

## REMEMBERING WITH PINK, WALKING WITH HOPE

### Student raises breast cancer awareness for men as well as women

BY DAN MIKA  
Staff Reporter

Every October, the United States becomes awash with pink to observe Breast Cancer Awareness Month. But for freshman Rachel Mattingly, creating awareness for the disease is a year-round activity.

Mattingly said members of her family carry a mutation of the breast cancer type 2 gene, which inhibits the body's ability to suppress breast cancer tumors, according to the National Cancer Institute. Having the mutation makes the person five times more likely to develop breast cancer, a statistic that has manifested itself throughout the Mattingly family.

"My grandma is one of seven girls, and out of seven girls, four of them have had breast cancer in their lives and all of their daughters have had it," Mattingly said. "My grandma passed away from it in May and my mom passed away from it when I was 11, so I'm kind of next in line."

Despite seeing women in her life affected by breast cancer, Mattingly has focused her efforts to raise awareness for a form of the disease many don't

even realize exists.

"My mom's best friend Tim died of breast cancer a few years after she did," Mattingly said. "People are so unaware that men can even get breast cancer."

To promote men's breast cancer awareness, Mattingly participates in the Susan G. Komen Race For The Cure in St. Louis with the team "Men At Risk," along with her mother's friend Maureen Wiehage.

"My brother-in-law was diagnosed with male breast cancer a few years before Rachel's mom passed away," Wiehage said. "We are doing it two-fold: in memory of Cheryl [Rachel's mother] and for my brother-in-law, and we just kept doing it every year."

Every year, about 2,200 men and about 200,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer, according to the American Cancer Institute. The lower amount of diagnoses has kept male breast cancer out of the spotlight, but it still remains a danger to men of all ages, races and ethnicities, according to the Institute.

"Men At Risk" is one of few groups that attempt to raise funds and spread awareness for male breast cancer research, Mattingly said. She said she and Wiehage have taken part in the Walk For The Cure with the team for six years. Those years have not been without incident, Wiehage said, as some activists at the event didn't think Wiehage's



Submitted Photo

Freshman Rachel Mattingly walks with her team, "Men at Risk," at the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure during 2009 in St. Louis. Mattingly lost a male family friend to breast cancer.

brother-in-law could suffer from breast cancer.

Wiehage once approached a booth giving away small pink baseball bats to survivors. When she told them it was for her sick brother-in-law, they were reluctant to give her one, she said.

"In the one race that my brother-in-law did walk, at the end there were Rams cheerleaders giv-

ing out bags to the survivors," Wiehage said. "They assumed that he was just being funny and trying to get close to the cheerleaders, and they didn't believe him when he said he had breast cancer."

Little by little, Wiehage said she thinks her and Mattingly's work is spreading awareness for the disease, noting that the team has received support from men

as far away as Washington, California and England.

"I think that those who ask us are amazed at how many men get it and there is a group that's bringing it to light," Charlie Feltmann, a "Men At Risk" team member and breast cancer survivor, said.

"Even if it makes just a few people aware, then we feel like we've done something," Wiehage said.

