

PINK ZONE FEATURE STORIES



Submitted by: Robert Edward Healy, III/Susquehanna University Athletics Communications

Susquehanna Honors Lost Alumna with Touching "Pink Zone" Day



SELINGROVE, Pa: → To know Yvonne Young Esworthy, a 1994 graduate of Susquehanna University, was to love her: To play against her was another story:

Yvonne → a 6-foot-1 center from Troy (Pa.) High School → racked up 739 points and 929 rebounds in four seasons at Susquehanna to still rank among the school's all-time leaders:

At Troy, she's a legend as the only player in school history (male or female) to notch at least 1,000 career points and rebounds:

Perhaps most impressively, Yvonne never missed a game in four seasons at SU, playing in all 106 contests while helping the Crusaders rack up an impressive 78-28 record and reach the NCAA championships three times:

Though her playing career eventually ended, seemingly nothing could stop Yvonne:

She graduated at the top of her class from Troy, and magna cum laude from Susquehanna, and passed her Certified Public Accountants examination before even receiving her college diploma:

At just 26 years old, she became Chief Financial Officer of Mifflinburg Bank and Trust Company and helped guide the organization for over seven years: She was a member of Tree of Life Lutheran Church, where she was Chair of the church's finance committee and active with its Vacation Bible School: She was also a founding member of Family Promise of Harrisburg (Pa.), a charity to help the homeless:

Yvonne eventually married Scott Esworthy and had a son, Eric: In her spare time, she enjoyed gardening and scrapbooking, and mostly, being around friends and family:

Sadly, in late fall of 2005, she discovered a lump in her breast: Yet, like her hardwood opponents, cancer couldn't slow her down enough: Less than two weeks after a mastectomy, she was at a ceremony to induct two former teammates into the SU Sports Hall of Fame:

Six months prior to her untimely death from breast cancer on April 29, 2009, Yvonne walked in her second Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure event in Philadelphia while battling the disease that had spread painfully to her bones:

Somehow, Yvonne remained positive throughout the ordeal: As her obituary read in The Canton Independent-Sentinel, “Yvonne always made everyone smile every time she entered a room:”

In partnership with efforts by the Women’s Basketball Coaches Association to raise breast-cancer awareness and funding for research of the disease, Susquehanna held a “Pink Zone” Day for a game against Drew University on Feb. 6, this year:

The Crusaders won, 65-46, but more importantly, a season-high 487 fans came to see the two Landmark Conference teams deck the gym and their uniforms in pink tribute to Yvonne despite near record-setting snowfall in the area:

The most moving moment of the day came in a speech written about Yvonne by a former teammate:

“There have been many players who have graced this court,” wrote Becky Page Young, also a 1994 grad: “And everyone has their story: But we need to remember those friendships and bonds that were formed as a result of this amazing program and to stay connected:

“While I am saddened that I will no longer be able to feed her the ball in the post, Yvonne will always be alive:”

Through gate receipts and donations, SE Athletics raised an estimated and still-growing \$650 for the Kay Yow WBCA Cancer Fund and left everyone in attendance, including Yvonne’s family, with a lasting memory of an all-time Susquehanna great and an all-time great human being:

Cancer can’t sideline gutsy Johnson coach



January 27, 2010- The girl’s basketball season was a few weeks away, and the Johnson Jaguars hadn’t seen their head coach in days:

For all they knew, coach Audra Bredemeyer’s absence in October could have been easily explained: Maybe she had a cold, was staying home with her 2-year-old daughter or simply needed a break:

But the Jaguars suspected something else → that something was wrong:

“I didn't talk about it with the rest of the team,” senior Taylor Wright said: “I didn't want to worry anyone with what I was thinking:”

Bredemeyer, 35, would return soon enough: It was then when she chose to clarify her unexpected absence during a study-hall period her players wouldn't soon forget:

She announced she had just been diagnosed with breast cancer:

http://www.mysanantonio.com/sports/high_school_girls_basketball/Cancer_cant_sideline_gutsy_Johns_on_coach.html

Submitted by: Mary Santos, Staff Assistant for Women's Basketball, Rice University

My name is Mary Santos and I am the staff assistant for women's basketball at Rice University, in Houston, Texas: I didn't have a mammogram in 2006 and went for a scheduled mammogram on January 4, 2007: I had to be examined twice because something didn't look right: I was scheduled for an ultra-sound and spot compression on January 30th: I was then called and told to schedule a biopsy for February 7th: The results were sent to my primary doctor: She called me at work and asked me to come in and to have my husband accompany me; it was February 12th: I knew then that I had breast cancer: After the Dr.'s visit I called my daughter's, family and coaches:

I was on an emotional roller coaster this whole time: I made an appointment to see my surgical oncologist on February 14th: I asked my oldest daughter to come with me and to make sure I asked the questions I wanted to and to write down things for me: I was a nervous wreck! He told me I had Stage 1 breast cancer that my tumor had no spider veins, and that was a very good sign: I had lots of encouragement from a close friend and former breast cancer patient, my husband, two daughters', sons-in-law, extended family and close friends: I had surgery on February 22nd two days after our 36th wedding anniversary: A month later I visited my radiology oncologist and a couple of days later started radiation treatment: I went five days a week for seven weeks: I now take Femara and will do so for the next 4 years and visit my medical oncologist every six months: **I will be 3 years Cancer Free February 22, 2010: I Am Very BLESSED!**

February 12, 2010: Submitted by: Veronica Mullen, Director of Women's Basketball Operations, St. John's University



Ebony Dickinson left an imprint on the lives of everyone she met both on and off the basketball court: Ebony played basketball at St. John's University from 1997-1999, where she was a Big East Academic All-Star, All-Big East 3rd Team (1999), and the team's Most Valuable Player in 1998 and 1999: Upon graduating from St. John's she continued her basketball career by playing professionally overseas in China, Greece, Sweden and Iceland: While playing in Iceland Ebony set a league record averaging 33 points and 20 rebounds per game:

