

# **Pink Ladies of the Laurentians Breast Cancer Support Group**

August 2009

Awareness of breast cancer is growing due to widespread fundraising and educational efforts. But dealing with cancer in the abstract isn't enough. We all know someone who has been affected. For women who have received a diagnosis of breast cancer, support services in the community take on a greater meaning.

When she learned that tests had proved positive for breast cancer, Melanie Maguire felt she needed something more than just the prescribed treatment she had ahead of her, that she needed to connect with others who had received a similar diagnosis. She looked for a breast cancer support group in the Laurentians. While she located some in Montreal, up north she found only the long-established group that supports men and women with all forms of cancer. That support group fills a real need, and it is helpful to breast cancer survivors, but women with breast cancer have specific needs that they may be more comfortable discussing with other women who have been through the same experience.

The Pink Ladies of the Laurentians/Les Dames Roses des Laurentides was formed in May 2009 by Melanie Maguire and several other women, with the help of other, more distant, support groups, in order to provide a time and place where breast cancer survivors can meet and support each other in the journey to wellness. The members are women who are at all the different stages along that path. They get together in an intimate and confidential setting and can share with each other their fears and joys. As the group is relatively new, the participants learn from each other about the disease, its treatment and the coping mechanisms they have used to come through what is a physically and emotionally draining experience for all involved.

On a practical level, such a support group acts as an informal way for information on where to find products such as prostheses, specialty garments or wigs, and where to go or who to call for services in the public healthcare system and through private providers.

But the most important reason for such a group is to provide the emotional and spiritual support needed during a traumatic and demanding period in these women's lives. Exchanging with women who have been there and done that is invaluable in helping to regain strength and confidence at all stages of the battle against breast cancer, and we in the Laurentians are fortunate that a dedicated group of women has identified the need and has stepped up to create such a support group.

The Pink Ladies of the Laurentians meet at 7:00 pm on the third Wednesday of every month at Trinity Church in Ste-Agathe. Contact Melanie at: 819-217-6032 or [lesdamesroses@gmail.com](mailto:lesdamesroses@gmail.com) to learn more.

Sheila Eskenazi, President, English Communities Committee of the CSSS des Sommets