

REFUNDS FOR RESEARCH: Income Tax Check-Off is Opportunity for Every PA Resident to Contribute to Breast Cancer Research



Five researchers from the Penn State College of Medicine at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center were selected to receive grants through the Income Tax Check-Off for breast cancer research. From L to R, they are: Andrea Manni, M.D., Craig Meyers, Ph.D., Gail Matters, Ph.D., Michael Verderame, Ph.D., and Jong Yun, Ph.D.

Pennsylvania residents are fortunate to have the means through which they can contribute directly to life saving breast cancer research, thanks to the efforts of the Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition and State Representative Katie True. By checking line 35 on their state income tax form to donate their refund to help fund research being done right here in Pennsylvania, taxpayers have contributed almost \$2 million to the research of those in the breast and cervical cancer fields.

The Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition visited the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center to launch the 2007 Income Tax Check-Off for Breast Cancer Research campaign to the public and recognize the accomplishments of the five Hershey researchers selected to receive grants in the 2007 cycle.

Nine recipients in total have been selected to receive grants this year. Research topics that are being funded include those geared toward finding better treatment of breast cancer, the biology of breast cancer, and gaining a better overall understanding of the disease. Five of the selected recipients are from the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, three are from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, and one is from the Geisinger Clinic in Danville.

DON'T
FORGET!

CHECK YES
ON LINE 35
OF YOUR PA
40 TAX FORM
THIS YEAR!

YOU CAN
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!

Check-Off Grants Provide Much Needed Start-Up Funds for New Research



Many researchers who have been selected for grants through the Income Tax Check-Off find the resources extremely valuable to obtain start up materials for groundbreaking research. Such resources are difficult to acquire from other grantors, so the Income Tax Check-Off is viewed as a stepping stone to get additional research dollars.

Dr. Craig Meyers and Dr. Samina Alam explain the basics of their research to Joanne Grossi, Deputy Secretary of the PA Department of Health and PBCC President & Founder Pat Halpin-Murphy

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Small change makes a huge impact at local Wine & Spirit stores. Find out how much was collected this past October!

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FRONTLINE™

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From the desk of: Pat Halpin-Murphy President & Founder

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED INSURANCE & EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONS ANSWERED:



The Difference Between Screening and Diagnostic Tests

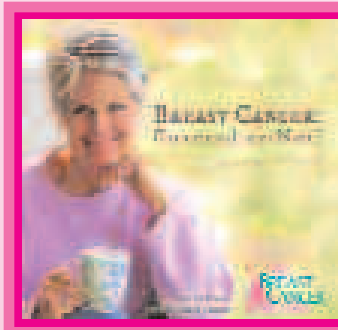
by Dr. Linda Rhodes & Pat Halpin-Murphy

If you are diagnosed with breast cancer, you'll likely be undergoing a good number of tests: blood work, x-rays, CT scans, and PET scans to name a few. Some of these tests are preventive, in that you are not showing any symptoms but your doctor wants you to have the procedure to screen for any potential problems. One of the most common breast cancer screening procedures other than breast self-examination is the mammogram. The vast majority of women go through this procedure every year to screen for a possible lump even though there is no appearance of one or of any symptoms of breast cancer. In this instance, the mammogram is a screening test.

On the other hand, if the mammogram reveals a lump, your physician may then order a more expensive test such as a CT scan to help him or her better diagnose the nature of the lump. In this

instance, the test is diagnostic. Now, what does this have to do with insurance? Depending on your insurance plan, coverage for a test may be denied if it is considered unwarranted or if the carrier believes that the physician should have used a less expensive test first. For example, if your physician ordered a CT scan before you had a mammogram, the insurer might say that you should have been prescribed the least expensive mammogram rather than a very expensive CT scan, which, in this case, was essentially used as a screening device rather than a diagnostic one.

Most insurance plans today encourage screenings because catching potentially life-threatening illnesses early is better for you and less costly for them. Check with your health plan to see what screenings they pay for each year. Medicare does cover mammogram screenings once every 12 months, and a physician's prescription is not required to receive it. Just make sure the facility performing the mammogram is certified by Medicare.