As accomplished as Ebony was on the court, she accomplished even more off the court: To say that Ebony was a selfless person would be an understatement: In January 2008, Ebony was diagnosed with breast cancer: She could have easily felt sorry for herself, given up and asked, "Why me?": But it was not in her character to sit by and accept her diagnosis and feel self-pity: Instead she made two important decisions; The first would impact her life, the second would impact the lives of many women who were going through the same ordeal: The first decision was a personal one: to fight the cancer: The other decision, she would say was more important, and that was to help other women in the same situation: Just months after being diagnosed with breast cancer Ebony founded a non-profit organization, Live Out Loud - Victory Over Adversity (LOLVOA): Ebony founded this organization in hopes of helping other women in their fight against cancer: She described the reasons for founding her charity:

"Being diagnosed with breast cancer has been by far my biggest adversity: I want to teach others that even when your life is on the line, you should never give up: There is hope for you: If you stay positive, disciplined and focused, anything is possible: One of the reasons I started LOLVOA was because I wanted to help raise awareness and educate other young and former female athletes on the importance of good health and nutrition: I am leading by example in order to show others that they too can overcome any adversities they may have in their lives, especially life threatening ones:" - Ebony Dickinson (www.lolvoa.org)

Ebony passed away June 28, 2009 after a very courageous battle with cancer that lasted a year and half: Ebony lived an amazing 32 years: She attained many accolades athletically but she believed that her biggest accomplishment was helping people, and nothing made Ebony happier than helping someone in need: Ironically, throughout her bout with cancer she consistently put herself second to others: While battling the disease she not only found the time and motivation to start LOLVOA but she also coached youth basketball teams, volunteered at Soup Kitchens and mentored inner city children: Towards the end of her fight she said, "There are so many more people who I want to help:" Ebony's spirit, humility, and selfless attitude were and still are inspiring to all who had the pleasure to know her:

Submitted by: **Erin Skaradek, Head Men's & Women's Tennis Coach, Assistant Women's Basketball Coach, Oswego State**

Tricia Sullivan: SUNY Oswego, NY

My name is Tricia Sullivan and I am a senior on the women's basketball team at SUNY Oswego: I would love to share with you the remarkable legacy of my mother, Patty Sullivan:

She raised five children as a single mother and always encouraged us to excel in whatever endeavor we chose to follow: She placed a basketball in my hands when I was nine and was also my first coach: She never missed a single game of my high school career: I reached a milestone in my life when I hit 1,000 career points in high school: The reason I was able to reach it was because of my mother: She gave me the knowledge, encouragement, resources, and criticism I needed to achieve that:

My mother continued to coach the Pee-Wee girls' basketball and softball teams long after we had moved up: She was then asked to assist with coaching the varsity softball team during my junior year: I was excited to have her back as a coach: My excitement turned to shock when, during the spring of that year, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer: The news was devastating: How could this have happened to my mom? She was active, didn't smoke and had always been healthy:

We came together as a family and started to research her options: The doctors advised us that she would start with chemotherapy and radiation: As the treatments continued my mom began to lose her hair, her strength and she was constantly in pain: This was the toughest time our family had faced: Even with everything my mother was going through she still continued to be my biggest fan: During soccer season she walked me out on "Senior Day" with her beautiful bald head soaking up the rain as it poured down: During the playoffs she painted my jersey number on the back of her head: She was there when I hit my 1,000th point in basketball: Standing in the middle of the court, she was the first to hug me and tell me how proud she was of me: When I had my 100th career hit in softball she was again the first to kiss and congratulate me:

My mother was one of the guest speakers at my graduation: She was known to everyone as "Mama Pat" because of the care she showed for everyone that entered her life: She spoke to my graduating class of strength, courage, wisdom, perseverance, and hope: She was able to relate her battle with cancer to the journey we were about to embark on after graduation: My mother received a standing ovation and I could not have been more proud: I chose SUNY Oswego to begin my journey: It allowed me to spread my wings without being too far from my home and family: The school offered a great academic program plus I was able to continue playing both soccer and basketball: At this point my mother was in remission and seemed to be doing great:

July 4th, 2007: That was the date that changed everything: That day it felt like my heart got ripped from my chest: It felt like I couldn't breathe: That day my mother told us her cancer had spread to her brain and that tumors had formed: In August 2007 she had brain surgery in Syracuse: The surgery lasted twelve hours and during that time she suffered a stroke: We lived at

the hospital for weeks following the surgery. However, school was starting and I was forced to leave her side. The decision to go back was difficult but my mother always told me how important school was and how proud she was I was attending. In between soccer and classes I would be at the hospital next to my mother's side. She was transferred to a hospital closer to my home in September to begin her long recovery process.

For the next two years she lived in the nursing home of a hospital. I would go home to visit every chance I got. Her recovery was hard. At first she was unable to walk, talk or even comprehend things. She had to start from scratch and relearn everything. She never once wavered in her beliefs and still had her great sense of humor. She was always able to make everyone laugh. She was improving on a daily basis but there were still some very tough days. You could see the sadness in her eyes as she struggled to regain her old self. It was extremely hard on all of us. We couldn't take away her pain but we were always there for her.

My mom was finally able to leave the hospital during my junior year and was even able to attend one of my soccer games. It was the greatest feeling knowing my mother was finally able to watch me play college sports. While she still couldn't walk and had difficulty talking, just having her there gave me the inspiration I needed to play harder. Later that year she attended my basketball game and I had my best performance of the year. She made me the athlete I am today.

