



Karen Miller: Her own diagnosis led to her involvement in the cause.

## Preventing breast cancer

By KENNETH R. CERINI

Receiving a breast cancer diagnosis in 1987 was a shock to Karen Miller. With no familial risk and no warning signs, Karen sought to discover why individuals get breast cancer. After placing an ad in her local gym, she soon found herself with a dedicated group of women that had come to fund Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition.

"We chose the word action because we set out to participate, motivate, raise awareness and affect policy surrounding breast cancer," said Karen Miller, founder and president of HBCAC. "Today, we focus on prevention methods while actively helping those who are faced with a positive diagnosis."

**Since its founding in 1992, how has HBCAC worked to gain public support?** Our success began through partnerships with businesses; when we began we received nearly all of our office supplies from the donations of local businesses. Today we collaborate with organizations throughout the community ranging from the Long Island Ducks to Edge Electronics. Nearly 20 years ago, Telecare had given us a free slot to discuss the issue of breast cancer, and Rosie O'Donnell had seen the program and helped promote our cause on a national level.

**What is the primary focus of HBCAC?** We focus on working to ensure that physicians and health care professionals have all of the tools and training needed to ensure a long and high-quality life for those diagnosed. We focus on primary prevention. Our tagline has and remains: Prevention Is the Cure.

**How has HBCAC impacted the community?** Congress had created a mandate to study the connections between environmental triggers and high incidence of breast cancer on Long Island. I was chosen as a representative from a community group to peer review potential studies for funding. From this collaborative effort the Long Island Breast Cancer Study Project began. The study opened the possibility of partnerships between community organizations and researchers.

**What differentiates HBCAC from other breast cancer organizations?** From the beginning our primary focus has been prevention and public policy. Many organizations focus on support services, which are necessary to the community, and though we provide these services, our focus has always been primary prevention. We are part of the Prevention Is The Cure campaign, which increases public awareness of environmental links to disease; gains support for the Precautionary Principle, as it applies to public policy; urges the public to demand more funding for environmental health research; and encourages a "better safe than sorry" attitude toward personal lifestyle.

**What is HBCAC looking to accomplish over the next several months?** Federally, we're pleased to work with Sen. Charles Schumer and Rep. Steve Israel. Sen. Schumer recently put forth Toxic Substance Control Act with Sen. Frank Lautenberg that will ban toxic chemicals from coming into the marketplace. The TSCA reform will put the burden of proof on manufacturers about product safety before placing a product in the hands of consumers. Statewide, we want to eliminate the toxin BPA in cash register receipts and the lining of tin cans. Congressman Israel provided resources toward our Roadmap for Prevention Project, in which we will go into diverse communities and institutes to hold training sessions and encourage new leaders to address the impacts of environmental triggers on public health.

### Organization Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition Inc.

Address 746 New York Ave.,  
Huntington NY 11743

President Karen Joy Miller

Phone 631-547-1518

Website [www.hbcac.org](http://www.hbcac.org)

Year founded 1992

Paid staff 2

Annual budget \$286,900

Fundraised expenditures \$64,700

Program service 81 percent

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### The envelope please ...

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Long Island chapter announced the winners of its 2011 Man & Woman of the Year campaign.

Steven M. Robbins and Sondra Rose bested a field of select men and women vying for the title over a 10-week intensive fundraising campaign. The two winners generated donations of more than \$60,000 each to support the work of the Melville-based chapter. Robbins is vice president of asset management for Capital One Equipment Leasing & Finance in Melville. Rose is a lifestyle management coach, certified by the American Council on Exercise.

Both champions have a personal connection to the cause. Robbins is a lymphoma survivor and Rose's grandson was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma three years ago.

"This year's campaign was outstanding. Our candidates were highly creative in their fundraising activities, which ranged from shopping and fashion events to a comedy show, pub crawl, chocolate and cookie sale, day of beauty and cocktail receptions," Nicole Kowaleski, deputy executive director for the Long Island chapter, said in a statement. Each of the 10 candidates raised a minimum of \$20,000 and total funds generated through the campaign topped \$243,000.

### Donning veils, bowties and sneakers to support DRI

Old Westbury Gardens is a popular spot for wedding photos, but on a recent Sunday there, more than 100 ladies in tulle veils and men in bowties were walking, rather than posing, in the Wedding Veil Walk for a Cure event.

Organized by Iman Bridal Couture in Old Brookville, the march of the "brides" and "grooms" raised \$4,600 for the Diabetes Research Institute, which has offices in Jericho.

"I have been involved with a variety of different charities over the years, but DRI is different to me because it's not only a charity; it offers hope that one day, with enough support and research, together we can conquer this disease," store owner Iman Baccash, whose mother suffers from diabetes, said in a statement.

### Large grant provides more housing options

Options for Community Living Inc. in Smithtown received a grant of more than \$1 million to support the development of three residences that will provide services to individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The grant was awarded through the

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program.

Options serves Long Islanders who suffer from HIV/AIDS, mental illness and homelessness. There are more than 8,000 individuals in Nassau or Suffolk diagnosed with HIV or AIDS – more than any other suburban area in the nation – according to a statement from Options, which cited state Department of Health reports from December 2008.

"Options is proud to partner with HUD, the Town of Islip Community Development Agency and the United Way of Long Island to expand housing opportunities for low-income families living with HIV/AIDS. Through affordable, supportive housing, our residents achieve stability, improved health care and access to a broad spectrum of community services," Diana Arens, executive director of Options, said in a statement.

### Walk for mental health a success

More than 3,000 walkers turned out at Jones Beach State Park in Wantagh last month to support the National Alliance of Mental Illness. NAMI Queens/Nassau's seventh annual walk raised nearly \$250,000, with dollars continuing to come in.

"I walked to support NAMI's fight against the stigma associated with mental illness and to spread the word that mental illness is not a weakness," Gloria Keyloun, coordinator for the Lake Success-based chapter's In Our Own Voice program, said in a statement.

Participants in the NAMI Walks event also donated 500 pounds of food, to be distributed by Hauppauge-based Long Island Cares Inc.

### United Way gets the means to make more homes green

In recognition of operating its weatherization assistance program effectively, United Way of Long Island received an additional \$250,000 from the U.S. Department of Energy to extend the program for another six months.

Over the past 18 months, the Deer Park-based organization has weatherized 369 special needs and affordable housing projects in Long Island. With the additional funding, the nonprofit expects to weatherize an additional 30 units by the end of the year.

United Way of Long Island provides energy case management services to nonprofit agencies that work with income-eligible Long Islanders to improve the energy efficiency of homes. The organization was the first regional nonprofit to mandate that all construction projects supported by public and private grant dollars meet the Energy Star standard.

— BERNADETTE STARZEE

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