

RACE FOR THE CURE, 2002

Laurie's Speech: Cancer, Cohesion and Courage

This is truly a day of justice for all of us in pink. It takes guts to show this much pride in our survivor-hood. You wearing your pink shirts, year after year, gives me the courage to wear mine today. Because for those of us who have or have had cancer, this is one of the few places we realize we are really in it together.

Illness is humbling and starkly revealing. There is isolation that breeds powerlessness, an almost natural disservice to yourself. In the real world, no one can make you inferior without your consent.

In cancer, there is another actuality. There is the ability to see the remarkable. There is more beauty, triumph and truth in an infusion room than you will ever see on a stage, in a stadium or in song.

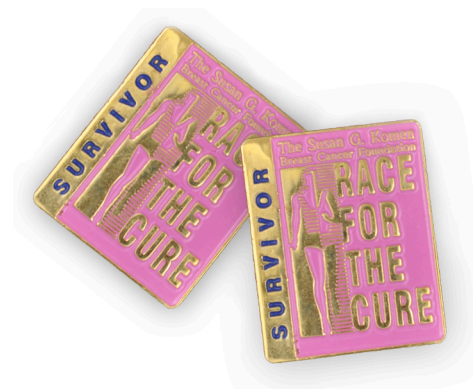
Our lives are in a pendulum swing. For some of us we share a disquieting intimacy, for others, total uncertainty. And so many of us are living in a state of anxiety, known as remission, obsessed with the idea of relapse, wrestling with hope, faith and advocacy.

One definition of 'human' is to the characteristic of frailty and especially susceptibility to fear and weakness. These are not weaknesses, but are reflections of some qualities of mankind.

At the Central New York Affiliate, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, our true rest is in the service of our neighbor. We take upon toilsome and difficult tasks on a day-to-day basis to do everything in our power to further the mission of eradicating breast cancer as a life-threatening disease by advancing research, education, screening, and treatment.



*Laurie Mezzalingua
President of the CNY Komen
Race for the Cure 2002*



We promise to continue to bear the sufferings of our neighbors, and to be a voice here in our community, where we can water the garden we've worked so hard to flower.

We want to live, survive and thrive in this community.

We want to greet each day with praises rather than curses.

We will continue to reach out to you as long as you accept us.

We will fight the disease in public as well as in private.

There is tough talk, and then there is the fear that comes from being human. There are huge obstacles. But we will conquer them.

As my friend once said to me, I've cheered, cried and cheered. This is the epitome of our culture, and ironically, of this disease.

You, the survivors who gather around this stage in whatever weather the day brings us, to celebrate our lives: You have truly made us who we are.

Laurie Mezzalingua shared these words with all to whom cancer is personal.

*Blessed is the influence
of one true,
loving soul upon another*

GEORGE ELIOT



Laurie and Cindy Cherry