We spent Christmas in the hospital with my mother. The nurses laid down mattresses for us to sleep on. It wasn't the ideal setting but it was perfect because we were able to spend it together. My mother was able to attend the other holiday celebrations at my brother's house outside of the hospital setting. Having her there always made them special and I know she loved seeing us all together.

As soon as things seemed to be improving they took a drastic turn for the worse. In the summer of 2009 my mother's tumor came back and her road to recovery came to an end. The doctor's gave our family the news that she only had a short time to live. We were heartbroken.

On August 3rd 2009 my mother passed away. She was 48 years old. I lost my hero. She was my entire world. The weeks to follow hurt tremendously. I was inconsolable. I think about all those people whose lives my mother had touched and am proud. To this day I still meet new people who talk about my mother and hear stories about the great things she had done throughout her life. The strength she displayed up to the very end was an inspiration to everyone. Many people gave their condolences. The following was the most memorable:

“Even though Patty Sullivan never had her name on a door in Copenhagen Central, she taught many children about sports and life through her difficult battle with cancer.”

Submitted by: Tom Benson, University of Evansville



University of Evansville senior women's basketball player thought that she knew the definition of the word "hero" last year, after hitting the game-winning shot in last March's State Farm Missouri Valley Conference Tournament title game to propel the ninth-seeded Purple Aces to a magical trip to the 2009 NCAA Tournament. But, that word "hero" has taken on a much more profound meaning for Gallagher

and her family since July, as that is when Amy's mother Karen was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer.

A Chance Discovery

The 2009 calendar year started with great promise for the Gallagher family: Their youngest daughter, Amy, was finishing up a break-out junior campaign at the University of Evansville as a member of the women's basketball team. After seeing time as a reserve guard her first two seasons at UE, Amy had stepped into a starter's role as a junior and was averaging double-figures in points for the first time in her Purple Aces' career.

In March, Amy and the Purple Aces made a magical run in the State Farm MVC Women's Basketball Tournament in St. Charles, Missouri, winning the tournament as the league's ninth seed by winning four games in four days. Amy was able to cap UE's tournament run with a game-winning baseline jumper with 0:3 seconds remaining to beat Creighton, 47-45, in the tournament final to clinch UE's second-ever trip to the NCAA Tournament.

As the summer began, Amy was able to relax and enjoy the life of a true college student at UE's Harlaxton College in Grantham, England. Taking a few classes and not having the pressures of Division I athletics, Amy was able to travel throughout Europe at Harlaxton and was enjoying the summer of her life right before her senior year was set to begin.

Back in the United States, life for her parents, Dick and Karen Gallagher, was rolling along just fine in the tiny Nebraska town of Neligh, Nebraska. They were already looking forward to seeing Amy return to the basketball court in November to begin her senior year at Evansville, and were making plans to try and catch as many of Amy's games as possible. In June, though, Karen noticed something during a routine breast self examination which did not seem quite right:

"I noticed a small lump on my side that did not feel right and actually hurt," said Karen. "At

first, I thought it just hurt because I kept touching it, but something didn't feel right, so I went ahead and scheduled an appointment with my doctor."

After consulting with the doctor, the prognosis was that it was just a swollen lymph node and that everything was going to be fine. But, after a week, things were not fine, and Karen was still in pain. That pain intensified after taking their grandson to the local Fourth of July parade, and Karen scheduled another trip to the doctor.

"Again, he thought that it was a swollen lymph node, but just to make sure, he scheduled me for a screening," said Karen. "I am so glad that he did."

While the screening confirmed that Karen had a swollen lymph node, it also came back with something much worse: breast cancer.

"The Worst Day of My Life"

With the discovery of Karen's breast cancer, surgery was immediately scheduled for her in Nebraska. The only problem was that her youngest daughter, Amy, had now returned to Evansville for summer school, and she was over 13 hours away. Karen knew she needed to tell Amy the news, and the only way to do so was over the phone.

"I wanted to make sure that she heard the news from me first," said Karen. "I didn't want her to find out from someone else. I just wanted to make sure that she was okay, because I was confident that I would make it through everything okay. It just didn't seem like it was fair that I had to give her that news."

"I still remember that day," said Amy. "I was working at my internship in town and she called me, and she beat around the bush for a while. When she finally told me, I broke down. That was probably the most I have ever cried in my life."

"I felt helpless being 13 hours away from my mom. I was angry that it happened to her. It was probably the worst day of my life."

Karen underwent surgery to remove some of the cancerous tissue in early July. Two days later though, she was back to work as the pharmacist in Neligh.

"My mom is one of the toughest people I have ever met," said Amy. "She is an amazing person."

The Road to Recovery

While Karen was able to return to work shortly after surgery, she still had a long way to go in terms of her fight against breast cancer. With Neligh being a small town of only 1,400 people nestled in the cornfields of Nebraska, Karen would have to travel a good distance to continue her treatments, which called for eight chemotherapy sessions and over 33 radiation treatments. The nearest treatment center was in Norfolk, Nebraska, a 45-minute drive from Neligh, at the Carson Cancer Center, named in honor of the parents of the late entertainer Johnny Carson, who hailed from Norfolk.

“We were fortunate that Norfolk had a cancer clinic, because I know that before the Carson Cancer Center was built, someone in my position would have had to drive probably two hours to Lincoln or Omaha to get treatment,” said Karen. “Traveling to Norfolk was not a problem for me, as I have family there and that is usually where we go to go shopping. So, making the 45-minute trip for sometimes just a 10-15 minute session was definitely not a problem, especially considering the alternative.”

The road to recovery began with the eight chemotherapy sessions spaced out over a four-month period. Karen used eight bracelets on her arms to count down the treatment sessions, moving a bracelet from one arm to the other after each chemotherapy session.