Copies of *Breast Cancer: Covered or Not?*, the PBCC's guide on insurance and employment are available for \$5 each. The book is also available for download in its entirety on the PBCC's website at www.pabreastcancer.org/insurance_book.html

County Captain

Karen Byers
Cumberland County

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Karen Byers is a long time supporter of the PBCC and one of our most active County Captains, survivors, and volunteers. Because of her involvement, she was selected as the recipient of the 1999 Shining Light Award.

As a Cumberland County Captain, Karen has been a vital part of the PBCC in a number of ways. Most recently, she has worked to bring the PBCC's traveling photo exhibit "67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania" to Carlisle Regional Medical Center in June 2007. She serves as our Cumberland County exhibit participant, and she lends her leadership each fall in helping with the PA Breast Cancer Coalition Annual Conference by working with her breast cancer support group, the ABCS to stuff conference totebags and work the registration booths the day of the conference. Karen co-facilitates the ABCS in Carlisle and prepares a quarterly newsletter for them as well.

Karen was inspired to work to bring the traveling photo exhibit to Carlisle. "We have a new facility, and I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to highlight the photo exhibit in our town, as well as the hospital. As you walk through the photo exhibit, it speaks volumes - it is so moving."

Spending time with her grandchildren, Alexis and Zachary, is Karen's greatest joy.

Her advice to someone looking to become a county captain? "It is a wonderful opportunity to give of yourself by showing that there is life after breast cancer. It is also an important avenue for being an advocate for breast cancer awareness - it is surprising how many women are not aware of free mammograms, as well as the other programs available to them once diagnosed."

Survivor Spotlight

Illuminating the lives of breast cancer survivors

Gina Conners
Philadelphia, PA



Gina Conners celebrates her 50th birthday at her "Chemosabi party"

Gina Conners lives in the Philadelphia area. She shares her story to spread the word about the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program so that women know that the program is out there and available.

Her Diagnosis

My first diagnosis of breast cancer was in 1997 at the age of 42. My husband had been in treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma for the previous year and spent four months in the hospital and three months in rehab. I was so busy taking care of him that I would probably not have taken the time to have a mammogram. But my workplace had brought in Fox Chase Cancer Center's mobile mammography van. I told my boss I was too busy to take advantage of it, but he said, "No. You go out now and get a mammogram." That was a blessing.

Within a month I received notice from Fox Chase that they had found something suspicious on my left breast. A biopsy showed that I had DCIS (ductal carcinoma in situ). I was given several options, and chose a lumpectomy and radiation. The doctors said it was minor and the chances of recurrence were low. I went through it like a robot, in denial. I added breast cancer treatment to my list of things to do. I would get up, go to work, go to radiation, then go home and take care of my husband. I was deep in my husband's illness and trying to keep the ship afloat. I finished radiation in March and he died in July.

Time for Change

One of the things I did after he died was to leave my corporate job as Vice President of Enterprise Solutions, a meeting management company. It was one of those jobs that took up your life with travel, Sunday evening conference calls, and long days. I decided this was not what my life should be about. With a friend, I opened a women's fitness center called Ladies Fit Express.

The second time I was diagnosed was seven years after the first. I went for a mammogram in July 2004 and they saw something on my right side (the opposite breast) and did an ultrasound. Lying on that table, I knew it was back. I felt like I could

hear the teardrops hitting the floor.

My doctors recommended a lumpectomy and radiation. I said no. I'm not going to keep on doing this dance. I want bi-lateral mastectomies.

I had great respect for my surgeons and the radiation oncologists, and they all said I was going overboard. I insisted. I also decided I didn't want regular reconstruction with tram flap and didn't want implants. I wanted DIEP (flap breast reconstruction), a newer kind of surgery. I found a doctor in Baltimore who had been doing them for years. I met with the oncology surgeon and he agreed with my doctors here that a lumpectomy and radiation would be adequate, but that given my history, bi-lateral mastectomy was a reasonable decision. Remember, I only had a lump in my one breast. But as long as both breasts would be taken I wanted a biopsy of the other breast. He did that as well as a sentinel node biopsy.

