

Surviving in Style: a breast cancer awareness style show

Mission Statement

The mission of Surviving in Style is to provide funding for women who are not able to receive breast cancer screening through mammograms due to financial burden. The goal of the annual event is not only to raise money, but also to promote breast cancer awareness and provide education regarding screening and community resources, while acknowledging those we have lost to breast cancer and providing a day of recognition and celebration for breast cancer survivors.

How I decided on the Project:

I have always been a very big supporter of breast cancer awareness and related events and organizations. When I was in first grade, my mom, at the age of 35, was diagnosed with breast cancer. I am very proud to say that next fall she will be a 20 year survivor! In the past 19 years my family has been involved in many breast cancer events, including various 5Ks, Relay for Life events, a dragon boat race event which included the “breast of friends” team, and an event called Images and Information. Images and Information is an event that has been going on in Dubuque, IA since 1993. The event includes speakers to educate the audience about topics related to breast cancer and screening, booths showcasing community resources, and a style show consisting of local breast cancer survivors of all shapes, sizes, and ages modeling clothing from local boutiques. This October, as I drove back to Dubuque on a Monday night to celebrate with my mom at this year’s Images and Information event, it finally hit me – this would be a great Student Distinction Track project! It is something I am very passionate about, there are women in need of mammograms who can’t afford them, it could be an annual event that other students could continue, and it’s an extremely fun event for both the guests and the “models!” The models get a chance to celebrate survivorship and form a social network of support and friendship through meeting others who have faced the same struggles. The funds raised through the event in October (and hopefully subsequent years!) will help women in need with the financial burden of breast cancer screening, while promoting earlier detection of breast cancer. The more I thought about the possibility, the more excited I got about the project!

I have been in contact with Iowa City area community members and breast cancer survivors to ensure that something similar is not already in place. A Mercy affiliated organization held two similar events in the 90s, but they did not continue them and do not have plans for something similar in the future. Other breast cancer survivor support groups exist and the leaders of these seemed to think the survivors would be interested in participating. While it will take a lot of organization, I hope to recruit a few M1 or M2

students who would be interested in helping with this year's event and continuing the event in subsequent years. It is also very helpful that I already have an event model to guide me and resources who can give me advice about things that have worked or not worked well for the Dubuque event. I have been in contact with the "Images and Information" organizers, and they supported the idea as long as I change the name (Surviving in Style) and do not promote the event in the Dubuque area.

Resources Needed:

1. Models – I have already been in contact with leaders of breast cancer support groups in the Iowa City area, and I will attend a meeting to explain the event and recruit survivors to be models or greeters.
2. Clothing – If the project is approved, I will meet with local boutique owners/managers and explain the event. If the boutiques agree to have the models showcase their clothing, the models would visit the boutique about 1 week before the show to be fitted for the clothing, model the clothing the night of the event, and then the clothing would be returned to the boutiques. As the models "strut their stuff" on the run-way, the MC will be describing the clothing and which store it is from. Boutiques I have looked into include InBox, Catherine's Boutique, Dulcinea, Four Seasons, Heart to Heart Bridal and Formal, and Yana's Ladies Boutique.
3. Hair and Makeup for the models – ideally this would be donated by one of the local salons or cosmetology schools.
4. Venue – If approved I will check into various venues in the area. Ideally, the venue would have some sort of stage. This will be the biggest expense; however, I am planning to utilize the advertising the venue will receive during the event and its promotion. The event will likely be on a weeknight, so availability should be less of an issue. Venues I am planning to check into include the Marriot, IMU, The University Club, and Cedar Ridge Winery.
5. Programs, tickets, and Advertising – There is a UI student group called Design UI, and I plan to see if they would be interested in doing the graphic design. Printing will also be an expense, but once again would try to get some sort of discount from one of the multiple printing companies in Iowa City since it's for a charitable event. I plan to include any companies that sponsor the event through donations on promotional fliers and the evening's program and will highlight this while recruiting companies.
6. Beverages and Dessert – I have applied for funding from both Fairway and Walmart in the past for another fundraising event, and it was a very easy process. If I can get funding to cover much of the cost, I was thinking coffee, punch, and cake-pops would be easy to serve after the show. I may also look into local bakeries to see if they would be willing to donate mini desserts.

7. Items for Raffle or as door prizes – local businesses and restaurants have been very generous in the past when I was fundraising for another organization. Also, the Dubuque event has recently added a silent auction to the evening, so this is something to keep in mind either for next year or for subsequent years.

I realize that this year, as the start-up year, may be somewhat costly. As you can see, I plan to get as much as possible donated by local businesses. I will also apply for the John and Eloise Mountain Wright Mini-Grant for Service to the Community, which will help with the expenses if I am awarded the grant. I also plan to look into other ways to raise money through community events, such as Panera Bread's ribbon shaped Pink Ribbon Bagels, in which 25 cents is donated for each bagel purchased, or having community nights at local restaurants.

Timeline:

Winter/Spring/Summer 2013

- Recruit a few other students to help work on the project, who might be interested in organizing the event in subsequent years for their SDT project.
- Attend support group meetings to recruit survivors/models.
- Visit local boutiques to promote the event and see if they would be willing to provide some of the outfits for the survivors to model.
- Contact other local businesses to organize the venue, printing, menu, and hair and makeup.
- Contact community resources that may be interested in having a booth at the event, such as UIHC 4th floor salon, Décolletage Perfect Fit Boutique, NuCara by Crazy Girl Yarn Shop, Bosom Buddies, Continuing after Breast Cancer Support Group, American Cancer Society, Relay for Life, etc.
- Recruit speakers – a physician or public health spokesperson to have a brief educational talk about breast cancer and a survivor to share their story.
- Assemble an advertising campaign with the assistance of my sister and aunt, both University of Iowa alums.

Fall 2013

- Attend other breast cancer awareness events to advertise and sell tickets for the style show.
- One or two weeks before the event the models will go to the boutiques to be fitted for the show.
- One or two nights before the event will be a rehearsal.

The event will be on a weeknight in October, breast cancer awareness month.

Outcomes – Measureable Goals

The goal is to promote breast cancer awareness and education, celebrate survivorship, and to raise money to help fund mammograms for women who cannot afford them on their own. The money we raise through selling tickets to the event will be for women in the Iowa City area or Johnson County. If there is already an organization or partnership that helps women get mammograms in place in the area, the money could just be donated to that organization. Otherwise I am hoping to set something up with the hospital so that we could give out vouchers through UI Mobile Clinic or Free Medical Clinic to patients who need a mammogram. The more money we raise, the more women we can help! I don't know what to expect for the first year of the event, but if we could fund even 10 women's mammograms I would be happy! I hope that the event becomes an annual event, and more money is raised each year the event is held! One goal would be to have 100 people in the audience. Another goal is that everyone in the audience learns something new about breast cancer while at the event. Lastly, my goal would be that each survivor/model feels recognized and supported at the event, and that they are happy that they chose to participate.

Assessment/Evaluation

Attendance numbers can be evaluated by the number of tickets we sell. One way to evaluate if the event is educational would be to have a pre and post event questionnaire/quiz. This would only include a few questions, and they could fill it out as they enter and have surveys on the seats to fill out after the show. This would also be a great way to get general feedback about the event so that we could improve it in subsequent years. Ways to assess how the models felt about being involved in the event include a feedback or wrap-up session with the survivors or a survey for them after the event is over. We would also keep track of how many women we help fund mammograms for throughout the year.