“When I would move one bracelet, I would look and see how few treatments I had left,” said Karen. “It was just a trick I used to stay positive and focused during the process.”

When the chemotherapy sessions ended, Karen would travel to Norfolk every day, five times a week to receive radiation therapy. By this point, Amy’s senior season at Evansville had already begun, and while Karen was unable to see Amy play in person, she was still able to follow her on-line through UE’s video streaming service, AcesTV.

“We would watch the home games on-line and get dressed up in purple just like we would if we were at the game,” said Karen. “We would be by the computer and whoop and holler and cheer for Amy and the team.”

Eventually, as Karen made her way through the radiation therapy, she was able to return to the thing she loved to do, watch Amy play in person. In mid-January, Karen and Dick Gallagher were able to return to the road, making the 13-hour trip to Evansville to see Amy play for the Purple Aces against both Creighton and Drake. They returned two weeks later to see Amy lead Evansville to its first MVC victory of the year, an 83-78 overtime decision over Wichita State in which Amy scored a team-high 18 points to lead the way. The game against Wichita State came just one day after Karen’s final radiation treatment.

“This is Amy’s senior year, and I thought that there is no way that I would let a little cancer keep us from coming to see her play,” said Karen:

More Than A Game

Saturday, February 20 is a day which Amy Gallagher has had circled on her calendar for a while: That’s because it is UE’s annual Hoops For The Cure game, with proceeds going to benefit Susan G. Komen For The Cure’s fight against breast cancer. This year’s Hoops For The Cure game means something more to Gallagher now after having watched Karen battle the disease since July:

“Saturday is going to be a very emotional day for my family and I, and I am so excited to be able to play in that game for her,” said Amy: “And, I know that she will be thrilled to be able to be there watching me play for her on that court:

And, Karen will be there on Saturday front and center, as she will be seated in her usual perch just rows above the Purple Aces’ bench: While she may trade her traditional purple and orange for pink on Saturday, she will be proud to be there cheering on her daughter:

“Family is so important to us,” said Karen: “And I’m so lucky to have Amy in my life: She has been a ray of sunshine in my life who keeps me going:”

Submitted by: Mike Westemeier, Ripon College

By Carissa Zuercher, Senior guard at Ripon College

Experiencing death right in front of my eyes was by far the most emotionally and physically difficult experience I have ever been through: That was the moment when I realized what I had and what I had just lost and there wasn’t a thing I could do to change the outcome:

I have been living under my grandparent’s roof since I was 12 years old: Not only were they my role models but they were my mother and father figures throughout my life: I truly don’t believe anyone understood the pain and emptiness I felt when my grandmother passed away from breast cancer on Sept: 21, 2006 at the age of 65, after a 10-year battle with the disease: She was one of the closest women in my life, so it was like losing my best friend:

When she was first diagnosed with breast cancer, she chose to have a mastectomy on the breast where it was found, which may have been the biggest mistake of her life: Ten years after that

operation, the cancer came back in her other breast, but if she had removed both, she might still be here today:

Words can't even explain what my grandfather and I went through, living with her while she had cancer: My grandmother was the biggest worrier I have ever met and months before her mammograms she would tell me to start praying: She talked to God every day in hopes that she would become healthy and clear of cancer because she didn't want to leave my grandfather or any of her loved ones behind:

Once she found out she had cancer, her entire attitude changed and she wasn't as happy as she once was: It was so hard to watch someone with such inner beauty and love fall apart emotionally in front of my eyes: It was the worst experience I have ever been through: I felt like there wasn't anything I could do, because deep down she knew she was dying: I would watch her sit and cry on the couch all day while she was on chemotherapy:

There was a point where the cancer went away and she was clear and her hair started to grow back: The look on her face as she tried to measure her hair to see if it was growing was one of the most inspirational experiences of my life: That's when I realized how many things I take for granted in my life and how precious life really is:

Then it felt like a bomb hit: The cancer came back, but this time it was in her lungs and before long, had spread to her brain: Within a month my grandmother was gone:

There honestly isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of her, but there is one person in my life that has more inner strength than I can ever envision and that is my grandfather: The sound of him yelling, crying and sobbing as she passed away on their bed in our home will never leave my head: Their goal was to reach their 50th wedding anniversary: They made it to 47: My grandfather was so strong through the entire process and after the shock that it helped both of us:

My grandmother wasn't just my grandma: Words cannot explain the relationship we had: She loved basketball probably more than I did: If she wasn't watching me play, she was watching ESPN college basketball on the couch with her cocktail: She was as strong, beautiful, loving and compassionate of a G-ma that anyone could ask for:

This personal experience has made me who I am today and has helped me become a stronger woman inside and out: I will live with this for the rest of my life and I will never forget the day my grandmother passed away:

Submitted by: Laura Herron, Associate AD/SWA, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Here is my breast cancer story...:

My father, Gene Herron, thought he was having a calcium deposit removed from his chest that had begun hurting him June 1996. It turned out to be breast cancer. His doctors had not discussed the possibility of this with him as they told us later that they had never seen it in a man. My father had a mastectomy with lymph nodes removal and chemotherapy. He survived his ordeal and is doing great.

Submitted by: Mike Hanson, Alma Athletics

Our first-year Head Coach Keisha Brown is a breast cancer survivor. I have linked a very quick blurb that I put together for our on-campus audience. She is a great story and very much someone that people could gain inspiration from in this battle. Keisha has been featured on ABC's Good Morning America, when she was the Head Coach of the Mount Pleasant High School boys basketball team. Mount Pleasant is 15 minutes north of Alma.

