

February 2022

# BCAK NEWS



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## Support Facilitators

Last month we reached out to members of BCAK (and the public through our Facebook account) asking for those who might be interested in taking a course in order to facilitate support groups in our health region. Our facilitators are breast cancer survivors who volunteer their time once a month (or as needed) to allow women who have been affected by breast cancer to come together in a secure and safe environment to talk about their situations and concerns.

We had an amazing response. Over 11 women will be taking the training. Breast Cancer Action Ottawa will be giving the course on line. If you expressed interest but have not heard from Lynne Funnell, please contact her directly at: [president@bcakingston.ca](mailto:president@bcakingston.ca).

## Membership 2022

Our 2022 membership campaign is off to a good start. As of January 31<sup>st</sup> we have 52 paid members, nine of whom are new members this year. Of note is the fact that 17 of those ticked the box to say they were interested in volunteering. Membership cards are sent in batches and so far 40 cards have been mailed. If you have paid and not received your membership card email: [email.bcak@gmail.com](mailto:email.bcak@gmail.com).

## Volunteers

We are hoping to be able to participate in and hold events this year that require volunteers (other than the golf tournament and walk). We have built a database in Access and are now able to send individual letters to each prospective volunteer when the need arises. When you fill out your membership application for 2022 let us know if you are interested in volunteering and you will be added to our list.

At the moment we are beginning to re-organize the "Hands-On" program. This has been resurrected from 10 years ago and we hope to extend it to all of the South Eastern Ontario health region. We have 24 breast kits in stock at the moment and will be training volunteers how to demonstrate (using the kits) proper self examination. We will have a visual arts presentation available and lots of hand outs.

We are looking for a committee head/chair. This person may have some medical background and be comfortable working with volunteers and the public. She/he will organize the program, oversee volunteer training, set up demonstrations within the community and schedule volunteers to man the demonstrations. If this interests you please email: [email.bcak@gmail.com](mailto:email.bcak@gmail.com).

We also need 4 to 6 volunteers to take the training and be the spokespersons who go out into the community to present the program. Again, if interested email: [email.bcak@gmail.com](mailto:email.bcak@gmail.com).

With sincere thanks to our generous donors to Breast Cancer Action Kingston in the month of January.

ALEXIS GIRLING

ASHLEIGH FORSYTH

BEV MARTIN

CONFRONTING CANCER TOGETHER FUND

IRENE WITZKE

JULIA BARAN

LYNDA KEELER

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS #12309

MANULIFE INVESTMENTS - "ON BEHALF OF" HEIDI BLONDIN

MANULIFE INVESTMENTS - "ON BEHALF OF" ANGELA MILLER

MARY CASSIDY

RYAN HOBART

SUE DAVIES

WOMEN'S HEALTH IN FOCUS



I would like to make a donation in my father's name, he passed away a year ago and after he passed we learned that he carried the BRCA2 gene (which I have, 2 year BC survivor). His many golf buddies at Comox Valley kindly took up donations and my brother and I would like to thank them for their generosity and their continued loyalty to my dad.

Ashleigh Forsyth

## Wilderness Retreat

The BCAK Wilderness Retreat (May 27 - 29) is a go!! We have the 20 people necessary to book the site. At the moment Retreat organizer, Serena Taylor, is working on the cost, the itinerary, resort information and the application form and will be contacting all the ladies who expressed interested very shortly.

If you didn't get your name on the list and are interested, email: [email.bcak@gmail.com](mailto:email.bcak@gmail.com) as soon as possible. We will be asking for a \$150.00 deposit with the application form and spaces are limited

The cost will include bus transportation to and from Foresters Falls; two dinners, two breakfasts, two lunches and the Saturday morning whitewater adventure as well as other resort activities.





## Metastatic Breast Cancer

### What is Metastatic Breast Cancer

Metastatic breast cancer (mBC) is defined as the spread of breast cancer cells to areas of the body other than where the cancer first formed. It is also referred to as advanced, secondary, or Stage IV breast cancer. Breast cancer that has travelled to other areas is called metastasis (plural – metastases). Though breast cancer cells can spread to almost any part of the body, they most commonly spread to the bones. Other common sites include the lungs, liver, brain and skin.

Metastasis can be diagnosed before or after initial treatment of cancer in the breast, or it might occur with a recurrent breast cancer (breast cancer that returns following a period where it could not be detected). When detected with the initial breast cancer diagnosis, it is referred to as “de novo”. In Canada, approximately 10 percent of breast cancer is diagnosed metastatic de novo. In addition approximately 30% of early stage breast cancer will develop into mBC.

