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Ellington Resident Honored at 15th Annual Komen Connecticut Race for the Cure

HARTFORD – July 7, 2008 – Diane Harrington of Ellington was named 2008 New Balance Survivor at the Komen Connecticut Race for the Cure on Saturday June 7, 2008. Harrington was honored for her strength in battling her own breast cancer and her dedication to raising awareness about the disease.

A National Series Sponsor of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure® since 1991, New Balance honors and supports the fight to find a cure for breast cancer by recognizing survivors at more than 100 Races across the country. As the New Balance Survivor, Harrington has been outfitted with New Balance Lace Up for the Cure® shoes and apparel.

A tireless advocate for monthly self-exams with a slightly unconventional story, Harrington was a prime candidate for this designation. After going for her annual mammogram in April of 2007, Harrington passed with a clean bill of health. However, a few weeks later, she found a lump on her right breast during a monthly self-breast exam. "I thought, 'This can't be what I'm thinking it is. It must be something else.' I waited 24 hours, hoping it would go away, but it was still there," said Harrington.

Harrington saw her doctor the next day, and after an ultrasound and biopsy, it was confirmed that she had breast cancer in her right breast. Harrington soon found out that she only knew half the story, because her left breast had never been examined. After an MRI, a cancerous lump was also found on the left breast. Shortly thereafter, Harrington underwent a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery, procedures that took over 7 hours combined.

After the "roller-coaster" experience of being diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 62 with no family history of the disease, Harrington realized that women were not taking enough interest in their health and wellness. "I began targeting every woman I knew to emphasize the importance of self exams instead of relying solely on mammograms," she said. Harrington even offered to go with women to get their first mammograms if they didn't want to go alone. "I don't want women to be afraid of their bodies or talking about health problems."

Because she was so vocal about her experiences, her co-workers at the Connecticut Supreme Court decided to start a Race for the Cure team in her honor, called Harrington's Heroes. A team of 25 participated in the 15th Annual Komen Connecticut Race for the Cure, becoming one of the Race's most successful fundraisers. Inspired by Harrington's bravery and positive attitude, this was the first year that many of the members participated in the Race.

When asked how she would advise other women diagnosed with breast cancer, Harrington said, “Hope. There’s so much hope out there that we can’t give up, we have to keep spreading the word. We have to continue to educate women about taking care of themselves and their health issues. We need to take care of ourselves first so that we can take care of others. We don’t have to die from this disease. We have to stay in there and battle.”

About Susan G. Komen for the Cure® Nancy G. Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1982, that promise became Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and launched the global breast cancer movement. The Connecticut Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure® is working to better the lives of those facing breast cancer in the local community. They join more than 100,000 breast cancer survivors and activists around the globe as part of the world’s largest and most progressive grassroots network fighting breast cancer. Through events like the Race for the Cure, Komen Connecticut Affiliate funding for statewide programs and Komen international research funding -- together -- have made a \$17 million impact on Connecticut over 15 years. Not only has the Affiliate made substantive distributions statewide to local breast cancer organizations and programs and to international research, but international research dollars are being funneled back into the state. For more information, call (860) 728-4955 or visit komenct.org.

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