

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

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You've seen the pink Yoplait yogurt lids and Campbell's soup cans; you might have noticed a rosy hue leading up the main stairs and winding around the concourse in the BSC. By now, you've probably figured out that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Aside from skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common form of the disease found in women in the United States. An estimated 192,370 new cases of breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed among women in the U.S. just this year alone, according to statistics from the American Cancer Society — and of that 192,370 diagnosed, an estimated 40,170 are expected to die from the disease in 2009 alone.

However, it is also estimated that upwards of 2.5 million breast cancer survivors are living in the U.S. today. One of these survivors walks the paths of Elizabethtown College every day.

Occupational therapy professor Ann Marie Potter was first diagnosed with Stage III Breast Cancer in December of 2005. When asked what her biggest support system was during her time of treatment and chemotherapy, she responded with almost no hesitation.

"It was really a combination of a lot of different things — my family, my friends, my husband, my

doctor," she said. "We had a lot of support from a lot of great people. There were even students in the OT program at Elizabethtown who would come and babysit for me. It was incredible. Some of the students weren't even in any of my classes."

Potter has now been cancer-free for three years. "I would describe it as being back to myself," she said. "I have a little more zest for life, and I definitely have a change of perspective for enjoying things more and not letting certain things get me down as much. I also have become more acute with deciding where my energy goes."

Potter will speak about her battle at tonight's Pink Party, sponsored by Colleges Against Cancer (CAC).

"I'm going to try and keep it light," she said. "I'm going to come at my experience with a sense of humor because that's what keeps me going. I don't want people to be afraid of the issues."

In addition to Potter's speech, Pink Party attendees can enjoy pink lemonade and decorate cookies with pink icing. The event begins at 7:30.

"We'll have various activities and raffles [and] brochures with information about breast cancer awareness," senior Angela Candelora, CAC committee president, said.

The Pink Party is just one small facet of Breast Cancer Awareness Week organized by CAC. Since CAC is a national organization, colleges across the U.S. host similar events and activities.

Sunday, the club decorated the campus in pink, the color that symbolizes breast cancer in the U.S. CAC members also sat at tables throughout the week, selling breast cancer awareness items such as T-shirts and paper moons and stars.

"[The] moons and stars are little hope banners people sign that get posted in the mail room," Candelora said.

However, CAC members aren't the only students on campus advocating for awareness. Senior Kevin

Smith has worked with the Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition (PBCC) since January 2009.

Smith's friend who works with PBCC originally got him involved in the cause. Although he started as an intern, he now works as PBCC's Social Media Coordinator. In this position, Smith maintains the organization's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

"I connect with survivors and raise money for the cause," Smith said. "Our slogan is 'Finding a cure now, so our daughters won't have to'."

For two years, PBCC has held the Take a Swing Against Breast Cancer fundraiser during the month of July. This past July, Smith visited minor league baseball stadiums and gave teams of four a chance to get out on the field and raise some money.

"Each person gets 15 swings, and depending on where the ball lands, the team gets points," Smith said. "In the last two years, we've raised \$250,000."

PBCC is also responsible for passing legislation mandating free breast cancer treatment for women between the ages of 40 and 49. This free treatment includes mammograms, doctor visits, radiation and post-treatment medication.

"Women are getting diagnosed younger and younger, and there are 1 million people in the state of Pennsylvania who are uninsured," Smith said.

Above all, PBCC and CAC both stress the importance of breast cancer awareness and education. As the popular CAC T-shirts proclaim, "great boobs are worth fighting for."