



# Touch of Courage

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## Beyond Pink TEAM

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### New Advances in Breast Radiation Therapy

**By Chris Hagness, Ph.D.**

eBx™ (electronic brachytherapy), a new breast cancer treatment, is now available close to home. This treatment is best for early stage invasive breast cancer (stage I) in post menopausal women (ages 60+), and is used to treat a lumpectomy site. This treatment may also be used in specific situations for some patients, determined on a case-by-case basis.

Used after lumpectomy, Accelerated Partial Breast Irradiation (APBI) differs from External Radiation Therapy in two ways. First, it reduces the treatment area from the entire breast to the area of the breast immediately around the lumpectomy site. This is the part of the breast where most cancers are likely to recur. Second, it shortens the treatment time from 5-7 weeks to **5 days**. Since the duration of treatment is shorter, radiation is delivered in fewer fractions at larger doses per fraction.

eBx™ is beneficial to the patient in many ways:

- More intense therapy to cancer sites with minimal radiation exposure to surrounding healthy tissue (like the heart and lungs).
- Designed to deliver non-radioactive, isotope-free radiation treatment in a minimally-shielded clinical setting under the supervision of a radiation oncologist.

- Delivers electronically generated radiation directly to tumor beds by the use of disposable, miniaturized x-ray radiation sources.
- Designed to mimic the dose rate and isodose curves of an Iridium-based system in the treatment site while reducing extraneous dose as compared to MammoSite. This means that medical physicists and radiation oncologists are able to implement currently used treatment protocols while switching from radioisotopes delivered by High Dose Rate (HDR) afterloader to electronic brachytherapy delivered by a Xofigo Axxent Controller.
- Does not require replacement of radioactive sources used with Mammosite and avoids safety issues of handling and disposal of radioactive materials.

This new cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art treatment is available at Covenant Cancer Treatment Therapy department to patients in our community. Their radiation oncologists will be working closely with general surgeons throughout Northeast Iowa to ensure women who fit the criteria benefit from this new technology.

## Relay for Life- The Countdown Begins! By Jill Roberts

Right around the corner is Black Hawk County Relay for Life. It will be held at Hawkeye Community College campus on June 18-19<sup>th</sup>. Relay for Life is an overnight event with members of each team walking throughout the night to raise money to fight cancer because cancer never sleeps.

The Relay is a family event including entertainment for the kids, crafts, coloring, bubbles and games. Music plays all night long either by a local radio station or local live band. There are items for sale ranging from cookies to bracelets with the proceeds going to the Relay for Life. The Relay goes on rain or shine and many participants camp overnight.

Relay for Life is an event with certain traditions, no matter where they are held. These traditions help participants celebrate, remember and fight back.

### Celebrate -The Survivors' Lap

The survivors' lap is an inspiration to all Relay participants. Survivors circle the track together to lead everyone in celebrating the victories we are achieving over cancer.

### Remember - The Luminary Ceremony

The Luminary ceremony starts at dusk. We honor people who have been touched by cancer, support those still fighting and remember our loved ones lost to the disease. Luminaries are candles that are lit inside of bags filled with sand and each one bears the name of a person touched by cancer or is in memory of a loved one.

### Fight Back - The Fight Back Ceremony

Each year during the Relay we make a personal commitment to save lives by taking up the fight against cancer.

You can make a difference today by signing up to participate with a team, start your own team or by making a donation.

For more information or to donate on line please go to <http://www.relayforlife.org/blackhawkcountyia> or call the American Cancer Society at 272-2880.

### Pink Tulips Will Soon be in Bloom

More than 15,000 pink tulip bulbs have now been sold by the Beyond Pink TEAM. Most are planted here in the Cedar Valley, and soon we will be seeing pink tulips everywhere. Some of our bulbs have found homes in other states, including Oregon. Beyond Pink TEAM member, Nancy McHone, sent some tulip bulbs to her sister in Oregon, and she sent us this picture of them in bloom last spring.



Tulip bulb orders will be taken again this summer for October pick up so you can plant them in your gardens. Watch for the order blank in our July issue. We will have the order form on our website also, at [www.cedarvalleybreastcancer.org](http://www.cedarvalleybreastcancer.org).

### Live Green By Cindy Harris

As we watch cancer, neurological disorders, reproductive disorders and a whole laundry list of illnesses increase over the years, we have to notice that we have hundreds of products not available years ago. Take fabric softener for example - it is one of the most chemical-laden products in homes. These chemicals aren't listed on the bottle because it is not required by law yet.

Many chemicals in fabric softeners are not to be inhaled, not to come in contact with the skin, have an increased effect when heated, and are not to be flushed into sewer systems.

