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Trailing for Triumph

Breast cancer is like a masked burglar in the darkest part of night. It sneaks up behind women and robs them of their femininity, their hair, their energy to do simple, daily tasks and sometimes it even robs them of their lives. But one thing that breast cancer can never take away is hope. Not a single woman goes down without putting up a good fight. These women struggle with a monster that affects 1 out of every 8 women. In 2012 alone, 39,510 women are expected to lose this battle. However, there are ways to decrease these tragic numbers for future years and I am proud to say that I am a participant in an annual event that helps to sponsor this research.

Trailing for Triumph is an organization that gathers local area horseback riders together for one weekend every September to raise money for the fight against breast cancer. To participate, each rider must reach a certain goal of money raised and bring it with them to the ride. Since it was founded eight years ago, Trailing for Triumph has raised upwards of around \$150,000 for breast cancer research and the care, treatment, and support of local women and their families who are battling breast cancer. This wonderful organization supports the Mammography Assistance Program, which helps to ensure that every woman who needs a screening or diagnostic mammogram can receive one. It also helps to sponsor basic needs such as mortgage, rent and utilities payments, child care, groceries, and transportation. Just a simple gas card or repairs to a car can help patients to get to their treatments. For obvious reasons, if I were able to donate fifty dollars to any local charity, it would certainly be Trailing for Triumph.

Breast cancer is second, only to lung cancer, in cancer deaths among women in the United States. However, studies show that early detection and diagnosis, (which are typically done by mammograms), are the best ways to beat this disease. About 80-90% of breast cancer in women who don't show symptoms will be detected by mammography. In 2011, Trailing for Triumph donations helped 142 women get the supplies and screenings they needed for their fight against breast cancer.

There are 2.9 million breast cancer survivors alive in the U.S. today - the largest group of all cancer survivors. I can joyfully say that my grandma and my mom's best friend, who is like a second mother to me, are a part of this group. However, I also know of those who weren't so lucky. My uncle died of lung cancer a few years ago and my aunt is still battling breast cancer today. Breast cancer isn't hereditary. In fact, the most significant risk factors are being female and getting older, but those who have a family history of it and are diagnosed typically have a more aggressive form of it. It is no wonder that this is an issue that is very close to my heart.

Every two minutes another woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. That means that every two minutes another daughter, sister, wife or mother is diagnosed with a disease that could rip her away from her family. There is a song that says it tragically, but truly and beautifully: "Cancer doesn't discriminate, or care you're just thirty-eight." Treatment for breast cancer is incredibly expensive and not everyone can afford it. One single mother who was battling it wasn't going to be able to buy presents for her young kids for Christmas. Because of Trailing for Triumph, there were gifts nestled under the tree on Christmas morning. It may just be a small organization but Trailing for Triumph truly helps breast cancer patients and their families triumph one trail at a time.