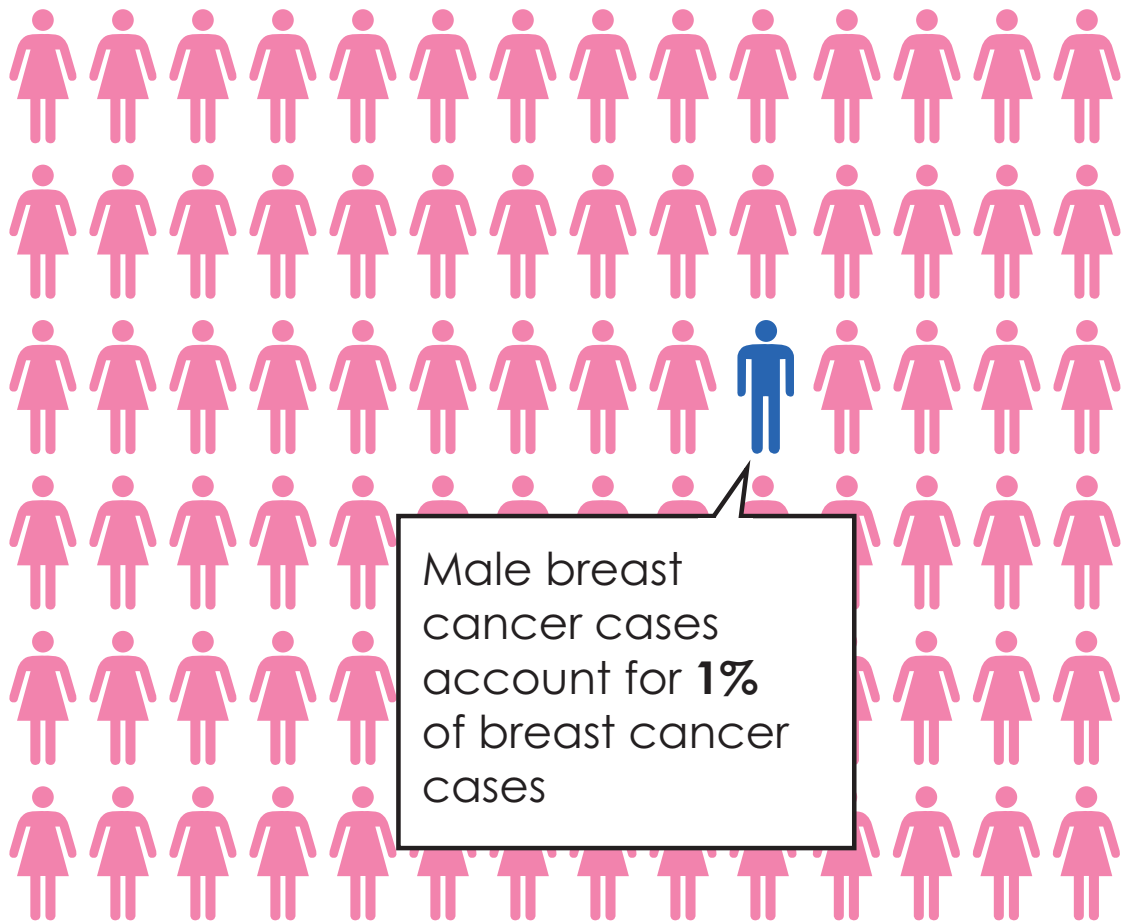
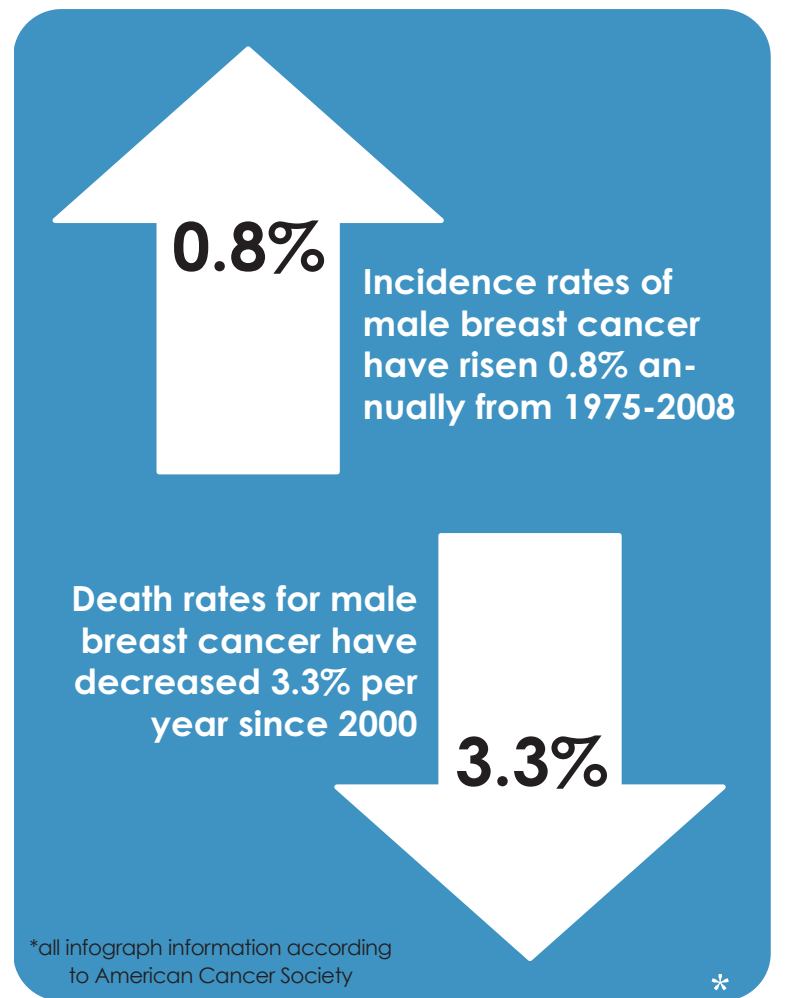


Submitted Photo

The "Men at Risk" team poses at the 2009 Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in St. Louis. In addition to knowing men who have passed from breast cancer, Mattingly's mother and grandmother both passed away after fighting the disease.



Submitted Photo  
Cheryl Mattingly poses with her daughter, Rachel, when she was three years old. Cheryl passed Nov. 11, 2005, after battling breast cancer. Rachel was 11 years old at the time.



During 2012	
2,190	men are expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer
226,870	women are expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer
410	men are expected to die from breast cancer
39,510	women are expected to die from breast cancer