breast cancer research. There have been media reports stating that women are hysterical about a disease that is “95% curable.”

For those caught off guard by this backlash, there is a sense of disbelief that anyone would openly attack the eradication of breast cancer. The breast cancer advocacy movement is comprised mainly of women living with breast cancer, their friends, and family members. It is hard to make us out as sinister. It is, however, an old and very effective ploy to call us “hysterical” and “overly fearful.”

If we understand that power and control always change hands reluctantly, we still recognize that our efforts are at last bringing about real change. There has always been more at stake with our movement than merely increasing the amount of dollars spent on breast cancer research. There is the need to bring about a renewed commitment to ending this epidemic. It is the knowledge that real change always meets resistance that makes backlash not a negative consequence but proof of our successes.

What are some of our successes? We have succeeded in greatly increasing the National Cancer Institute’s breast cancer research budget, as well as getting funds to the Department of Defense, which can look at breast cancer with a different eye and perhaps see new avenues of research that were simply not available before. There are always those who would prefer no progress at all to the threat of change, but there is no place in research for those who are not willing to explore new avenues and take risks.

Second, we have taken the epidemic of breast cancer out of the closet and it can never be stuffed back in again. There are many media articles this year stating the misleading statistic that breast cancer is 95% curable. How can we believe this statistic as we continue to watch people we know and love fight this disease and die too young?

Finally, we have given a voice to the 1.8 billion women living with breast cancer. There has always been a research budget for breast cancer and there have always been decision makers who decided how much to spend on what research projects. There has always been some controversy over how these decisions were made. What is now irrevocably changed is that those of us most directly affected by breast cancer will have a voice in these decisions, also. Women are not satisfied that almost all breast cancer research money in the past has gone into exploring different mixtures of chemotherapy, with little being spent on research into the causes and methods of prevention. Women are not satisfied that little is being spent on a detection method that will diagnose breast cancer in all women before it has had an opportunity to spread. Women are not satisfied that treatments continue to be disfiguring and disabling.

Breast cancer advocates desire a partnership with those who share our commitment for the eradication of breast cancer. In the short term, until our goals are more clearly understood and our abilities put to good use, our input will no doubt be viewed as irrelevant and a threat to the status quo. In the long term, our input into prioritizing research projects and making clinical trials more “user-friendly” will be a tremendous benefit to the research institutions, to the individual researchers, and most assuredly, to American women.

Change always creates resistance. Changing breast cancer is what we are about. We must be strong in the face of this first flurry of backlash. As we continue our successes and move closer to the eradication of breast cancer, the backlash will die down and all our enemies today will be claiming they supported us from the very beginning.
We Need Your Pictures!

VBCF is collecting pictures of individuals who have been affected by breast cancer or involved in the fight against breast cancer the past 15 years. The purpose is to create a 15th Anniversary Quilt: Faces Behind the Fight that will be unveiled at the Ribbons and Roses Reception and then be prominently featured in the VBCF office.

Since the display will focus attention on the impact of this disease beyond the person who is diagnosed, VBCF is collecting pictures of family members and friends affected by breast cancer, in addition to pictures of those diagnosed. You may also want to send a picture of a healthcare provider involved in the fight against breast cancer.

How to submit? You may submit your picture by mail or email. To email your picture, please send to Lisa Boudreaux at Lisa@vbcf.org. To mail your picture, please send to the VBCF Office: 5004 Monument Ave., Suite 102, Richmond, VA 23220. Please use a heavy envelope to protect the picture.

Submission guidelines: VBCF will accept any size picture that is in color or black and white. You may submit one or multiple pictures. If emailing your picture, please send in jpeg format with the highest possible resolution. We cannot use postage stamp-sized digital images or ones embedded in Microsoft Word documents. For assistance in determining the format and resolution, please contact the VBCF office.

Can I have my picture returned? VBCF prefers you send a copy of the picture that VBCF can keep. If you are unable to do this, VBCF will make a copy and return the original. (Please include your name and mailing address. Originals will not be returned until November).

Suggested donation: VBCF asks for a suggested donation of $15 in honor of VBCF's 15th Anniversary to include a picture in the quilt. (If you would like to contribute a picture but cannot afford a donation, send us your picture anyway. We want every family in VA affected by breast cancer to be part of the display).

Help VBCF pay tribute to the advocates and volunteers who have actively worked to fight breast cancer.

VBCF Lesbian Outreach Project Training a Success

VBCF's Lesbian Outreach Project presented Removing the Barriers: Providing Culturally Competent Care to Lesbians, a training for healthcare providers, on April 11 at VBCF and May 2 at CHH Hospital Oncology Department. This training discusses the different barriers lesbians face in accessing healthcare and how healthcare providers can help dismantle them. Participants included healthcare providers from community clinics, private practices, cancer centers, and more. Special thanks to the Susan G. Komen Foundation Richmond Affiliate and Diversity Thrift for funding VBCF's Lesbian Outreach Project.

