

# WIN ABC™

Women's Information Network  
Against Breast Cancer

Fall 2000

Volume III, Issue I

## **"The Mother is the Necessity for Invention" New Product!!! DRAM™ Belt**



In the summer of 1998, Dawn Friedman's mother was diagnosed with a recurrence of breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy and TRAM flap reconstruction. Upon her mother's release from the hospital, her four postoperative drains presented a challenge: "What do you do with these dangling nuisances?" The free-falling drains complicated all of her normal daily activities; in particular, showering, dressing and using the bathroom facilities were quite an ordeal – the drains even interfered with sitting, laying down and sleeping.

Dawn was determined to find a better way, not only for her mother, but also for everyone who required drainage devices following surgery. She met with members of the healthcare community (surgeons, nurses, home care providers, etc.) and worked with various textile suppliers on many versions of a belt until finally the DRAM Belt was born!

The DRAM belt's safe, comfortable and easy to use support system instills patients with a feeling of security and enables them to better maintain their independence and dignity during the postoperative recovery period. Use of the DRAM belt maximizes a patient's comfort, ease of movement and ability to perform normal daily activities during the recovery period.



*(continued page 2, column 2)*

## **Tips to Help Patients Stay Healthy and Strong After Surgery\***

*Make sure you completely understand your written postoperative instructions, then follow them!*

- ❖ There are a variety of low-impact exercises to do after your breast surgery to loosen you up and increase your range-of-motion. Your health care team can show you how to do them. (Ask them to do so, with written examples, *preoperatively*.) It is important to begin these exercises as soon as your surgeon gives you the "OK." Call WIN ABC to receive a complimentary exercise video.
- ❖ To avoid infection and/or fluid retention (lymphedema) in the treated arm, from now on make sure that injections, I.V.'s, blood draws (blood tests) and your blood pressure are taken on your untreated arm. Use extra care when you shave under your treated arm and check with your health care team when you can resume shaving under that arm (usually after two weeks). Electric razors are recommended.
- ❖ Avoid wearing tight rings and other jewelry or cuffs (especially with elastic) on your treated arm.
- ❖ Use care when clipping your nails and cuticles to avoid infection. If you wear acrylic or porcelain nails, discuss this with your doctor and keep them clean and dry.
- ❖ Use extra care when gardening and wear gardening gloves to protect your hands and arms. If you notice that you are bitten by an insect, develop a rash, blistering, redness, swelling, fever or other signs of infection or irritation, do not ignore it. Let your doctor know right away to avoid complications. Talk to your doctor about keeping a supply of antibiotics (e.g., Keflex) on-hand at home.
- ❖ Take care not to over do it! You may very likely be up and running around sooner than you think.

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**"Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another."  
—George Eliot**



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## In Honor Of

Betsy, Shelly & Renee  
 From Jane Fisher  
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 Teresita Villasanta  
 From Delia Cabran

## Self-care Tips to Help a Patient Through Radiation Therapy\*

*The following tips have been written to help breast cancer patients get through the experience of radiation therapy as smoothly as possible.*



- ❖ Wear a soft and comfortable bra. Try placing a soft handkerchief inside your bra strap to protect your skin from the strap rubbing against the radiated area.
- ❖ Take extra care with the skin-fold area (*inframammary crease*) under your breast(s). To help keep this area clean and to help with itching, use cornstarch; it is soothing to the skin and absorbs moisture. Make sure the area is dry, not wet and draining. Let your health care team know if the areas being treated become moist, sticky and/or blister.
- ❖ Be good to yourself and rest as much as necessary to conserve your energy.
- ❖ Try to stay away from people with colds.
- ❖ Avoid using hot water bottles, heating pads, hot water or ice on your radiated skin.
- ❖ Use a mild soap such as Neutrogena and avoid scrubbing when you bathe. Take care not to wash off any skin markings. If you do, do not attempt to draw them back on; just let your radiation technician know about it when you arrive for your next treatment.
- ❖ Use a mild laundry detergent such as Ivory and avoid using starch on your garments.
- ❖ Avoid using adhesive tape on the area being treated.
- ❖ Wear clothing that is soft, loose-fitting and comfortable; avoid tight straps.
- ❖ Be careful when shaving and avoid the radiated area. Radiated skin can be easily damaged and this can lead to infection. Be aware of any signs of infection such as redness, swelling or warmth.
- ❖ Avoid deodorants and skin care products that contain a metal base (e.g., aluminum) as this may interfere with the absorption of radiation and may also be harsh on your skin. Products such as Tom's of Maine and Mill Creek (available at health food stores and Trader Joe's) are good alternatives.

