

# Patient Advocacy at Mercy Makes the Difference

Last summer Marlene Mastandrea, of Green, was paying attention to everyone but herself. While simultaneously planning her father's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party, her daughter's wedding and a large back-to-school party in her neighborhood, Mastandrea was dealt a painful personal blow. After a routine mammogram, her doctors feared she had breast cancer.

Needing further tests to confirm their suspicions, Mastandrea, 53, went to Mercy Medical Center for a compression mammogram and ultrasound. Outside of her husband, she kept the news to herself so as not to interfere with the joyous events she was planning with family and friends. But during her follow-up tests, she broke down.

"The first time I cried was during my second mammogram at the hospital," she said. "I was trying to be strong, and hadn't told anyone about what I was going through. But the Mercy technician was very kind and helped me to relax. And then she introduced me to Diane."

Diane Wofsey, RN, Care Coordinator of Mercy's Breast Care



Diane Wofsey, RN, Care Coordinator of Mercy's Breast Care Center talks with patient Becky Theil, her husband Larry and son Jacob. Wofsey often meets with patients and their families to provide education and support.

Center met Mastandrea just as she was beginning to face a long road of treatment with various medical specialists. "She helped me to calm down and explained the process ahead," said Mastandrea.

Patients of Mercy's Breast Care Center are assisted by the Nurse/Care Coordinator to help them every step of the way. "Waiting for an answer to that question, 'Do I

have breast cancer?' is a difficult time for any woman," said Wofsey. "From abnormal mammogram to diagnosis, we try to get each patient an answer to that question within seven days," she adds.

Wofsey can help patients schedule an appointment with their surgeon or oncologist, talk them through their fears and frustrations and connect women diagnosed with

breast cancer with others for support.

"We try to get each patient emotionally ready for what will happen next," said Wofsey, a nurse of 29 years with Mercy who understands the emotional ups and downs that come with cancer diagnosis. Wofsey's son was diagnosed with cancer several years ago. "Patients call with a number of different questions from what to expect from their medications to where to find a wig," she said. "We don't stop until we've exhausted every avenue to answer their question and help them find what they need."

Wofsey helped Mastandrea schedule an appointment with Russell L. Ramey, M.D., a Surgeon at Mercy Medical Center, who explained her options for treatment and helped her make the decision to have a mastectomy. She was also under the care of Dina K. Rooney, M.D., a Medical Oncologist at Mercy who administered chemotherapy treatment.

Now, 13 months after her initial mammogram, Mastandrea is cancer free and said she's better than ever. "I feel perfect. I do windows,

I vacuum, I do it all! It comes down to all the support I've received from Diane's office. They are so good at keeping in touch with me to see how I'm doing," she said. "From the doctors and nurses to aides and administrators, the quality of care at Mercy's Breast Care Center is first class all the way. I cannot say enough good things about Diane, Dr. Ramey and the whole team at the Breast Center."

Mastandrea now looks forward to years of giving back. Because

shopping event features upscale gift items just in time for the holiday season. Mastandrea will be donating gift baskets that she created through her business "Always A Smile."

Even after her husband's job transfer will move them to St. Louis this fall, Mastandrea will return to Mercy Medical Center for treatment. "The biggest compliment to all of us is that she has already pre-arranged with her new insurance company to have future treatments done at Mercy," said Wofsey.



Cancer survivors gather at Mercy's Breast Care Center for an informal reunion Sept. 4, 2003.

of her upbeat attitude throughout the treatment process, Wofsey listed her as a resource for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients looking for mutual support. Mastandrea is also involved in the Mercy Service League's October 24 event Tannenbaum Treasures, a fundraiser for the Breast Care Center. Open to the public from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the atrium of the Ireland Cancer Center, the

"Breast cancer is a family affair; it affects everyone around you," said Mastandrea. "Mercy took such great care of me, they have become a part of my family."

For more information about the Breast Care Center, please call Mercy's Healthcare Connection at 800-223-8662.

## THREE EVENTS. ONE CAUSE.

Mercy Medical Center presents three ways you can get involved in the fight against breast cancer and learn more about how you can take control of your health.

October 2, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

### TAKING CONTROL: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BREAST HEALTH

Kent State University Stark Professional Education & Conference Center, 6000 Frank Avenue NW, Canton

Hear from those on the front lines. A panel of physicians will discuss the latest in breast cancer prevention, detection and treatment options. Join us at 6:30 p.m. for complimentary hors d'oeuvres, giveaways and the chance to speak informally with health professionals. Assess your breast cancer risk with computer software, learn about mammography and the latest clinical research trials. The panel discussion begins at 7:30 featuring: Dina K. Rooney, M.D., Medical Oncologist; Edward J. Walsh, M.D., Radiation Oncologist; Thomas I. Vesey, M.D., Radiologist; and Russell L. Ramey, M.D., Surgeon.

This event is free and open to the public. Bring your mom, your sister, your friend. Register by Wednesday, September 24, by calling 330-489-1333 or 800-223-8662.

October 11, 8:00 a.m. – noon

### THE KOMEN NORTHEAST OHIO RACE FOR THE CURE

to benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

The Breast Care Center at Mercy invites you to join Mercy employees in the 10th Annual Komen Race for the Cure, a 1 mile walk or 5K walk/run at Voinovich Park, downtown Cleveland. Mercy will provide a free coach bus ride to the event, breakfast snacks, souvenir and other goodies. Seventy-five percent of the money raised stays local to fund breast health/cancer programs. Twenty-five percent funds cancer research.

To reserve your spot on the bus, call Mercy at 330-489-1333 or 800-223-8662 by October 3rd. Space is limited. Register for the Race as an "individual" by going online to [www.neohiorace.org](http://www.neohiorace.org) or picking up a brochure at Mercy Medical Center.

October 24, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### TANNENBAUM TREASURES A HOLIDAY SHOPPING EXTRAVAGANZA!

Mercy Medical Center, Ireland Cancer Center Atrium

The Mercy Service League is proud to host Tannenbaum Treasures – a unique shopping event to raise funds for the Breast Care Center. Take your pick from an array of upscale gift items from area artisans and retailers. The event also includes an array of sumptuous food and beverages to enjoy while shopping.

Admission and parking are free. For more information, call 330-489-1333 or 800-223-8662.



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