VBCF Memories and Moments

In honor of VBCF's 15th Anniversary, One Voice shares memories or moments of pride experienced by VBCF Members.

From Ann Wilson, Secretary of the Peninsula Chapter and former Vice-President of the Board:

"I have been a member of VBCF for 12 years. Every moment spent representing VBCF has been special for me. When I was diagnosed, I started researching information and, finding very little, I discovered VBCF and became involved. VBCF put me in contact with women like myself with this new aspect of my life.

I became aware of how very important EDUCATION about breast cancer can be for a woman who has just been diagnosed. As a member of VBCF I have always felt that if I can touch ONE woman's life with education about breast cancer, then I have accomplished the mission of VBCF.

As for one special moment during the past 12 years, I would have to say it was when I represented VBCF as Vice-President of the Board in the Rose Garden in October of 95. I met and had my picture taken with President Bill Clinton on that day. There have been times when I would like to have taken a 'back seat' from VBCF, but this small voice tugs at my heart strings and says 'until there is a cure, there is still a reason to be an active member of VBCF.'"
Giving Back
By Linda Seeman, PhD, VBCF Board Member

How do we differ from other breast cancer organizations? We are a community of articulate individuals who are passionately fighting to save lives by increasing awareness of breast cancer in hopes of eliminating the drumbeat of disease and death that continues to affect the lives of so many. We are educating the public, and we are educating ourselves, so that we can effectively fight against this disease that continues to increase in its frequency.

Our goals are to educate Virginians about breast cancer and to advocate for the eradication of this dreaded disease. We lobby for better laws to be a state and national priority. VBCF’s mission is one of advocacy for all people affected by breast cancer.

The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation sits on the Board of the National Breast Cancer Coalition. Our members effectively lobby in Washington for laws that benefit our mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, friends, husbands, fathers, and sons. In other words, who doesn’t run a major risk of being touched by breast cancer in some way, shape or form?

During the course of our lifetimes, very few of us will escape knowing someone who is fighting for their life. VBCF gives an active voice to women and men who cannot speak for themselves. Many of us are survivors ourselves who are giving back through our dedication to finding a cure, so that future generations do not have to face what so many currently have to fight.

“Giving back” are key words. Hopefully, if you are reading these words, you are considering finding your own way of giving back.

Frankly, we need “new blood” in keeping our fight effective, and we are hoping you will join the fight. Please volunteer time, donate money, or purchase a pink ribbon license plate. Any contribution will be put to good use.

You probably aren’t aware that most of our excellent programs are delivered with little or no financial cost to participants. You may not even be aware how varied and how well done our programs are.

It is our dream to continue delivering programs, educating ourselves and the public, and lobbying for laws that ensure medical treatment for all people diagnosed with breast cancer until breast cancer no longer threatens so many in our world.

How can I give back to VBCF?

Make a financial contribution:
- Make a donation, which can be made in honor or in memory of a loved one;
- Remember VBCF in your planned giving;
- Purchase the pink ribbon license plate. The plate costs $25 of which $15 comes to VBCF;
- Donate an unwanted vehicle. Contact VBCF for details;
- Hold a benefit or fundraiser for VBCF. Past benefits have included golf tournaments, fashion shows, concerts, luncheons, contributions in lieu of wedding favors and birthday gifts, house parties and more;
- Donate a day’s promotion on your local radio station and help raise awareness about VBCF;
- Shop for VBCF through Benevolink. Visit www.benevolink.com for details;
- Find out if your employer offers matching gifts or workplace giving, such as the Combined Federal Campaign or United Way Campaign;

Donate your time and talents:
- Volunteer for a VBCF Chapter. VBCF has four chapters – Blue Ridge, Central VA, Hampton Roads, and Peninsula. Or, if you do not have a chapter in your area, contact VBCF for information on how to start one;
- Join a statewide committee, such as the Advocacy or Program Committee. You do not need to live in Richmond to join a statewide committee. Many of our members participate by conference calls and email;
- Staff a VBCF educational table in your community. Contact VBCF for literature and information;
- Participate in the next VBCF Speakers Bureau Training so you can educate others in your community on breast cancer;
- Join VBCF’s Email Alert List so you can stay up-to-date on the latest news and legislative happenings;
- Attend next year’s VBCF State and National Lobby Days to help advocate for important breast cancer issues;
- Participate in the Pink Ribbon Campaign this October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, by placing VBCF pink ribbon cards in your community.
The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation gratefully acknowledges the individuals, companies, and organizations, whose generosity during the calendar year 2005 made it possible for us to continue our work in the fight against breast cancer.

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Organizers of A Celebration of Breast Cancer Survivors, a VBCF benefit, held on March 26, 2006, present a check to VBCF Executive Director Shirley Belkowitz. The total amount raised was over $10,000. Special thanks to Pam Peck and Vickie Hester of Babe's of Carytown.

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