- ❖ Try not to scratch the areas of skin being treated. If you experience a great deal of itchiness or discomfort, let your health care team know about it. Products such as Lubriderm lotion, mild water-soluble ointments or lotions with vitamins A and D, Aloe Vera gel and glycerine are soothing and will help with itching or dryness.
- ❖ Avoid exposure of your chest to sunlight and use a good sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more for one year.

*\*Part 2 of a 4 part series.  
 Excerpts from the Breast Buddy Volunteer Curriculum.  
 WIN Against Breast Cancer -copyright 1994*



## DRAM Belt™ (continued from page 1)

The DRAM Belt is a comfortable lightweight belt that provides a 24-hour support system for postoperative drains. The DRAM Belt does not require the use of tape or pins and was designed to be worn while bathing and/or showering. Additionally, the drainage bulbs can be emptied without detaching them from the belt. Health care providers and patients throughout the country have welcomed the DRAM Belt.

### **Benefits and features of the DRAM Belt:**

- Easily concealed beneath the wearer's garments.
- Drainage bulbs are fully viewable and easily accessible for periodic monitoring and emptying.
- Each DRAM Belt can support up to four drainage devices.
- Made of waterproof vinyl so that patients can wear the DRAM belt while showering or bathing.
- Comes in assorted sizes for children and adults.
- Utilizes convenient and safe hook and loop closures for fast and easy adjustments; no more tape or pins.

Made in the U.S.A.  
 The belt sells for \$19.95 and  
 is available by calling 310-277-6966  
 or visit the website [www.formymomllc.com](http://www.formymomllc.com).



## Revlon May 12, 2001

*Ready, Set, Go!* Yes, it is that time of year again to get ready, for the Revlon Run/Walk for Women with Breast and Ovarian Cancer. Many of you have already received your pre-registration forms. Please be sure to mark the team number as 112 on your registration form and help us to *WIN* Against Breast Cancer! For more information or a registration form, please call 626-332-2255.

## Open House

Thank you to all who supported our Open House and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on September 6, 2000.



Miss Covina-Kate Hiller, Mayor Chris Christiansen, Betsy Mullen, Shelly Blechman, Renée Gaines, Cory Calaycay and Stacey Corti all look on as the Official Ribbon Cutting ceremony takes place.

## Travels and Awards



It has been quite a busy summer and fall. WIN ABC was successful in spearheading efforts for the Breast Cancer Research Stamp reauthorization bill and once again made history in Congress. On July 28, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed the reauthorization bill into law, extending the stamp for two more years. Many of the WIN ABC supporters made this happen with all the letters of support and faxes to their legislators. Remember the stamp is still for sale. Please use the stamp on all your holiday mail. Penny by penny and stamp by stamp you are making a huge difference. Over \$18 million has been raised so far for breast cancer research. Thank You!

California Health Decisions, presented Board Member Bradford W. Edgerton, M.D., Kaiser Permanente, West Los Angeles and Betsy Mullen the Individual Award for *Involving the Public in Health Decisions*.

In September, Betsy Mullen attended the National Association of Women's Health Conference and presented, along with Patricia Sloman, R.N., M.S., of Kaiser Permanente Fontana, a workshop titled "The Breast Buddy Breast Care Program: Developing a Comprehensive Breast Care, Patient Education and Support Program". In addition, WIN ABC was presented with the NAWH 9th Annual Awards for Excellence recognizing its Special Service - National Level in the Field of Women's Health.

