

# HERS Breast Cancer Foundation

January 2017 Newsletter

## Happy New Year!

We are looking ahead to a new year with optimism and renewed energy. And we already have some great news to share!

First, we are pleased to announce several **new board members**. Dr. Rishi Sawhney, Don Briones, and Jennifer Kindred were officially added to our board of directors in December. Please join us in welcoming these talented and dedicated members. You can [read more about them](#) on our web site.

Second, board member **Kirstin Litz was honored with the Harmon E. Burns Award**, given annually to a Franklin Templeton employee who has made extraordinary contributions to their community.



The award includes a \$10,000 donation to a nonprofit chosen by the award winner. We are humbled and honored that Kirstin chose HERS to be the recipient. We couldn't be more proud of her, or more grateful for her hard work as volunteer and board member. We thank Kirstin and Franklin Templeton for the generous contribution, which will help us serve more Bay Area breast cancer survivors. Don't miss this [inspiring video](#) about Kirstin's work in the community, at HERS and beyond.

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## People with Purpose: A Pink Tie Gala

Please plan to join us **April 1, 2017** at Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton for our **2nd Annual Pink Tie Gala** to celebrate People With Purpose.

[Tickets are available online.](#)

Invite your friends and family and make it a night to remember!

Each year, we honor several People with Purpose – dedicated community leaders who contribute their expertise and resources to support breast cancer survivors. We will announce the honorees and share their stories with you in the weeks to come.



Last year's Gala was a huge success, and a fun night out for all the attendees. Castlewood is a beautiful venue – its gorgeous ballroom looks out over sweeping views of Pleasanton's hills and valleys. Guests will mingle during the cocktail hour, then enjoy dinner and dessert, inspiring speeches from honorees, a fun auction, dancing, and an all around celebration of life.

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## Vicki Goss: Volunteer and Smile Starter

Vicki Goss knows a little TLC goes a long way. In 2009, she founded the ChemoCare Bag Ministry to bring comfort to women going through breast cancer treatment.



The ChemoCare Bags Ministry has given out more than 600 bags in 22 states and two countries. The hand sewn bags are designed to accompany women to therapy and are filled with useful and fun items. Along with Susi Folks, a previous partner in the ministry who has since moved to Texas and started a similar service through her church, Vicki has been honored with the 2015 People With Purpose award and the 2015 Jefferson Award for community service.



*Vicki shared her story with us:*

I discovered a HERS brochure in a goodie bag given away at a fundraising walk. I contacted Vera to see about including the brochure in our bags. We met to discuss the ChemoCare Bag ministry and have been associated ever since. HERS is very supportive of our ministry. I am always asked to share a table at fund raising or awareness events. I feel as though I am part of the staff and the organization.

I volunteer at Stanford Valley Care in Pleasanton each Tuesday. Having had breast cancer and chemotherapy 10 years ago, I try to offer encouragement to the HERS clients that come through the door.

My favorite thing about this work is making women smile. Many times, women coming to HERS for the first time look terrified. I try, in some small way, to ease their fears. I tell them I am a 10 year survivor and that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I try to share only positive things about my breast cancer and chemotherapy – how I never got sick, how quickly your hair grows back, or even some makeup tricks. Often after meeting with the breast care specialist and seeing that they can look and feel whole again, their face softens, their shoulders come down and their voice changes. Hugs are the norm at HERS. No one leaves without knowing they are loved and cared about.

I have had the opportunity to meet women that have received a ChemoCare Bag through HERS. I supply bags to many locations and most of the time I don't meet the recipients. Women often tell me that the bag came at just the right time, a dark time when they needed that dose of encouragement. People tell me that it is very special to receive a gift of "hope" from someone you have never met. Sometimes when I am wondering if these bags make a difference in someone's life, I get my own dose of encouragement. I find the hardest part of my ministry is talking to women with failed surgeries and recurrences. Going on this journey once is more than enough. It breaks my heart to see women enduring multiple treatments and surgeries.

This ministry has providing me with healing and ongoing inspiration. It has strengthened my faith and my resolve. There is nothing more powerful than the love of God and how He works in the lives of others.

I was an HR Manager for an automotive firm for 20 years. In retirement, I enjoy my church, traveling, volunteering and making ChemoCare Bags.

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## Staff Spotlight: Pam Condy

Pam works for HERS as a Breast Care Specialist. She currently works at the program stores at Stanford Health Care/Valley Care in Pleasanton (Tuesdays only) and Washington Hospital in Fremont.

*Pam shared with us a little about herself and her job:*



I have been with HERS for 5 years, making me the longest working Breast Care Specialist at HERS.

I am a Certified Breast Care Specialist and proud to be one. HERS is a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) provider, licensed at federal and state levels. I work directly with breast cancer patients before and after surgery, providing prostheses, bras and lymphedema garment fittings. This job requires a person to wear many hats and work with the team to provide the best and most positive services to our customers.

I have a BA in Sociology, and have worked as a social worker. I also worked at AT&T for 18 years as a project and account manager. I am also proud to have been instrumental in founding SAVE, an organization that supports and shelters individuals and families dealing with domestic violence. Now that I am back in the non-profit world, I feel I have come full circle to where I was meant to be.

I truly love my job with HERS. I feel blessed to work with a non-profit that helps women with breast cancer. These brave women are absolutely the best part of my job.

I had a patient who was deeply depressed. She was hunched over, angry, and didn't want to be at the fitting. She only made the appointment because her son was getting married and she didn't want to embarrass him. As fitters, we must adapt to our patients, and I knew I had to be tender, kind and confident with her – and it worked! When she left HERS she was standing tall with a restored confidence that showed in her countenance. For the first time since her surgery, she experienced looking and feeling like she had before cancer, and it lifted her spirits. This experience changed me and I knew I was in the right job for all the right reasons...to make a difference in the lives of these women who come to us seeking hope and renewal.

I grew up knowing my mother had a very serious heart condition and my earliest memories of this deeply affected me. I believe that growing up with a parent who was in and out of hospital my entire life helped me become insightful, intuitive, and compassionate, which lends itself to the work I do now.

The type of person who becomes a Breast Care Specialist/Fitter would naturally feel the pain and sadness that comes with some patients. I have cried with my patients and alone. My co-workers all care as much as I do – we make sure to lift each other up. We pull ourselves together and greet the next patient with a warm smile.

In my time at HERS, I have learned how important it is to be flexible and adaptable, which hasn't always been my forte. But change is necessary, and it has been inspiring to watch HERS evolve and grow as an organization. In the past five years, HERS has expanded to three hospitals, become an experienced provider to our lymphedema patients, developed a strong and active Board of Directors, and built the most amazing, skilled and dedicated staff.

I admire the visionaries like Vera that work to keep this non-profit a viable business. I'm immensely proud of the important services we provide to women with breast cancer regardless of their ability to pay. I say it all the time: "I love my job and I'm so lucky to be working at HERS!"

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## Don't Forget to Smile!

Everyone shops on Amazon, right? Did you know you could raise money for HERS while you shop? Start at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), and select HERS Breast Cancer Foundation as your Amazon Smile beneficiary. Each time you shop at Amazon, simply start at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). Every little bit helps. Thank you!



**HERS Breast Cancer Foundation**

**Program Stores:**

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