

One Promise, Two Sisters: the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure

October 16 is the date for this year's Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Honolulu, to be held at Kapiolani Park. This year 146 races will or have been held around the world, including 16 international races in 11 countries. The singular goal for all the races: a world without breast cancer.

The Susan G. Komen movement has changed the way breast cancer is spoken of, thought of, and treated. Nancy G. Brinker started the foundation in 1982, after her only sister Suzy died. In 1977, Suzy was only 34 when she was struck with breast cancer. Her physician was uninformed. Her surgeries left her feeling mutilated. Available chemotherapy and radiation drained her. Throughout Suzy's fight with breast cancer, she thought of how to ease the pain and suffering of fellow cancer victims. In her dying days, she made her sister Nancy promise that she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer once and for all. Beginning with only \$200 and a list of would-be donors, Nancy transformed every aspect of this area of medicine, including public awareness, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. In the last three decades, the work of the organization has brought about the development of many new treatment options and a higher quality of life for breast cancer patients and survivors. For the transformation that the organization achieved, President Obama awarded Nancy G. Brinker the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.

The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure series increases awareness about breast cancer and raises funds for breast cancer research and treatment. Nearly \$1.9 billion of funds raised has been invested. Women in the local community directly benefit from the money brought in by the race because 75% of the net income stays at home for breast health education and breast cancer screening and treatment. National research and training receives the remaining 25%.

Eight hundred runners ran in the first race which was held in Dallas, Texas in 1983. In 1998, the National Race for the Cure became (and remains) the largest registered 5K race in the world, according to its website. Last year, over 100,000 volunteers helped and more than 1.6 million people walked in Komen races around the world. The 2010 race in St. Louis was the largest one ever, with over 71,800 participants. Today around the globe there are more than 140 races with 1.6 million participants on four continents.

The October 16 event already has 2,420 participants and 219 teams signed up. To join the effort, you can register at www.komenhawaii.org. The website contains a list of in-person registration sites, a downloadable entry form if you want to mail your registration in, and online registration. This year's goal is \$350,000.

I've walked in past Susan G. Komen races, and look forward to participating again. It is a worthy cause, the walk is good exercise, and you get to meet people along the 5k route. I encourage you to consider joining us on October 16.