

# Marin Breast Cancer Watch honors local healers, survivors

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Each year since 1999, Marin Breast Cancer Watch has honored members of the community who have made significant contributions and offered support to women suffering from breast cancer. The community's ability to provide nominees worth honoring is a testament to Marin's dedication and compassion for those dealing with the debilitating disease.

"This is my third Honor Thy Healer and I'm increasingly impressed with how many people in our community are supporting women and family in so many different ways," said MBCW Executive Director Janice Barlow. "It is really amazing that a community has responded so uniformly."

MBCW was founded in 1995 by a group of Marin residents who wanted to find out why so many women close to them had been affected by breast cancer. They dedicated themselves to investigating the effect the environment may have, pursuing research closely linked to the problem and increasing awareness throughout Marin and the Bay Area.

Honor Thy Healer was a way for MBCW to thank those individuals who help women with breast cancer in their healing process or contribute to a healthier environment and as a result, uphold the ideals espoused by MBCW's founding members.

Those honored have ranged from health and healing professionals to researchers and breast cancer advocates. Individuals are nominated by members of the Bay Area community and chosen by the MBCW board of directors. Those honored donate their support in different ways; however, the source of

their concern is the same.

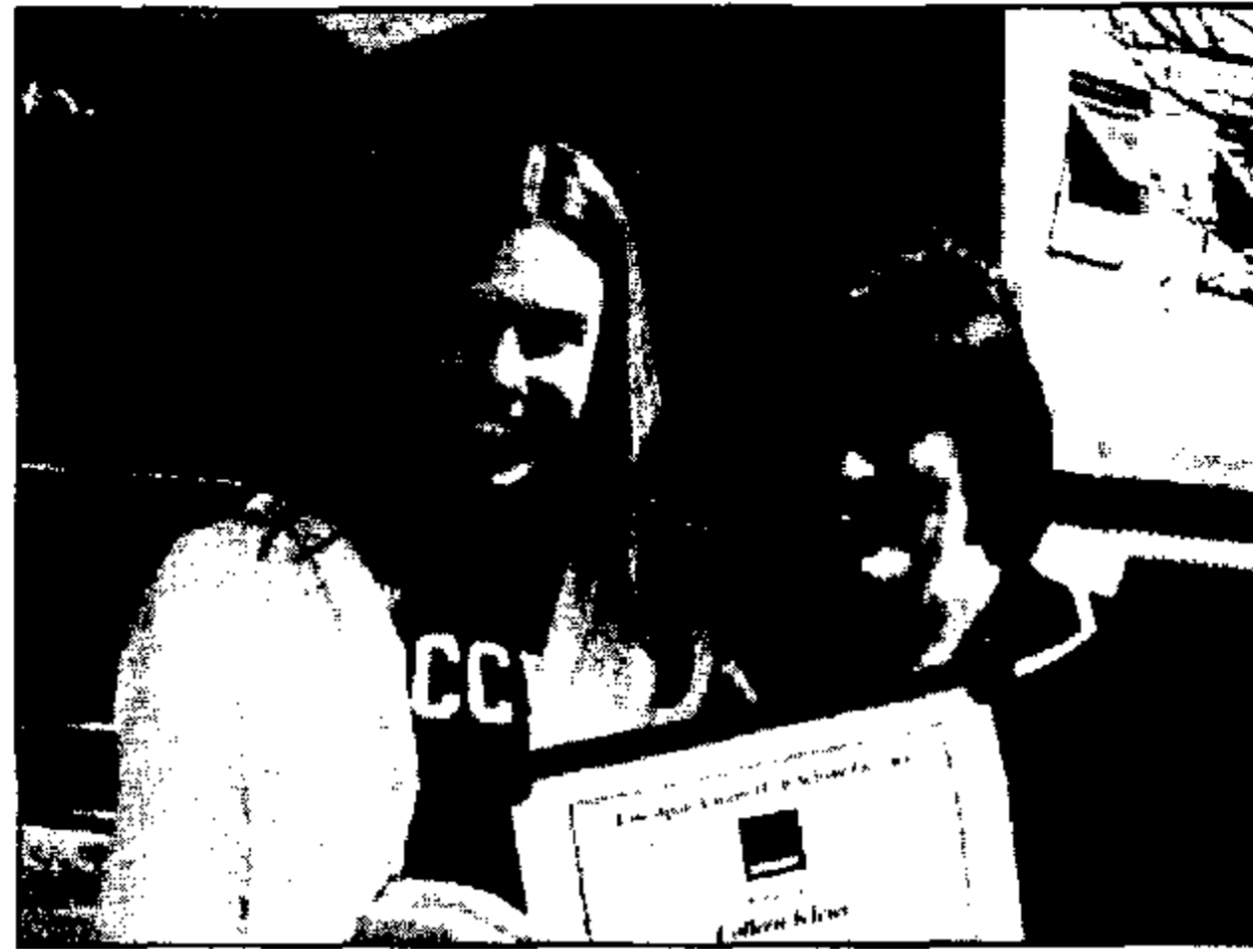
"I think people who contribute in this way have a unique sense of empathy," said Barlow. "They can put themselves in someone else's position. I also think you have to have a great sense of community."