Betsy then flew to San Francisco to the HFMA 10th Annual Conference on Managed Care and presented a seminar on Consumer-Focused Managed Care with Sam Ho, M.D., VP of Corporate Medical Director, PacificCare Health Systems and Peter Lee, President/CEO, Pacific Business Groups on Health.

In October, Dick Pettingill, President, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan/Hospitals, California Division, and Oliver Goldsmith, M.D. Medical Director and Chair SCPMG presented Betsy Mullen with the Extra Mile Hero Award.

Throughout the fall there were numerous Breast Cancer Awareness Month Activities beginning in September and going throughout December. Betsy Mullen was the Featured Speaker as a Cancer Champion at the Emanuel Medical Center in Turlock, California. Renée Gaines visited Mendoza, Dillon & Asociados in Newport Beach for a lunch and learn Breast Health Education Program. Senator Joe Dunn invited Betsy Mullen to be the Keynote Speaker and to serve on the panel at his annual Women's Health Event, held at Anaheim Memorial Hospital, Anaheim, California. WIN ABC participated in the Citrus Valley HealthCare Partners, Oncology Education Day in Covina, California. In addition, WIN ABC attended the Kaiser Permanente Family Health Day at Baldwin Park Medical Center in Baldwin Park, California.

## Volunteers of the Quarter

Rolaine Bash, Adam Blechman, Robbie Blechman, Stacey Corti, Nancy Corti, Desirée Gaines, Larry Gaines, Vickie Madrid, Mary Beth McNair, Ken Mullen and Elise Rose.

*"Volunteers give us  
the wings to fly."*

*We need volunteers to work in our office.  
Please call 626-332-2255!*

## In Memory Of

Maria Baglioni  
From Enrichetta Potter

Eugene Bohem  
From Larry Schwartz

Lai Man Chu  
From Paula Tanguay

Getrude Cook  
From Larry Schwartz

Shirley Dornbusch  
From Catherine & Joseph  
Stradinger

Lynda Halsey  
From Margaret Bloom

Marilyn McElroy  
From Carol Lewis

George Mullen  
From Jane Fisher  
From Ken & Betsy Mullen

Joan Munoz  
From Denise Bloch

Christine Ann Pardo  
From Sandy Hoffman

Jerry Riordan  
From Larry Schwartz

Katherine Ryan  
From Ronald La Conte

Vera Tacknoff  
From Linda Wright

## Grants and Donations

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NORCAL  
Ralph's Grocery  
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Subway  
Von's Grocery

# From our President/CEO:

*Betsy Mullen*



In Honor of  
Walter Allen's 50<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday

- Shelly Blechman
- Michael Catania
- George & Shirley Chadwick
- Albert & Paula Cheatham
- Retha Champion
- Mayor & Mrs. Chris Christiansen
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- Cynthia Rainey
- Faye Rogers
- Joanne Rumppler
- Kathryn Slimak
- Darcel Woods
- Fred Young

As we reflect upon the past year, Shelly, Renée and I wish to express our gratitude for the privilege we have had in serving so many. The message below is one of the many notes we received this year that serves as our inspiration and a constant reminder of why the WIN organization exists:

"Dear WIN ABC,

Thank you so much for your new friendship, love, prayers and support. I have been truly blessed and renewed by your staff and WIN ABC. You have provided me with information. Knowledge is power! You held my hand as I went through the Stem Cell process. That meant so much to me. I thank God that He put you in my life as I go through this journey. WIN ABC, you are the best!

Love, *Justine*"

We ask that you send a gift of love to WIN ABC, to enable us so to help the many individuals, like Justine, who turn to us for support from the time they are diagnosed, throughout their treatment and recovery from breast cancer. You can make a difference!

Wishing you and yours a magical and healthy Holiday Season.

Fondly,

**4** *Betsy*



"Fund the Fight. Find a Cure."

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