Knowing Yourself

A week after the surgery I learned that not only had they found a tumor in the left breast, but the left lymph node came out positive. What started out as a prophylactic mastectomy on that side turned out to be a lifesaving procedure. One of the messages I share with women is trust your doctors, but trust your instincts too. Listen to your body and listen to what your heart and your soul are telling you. God whispers to us, taps us on the shoulder, and eventually if we still don't listen, He screams in our ear.

My other message is that I had cancer twice and never felt a lump. So yes, breast self-exams are important, but you can't rely solely on that. You can't hang around waiting for a lump to show up. Mammograms are the key.

While I was going through diagnosis and treatment the second time, I lost my business and with that, my insurance coverage. My medical expenses for breast cancer treatment are covered through the **Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Program****.

At this stage I'm still looking for my "new normal." Since all this happened I have asked God many times what my purpose is now. Meanwhile I will continue to tell women to trust your instincts and to have mammograms.

"Listen to your body and listen to what your heart and soul are telling you. God whispers to us, taps us on the shoulder, and eventually if we still don't listen, He screams in our ear."

- Gina Conners

****The Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Program provides full, free treatment of breast or cervical cancer to uninsured and underinsured women in Pennsylvania. BCCPT is administered through the PA Department of Welfare and funded by Medicaid. More information is available at the FAQ section of the PBCC website. To apply for BCCPT coverage, call 1-800-215-7494.**

Traveling Photo Exhibit Visits Elk County

Hosted by Elk Regional Health Center

For the first time in its history, the Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition's traveling photo exhibit "67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania™" visited Elk County and the Elk Regional Health Center to spread the message of hope, courage, and dignity to the women of northern Pennsylvania.

Speakers at the opening reception were Elk Regional Health Center President & CEO, **Scott Berlucchi**; PBCC Executive Director, **Heather Hibshman**; **Paulette Schreiber**, ERHC Nurse Practitioner and breast cancer survivor; and **Betsy Healy**, Elk County Exhibit Participant. A packed room listened to the speakers as they shared their insight into breast cancer and the women who bravely battle the disease. The night was dedicated to the memory of two Elk Regional Health Center employees who lost their lives to breast cancer -- Dr. Hargit Tanden & Carol Oreka Antonio.

Many thanks to committee chairs **Paulette Schreiber** and **Char Floravit** for all of their hard work to bring the exhibit to Elk County.



Above: Nurse practitioner and breast cancer survivor **Paulette Schreiber** reflects on the lives of those who have lost the battle with breast cancer. Left: Elk County exhibit participant **Betsy Healy** stands with her mother in front of her photo in the exhibit.

Coming to Your Community

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| March 22 | Income Tax Check-Off Event
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
Philadelphia |
| April 19-29 | "67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania"
Saint Catherine Medical Center
Fountain Springs, Schuylkill County |
| May 3-13 | "67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania"
Guthrie Clinic Atrium Lobby
Bradford County |
| May 5 | Slap Shot 2: "Paint the Rink Pink"
Charity Hockey Game
Harrisburg |
| May 8 | Serendipity: An Evening With Singer/Songwriter Barry Mason
Lancaster |
| May 13 | Cold Stone Creamery Paints the Park Pink with the Harrisburg Senators
City Island, Harrisburg |
| May 20 | Reading Phillies Breast Cancer Awareness Day
FirstEnergy Stadium, Reading |
| June 10 | Dancing Under the Stars
Harrisburg |
| June 18-28 | "67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania"
Carlisle Regional Medical Center
Cumberland County |

For more information on upcoming events, visit
www.pabreastcancer.org/events.html

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS & SITES

We are looking for breast cancer survivors in Adams, Beaver, Berks, Bucks, Butler, Cambria, Columbia, Huntingdon, Juniata, Schuylkill, and Susquehanna counties to be featured in our 67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania traveling photo exhibit. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Jen Fetich, Program Director at 1.800.377.8828 x101 or at jennifer@pabreastcancer.org.

