

Local Cancer Survivor Raises Money for Hospital's Support Programs



Left to right: Amy Litterini, PT, DPT, Director, Cancer Wellness Services at the Center for Cancer Care at Exeter Hospital; Kathleen Kerrigan; Brenda Karkos, Assistant Director of Oncology, Exeter Hospital; Karen DeGrandpre, MSW, Exeter Hospital

Exeter, NH- The generosity of the local Seacoast communities was demonstrated through their support of Kathleen Kerrigan in her desire to raise money for four support programs at the Center for Cancer Care at Exeter Hospital. Mrs. Kerrigan, a breast cancer survivor treated at Exeter Hospital, is a wife, the mother of four boys ages ten to nineteen, and a fitness instructor.

Mrs. Kerrigan, thankful she had health insurance, is aware that some who have been diagnosed with breast and other cancers do not have this benefit.

In an effort to show her gratitude to the doctors and staff at Exeter Hospital Kathleen wanted to share in the mission of helping individuals who are going through cancer treatment who may need additional support services and financial assistance by raising money to help.

Kathleen Kerrigan's story is both unique and common among those who have been diagnosed with cancer. Wanting a second opinion after being diagnosed in December 2007, Mrs. Kerrigan sought out Roderick McKee, MD, Core Physicians General and Vascular Surgery, and the Center for Cancer Care team at Exeter Hospital. "I knew after the first twenty minutes of speaking with Dr. McKee that Exeter Hospital was where I wanted to get my care," stated Mrs. Kerrigan.

"The compassion that Dr. McKee showed plus the team approach that the Center for Cancer Care uses made it easy for me to choose Exeter Hospital. My initial evaluation proved true. Everyone involved in my care, from the group of medical and radiation

oncology doctors and staff, Dr. Marble (Kimberly Marble, MD, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery) and the reconstruction team, the receptionists who checked me in, to even the valets who took care of my car, each was immensely supportive to me and my family during that time in my life,” Mrs. Kerrigan continued.

“I wanted to show my appreciation to those who helped me so much during my illness which turned out to have more complications than usual including emergency surgery in December 2007,” Mrs. Kerrigan added. “It was not unusual for Dr. McKee to call me at seven o’clock at night to find out how I was doing emotionally and to ask how my husband, Paul, and my sons were handling the stress. The team at Exeter recognized that not only I was going through this difficulty but my entire family as well.”

“Even when I had to have a PIC line procedure (PICC – peripherally inserted central catheter) done at the Center for Cancer Care, a procedure which has nothing to do with plastic surgery, Dr. Marble’s assistant not wanting me to go through this alone, left her office, came and held my hand during the placement. I can tell you story after story of the kindness and care shown to me during this period of my life by Exeter Hospital, its affiliated doctors and staff.”

In an effort to raise money for the Center for Cancer Care Mrs. Kerrigan offered two free exercise classes, Zumba and Pilates, on four consecutive weekends at the Oyster River High School gym. In lieu of a fee, she asked that the participants consider making a donation to the support programs at the Center for Cancer Care. The participants, including high school students, eagerly donated amounts from \$5.00 to \$100.00 per class.

This was not only an opportunity for Ms. Kerrigan to raise money, but it also gave her a chance to educate the public about the benefits of maintaining a good exercise regime while going through treatments by relating her own personal, inspirational and anecdotal story. “I was studying for an extensive Pilates certification in the mist of getting chemotherapy and discovered that I had far less nausea and fatigue. A port for chemo therapy had been placed in my neck. It was pressing against a nerve causing pain severe enough that my doctors wanted to remove it. I asked to be able to do Pilates to see if I could relieve the pressure. As a result of doing the Pilates exercises, the pain went away and I was able to keep port in my neck in order to continue my chemotherapy treatments. I happened to have had axillary webbing or cording which normally can take up to three months to go away, but I found mine loosening up after a week or so of regular exercise and stretching,” shared Mrs. Kerrigan.

Ms. Kerrigan and the Durham, Lee, and Madbury communities raised \$1,801.00 to support the Beyond the Rainbow Fund, Cancer Well-Fit Fund, Women’s Wellness Fund, and the General Oncology Fund at Exeter Hospital. These funds have been used to provide financial assistance to oncology patients who are uninsured and underinsured by providing air conditioners for lung cancer patients; assisting with rent and fuel bill payments; purchasing walkers and canes, and aiding with any other practical needs that can become unmanageable for individuals or families during their cancer treatment.

About us:

Exeter Hospital's Center for Cancer Care offers the area's leading, comprehensive approach to cancer treatment. Exceptional care is provided by combining the expertise of: radiation oncologists from the renowned Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center; medical oncologists from the region's only group affiliated with the Dana Farber Cancer Center; and the area's largest group of surgical specialists. To learn more about how you can get the best possible cancer care without ever leaving the Seacoast visit www.exeterhospital.com or call Exeter Hospital's Center for Cancer Care at 1-866-9-EXETER.