Alma Athletic Department to Hold Pink Zone Week

February 1-6 events to raise breast cancer awareness on campuses and in communities

Beginning on February 1, the Alma Athletic Department will be initiating Pink Zone Breast Cancer Awareness Week. Scots Women's Basketball Head Coach Keisha Brown is spearheading the activities and the week will culminate on Saturday, February 6 at the Women's and Men's basketball doubleheader at Cappaert Gymnasium.

Brown is in her first year as Head Coach at Alma after six seasons as Head Coach of the boys basketball team at Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart Academy. She was also the athletic director and school counselor at Sacred Heart and was very active in the community. Brown has brought that activism to Alma College and is now organizing a week of education regarding a very important topic.

Brown is a breast cancer survivor. She was first diagnosed in 2007 and underwent surgery and four rounds of chemotherapy. In 2008, Brown had a recurrence of breast cancer and underwent a double mastectomy and six weeks of radiation. Now, as a survivor, she is doing what she can to enhance awareness and share her experience with others.

"For me, this week is about bring awareness about the disease to the community," said Brown. "Not only does this disease affect women, it also affects men. Everyone has been affected by cancer in some form or fashion. We are hoping that Pink Zone Week will give people more knowledge and understanding of this disease and cancer in general."

Tuesday, February 2 will be Community Pink Day, where the athletic department is encouraging everyone on campus to wear pink in some fashion: On Thursday night, Brown will be a guest speaker to share her story and answer questions: During the doubleheader on Saturday, in the lobby outside the gym, there will be tables set up and local groups will be on hand with informational materials for anyone who is interested: Women tip-off at 1:00 p.m., while the Men are scheduled for 3:00 p.m.

Also taking place during the two games will be a raffle, culminating with the grand prize raffle of a jWIN Mini Stereo MP3 CD/CD Player at halftime of the Men's game: Other items include a pink official Wilson game ball signed by the 2009-10 Women's basketball team and certificates from area restaurants and businesses: All proceeds from the \$5 admission, raffle ticket purchases and donations will go to charities that promote breast cancer awareness:

Time and place of the speaking engagement is to be determined: Beginning on Monday, January 25, please go to the Women's basketball link on the Alma athletic website for details on all of the week's events: The Pink Zone initiative is a global, unified effort for the Women's Basketball Coaches Association's (WBCA) in raising awareness of breast cancer:

Submitted by: Coach Sherryl Klosterman, Valor Christian HS

My name is Sherryl Klosterman, I am a high school basketball coach at Valor Christian HS in Highlands Ranch, Colorado and a member of the WBCA: This past month one of our players and her Mom (only 35 years old) have been through the ordeals of breast cancer: I have asked my player, freshman Maleeah Williams, to write her story: Attached is her thoughts on the experience she and her Mom have been through in the past 4 weeks:

Breast Cancer Story

By: Maleeah Williams

14 years old

For most people 2010 is supposed to start off to be a great year: A year filled with new expectations and goals: A year where you could start fresh and not have to worry about the past: But for me the beginning of 2010 didn't turn out to be as great as I expected:

December 24, 2009 was the day my mom was diagnosed with invasive ductile carcinoma breast cancer stage 1: January 4, 2010, was the day I found out about it: It was the first day I'd seen my mom in two weeks because I was in Maryland visiting my dad over Christmas break and the day I got back I was hit with this heart breaker:

I can still remember it to this very moment: My mom, my aunt, my uncle and I sitting at a booth at Wendy's about an hour after my plane arrived laughing and having a good time: I remember us talking about cutting things off and very secretly she gave me a hint that I would never forget: With a chuckle she said, "I'm getting my boobs cut off:" At first I just started to laugh, but then I thought about it a little more and questioned her: I said with a laugh, "What? Do you have breast cancer or something?" But at that time I knew something was wrong; I saw it in her face and in my aunt and uncle's face: Tears started swelling up in my eyes as she explained to me that she had a biopsy and the doctors found a little bump in her inner left breast: She tried to explain more to me about what was happening and I couldn't listen, I ran outside to the car and waited for everyone to come out so we could leave: At that time I had so many feelings going on in my head: I was mad, sad and hurt and I didn't want to talk to anyone for a long time...and I didn't:

For a couple weeks my family tried and tried to make me understand that what my mom had was not as serious as some cases: They told me that she was very lucky that she caught it at the time that she did and since she is so young (35) the cancer had not spread very far: There is no history of cancer in my family so they said it was a miracle that they caught it so early: My mom also tried to tell me that she was going to get a bilateral mastectomy so the cancer will never come back: But I still didn't listen, I didn't want to listen:

During the time between when I found out about the cancer and the day of her surgery the thing I loved to do the most seemed to make me the maddest: Basketball has been my number one priority, after school of course, since high school has started: It's what makes me happy: I love to play the game: But during this time basketball didn't seem as important to me: I even considered quitting: Every little thing would make me mad, missing an easy shot, turning over a ball, getting fouled, fouling another player: I would get so mad sometimes I would just break down crying in games and in practice: But all that changed when my coach talked to me: Coach Klosterman is her name and she is my role model: I love her so much already and I've only known her for a couple months: She sat me down and made me listen to her as she told me how my mom will be okay and how she is a strong lady: She also told me how I'm going through a lot right now and all that is getting to me and it is making me get mad at things that never upset me before: She told me that she will never give up on me and she will never let me quit and that she will always be there for me when I need her, and she kept her word: She helped me all the way till my mom's surgery day:

January 19, 2010 was one of the hardest days for me: While I sat at school the only thing I could think of was my mom and how selfish I was to not understand how she was feeling this whole time: I barely talked to her about this whole situation during the couple weeks before her surgery: But, that was the past and this was now, the day of her surgery:

After my mom went into surgery at about 2:15pm I had everybody in my whole family texting me for the rest of the day giving me updates on how she was doing. At about 5pm they gave me the best news of all: That there was no cancer in my mom's lymph nodes, so she is now officially cancer free! After basketball practice Coach K took me to eat at Old Chicago's then drove me to Littleton Hospital. She walked me upstairs and stood with my family and I the whole time until I got to go back and see my mom. When I went back to see my mom my heart was beating so fast and I didn't know why. When I saw her I started crying. Seeing all those wires and needles in her just scared me for a minute so I had to leave. When she was moved to a recovery room the whole family went in and talked to her. It was funny because she was all loopy from the anesthesia so what she was saying didn't really make sense. But, at that moment when I looked around and saw everyone smiling and laughing and then I turned and looked at my mom. She just looked so happy and so relieved! And at that moment I knew everything would be okay!