This year's theme involves advocacy and activism to raise awareness about causes, prevention and treatment of breast cancer. The March 18 event at the Embassy Suites Hotel will be led by honorary chair Jim Gerber, CEO of Western Athletic Clubs, a company that has committed itself to using its assets and resources to address important community issues. Jim was instrumental in designing the Impact Program, an innovative exercise program for cancer patients. The Bay Club Marin is dedicated to caring for the community by supporting many of the county's breast cancer advocacy organizations including Marin Breast Cancer Council, the Breast Cancer Fund, the American Cancer Society and MBCW.

The Twin Cities will be represented with two recipients of awards. Colleen Kleier, who is being recognized with the Shining Star Youth Award, is a junior at Redwood High. Having lost her maternal grandmother to breast cancer, and aware of the high rate of breast cancer in Marin, Kleier formed a Breast Cancer Awareness Club at Redwood in order to educate her peers about ways they can reduce the risk of the disease. She received accommodating support from her classmates and the weekly meetings now attract around 25 students.

"People think it is a really great thing because they know someone who has had it or has it," said Kleier.

Though she understands the



Above: Nancy Neu, principal of Redwood High School, with Colleen Kleier, a Redwood student receiving the Shining Star Youth Award. Below: Rosa Maria Hayden, recipient of the Shining Star Award, and Cathy Tobin, who won the Healing Partner Award. The ceremony is March 18.



value of her efforts, the award came as a tremendous shock.

"I didn't even know about the award," Kleier stated. "When I was called and told, I was extremely surprised."

Barlow believes that Kleier's interest and determination is an inspiration.

"It's the first time that we've given a youth award," Barlow said. "It is amazing that Colleen



started a club on her own in an effort to become informed about breast cancer."

The other member of the Twin Cities community who will be honored is Cathy Tobin, the administrative secretary for Chief Green at the Twin Cities Police Department for the past 10 years. Tobin is an eight-year breast cancer survivor. Her experience with the disease has

motivated her to volunteer in virtually every breast cancer organization extant. She has worked with the Marin Breast Cancer Center, participated in four three-day walks and one two-day walk for breast cancer, worked as facilitator for the Kaiser Breast Cancer Support Group and worked with MBCW. Tobin will receive the Healing Partner Award.

"So many people were there for me. I know what it means to have people there for you," said Tobin. "It's a pretty rough road and it is good to have someone there as your mentor."

Her work is well known throughout the breast cancer community.

"Cathy Tobin is so impressive because she volunteers for so many breast cancer groups," said Barlow. "Her dedication is pretty pervasive and an inspiration to all of us."

Ross is represented by one nominee, Rosamaria Hayden, an employee for the Marin Friends of Women Latina Translation and Training Breast Cancer Project in Partnership with B.R.E.A.S.T. Cancer Center, will receive the Shining Star Award. Hayden explored the services available to non-English-speaking women who were diagnosed with breast cancer, a priority for MBCW. The absence of specialized services for Spanish-speaking women and the stories she heard compelled her to begin filling the void. The appreciation she has received is a motivating factor.

"I am very proud because I feel these women are very grateful for what I am doing," said Hayden. "That is the greatest reward as a volunteer."

MBCW recognizes the importance of her work.

"We are delighted to be honoring Rosamaria," said Barlow. "Reaching out to

diverse communities is one of our goals and priorities and she represents that. It is wonderful for us to know her and what she is doing."

Others who will be honored at the event include Amy Shaw, M.D., a family practitioner working for the Sutter Medical Group of Santa Rosa Breast Care Center, who is the recipient of the Francine Levien Activist Award, created to honor an individual who embodies the spirit and vision of MBCW's founder; Laura Esserman, M.D., a surgeon at the Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center who, along with Mary Beth Fraustine, the breast care coordinator at Kaiser Permanente in San Rafael, is the recipient of the Healing Professional Award; and Peggy Reynolds, Ph.D., a research scientist at the California Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Investigation branch who is receiving the Community Breast Cancer Research award.

The awards ceremony is one of MBCW's most important events, conveying the appreciation it has for Marin's assistance in tackling the disease.

"It is one of the highlights of what we do every year for all of us," said Barlow. "We do a lot of research, education and outreach in order to have an opportunity to interact with the community. Honor Thy Healer confirms that what we are doing in the community is very valuable. It makes our work very worthwhile."

MBCW's Honor Thy Healer celebration is on March 18, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 101 McInnis Drive, in San Rafael. The reception, which begins at 6 p.m., includes a dinner and awards presentation featuring video profiles of each honoree. Tickets are \$125 per person. Contact MBCW at 256-9011.