We are also looking for future host sites for the exhibit, especially in the northern tier of the state! Exhibit sites should have at least 1,500 square feet of space for the exhibit and the exhibit stays up for 10 days. Contact Jen for more details to see if you can host this powerful exhibit.

Mothers Day Mammograms®: Mission Accomplished

The PBCC has always been committed to making mammograms available to all Pennsylvania's uninsured and underinsured women 40 and older. When the Mother's Day Mammograms® (MDM) program began, PA Department of Health's HealthyWoman Program provided mammograms, clinical breast exams, and Pap tests for women between 50 and 64. At that time, Medicare covered the cost of mammograms for women 65 and older but limited the coverage to every other year. The National Cancer Institute recommended annual screenings for all women 40 and over and MDM was created to fill the gaps in screening services.

Now, because of the efforts of the PBCC and our grassroots advocacy network, who called and wrote their legislators about the issue, the Pennsylvania Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Screening Act has made free mammograms available to eligible uninsured and underinsured women 40 to 49. The act creates a program within the PA Department of Health to make annual breast and cervical cancer screenings available to eligible women 40 to 49, complementing the existing program for women 50 to 64. Women whose family income does not exceed 250% of the Federal poverty level with no other access to health insurance qualify for screenings under the PBCC legislation.

In light of this legislative victory, it is time for the PBCC to declare MISSION ACCOMPLISHED! Our goal of making mammograms available to every Pennsylvania woman 40 and over has been met!

On behalf of the thousands of women over the years who have been helped through the MDM program, the PBCC thanks our friends at the PA Department of Health, Family Health Council, Commerce Bank and the participating hospitals and clinics. To see if you qualify for screening through the PA Department of Health's HealthyWoman Program, call 1-800-215-7494.

Living With the Uncertainties of Hormone Replacement Therapy – or Not

by Barbara C. Good, Ph.D.

Director, Scientific Publications

National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project
Pittsburgh, PA



Barbara C. Good, Ph.D.

Living with uncertainty is one of the hallmarks of the experience of the woman who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. After treatment, it is always a matter of will it return; if so, when will it return; would I get a mastectomy (assuming a lumpectomy with the first cancer diagnosis); how much would it alter my life this time. At every mammogram, at every self-examination, at every exam by your internist or your primary care physician, those questions go through your head, if not in words then in concept.

Now women who are or who have been taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) are on notice to start asking questions of their own about breast cancer. In 2002 the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) Study, a set of clinical trials that examined generally healthy postmenopausal women, reported its findings. Those trials were designed to test the effects of postmenopausal hormone therapy, diet modification, and calcium and vitamin D supplements on heart disease, fractures, and breast and colorectal cancer. By 2003, millions of women had stopped taking hormones after WHI results revealed that HRT resulted in no cardiovascular benefit, and that estrogen and progestin therapy was linked to an increased risk of invasive breast cancer.

Statistics on the development of breast cancer in U.S. women in the year that followed the trial report have now been released. Breast cancer incidence dropped 7% in 2003 (occurred in 14,000 fewer women than in 2002), and in women 50-69 with estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer, it dropped 12%. The latter group is the group most likely to have been taking HRT. The drop in breast cancer rate for 2003 is the first time that rate has fallen significantly since records have been kept. Previous to that, it had slowly increased, year by year, since 1945. Did that drop occur because women stopped HRT?

Hormones and hormone receptor-positive breast cancer are without question linked. Whether taking hormone replacement therapy for 2, 5, or 10 years can be definitively linked to the development of breast cancer is harder to say. The idea of correlation versus causation is what is at issue. Just because something happens along with something else (correlation, such as breast cancer rates dropping with a drop in HRT rates) does not necessarily indicate causation (that the cancer rate

dropped because of the drop in HRT rates). There are other reasons that breast cancer rates could have lowered during 2003, for instance, the more widespread use of Evista® (raloxifene), which was prescribed to women to prevent osteoporosis and that subsequently was shown by the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project's STAR trial to prevent breast cancer as well. Or the fact that more and more women have become conscious of the benefit of a yearly mammogram, and more mammograms would mean the detection of more noninvasive breast cancers that could be treated before they become invasive.