God answered my prayers and every other person's prayer who prayed for my mom. Thanks to Him, my mom is now healthy and cancer free. January 25, 2010, I am sitting here typing this paper sitting right next to my mom. She is healing tremendously. My mother is such a sweet, strong, beautiful person and I sometimes take that for granted. I love her so much and I couldn't ever ask for a better mommy!

Thanks to all my family and friends and

Valor Christian High School staff for helping my mom and me through this hard time:

Special Thank You to Coach K: I love you, thank you for all your help:

Submitted by: David Alexander, Assistant AD/SID, The College of Saint Rose

Story on Coach Haag (pictures included)

You never really know what any day may bring. Karen Haag, head women's basketball coach at The College of Saint Rose, has come to appreciate that throughout her nine-plus years as a breast cancer survivor. It has in fact become the cornerstone of how she conducts her life:

Haag's zeal is perhaps most evident in her greatest passion outside of basketball: Haag is a co-founder of Camp Bravehearts, a series of weekend retreats throughout New York and Pennsylvania that are designed for women who have been diagnosed with cancer. The camp offers activities ranging from nature hikes to boating, yoga, craft workshops and ceramics as well as free manicures and massages. The cost is just \$75 thanks to numerous private donations and underwriting from the Northeast New York and Northeast Pennsylvania chapters of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation:

The camp also offers some scholarships and provides transportation to further limit the financial burden on the participants:

“Our goal is to provide women who are dealing with cancer an opportunity to share life experiences: We provide participants an opportunity to learn new skills, increase self-esteem and confidence, and help address the risks and fears that many women face during and after treatment,” said Haag:

In short, it is not much different than coaching a basketball team: You provide a group of young women a chance to work towards common goals, you further develop their talent, you put them in situations where they are capable of succeeding and you help allay any fears they may have of failure:

It is also partly why Haag, her coaching staff and players had spent the better part of a year fundraising for an overseas trip to Greece in the summer of 2008: The team did everything from running concession stands at various events to holding car washes to cover the expenses for the trip of a lifetime: It would be a journey that provided an opportunity for the team to bond away from the court and to enjoy firsthand some of world’s most renowned archeological sites: The chance to play some preseason basketball only added to the allure:

But then again, you never really know what a day may bring: With just more than week to go before the team’s scheduled June departure, an MRI during one of Karen’s biannual examinations revealed a tumor in her left breast: It was an unusual turn of events because it was not a recurrence of her original diagnosis in 1999, but rather a new primary cancer:

Not wanting to cast a pall over the trip, Karen opted not to tell the team until they had arrived at JFK airport on the way back home to Albany: She subsequently went through a bilateral mastectomy with reconstruction in late July: An infection then forced her to miss one game last year and required her to wear a sling during games, to prevent her from flailing her arms that could cause the stitches to open from a drain that was inserted to help heal the infection:

“I am so lucky that this was not a medical thing: For all intense and purposes, I am healthy,” said Haag:

It is such a positive outlook that has provided her a unique perspective in a modern college basketball environment where wins and losses along with inherent pressures from an array of sources are often at the forefront:

“It has freed up the players to show some affection towards me, and that is not always the norm: It is not necessarily cool to love your coach,” said Haag:

It may not be cool, but it is prevalent in the Golden Knights locker room:

“Coach has helped me grow as a person more than anything else. She has always assured me that she would always be in my corner and I cannot express how much that has impacted me,” said former captain Ashley Anderson, who inscribed a pink ribbon and the word ‘coach’ on her sneaker after Haag returned to the team following her one game absence. “She will not hesitate to call me out when I need that, but again she is always there for me and all of my teammates. She provides us with a great sense of balance.”

“Her experiences have made us realize that we cannot take anything for granted. We always have that in the back of our mind. We certainly play for ourselves and to win, but we play for her as well and never want to disappoint her,” added junior guard Lynsey Timbronck. “She makes sure to place an emphasis on living every day as if it was your last and to make sure that you never take anything for granted.”

Prior to her original diagnosis in 1999, Haag discovered a lump on her breast a year earlier. She was originally told that it was not cancerous. However, when she decided to have the lump removed for cosmetic reasons, the biopsy revealed that it was indeed malignant.

Haag had the cancer removed on a Monday that December and was back on the court directing her Wilkes University (Penn.) women’s basketball team that following weekend. Haag began her chemotherapy in January of 2000 followed by six weeks of radiation.

Haag continued to coach throughout her treatment. At the same time, she became involved in a Scranton-Wilkes Barre area support group for cancer patients at Medical Oncology Associates. It was through that support group that Haag met and became close friends with the other two founders of Camp Bravehearts, Joyce Chalock and Lori Walsh. The three women were inspired to start their own camp after visiting Camp Good Days and Special Times, a cancer camp in Penn Yan, NY. They realized that there were no other wellness/education retreats in the Scranton-Wilkes Barre region, so the three organized their own.

