

FUNDRAISERS

Del. Breast Cancer Coalition benefits from generosity

Survivors, patients supported by fall events

By Glenn Rolfe
Daily State News

GEORGETOWN — The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition's mission to assist survivors and patients of the disease banks on grants but also on the benevolence of individual supporters.

"We don't have anything that we can sell to make money," said Connie Holdridge, the coalition's program director for Sussex County. "So, we have to depend on the generosity of people and companies that are willing to do something to help raise money."

A series of activities during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October followed a significant fundraiser in late September at Georgetown's Stockley Tavern — a daylong event that netted a record \$114,000.

An Oct. 19 car show and community gathering staged by the County Seat Cruisers has netted \$13,000, an amount that could grow, according to its organizer Levin Clark. The show at the Georgetown Historical Society drew about 100 vehicles, "and spectators, they came from everywhere," he said.

Other support in October included Bras for a Cause in Dewey Beach (\$3,500), the fourth annual Sawgrass Pink Zumbathon and Pickle Ball Tournament (\$3,850) and the Boardwalk Plaza 80s Night in Rehoboth Beach (\$1,000).

Plus, a final tally from a First State Chevrolet fundraiser is forthcoming, Ms. Holdridge said.

Add it all up, and it's a sizable financial cushion for the DBCC.

"All of our events are free for our

survivors," said Ms. Holdridge, herself a breast cancer survivor, diagnosed at age 45. "Just in the past fiscal year, we had 363 different events for survivors. Of those events, the total attendance was 2,678 people."

The coalition pays for such things as venues, cookbooks/cooking instruction, professionals for yoga and Pilates, and one-on-one counseling — all free for those diagnosed with the disease, she said.

Donations and fundraisers also provide mammograms, van transportation to and from appointments, and even English proficiency aides.

The survivorship van, supported by a previous Dewey Goes Pink initiative, can carry 15 people at a time to appointments and events up and down the state.

In addition, just last year, the coalition gave out \$125,000 from its Breast Care Assistance Fund, established to provide immediate assistance to Delaware residents undergoing treatment. This includes mortgage and car payments, as well as utility bills.

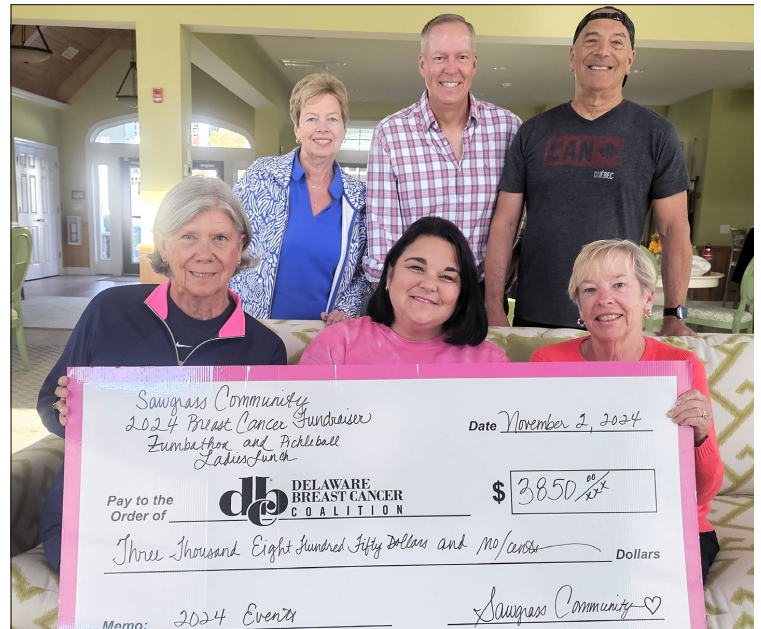
"The whole point is to make survivors feel comfortable in their own skin, to understand ... they have been diagnosed with a potentially deadly disease, and they are terrified," Ms. Holdridge said.

"So, we try to bring them down, get their anxiety down a little bit. Because everybody on our survivorship team is a survivor, and we understand how that feels. We can help them understand what they are going through, and it's OK to be angry. It's OK to be mad, all of these emotions, and that's OK. There is life after this."

Staff writer Glenn Rolfe can be reached at gr Rolfe@iniusa.org. Follow @glennrolfeBTBN on X.



The Stockley Tavern's check presentation to the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition from its "Bags, Booze & Boobs" event in September was held Nov. 4. Front row, from left, are Cindy Fluharty, Shondelle Graulich, Tracy Adams, Francesca Vogel, Alyssa Belote, Teresa Rogers and Connie Holdridge. Back row, from left, are Clint Fluharty, Tommy Engle, Ken Adams, Steve Smyk, J.B. Burnett, Robbie Fleming and Chess Hedrick. PHOTO COURTESY OF STOCKLEY TAVERN



The fourth annual Sawgrass Pink Zumbathon and Pickle Ball Tournament raised \$3,850 for the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition. Taking part in the check presentation are, front row, from left, Heler Phillips, Meridith Rothstein of the coalition and Jenny Story; and back row, from left, Alice Hoens, Bob Murray and Bruce Richter. PHOTO COURTESY OF SAWGRASS COMMUNITY