

Race for the Cure celebrates life

Breast cancer survivors lead way on 5K Phoenix walk Oct. 8

BY SARAH PARKIN

SPECIAL TO WEST EXPRESS

Caryn Doudna, M.D. was 36 years old and just beginning her career in radiology when she decided to take part in a race in Peoria, Illinois named after local resident Susan G. Komen who died of breast cancer.

"The first time I walked in the Race for the Cure I was already working as a breast imager and was overwhelmed by all the pink visors," said Caryn Doudna, M.D., and medical director of Desert Breast Center. Then Doudna was diagnosed with breast cancer, within her first year of practice.

"The following year, I wore one of the pink visors."

Pink hats and t-shirts are symbols of a brush with death worn by survivors of breast cancer.

"Five years ago I didn't know if I was going to live or ever have children. Now I have an eight-week-old son and a 28-month-old daughter," said Doudna.

The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure takes place in downtown Phoenix on Sun., Oct. 8. The non-competitive, 5-kilometer walk/run got its start 17 years ago in Dallas in honor of Susan G. Komen, who died of breast cancer at 36. This year the race takes place in 98 cities and aims to "eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease by advancing research, education, screening and treatment."

One in eight women will experience breast cancer in her lifetime, and breast cancer remains the leading cause of death in women ages 35-54. This year 183,000 women and 1,400 men will develop breast cancer with 41,200 dying of the disease, according to the American Cancer Society.

Money raised by the walk will support the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, with three-quarters of the total remaining in Arizona for research, screening, treatment, and education pro-

grams.

"One hundred percent of the money goes toward breast cancer issues," said Lisa Leier, public relations & communications chair.

Last year the race raised just under \$1 million, and \$700,000 was provided for Arizona grants.

Leier anticipates that 23,000 people will participate in the race this year, including 1,000 breast-cancer survivors. More than 8,000 of them will be with a team. "Last year Charles Schwab brought close to 700 people. Word is out that Honeywell is bringing close to 1,000 this year," she said. Five or more people can make a team. The majority are small-group teams.

Everyone is welcome to participate in the Race for the Cure. If someone is unable to make it on the day of the race, they can register as a "Phantom" Runner or Walker, a new category this year. Phantoms can pick up a race t-shirt prior to the race at the Runner's Den.

Lynda Tatum, an Ahwatukee resident, wears an 'In Memory' sign to honor the mother of her stepdaughters who died of breast cancer.

"I got started as a way to support my family. It was a good way to increase awareness for my daughters who were very young at the time."

Tatum has walked in a race every year since 1992. Her daughters are grown now, and participate in the cities where they live.

"Participating in these events makes me feel like there is something I can do by supporting and recognizing others. The feeling of solidarity is incredible. The disease is so prevalent that it is hard not to want to contribute to the cause."

Many participants wear pink signs honoring people they have known who had breast cancer. Both 'In Memory' and 'In Celebration' signs are available. Other people participate just to support the cause and

help raise money to fight breast cancer.

Doudna noted that these days many more women have learned about their options. She said a decline in mastectomies, new biopsy procedures, and improvements in drugs to control side effects of chemotherapy have all improved both treatment and survival.

"I think the most important reason that I walk is to show people that there is life after breast cancer and there are many survivors. It's important in my practice and in the race to show that there are many survivors," said Doudna, who will be wearing a pink hat in the race. "How blessed I am."

IF YOU GO:

The race will take place in downtown Phoenix, near Patriot's Park.

Pre-registration \$18, if postmarked by 9/30. After that \$20. Kids for the Cure (under 12) \$10

Mail to: Runner's Den, 6505 N 16th Street, Phoenix AZ 85016

Race Day Schedule

6:30 - 8:30 a.m. Registration

7:15am: Family Fun Run/Walk

8 a.m. Start for cancer survivors

8:15 a.m. 5k Run Starts

8:35 a.m. 5k Walk Starts

10 a.m. Awards Ceremony

Information: 602-346-CURE (2873)