Haag has also been inspired by others, including legendary North Carolina State coach Kay Yow who passed away on January 24, 2009 after a long and courageous battle with breast cancer. Yow coached the 1988 U.S. Olympic Team to the Gold Medal and led her Wolfpack clubs to Final Four appearances in both 1988 and 1994. She went on to become only the fifth women inducted into the James Naismith Hall of Fame.

However, like Haag, her legacy mostly centers on her commitment towards the fight against cancer although both established outstanding coaching careers as well. In 2007, the Kay Yow/WBCA Cancer Fund, in partnership with The V Foundation, was established as a charitable organization to finding answers in the battle against women cancers.

Meanwhile, Haag was honored by the WBCA with the organization’s 2009 Division II Most Inspirational Award. She has guided Saint Rose to a pair of NCAA Tournament berths within the

past three years along with five straight appearances in the Northeast-10 Conference Tournament. Following the 2006-07 campaign, Haag was recognized for coaching excellence when she awarded the 2007 Russell Athletic/WBCA Region 1 Coach of the Year Award.

Haag had an opportunity to first meet Yow when she was just starting out as a high school coach. Yow was a guest speaker at a small coaching clinic on Long Island and while eating a box lunch afterwards, she wound up at the same table as Yow:

“I connected with right her away,” said Haag. “We both started out as high school English teachers and that made it easy for me to relate to her. Since then, she has always been one of my top role models. Her philosophy of building relationships and seeing the best in people are two things that I have always strived to adhere to.”

Haag carries on those practices today, usually in the simplest of ways. She will often call the team out of the blue and have them over to her home on an off-day to play Guitar Hero or watch a movie just so they have time together outside of a basketball setting.

“She is easily one of the most optimistic persons that I have ever met. She always communicates the positives first and keeps everything in perspective. She is all about family, friends and teammates first; then basketball,” said Anderson.

“I have complete respect for everything that coach has gone through. She has made a huge difference in my life and it is my hope that one day I can do the same for her,” added senior guard Jenna Hughes. “She is courageous, determined; strong and any other similar word you can think of. I cannot say enough good things about her.”

That is after all, exactly the point. For now, while most of her fellow citizens in upstate New York lament the ongoing cold weather and snow that dominates the landscape well into March, Haag continues to focus on the positives, the upcoming postseason and some down time in the summer.

“You never know when great things are going happen and you never really understand pivotal moments when they are occurring, so sometimes you just need to look around and appreciate what you have,” said Haag. “Why complain about the weather when you can embrace it? We have some unbelievable beautiful night skies around here this time of year.”

Indeed there are, for you never really do know what any day may bring.

David Alexander

Sports Information Director

The College of Saint Rose

Submitted by: Don Abbott, Head Coach, Wells High School

By **Mark Quirk**

sports@seacoastonline.com

January 14, 2010 2:00 AM

When it came to choosing a fundraiser for this season, the Wells High School girls basketball team thought of the bigger picture: Instead of raising money for themselves, the Warriors will have a free-throw shooting marathon to raise money for the breast care center at York Hospital in Wells during the Shootin' For A Cure event Saturday at Wells High School:

Girls from the fifth-grade all the way up to the varsity team will participate: "I've wanted my girls to get involved in something a little more civic-minded," Wells coach Don Abbott said: "That was the catalyst for the girls, being part of something bigger than themselves."

Like any group, the players and coaches of the Wells teams have been personally affected by breast cancer: So, when they found out York Hospital was opening a breast care center in Wells, it seemed like the perfect place to support with a fundraiser: "I think it's great," Wells captain Taylor Boyle said: "It's good to give back to the community instead of ourselves."

Players have been gathering pledges and on Saturday each one will shoot 50 free throws at a designated time during the day: Abbott said there will be about 80 girls participating: Each team will get an hour slot starting at 9 a.m: He also said each individual was asked to raise at least \$100 and the total amount he wants to raise is \$10,000: "It's a lofty goal we'll try to achieve," Abbott said:

Most of the donations made were as a flat rate, not per basket made, according to Abbott: That way there won't be as much pressure on the players to make their free throws: Boyle said another good thing about the Shootin' For A Cure is that it has brought the basketball program in Wells closer together: She said the older girls on the varsity team have gotten to know the younger girls on other teams better and help prepare them for the future:

The event will start at 9 a.m: and run until 3 p.m: Abbott said Portland Red Claws mascot Crusher will stop by and the radio station 98.7 FM, The Bay, out of Dover, N.H., will be doing a live broadcast: Following the Shootin' For A Cure, there will be a junior varsity/varsity girls doubleheader against Old Orchard Beach: Players will wear pink T-shirts during the week and before the game, and some players will wear pink shoelaces: People going to the game are also asked to wear pink: "This week is going to be a big pink week," Abbott said: All of that should create a pretty interesting atmosphere when the Warriors host Old Orchard Beach on Saturday: "I think it's going to be a lot of fun," Boyle said: "And I think a lot of people are going to come."

Beamer basketball coach in fight of her life

January 27, 2010 Heather Sugg sits on the Beamer High School bench and touches her temple:

A headache inches closer, but she has no time for it or that irritating lethargy her medication causes: A grimace quickly melts into a grin and Sugg puts her hands to better use, clapping encouragement to her Beamer High School girls basketball team:

"Good job! Keep fighting!"