Instead of using fabric softer, try using dryer balls -- not the kind you put fabric softener in, but the kind with knobs on them. All they do is keep clothes from clumping together and helps fluff the clothes and make them dry a little faster.

I haven't bought fabric softener since December. It's much cheaper, and other than the smell, I don't see much difference.

On another note! It's getting close to spring so as soon as the snow will allow, get corn gluten down before weeds have a chance to germinate. Remember, this is a pre-emergent so you want to hit those weeds before they have a chance to really get started. That happens as soon as the ground starts to warm just a little. My tulips are coming up right next to my house, so the time is near.



## Being Treated as a Whole Person By Christine Carpenter

Breast cancer came as a shock. I had always been healthy – ate right, exercised regularly, never smoked, rarely drank alcohol. I was vigilant about doing monthly breast self-exams and had yearly mammograms. So, how could this happen to me? How could this happen to our family?

Shortly after my diagnosis I realized I needed more than just medical treatment, I needed psychosocial care. I felt shock, grief and depression during, and even months after treatment. There were moments during my treatment when I was in such physical and emotional misery that death looked appealing.

Now, sixteen years later, an Institute of Medicine\* report confirms my realization that cancer patients need more than just medical treatment. A recent Institute of Medicine (IOM) report stated, “Cancer care today often provides state-of-the-science medical treatment, but fails to address the psychological and social (psychosocial) problems associated with cancer. This failure can compromise the effectiveness of health care and thereby adversely affect the health of cancer patients.”

Psychological and social problems created or made worse by cancer include the following:

- depression, anxiety, and other emotional problems
- lack of information or skills needed to manage the illness
- lack of transportation or other resources
- disruptions in work, school, and family life

When these psychosocial issues are not provided for, it causes patients additional suffering, weakens the ability to follow prescribed treatments, and threatens patients' return to health.

Today, a range of services are available to help patients and their families manage the psychosocial aspects of cancer. These services are often called “integrated cancer care,” “comprehensive cancer care,” or “community support services.”

We now know it is very difficult to deliver good-quality cancer care without addressing patients' **psychosocial health** needs as well as patients'

**medical health** needs.

All patients with cancer and their families should expect and receive cancer care that provides the following:

- counseling from a trained professional
- discharge planning
- nutritional support
- pastoral care
- patient education and support
- family education and support
- health and wellness education and support
- hospice care, if needed.

Thankfully, my family and I survived and thrived since my breast cancer diagnosis. How did we do it? We



sought the psychosocial services of an oncology social worker who gave us information on how to help adolescent children when a parent is sick, counseled us about family relationships and illness, and who had the wisdom to tell me to see a different minister when mine made me feel like I was “crazy.”

### Getting Integrated Cancer Care

You often have a choice about your cancer care provider. Ask your doctor or surgeon to refer you to a Commission on Cancer accredited cancer program that provides comprehensive cancer care. If you are already receiving cancer care, ask your physician how he/she plans to provide you with the above psychosocial services that are proven to be so important for positive health outcomes. Remember, your health care system must treat you as a whole person, not just a disease.

\* The Institute of Medicine (IOM) is an independent, nonprofit organization that works outside of government to provide unbiased and authoritative advice to decision makers and the public. The IOM serves as adviser to the nation to improve health. Above information from IOM report, *Cancer Care for the Whole Person*.

## Heartfelt Support By Debra J. (DJ) Corson

In appreciation of being a breast cancer survivor for almost three years now, I make an effort to pay forward the kindness that was given me during treatment. Most of this effort is directed toward supporting individuals who are undergoing cancer treatment, and working with the Beyond Pink TEAM and Young Survivors group.

Following are some things I keep in mind as I work with others. If you have a friend or loved one with cancer, perhaps this article will help you to better support them.

- **Even if you’ve had cancer, never assume you “know what it’s like” for someone else.** Cancer is a personal experience. It can invoke anger, apathy, fear, frustration, and a host of other emotions—sometimes all in the same day! I’ve worked with dozens of survivors, and no two people have felt exactly the same way about having cancer. Listen to what people are saying and how they are saying it; then you’ll know what they are feeling.
- **Become comfortable with silence.** Well-intentioned people sometimes say unhelpful things. For example, “Don’t worry, it’s just hair; it will come back.” It’s not *just hair*. Losing the hair on my head was painful enough, but it was when I lost my eyelashes that I cried. Don’t use trivialities; rather, speak from your heart. Tell them how much you’ve been thinking about them, or how much you miss seeing them.
- **Be careful about sharing cancer stories.** After I was diagnosed, people told me a lot of cancer stories. The intention may be good, but the only stories I really wanted to hear were the stories about people who had cancer worse than mine and survived for years anyway.
- **Do something.** A lot of people say, “let me know if there is anything I can do.” Others do something. I appreciated those people who thought of things that would be helpful and did them—like sending a gift card to a local restaurant so we could get take-out, picking up my laundry, giving me a book, or calling to say, “I’m going to the grocery store, what can I pick up for you?” People are so thoughtful!

- **Inspire Hope.** If you remember only one thing from this list, let it be *inspire hope*. Hope is the foundation on which we build our strength for getting well again. *With hope, all things are possible.*

## A Dynamic Duo By Dee Hughes

The Cedar Valley is lucky to have Maureen (Mo) Hardy and Kathy Wroten lending a helping hand and warm hearts to those living with cancer. Using their skills as cosmetologists, they work with the American Cancer Society on the Look Good, Feel Better program. Women in cancer treatment can escape from their schedule of doctor appointments and therapy treatments, and be pampered for 2 hours when they attend a program. They learn about makeup, skin care, nail care, and ways to deal with hair loss such as with wigs, turbans, and scarves. Each woman gets a free makeup kit to use during and after the workshop.

Maureen and Kathy volunteer their time every other month to lead the Look Good, Feel Better program. Mo’s family has an extensive history of cancer, and anything she can do to promote cancer awareness or boost someone’s self esteem while in treatment is important to her. She is also one of four co-chairs for the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life. Mo’s enthusiasm spread to her friend and co-worker, Kathy. The response they get from the women they work with at the Look Good, Feel Better programs is very rewarding for both.

Besides the Look Good, Feel Better program, they also keep a wig bank at there salon, Vision Hair Studios. The wigs are free to anyone dealing with cancer. They have around 100 wigs on hand, and they will cut and style one for you at no charge. If they do not have one that works for you, they will help you get one through the American Cancer Society. They will also accept donations of gently used wigs.

Thank you, Mo and Kathy, for all you do for the Cedar Valley and women diagnosed with cancer. You are making a difference!

To sign up for the Look Good, Feel Better program, contact the ACS at 800-227-2345. Vision Hair Studio is located at 3674 University Avenue, Waterloo, (next door to Platt’s). Their phone number is 319-232-8239.

## A Survivor's Story by Mary Marticoff

I know 1995 seems like a long time ago, but it is a year I will never forget. It was a quiet June evening and with just a casual scratch of an itch, I discovered a lump in my breast. I wasn't a woman who did monthly self-breast exams regularly, but I was given a wake up call. I now push everyone I know to do this simple task. I know I am lucky to have discovered what could have been my daughters' worst nightmare.

Hi, I'm Mary Marticoff and I am a breast cancer survivor. Everyone has some sort of fear of turning 40, but that year was extremely challenging for me. My divorce was final in May, I got breast cancer in June, and I turned 40 in July.

I don't remember the little details. I **can** remember the two painful needle biopsies that didn't help. I **can** remember the lump being removed and within minutes being told I have cancer. I **can** remember the panic in my throat, but not crying. I **can** remember my parents taking me home. I **can** remember sitting alone with my thoughts, scared I was going to die.

Surgery was scheduled within two weeks. A left side mastectomy was recommended because of the size of the lump, but it was my decision to make. My thoughts were I didn't want any chance for the cancer to return, so I agreed to the mastectomy. Again, considering the size of the lump, my age, and having no family history of breast cancer, chemotherapy was recommended. I had six months

of chemo every two weeks. I lost all my hair by my third treatment so baseball caps became very popular in my house. I never got sick and I never missed a single day of work. My girls say I slept a lot when I was home, but I can't remember any bad side effects. I was lucky; someone was watching over me.

The hardest part for me was having no support. My girls were just teenagers at that time, so they really didn't know what to do or say. I knew they loved me, and probably were too scared to say what they feared the most. They were still too young to lose their mother, I had to survive. I don't remember any family support from my parents or siblings. I'm sure prayers were said, but it would have been nice to hear a voice of concern. No, I was on my own. I had to be strong for myself and for my children.

That was 15 years ago. I am healthy, on no medicine, loving and living life. Having breast cancer made me the strong woman I am today. I know the medical reasons why I survived, but I also know the spiritual reasons why I survived. **I AM A SURVIVOR.**

### Young Survivors Event

The next Meet, Mingle and Learn for young women living with cancer will be Tuesday, April 20. Dietician Michelle Busch will speak about Power Eating during cancer treatment and beyond. You may come and go as your schedule allows. Contact Emily Hodgin at 319-239-8118 or [emilyz@mchsi.com](mailto:emilyz@mchsi.com) if you'd like more information.

