

Press Release

**Contact: Laurie Zalepka, public relations coordinator, 732-739-5918
Bayshore Community Health Services**

WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD ON CANCER?

Holmdel-Thanks to expert treatment and compassionate care, Manalapan resident Trish Maloy is alive to spread the word about early diagnosis and life after breast cancer

“Using my experience to speak out to others, being open – these are precious gifts I’ve gotten back from my cancer,” said five-year breast cancer survivor Trish Maloy, now age 41, recently at Bayshore Community Hospital in Holmdel, NJ.

A hair stylist at Sanzio Salon in Matawan, Trish already enjoyed a great rapport with her clients before cancer struck in 2000 when Trish was just 35 years old. Once she was diagnosed and began life-saving treatment and reconstruction, “...my clients supported me and asked lots of questions. They knew what I was going through every step of the way,” remembered Trish. “Before long I found myself being networked to other women who were newly diagnosed. I listen to them, answer their questions and share my experience.”

Trish remembers her initial shock. Following an initial baseline mammogram, Trish was told her results indicated that she had a high probability of having breast cancer and needed to see a surgeon immediately. Trish was haunted by the memory of her grandmother being diagnosed with breast cancer at age 42 and dying of the disease five years later. ‘Don’t cry, don’t cry, don’t cry,’ Trish remembered thinking. The radiologist suggested Trish see Dr. Robert M. Arbour, a well-known physician on staff at Bayshore Community Hospital. “After that,” recalled Trish, “I didn’t hear anything else.”

By the Numbers: Breast Cancer in Younger Women

While breast cancer in young women accounts for a small percentage of all breast cancer cases, the impact of this disease is widespread. According to the American Cancer Society, while women under the age of 40 account for just 5% of breast cancer cases, the numbers of women affected are still impressive. There are more than 250,000 women 40 and under in the U.S. living with breast cancer, and over 11,100 young women will be diagnosed in the next year. The five-year survival rate for women under age 45 is on average 83%, yet breast cancer remains the leading cause of death in women under age 50.

Compassionate Care, Technical Expertise

Dr. Arbor performed a stereotactic biopsy, and eventually a lumpectomy, on Trish at Bayshore Community Hospital to determine the exact nature and degree of her cancer. A radiological oncologist on staff at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, a Bayshore Community Hospital affiliate, also participated in Trish's diagnostic procedures.

Dr. Arbour then referred Trish to Said Samra, M.D., a plastic surgeon who performed Trish's reconstructive breast surgery. "Dr. Samra examined me and took the time to outline all the various ways my reconstruction could be accomplished," said Trish. "Then he said, 'this is what I would recommend for you,' and that is exactly the procedure I had done.

"I try to offer my patients choices that take into consideration where they are in their lives, encompassing such factors as their age or any plans to start or add to their family," said Dr. Samra. "Each choice I offer is medically sound of course, but I try to offer options that will be appropriate for each woman as an individual."

"Dr. Arbour and Dr. Samra are both incredibly compassionate as well as highly skilled physicians," said Trish.

Helping Others through Recovery

Trish attributes her recovery and positive attitude to the care she received from both physicians and staff at Bayshore Community Hospital. “No one ever made me feel like I wasn’t going to make it,” she recalls. “Everyone was uplifting. It was business as usual whenever I was there for a test or procedure, but in a beautiful way.”

“From the staff that did my outpatient testing at the John Boyd and Kathryn Roberta Mitchell Pavilion at Bayshore to my two key physicians, Dr. Arbour and Dr. Samra, I always felt that each person treated me like a mother, sister or wife – someone of importance to them,” said Trish. Physicians such as her pathologist and anesthesiologist went the extra mile to make Trish feel secure. She recalls her anesthesiologist holding her hand and saying, just before she went into surgery, “I’m going to take care of you.” Trish summed up her experience by saying, “I felt so cared for at Bayshore.”

Today Trish continues to speak out about breast cancer to women in the community, stressing the importance of early detection by using herself as an example that even young women can and do develop breast cancer. In addition to her clients, Trish regularly speaks to newly-diagnosed women she connects with through my professional, family and friends, as well as talking with patients being treated by Dr. Arbour and Dr. Samra.

Now nearly six years post-cancer, Trish feels like her life has been given a rebirth. “More than ever, I know now that my cancer has been a gift. It’s enabled me to really, really help people and I am grateful for it,” she said.

(Sidebar:)

Resources for Young Women Facing Breast Cancer

The emotional and social experience of having breast cancer as a young woman can present different challenges than for post-menopausal women. Young woman may face questions on a physical and emotional level. First, why did I get breast cancer at such a young age? Is it safe or even possible, for me to become pregnant after breast cancer? Will I be able to find a partner who will love me regardless of my scars? Will the treatment affect my sexuality? Will the treatment result in premature menopause? If I find someone I care about, how and when do I tell my partner what I've been through? Can I be attractive without my breast(s)?

There are no simple or direct answers to any of these issues because every woman is an individual. The path of healing and finding the answers for each woman will vary according to her needs and life situation. The resources below will help younger women to advocate for their own health and well being and become educated about breast cancer.

The American Cancer Society – www.cancer.org

Fertile Hope – www.fertilehope.org

Sharsheret – www.sharsheret.org

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation – www.komen.org

The Young Survival Coalition – www.youngsurvival.org

Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization – www.y-me.org

Photo caption-Standing is Said A. Samra, M.D. with his assistant, Pam Bernoskie, (left) along with Trish Maloy.

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