An early 7-1 lead over league-leading Bethel on Tuesday night faded away, and the Titans are tumbling toward their 15th loss of the season: Sugg is reduced to cheerleader, handing over her head-coaching duties to Dave Cox:

But sitting's not her thing: She's a foot-stomper, a pacer, a picture of perpetual motion:

Before they found the brain tumor, that is:

http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/highschoolsports/2010910604_ringer28.html

Submitted by: Dannie Mirovich

Dear Ms: Megan as we would have said from New Orleans:

To this very day I become very emotional when I tell this story as we rarely in life meet people when there is an immediate bond created between the two: For most of my life I have been a motivational speaker working with Coaches, Athletic Teams, Individual Players, Executives , and performing at Award Banquets, Corporate Seminars, and Churches:

In August 2005 my Wife Pam and three daughters, Rebecca, Lacy, Danielle and a 6 week old Irish Setter Puppy we got from the shelter (whom my girls named Rescue) left New Orleans as Hurricane Katrina was fast approaching: Needless to say we all were devastated by the storm and we settled in Lynchburg , Virginia where I grew up: A year later , July 2006, my wife was transferred to Charlotte, NC and we settled in Mt. Pleasant, NC where we didn't literally know a blade of grass: On January 2, 2007 the dreaded phone call came from my wife's Dr: that she has Breast Cancer: In January/February of 2007 I took my three girls to a Focus 50 basketball camp run by Coach Heather Macy: Having spent most of my young life in professional baseball I can't tell you how impressed I was with the drills for skills Coach Macy was teaching these young kids: After the clinic I had the opportunity to talk with Coach Macy and never once did I tell her my wife was under going cancer surgery and treatments: Coach Macy began to share a

story with me about a young player she had recruited from Fayetteville, NC name Janay Davis who was just a rare ball of talent which comes around rarely in a Coaches career: This young Senior in High School was stricken with a rare form of cancer and her scholarship had to be withdrawn: After spending time with Coach Macy about Janay's prognosis I asked if she would still like to come to school even if she couldn't play basketball: Of course she would be thrilled so I had Coach Macy find out what the bottom line business cost would be to the University to have her in school: They told us around \$12,000: So I told Coach Macy I would raise enough money for her first year:

At this point I still had never told Coach Macy that my wife was totally bedridden with cancer after two major cancer surgeries and fighting Chemotherapy of the worst kind, "The Red Devil": I was thinking, how on "God's Green Earth" am I ever going to raise \$12,000 when I didn't know a sole in this area: I asked God to help me find the time to at least try and make this happen for a young lady who simply loved the game of basketball:

In a very emotional phone call I called Coach Macy to let her know I had raised enough money to send her Player to the University for all four years: She called Janay to tell her and her Mom and needless to say they were too excited: Unfortunately, before the fall semester started Janay lost her battle with Cancer: So a memorial was set up in Janays' name to honor a young lady who had the same love for the game as she did to attend the University to play basketball on a full scholarship:

To this day at Coach Macy's Focus 50 basketball camps there are 3 Janay Davis awards given to campers which I sponsor in her Honor and in the Team Locker Room at Francis Marion University there is a Janay Davis Player of the year award that goes to a player on her college team:

To this day my wife has had 5 cancer surgeries and by the grace of God she is cancer free: Amen!

On the brink our nations worst natural disaster, Hurricane Katrina, who would have ever thought that a story like this would have ever evolved:

Ms:Megan, "Hope" is all we have at times and is the best of things in the worst of times:

There is so much more to our family story from Hurricane Katrina and my wife's battle with cancer: However, I hope the WBA will begin to embrace our "Janay Davis" story: Please feel free to call upon me should you ever find yourself in of need a motivational speaker for an awards banquet, luncheon or Dinner:

<http://tarheelblue.cstv.com/sports/w-baskbl/spec-rel/120209aab.html>

Submitted by: Dave Walters, Guilford College Athletics

Breast cancer has affected a number of people internationally: In 2009 alone, 192,370 women and their families were affected by the disease: Lauren LeFevers, a shooting guard on Guilford's basketball team, is among those and she gives a personal testimony below of her family's battle with breast cancer:

First and foremost, I would like to recognize senior Joclyn Terry, who lost her grandmother, Clarice Clubreth Galloway, to breast cancer last year: Her grandmother was first diagnosed with the disease in 2007: JT lost her grandmother on August 10th, 2009:

My personal story also deals with my grandmother who has battled breast cancer for 34 years: After many years of remission, in 2006 my grandmother and her doctors found cancer cells within fluid in her lungs, which had advanced from her previous bouts with breast cancer: This was my first experience of breast cancer, I remember my family and I spending much of our time with her in the hospital as my grandmother and her doctors treated the fluid in her lungs:

On November 11th, 2008, our family received the news that has changed our lives forever: My grandmother was diagnosed with stage-four bone marrow cancer, a cancer that does not have cure but can only be treated with extensive types of chemotherapy: In the past year, I have watched her go through different types of chemo, some of which make her feel exhausted, others that make her lose feeling in her fingers, and some that make her lose her hair: This past December, the doctors found the cancer had spread to her liver:

But looking at my Nanny Kay, you wouldn't know that she is fighting a disease as devastating as cancer: She is a beautiful, warm-hearted woman who smiles and enjoys life to the fullest each and every day: Our family understands that she won't live another day without cancer, but we make the best of every moment we have together because that all we can do:

The Kay Yow/WBCA Cancer Fund was founded on December 3rd, 2007 and is in partnership with The V Foundation for Cancer Research: This is a charitable organization committed to raising money for women's cancers: The program hopes to fund scientific research, assist the underserved, and unify people for the common cause: Kay Yow was the longtime women's basketball coach at North Carolina State University and faced breast cancer three different times throughout her life beginning in 1987: She, like my grandmother, was a fighter: On January 24, 2009, advanced breast cancer of the liver took Yow's life: She spent many years promoting cancer research and encouraging other cancer victims to continually have faith and keep a positive outlook: I hope you will help me, my teammates, and my family to encourage others to protect themselves and their loved ones and to continue to raise money for cancer research:

For the past year, I have been lucky enough to continue my close relationship with my grandmother, once a cancer survivor and an ongoing cancer fighter. She fights for me, so I play for her.

by: