

Komen race is milestone for this cancer survivor

Woman saved info on support agency before knowing diagnosis.

BY SCOTT HUDDLESTON
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In some respects, Judy Meyn's recovery began nearly six months before she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Meyn had cut out a newspaper article about a place with a funny name that does serious work.

The SLEW Wellness Center — its acronym stands for Support Lending for Emotional Well-Being — helps Bexar County women with breast cancer by

providing mental health, nutrition, transportation and nursing services.

After two surgeries, six rounds of chemotherapy and lots of denial and anger, Meyn beat her cancer.

Now back at work as Frost Bank's corporate donation administrative officer, she's one of an expected 30,000 participants in Saturday's ninth annual Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in San Antonio.

"I really want to save the world," Meyn said. "The only way I know to do that is one person at a time."

Race organizers hope to raise \$1 million. Up to 75 percent of the funds will stay in San Antonio.

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Komen race is survivor's milestone

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supporting SLEW and other programs that help breast cancer patients.

Nearly two years ago, Meyn saved the article on SLEW, thinking it might someday help a friend. Soon afterward, her husband began prodding her to get a cholesterol check. After a few months, she saw a doctor.

"How long have you had this lump?" the doctor asked.

She had done monthly self-exams, but never found anything.

But a biopsy showed she had cancer.

She'd been used to a life free of complications. Free to enjoy traveling, her two Jack Russell terriers, her Italian home cooking and her sewing and quilting.

On Dec. 2, 2004, Meyn underwent a 7½-hour mastectomy and reconstructive surgery. A week later, doctors told her the cancer had spread to her lymph nodes. She would need another surgery as well as chemotherapy.

"I fell apart. I knew I had cancer then," she said. "I wasn't afraid of death. I was afraid of living with chemotherapy. Above all, I didn't want to lose my hair."

Then, she remembered the article, and called SLEW.

The center gave her things insurance wouldn't pay for — undergarments, prosthesis and a wig.

Her first chemotherapy treatment — one of six over four months — left her weak, dizzy; almost incapacitated for more than two weeks. She had an endless cycle of nausea, constipation and diarrhea, and "frozen shoulder" — a side effect of stiffness and often pain.

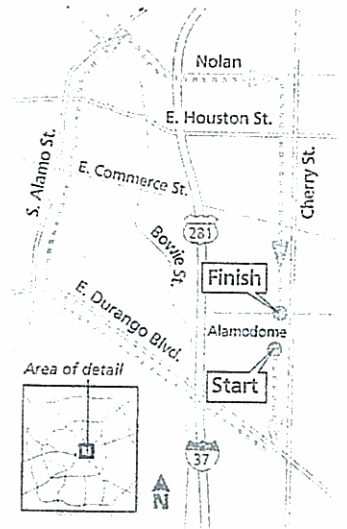
SLEW and the Cancer Therapy and Research Center, which also benefits from Saturday's race, advised her to learn what foods she could digest in small amounts. They helped her stay positive, and provided massage therapy before and after her chemo.

"I don't know what I would've done without them," Meyn said.

She turned 56 on Wednesday, and celebrated over dinner with

Komen Race for the Cure

Alamodome registration, in Lot C, is from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and 6 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. Saturday. The fee is \$28. A memorial service for breast cancer victims who died is set for 7:30 a.m. The race begins at 8 a.m.



JAMES HENDRICKS/STAFF

friends. They raised glasses of red wine to health and good luck. Since exercise is a cancer deterrent, Meyn now walks 45 minutes every other day.

Walking the five-kilometer course Saturday will be emotional, she said. She's walking in her first Komen event.

"I want to be out there to support other women who are fighting breast cancer," she said. "I want to tell them, 'I'm the biggest chicken in the world. If I got through it, you can, too.'"

The race also will honor breast cancer patients who didn't survive, including Bonnie Terry, an advocate of San Antonio's poor and homeless. Terry, 49, benefited from WINGS (Women Involved in Nurturing, Giving and Sharing), which gets funds from the race to help uninsured women with the disease, before she died Jan. 27.

In a eulogy at her Feb. 3 funeral, Mayor Phil Hardberger said Terry "was a friend, somebody I loved."

"Great cities are made up of great citizens," he said. "I don't know of a greater citizen than Bonnie Terry."

Several donations for Saturday's event have been made in her honor: About 20 friends have registered online to walk together under the name "Bonnie's Brigade."