

Breast cancer affects students

October inspires students to raise disease awareness

BY KATHLEEN BARBOSA
Staff Reporter

In the face of loss, Truman students persevere to fight for a cancer cure, especially in October, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

This disease has touched students across campus. Freshmen Katrina DeCoster and Nicolette Jerowski have witnessed the devastating effects of breast cancer. DeCoster is the only daughter of Jewells and Kathy DeCoster. When Kathy was 39, she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

DeCoster was four. Initially, she said the prognosis seemed good. The doctors believed they had caught it early enough to save her mother, but the cancer spread faster than they expected. For the next year and a half, Kathy underwent chemotherapy, radiation and took medications.

The family visited her in hospitals in Columbia, Mo.; Tulsa, Okla.; and Quincy, Ill. DeCoster said the hardest part was watching her mom's sickness. Kathy lost her hair, had no energy and grew frail.

"Even at five, you can see all those changes," DeCoster said.

The treatments were unsuccessful, and Aug. 18, 1998, her mother passed away at age 41. DeCoster said the timing made this loss more difficult.

"The funeral was on Aug. 20, and I started school Aug. 21," DeCoster said.

The loss of Kathy drastically changed their family.

"It made us grow up faster than probably most kids would," she said.

DeCoster received her mother's journals from her grandmother when she turned 16.

"Her journal was probably her biggest thing she did to just kind of cope," DeCoster said.

DeCoster commemorates her mother through her work with Relay for Life in Canton, Mo. She walks at Relay for Life events and gets school organizations to support the cause.

Nicolette Jerowski is the oldest of Sheryl and Steve Jerowski's three children.

Her mother was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer in 2000. She underwent eight rounds of radiation and had surgery to remove the mass in her breast.

"I think what was hardest was when she lost her hair," Jerowski said. "When she lost her hair, it all became real to me."

For Sheryl, the best way to cope was to treat every day like it was any other and stick to routines as much as possible. After a year of treatment, her mother went into remission and stayed in remission for almost ten years.

Jerowski said her advice for others who are going through a similar situation is to "have faith." Jerowski thinks this experience has made her family closer.

"Stay close with your mom," Jerowski said. "You never know what is going to happen."

DeCoster and Jerowski

are not the only ones who have been affected by breast cancer.

Alpha Sigma Gamma, a locally based service sorority, is giving Truman students an opportunity to help these women.

ASG is taking steps to raise awareness and funds to fight breast cancer this month. Junior Teresa Poelker is co-chair of this year's annual event, Breast Cancer Awareness Week 2010. Poelker explained her interest in the event.

"Who don't you know that hasn't had some sort of connection with it?" Poelker said.

One in eight women suffers from invasive breast cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. The organization also estimates that approximately 39,840 women died from breast cancer last year.

The week's events begin with "Bras on the Quad." Various organizations from campus have paid to decorate bras, and students will get a chance to vote on their favorite. The winning club will receive a pizza party.

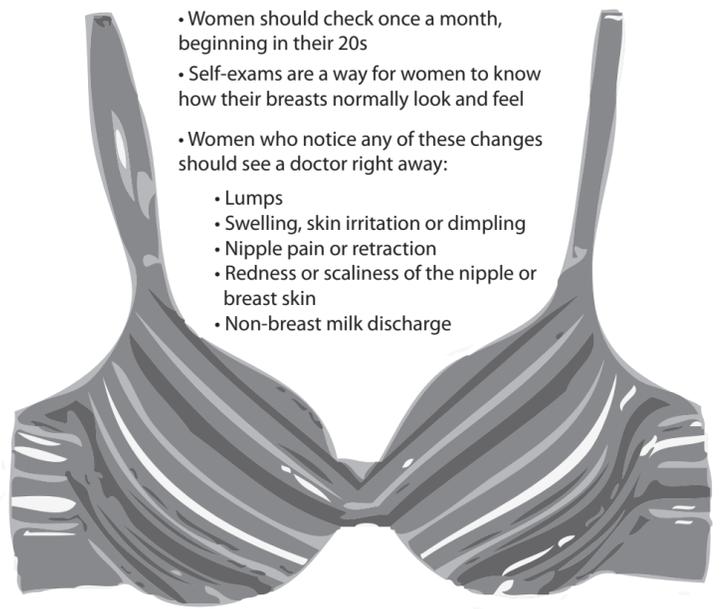
A local breast cancer survivor from the American Cancer Society will be speaking about her battle with cancer Tuesday, in Baldwin Hall Little Theatre. Students can attend the second annual Passionately Pink Pageant, a beauty pageant of sorts, Wednesday for a freewill donation. This is the first year the event will be judged, and students can donate their pennies to their favorite candidate. True Men and Minor Detail, Truman's a cappella groups, also will be performing. There will be a vigil at 8 p.m., Thursday, around the fountain on the Mall. ASG also will be selling shirts all week long in McClain Hall and the Student Union Building. They would like to raise as much as they can, Poelker said.

Breast self-exams: what you need to know

- Women should check once a month, beginning in their 20s
- Self-exams are a way for women to know how their breasts normally look and feel

- Women who notice any of these changes should see a doctor right away:

- Lumps
- Swelling, skin irritation or dimpling
- Nipple pain or retraction
- Redness or scaliness of the nipple or breast skin
- Non-breast milk discharge



Info from cancer.org



Krista Goodman/Index

Bras decorated by campus organizations hang on the Quad to raise breast cancer awareness. Students can vote for their favorite bra, and the winning club will receive a pizza party.

Event provides creative outlet

Students perform and see new talent at Fireside Fridays

BY KELLY KIESEL
Staff Reporter

Students have a new way to exhibit their musical creativity and listen to aspiring talent with Fireside Fridays.

The program, which began last semester, is continuing with a larger audience by bringing in local talent with a homey vibe. Fireside Fridays is from 3 to 5 p.m. on Fridays in the Student Union Building, where free food and entertainment are provided.

The program is headed by Dave Lusk, assistant dean of Student Affairs, and senior Rashawn Williams.

Williams said she has been working with the program since May and that it is becoming well-known on campus. Williams said plans for future shows include Tag Improv, student pianists and a holiday show including Minor Detail, TruMen and Unique Gospel. Williams also said

days plans on making recordings of the bands to give to them after performances.

Sophomore Johnathan Castles, sound engineer for Fireside Fridays, said the name of the group came from Lusk's idea of having the venue feel homey and comfortable, just as if people were sitting around a fireplace.

Castles said his main job is setting up sound equipment for bands. He also said he looks for and books groups, as

well as plans food and ideas for advertisement.

"We pride ourselves on allowing students the opportunity to show off their talents and skills," Castles said.

Senior James Megahan, station manager for KTRM, said the station helps promote Fireside Fridays via on-air promotion and live broadcasts. Megahan said coverage of Fireside Fridays has gone well.

"It provides a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere," Megahan said. "It is a great event for people to unwind at the end of the week."

Senior Matthew Kennedy is a new act performing folk music for Fireside Fridays. Kennedy said he

plays guitar and gets bands together with his friends.

Kennedy said Lusk heard him play back in June, and after he attended some of the Fireside Fridays events last year, Lusk expressed interest in having him perform.

"The thing that I get most excited about is the opportunity to get another show under my belt," Kennedy said. "Live performance experience is always a great thing to learn and build from. I really just enjoy playing, and Fireside Fridays [gives] me an opportunity to play with friends and perform for a different crowd of people than the ones who hear me all the time."

"The thing that I get most excited about is the opportunity to get another show under my belt."

Matthew Kennedy
senior

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