Despite these possibilities, however, the case for being cautious with hormonal therapy is strong, according to some researchers. It is known that the risks of HRT decline 1 to 4 years after therapy is stopped, and 5 years after therapy, the risk is back to where it was when the patient began hormone use. The fact that so many women stopped therapy soon after the WHI findings came out in 2002 and that his was followed by a dramatic downturn in breast cancer incidence the following year certainly at least offers food for thought.

The questions of whether stopping HRT stops the initiation of cancer, the growth of cancers that are already present but extremely small, or even whether it reverses the growth of cancer all must wait for further research and observation to be answered. National data from the year 2004 that should be available in late spring may lend support to the case for stopping HRT. Should breast cancer rates once again go up, it may turn out that stopping HRT only slowed the growth of cancers already present. However, data for the state of California have already been analyzed for the year 2004, and they show that in that state the drop continued in 2004.

Until these questions are answered definitively, it is prudent for women to be cautious about HRT and to discuss their own particular risks and benefits with their personal physicians. In addition to the potential physical risk of developing cancer, there is also the issue of how any given woman will deal with the emotional aspect of living with the uncertainty that comes from not having all the answers about HRT.

“Now women who are or who have been taking hormone replacement therapy are on notice to start asking questions of their own about breast cancer.”

-- Barbara Good, Ph.D.

Author's Note: Developing observations about HRT that are made as followup to the WHI findings are a reminder that the WHI work, of significant scope and size, could be carried out only because it was supported by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute as a very large clinical trial. The government is most likely the only organization able to conduct such prevention trials, which can result in major public health implications, due mainly to the fact that the trials are so large and expensive to design and run. The NCI-sponsored cancer cooperative groups, the major conductors of large cancer clinical trials in this country for the past 50 years, recently sustained significant budget cuts as a result of the priorities of the current administration in Washington. This will be the topic of an upcoming column.

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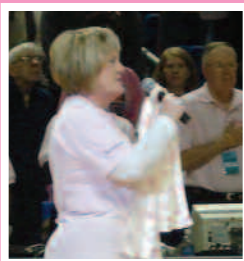
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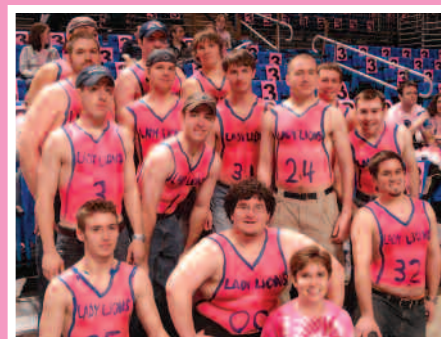
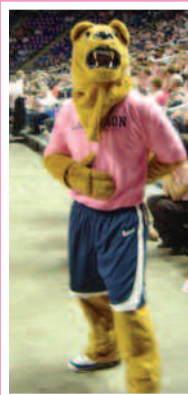
Grassroots Partners

Across the State



PSU Alumna and breast cancer survivor Connie Dunkleberger performs the national anthem before a sea of fans in pink

The Penn State Lady Lions roared on to raise over \$9,000 for the PBCC through their 1st Annual Think Pink Day, presented by the Barash Group. Survivors took the court at halftime and formed a pink ribbon in a show of sisterhood and courage. Head coach Rene Portland asked people to stomp out breast cancer by making a donation in a large pink high heeled shoe. The Lady Lions, who were dressed in pink jerseys auctioned off after the game, won the game and everyone went home feeling like a winner with the amount of awareness and funds raised. Special thanks to the entire Lady Lions organization, especially Loren Crispell, Amy O'Neil, Jennifer James, and Rene Portland. We are proud and honored to work with you on such a successful event!



Left: Even the Lion wore pink in support of the cause! Top: These brave fans weathered the cold to show their true colors in this photo with PBCC staffer Tricia Grove

Joanne Eck of Columbia, PA has been busy knitting pink scarves with pink ribbons on them in an effort to spread awareness of breast cancer and the PBCC across the state. To date, Joanne has raised \$720 for the PBCC through her handiwork. Thank you!

Kristy Penvose of Fairfield High School organized the first "Powder Puff" football game in her school's history for her senior project - and collected \$465 from sponsors and contributors to donate to the PBCC! Way to go, Kristy!

The Manheim Central Education Association held a Pink Day in which school district staff members were asked to wear pink and make a donation to the PBCC. Their A+ efforts enabled them to raise \$1330 and awareness among their entire district! Special thanks to Sharon Brehm for her efforts!

High fashion and high fun was in order at the Never Enough! Boutique Fashion Show held at the Greensburg Country Club in October. \$1200 was raised for the PBCC by those who attended and participated. Special thanks to Never Enough! owner Rosine Dull for her efforts in combining fashion and fundraising!

Methacton High School Girls Basketball scored big in raising breast cancer awareness and funds for the PBCC! \$1250 was raised because of their hard work. A big thanks to coach Craig Kaminski for making it look like a breeze!

From L to R: Sharon Brehm, MCEA Treasurer; Heather Hibshman, PBCC Executive Director; and Renee Kowalchik, MCEA President



Upper Merion High School Girls Basketball and Soccer teams are thinking pink this year and raising awareness of breast cancer and funds for the PBCC. The girls basketball team's event netted \$5000 and counting for the PBCC. The girls' soccer team will take the field in April to continue the breast cancer awareness and outreach efforts of Upper Merion! Special thanks to Ryan Larkin and Tom Schurtz for their efforts to raise awareness through their athletic programs.



Top: Pink was the color of the evening, sported by nearly all fans in the stands. Right: The Girls Basketball team poses for a team photo in their pink shirts.

SHOOT FOR A CURE NIGHT
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS
1/16 7PM



Green Ridge Village turned itself pink in October to benefit the PBCC! Their activities, which included a walk and a silent auction, raised over \$1000 -- and priceless awareness! They are planning an encore for 2007, so stay tuned! Many thanks to Darlene Hess for her hard work!

Front Row (L to R) Event participants Jana James, Jenn Sobonya, Ciara Trump, & Connie McMullen. Back (L to R): Darlene Hess, Hope Fry, and Love Baker

Paint Harrisburg Pink changed its venue and its look, but its mission was still the same -- to raise awareness and funds to promote breast cancer outreach and education! Over \$2,340 was raised for the PBCC. Many thanks to Leigh Hurst and the Feel Your Boobies Foundation for their support!

FYB Founder Leigh Hurst (right) takes a moment out of organizing and planning to chat with a chair masseuse



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GROW...

Plant the seed in your community and watch it grow statewide - become a Grassroots Partner. To find out how, call Amy at 717-738-9567 x106 or email amy@pabreastcancer.org

Thanks to the PA Liquor Control Board and Wine & Spirits Shoppers for their Continued Support



Monroe County Captain, Honi Grasing (far right) visited the Wine and Spirits Store in East Stroudsburg, which raised \$163.13 -- the most among the 625 stores in Pennsylvania! The combined total for the 2006 donations is over \$15,000! Since the program began, the LCB and Wine and Spirits Stores have raised over \$84,400 for the PBCC! Pictured from L to R: PBCC Volunteer Mary Jo Joyce, East Stroudsburg Store Manager Frank Haffner, and Honi Grasing. Thank you for your continued support! Which store will raise the most this year? Stay tuned to find out!

We hope you enjoy this newsletter!

Did you know that the PBCC has a free monthly e-newsletter? It is called **PinkLink™**, and it delivers the latest news right to your inbox every month!

Please email kim@pabreastcancer.org with "Sign Me Up" in the subject line and your name in the body of the email to get the latest PBCC news with just one click.

One randomly selected individual from those who submit their email will win a prize from the PBCC Marketplace in March, April and May!

Don't delay -- get 'pink-linked' today!



June 10, 2007

6 - 11 pm

Harrisburg Hilton

Harrisburg, PA

Tickets now available:

Call 1.800.377.8828

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Serendipity
an evening with **BARRY MASON**

May 8, 2007 ~ 7:30 pm

Fulton Theatre ~ Lancaster, PA

Tickets now available:

Contact the Fulton Theatre

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