

Our Story



Becky Sharon

Sharon Henifin and Becky Olson met in 1991 while working together at the same company. In 1993 Sharon was diagnosed with breast cancer. Being first in her circle, her friends were at a loss as to how to help her. Three years later, Becky was also diagnosed. Sharon's experience enabled her to better understand what might help Becky get through her journey.

Over the next few years, the two women came to understand their experiences were not unusual. They discovered that friends, though well-intentioned, often don't know how to help, and too often women were fighting the disease alone and in fear. They also learned most people would rather say nothing than risk saying the wrong thing. In August of 2000, the two women decided over lunch to start a non-profit organization. The name, Breast Friends, was chosen and registered with the state of Oregon. A website URL was selected and Breast Friends was born.

Since 2000, Breast Friends has grown at a phenomenal pace. Programs continue to expand to keep up with the need. In 2009, Breast Friends extended their support into other women's cancers. The organization began reaching out to women in other parts of the country and now has affiliates in Florida and Pennsylvania.

Breast Friends is a 501(c)(3) Organization
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Offering Help

Providing support to a woman with cancer is a sensitive undertaking. People are afraid of saying the wrong thing or invading privacy, fearful she will cry ~ or you will simply start crying yourself. The most common mistake you can make is likely to be overlooked, and that is, asking the patient to let you know when she needs your help. Sure, the patient will agree to do so, but what are the chances she will follow through? More likely, she'll not want to be a bother or cause you to take time out of your busy schedule to help her. And because she doesn't call you, it's easy to assume she's okay. Most likely she's not. She needs your love and support now more than ever.



Sharing Hope In Your Community

Though our focus is to build our programs to reach their maximum impact in each current location, we are open to strategic growth in new areas. We have requests each year to start affiliates in various locations. For information and requirements, contact our National Headquarters in Oregon for guidelines so you can decide if you are seriously interested in joining our family.

2000 Started in Oregon

2009 Florida Affiliate Added

2012 Pennsylvania Affiliate Added



Breast Friends®



Florida

1309 S Babcock #148
Melbourne, FL 32901
321.474.6900 or 321.474.4159
florida@breastfriends.org

Oregon/SW Washington

14050 SW Pacific Hwy, Suite 204
Tigard, OR 97224
503.598.8048
oregon@breastfriends.org

Pennsylvania

P.O. Box 935
Stroudsburg, PA 18360
321.236.3722 or 321.236.3721
pennsylvania@breastfriends.org

National Headquarters
1-888-386-8048
www.breastfriends.org



Breast Friends®

Your Premiere Resource
for Women & Families
Facing a Diagnosis of
Breast, Ovarian or
Other Women's Cancers



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Mission

Our Mission: Breast Friends ensures that no woman goes through cancer alone. We are a unique resource for women, their family, friends, co-workers and the community to minimize the fear and isolation of cancer. For over a decade our programs have empowered thousands with emotional support and hope. We are survivors and professionals helping others celebrate the joy of life.



A Message to Patients and Survivors

Breast Friends is here for you throughout your cancer journey; from the moment of diagnosis, through treatment, and beyond. We understand the importance of friendship and support from other women, especially during a time of crisis and trauma. We need to lean on others who have been there and come out on the other side, stronger and more alive. Once you have connected with us, we hope you will stay connected for life. At Breast Friends we practice doing the right things for the right reasons, and we want to pass the philosophy on so others can continue to pay it forward. Help us create better communities by encouraging women to share and care about each other.



Testimonials

"Breast Friends was the first place I reached out and felt that warmth and comfort..."

Lisa, Survivor

"Breast Friends helped me realize that joining this community means more than the pink ribbon. Cancer has changed my perspective and my priorities. I am not the same person I was. In many ways I am better."

Kathleen, Survivor

"I absolutely LOVE Breast Friends and what they do! They are a fantastic non-profit that helps women who get the awful disease; they show loving, caring and helpful support throughout the harsh and uncertain battle."

