

# SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



## **Over 250 'Walk for the Cure' - Supporters turn out for 10th annual Barbara Ireland Walk for the Cure for Breast Cancer**

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Saturday morning's clouds made for good walking weather for the participants of the Barbara Ireland Walk for the Cure for Breast Cancer.

Walkers and joggers converged at Chase Palm Park to raise funds and show their support for the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara, to whom the proceeds of the event go. Rain or shine, participants took on the 10-mile route along Cabrillo Boulevard, periodically marked by green balloons. They headed west to La Mesa Park, at which point they headed back down the scenic coastal thoroughfare to just past the Andree Clark Bird Refuge, turning around once again to head to the green and white finish line at Chase Palm Park.

Now in its 10th year, the Barbara Ireland Walk for the Cure for Breast Cancer has been raising funds to aid research to find cures for the disease, which affects close to three million women in the United States.

"My first reaction was, 'It can happen to anyone,'" said Nate Zempel, who, with his mother Brenda, was walking in support of a friend who was recently diagnosed with the disease. According to recent estimates, women in the United States stand a one-in-eight chance of developing breast cancer.

The proceeds of the fundraiser will go to funding research by the Santa Barbara Cancer Center, which is currently enrolling patients to participate in an upcoming clinical trial, as well as continuing to monitor 10 ongoing ones.

"Probably the best example historically is that we participated in the tamoxifen trial," said Cancer Center President Rick Scott, referring to the center's participation in the research into the widely popular cancer treatment drug. Because the Cancer Center was participating in the study, there were that many more women who were able to take advantage of the therapy in the early stages, as the drug made its way through its FDA approvals. Another way the center investigates breast cancer cures is a weekly multidisciplinary breast conference, where specialists gather to present and discuss possibilities for certain patients to join the clinical trial.

In fact, said CCSB research manager Barbara Conviser, there is a clinical trial for every one of the four stages of breast cancer, so it is conceivable that a woman diagnosed with breast cancer might be able to take advantage of



emerging therapies, no matter how advanced her cancer might be.

"Not only does it have potential benefit for that patient, and we are seeing that ... but also that patient's experience with the disease helps the next generation of patients, " she said.

Over on the grassy lawn of Chase Palm Park, several pink-clad participants, part of a large team called "Holly's Hooters," were lounging after the walk and waiting for other team members to complete their routes. For Holly Williams, an avid runner, participating in the walk was a goal that she had since she underwent a bilateral mastectomy to fight the disease.

"I said, 'I'm going to beat this. I'm going to walk in this thing.' "



It turns out that the testing she got revealed she was positive for a breast cancer gene. Subsequent testing of her family revealed that she inherited it from her father and her sons carry it. According to Ms. Williams, the presence of the BRCA gene in her children may mean that it could get passed on to future granddaughters or they could develop male breast cancer, another form which is insidious because it is lesser known than female breast cancer. Cancer Center of Santa Barbara, according to Ms. Williams, was essential to her survival.

"I was fortunate to get my treatment here and I want other women to be able to as well," she said.

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