## Save the Date!

**Apr. 5 1:30 p.m.**  
**Touch of Courage**  
**Breast Cancer Support Group**  
2101 Kimball Ave., Waterloo  
Dawn Colbert 415-6430

**Apr. 6 1:30 p.m.**  
**Care and Share Support Group**  
**Covenant Cancer Treatment Ctr.**  
200 E. Ridgeway, Waterloo

**Apr. 20 4:30-7:00 p.m.**  
**Young Cancer Survivor Event**  
**Meet, Mingle and Learn**  
3712 Cedar Heights Dr., C.F.  
Emily Hodgin 239-8118

**Apr. 22 6:30 p.m.**  
**Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action**  
UNI Center for Energy and  
Environmental Education  
Corner Campus St. & Jennings Dr.  
Christine Carpenter 266-0194

**Apr. 22 7:00 p.m.**  
**Environmental Health Working**  
**Group**  
UNI Center for Energy and  
Environmental Education  
Corner Campus St. & Jennings Dr.  
Christine Carpenter 266-0194

**May 3 1:30 p.m.**  
**Touch of Courage**  
**Breast Cancer Support Group**

**May 4 1:30 p.m.**  
**Care and Share Group**

**May date undecided**  
**Young Cancer Survivor Tea**  
AEA 267 Lobby  
3712 Cedar Hts Drive., C.F.  
Please call Dawn Colbert, 415-6430  
for time of tea

**May 27 6:30 p.m.**  
**Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action**

# Save the Date!

(continued)

**May 27 7:00 pm.**  
**Environmental Hlth Wking Grp**

**Jun 1 1:30 p.m.**  
**Care and Share Support Group**

**Jun 7 1:30 p.m.**  
**Touch of Courage**  
**Breast Cancer Support Group**

**Jun 8 4:30-7:00 p.m.**  
**Young Cancer Survivor Event**

**Jun 18-19**  
**ACS Relay for Life**  
**Hawkeye Community College**  
**ACS 272-2880**

**Jun 24 6:30 p.m.**  
**Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action**

**Jun 24 7:00 p.m.**  
**Environmental Hlth Wrking Grp**

**Jul 5 1:30 p.m.**  
**Touch of Courage**  
**Breast Cancer Support Group**

**Jul 6 1:30 p.m.**  
**Care and Share Support Group**

**Jul 20 5:30-6:30 p.m.**  
**Young Cancer Survivor Tea**

**Jul 20 Two starts: 7:00 a.m and 1:15 pm.**

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Pink Ribbon Golf Classic**

Fox Ridge Golf Club - Dike IA

**Jul 22 6:30 p.m.**  
**Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action**

**Jul 22 7:00 p.m.**  
**Environmental Hlth Wrking Grp.**



## Resources

Information, support, counseling, and educational materials are available from the following:

**Beyond Pink TEAM** is a local breast cancer organization providing a variety of services. Our website lists services we provide as well as other services available in the Cedar Valley. [www.cedarvalleybreastcancer.org](http://www.cedarvalleybreastcancer.org)

**Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-Action** is a local advocacy group taking action against breast cancer. [www.iowabreastcancer.org](http://www.iowabreastcancer.org)

**Living Beyond Breast Cancer** includes a helpline, newsletter and information. Survivors Helpline: 888-753-5222 [www.LBBC.org](http://www.LBBC.org)

**Young Survival Coalition** connects with other young women diagnosed with breast cancer. [www.youngsurvival.org](http://www.youngsurvival.org)

**Cancer Care** is a national nonprofit organization offering counseling, support, financial assistance and education to individuals with cancer and their families. [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)

**Iowa Cancer Consortium** offers cancer information and links to resources in Iowa. [www.canceriowa.org](http://www.canceriowa.org)

**American Cancer Society** offers cancer information and services. [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

**National Breast Cancer Coalition** The NBCC's mission is to eradicate breast cancer by focusing the government, research institutions and consumer advocates on breast cancer. It encourages advocacy for action and change. [www.stopbreastcancer.org](http://www.stopbreastcancer.org)

**M.D. Anderson Cancer Center**, University of Texas offers patient and cancer information. [www.mdanderson.org](http://www.mdanderson.org)

**Susan G. Komen for the Cure** website offers cancer and social networking information and a newsletter on their website. [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org)

**Iowa Breast Resource Guide** is available on the Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action website. [www.iowabreastcancer.org](http://www.iowabreastcancer.org)

Connect with us...

A donation for Touch of Courage is both needed and appreciated. All donations go to support the services of the Cedar Valley Cancer Committee and are tax deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ amount of donation

General Donation  Newsletter Donation  NBCC Scholarship Fund

Make checks payable to the Cedar Valley Cancer Committee and send to 1607 Heath Street, Waterloo, IA 50703