Kellie, Supporter

"Thank you for the love and kindness you've shown me since I first wandered in (nearly 2 years ago!) You helped me conquer my fear, hugged me on bad days, visited the doctor with me, and so many other big and little things. I will never forget what you've done or the inspiration you've been."

Liz, Previvor

"After cancer I found I had lived several lives; my pre-cancer life, my post-cancer life, and now the life I am fortunate to be left with. It is this life that Breast Friends saved and continues to enrich everyday. I am truly blessed to have found them."

Linda, Survivor

"You both were very compassionate, insightful and loving. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to hear and speak with each of the individual survivors and share our stories along with the moments of tears and then smiles. Thank you so much."

Kathy, Survivor & RN

Ways You Can Help

While most of our programs are free, we rely on events, donations, corporate sponsorships, and grants to help to pay for them. Your help is needed to continue bringing words of hope and encouragement to the thousands of women who will be diagnosed with breast or other women's cancers this year. Please consider a tax deductible donation to support our efforts. Here are some of the most common ways to help:

- Cash donations
- Donate a car, boat or RV
- Memorial gift to honor a loved one
- Celebrate special occasions with donations to Breast Friends in lieu of gifts
- In-kind gifts
- Make a gift through your will & estate plan
- Volunteer at your local Breast Friends affiliate



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Money donated to an affiliate stays in that state to support their communities.



DIRECT PATIENT SERVICES



Support Services

We provide important one-on-one emotional support in person, by phone or in groups. Breast Friends' volunteers establish a personal relationship that offers friendship and encouragement, and teaches the patient how to reach out to others for support.



First I Cry

"Welcome to the Sisterhood" is the comforting message of the packet given to a newly diagnosed cancer patient. A silk-screened hankie and a list of resources are included. "Give this to someone who cares about you" is a special insert to be shared, and explains the role they will play in their loved ones journey.



Hat Project

One of the most dreaded parts of a cancer diagnosis is the hair loss from chemo. We know how important attitude is and help women recapture their sense of humor by providing them with a humorous hat. The hat tells the world, "I'm okay—I will survive this." It also knocks down the wall that can stand between the patient and the outside world.



H.O.P.E. Workshop

H.O.P.E.-Helping Others Provide Empathy. In this three hour workshop newly diagnosed patients, their spouses, children and other key supporters, learn ways to assist and comfort the patient and understand the needs of the family.



Thriving Beyond Cancer

This workshop/retreat helps women enter the next phase of their life after cancer treatment. When the doctor finally releases the patient from chemo, radiation and nonstop visits, the patient is often expected to return to her normal life. However, her "normal" has changed. This program helps women move beyond cancer toward a more productive and fulfilling future.

OUTREACH TO FAMILY & FRIENDS



- Brochures
- DVD
- Workshops

Breast Friends serves the patients by teaching the friends and family members how to provide support. Our "Tips To Show You Care" brochure and DVD suggests and teaches techniques to provide proactive support.

Our guide for children "When Mom Has Cancer, Helping Children Cope" helps parents understand how much to tell their children, when to tell them, and what to look for in analyzing the needs of their youngster.

We also offer the H.O.P.E. workshop (see Patient Services) as a way for the patient and her spouse /partner, children, or other caregiver, to understand the need for support, presented in a useful, positive workshop.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



- Keynote Presentations
- Health Fairs and Exhibits
- Conferences and Events

Breast Friends teaches the importance of support for women diagnosed with breast, ovarian, and other cancers at a variety of public speaking events.

Breast Friends is committed to workplace communities by offering resources and understanding that can speed recovery and ease employees' return to work after cancer. Workplace Success Strategies is a series of teleconferences to create a supportive environment while improving productivity.

We also distribute educational materials to create awareness at health fairs and conferences, and bring hope and inspiration through keynote presentations to hospitals, survivor events, women's groups and civic organizations.

(Not all programs available in all areas.)