

'Miracles happen'

Breast cancer survivors, supporters send message

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Sun Media

Wearing pink T-shirts to symbolize their victory, these tough women walked or ran because they lived to tell about their hellish ordeal.

The ones surrounding them took part because they watched a loved one win the fight of their life or they lost someone to the dreaded disease.

"More and more women are surviving and I'm one of them."

Cancer survivor
Sharon Van den Broek

Regardless

of the reasons, the more than 5,100 people who participated in the CHBC Run for the Cure in downtown Winnipeg yesterday have a common goal of eradicating breast cancer so future generations of men and women don't have to don the pink shirt survivors such as Sharon Van den Broek wore.

The event, which coincided with walks across Canada, raised almost \$802,000 for breast cancer research and awareness.

Van den Broek, 60, is a survivor of breast cancer and colon cancer. "Miracles happen to ordinary people like me," she said. "More and more women are surviving, and I'm one of them."

Van den Broek, a nurse, recalled feeling devastated when she was diagnosed with breast cancer 12 years ago, just three years after she was told she had colon cancer. Then, she became determined to win the battle.

"I said, 'OK, you can take my body but you can't take my spirit.' So, then you just get up and fight," she said.

Her daughters, Amber Van den Broek and Kira Klear, were her inspiration. Klear got married two years ago, a moment her mother, at one time, didn't think she'd live to see.

The trio walked alongside people like Judy Stokes, whose family participated in memory of Stokes' 39-year-old daughter Cheryl

Brockington, who died of breast cancer in 2002.

"You always think

you're the only one it's affected but when you come (to this event) and see how many it's affected it's just overwhelming," Stokes said. "I always think my daughter's looking down on us and she's very proud of what we're doing."

Survivors weren't the only ones looking pretty in pink — a group of young men and women painted themselves pink from head to toe and, in the case of the men, wore only their underwear as they walked in the cold and drizzling rain.

"There's a lot of people out here who've battled breast cancer. We can handle 30 minutes in the cold," said Greg Boese, who walked with friends Chris Jack, Erin Mrena, Faith Cormier, Brendan Curran-Johnson, A. J. Kennedy, Kevin Morris and Brent Milljour.

Others participants showed their appreciation by applauding the university students as they walked the five-km route or posing for pictures with them at the closing ceremonies at MTS Centre.

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PHOTOS BY BRIAN DONOCH/SUN MEDIA EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

Men and women painted pink (above) take part in the Run for the Cure. At right, survivor Sharon Van den Broek (centre) is seen with daughters Amber (left) and Kira Klear who were her inspiration. Below right, Sonny McNabb carries a picture of his mother.



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