### Life Expectancy with mBC

Unlike earlier stage breast cancer, mBC is incurable and eventually fatal. The 5-year survival rate for Canadian women with mBC is currently 22% (compared to 100% for stage 1 cancer, 93% for stage 2 and 72% for stage 3). Consequently, an mBC diagnosis is scary and can be devastating not only for the patient but also for loved ones.

On a more positive note, research and new developments in cancer treatment have led to increased life expectancy for mBC patients. Many health professionals and patients now refer to mBC as a chronic, rather than fatal illness. Like other chronic illnesses, the physiological effects of mBC and side effects of treatment impact daily life. Because fighting this disease is an ongoing battle, many with mBC refer to themselves as warriors (rather than simply survivors).

### Someone I know has mBC – What Can I Do?

Hearing that someone close you has mBC can be devastating and may be difficult to accept, but in the long run, most people will want to provide support and

**BREAST CANCER IN CANADA**

Metastatic Breast Cancer (mBC) occurs when cancerous cells spread and grow in areas of the body other than where they first formed.

The most common sites where cancer cells spread to are:

- Bones** (An initial breast cancer diagnosis of mBC is referred to as de novo metastatic breast cancer)
- Lungs**
- Liver**
- Brain**

About 10% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have an initial diagnosis of mBC

mBC is also known as advanced, secondary, or Stage IV breast cancer

About 30% of women who are diagnosed with early stage breast cancer will go on to develop mBC

mBC is incurable. The goal of treatment is to slow the growth of the cancer cells, prevent them from growing, and to manage the symptoms of mBC.

The 5-year relative survival of women diagnosed with mBC is 22%

Stage	5-year relative survival rate
Stage 0	100%
Stage I	100%
Stage II	93%
Stage III	72%
Stage IV	22%

References

[https://cbcnc.ca/en/what\\_is\\_mbc](https://cbcnc.ca/en/what_is_mbc)  
[https://www.extraordinarymoments.ca/20cldi-CjKCOjwvITsBRCnARisAAwwD-S\\_rF9QirTV5oHnzuFOQsAResS3wNizen5IP/mxaAtza-wicGT6HkaA8LEALw\\_wCB](https://www.extraordinarymoments.ca/20cldi-CjKCOjwvITsBRCnARisAAwwD-S_rF9QirTV5oHnzuFOQsAResS3wNizen5IP/mxaAtza-wicGT6HkaA8LEALw_wCB)  
<https://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/breast/prognosis-and-survival/survival-statistics/?region=bc>

- cont.,  
comfort to a loved one. You might wonder – what can I do?
- Inform yourself about the disease - most importantly, understand that mBC is incurable (see attached infographic and references below).
  - Do not try to cheer up the person by telling them they'll get over it just like your cousin who had stage 1 cancer. This can be very disheartening and depressing – a person with mBC knows they will not “get over it”.
  - Ask how you can help and provide it as requested.
  - Be a confidant to listen, a shoulder to cry on when needed, a cheery companion when appropriate.
  - Some people have a difficult time accepting bad news. It is important for your loved one to know that you acknowledge the facts, hard as that may be, especially if the person is younger or has a more aggressive cancer.
  - Perhaps most importantly, continue the relationship you had before the diagnosis but within the “new normal”, whatever that may be. With today’s healthcare many people with mBC are living longer and gratifying lives.

#### References

[What is Metastatic Breast Cancer – Canadian Breast Cancer Network \(cbcnc.ca\)](#)  
[2020 Metastatic Breast Cancer Infographic \(cbcnc.ca\)](#)  
[Survival statistics for breast cancer | Canadian Cancer Society](#)

*Elizabeth Johnson*

*Elizabeth is a BCAA member who has metastatic breast cancer. Elizabeth will be doing a series of articles on mbc in upcoming issues and is looking for other members with mbc who might be interested in forming a support group. If you are interested, drop an email to: [email.bcaa@gmail.com](mailto:email.bcaa@gmail.com).*

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While on the topic of *Metastatic Breast Cancer*, Board Member Joan Cristoveanu sent along this article that may be of interest to members. Apparently there is a petition going around on change.org advocating fast tracking of this drug to clinical trials : [Breast cancer: New drug halts spread in mice \(medicalnewstoday.com\)](#)

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As part of a project that the Canadian Breast Cancer Network is undertaking to better understand the unique experiences of people diagnosed with **triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) and metastatic triple negative breast cancer (mTNBC)**, we will be holding virtual focus groups in February 2022. These focus groups will be 1.5 hours in length and will help inform CBCN’s programming for TNBC and mTNBC as well as a survey that will be widely distributed across Canada.

Please [email Jenn Gordon - jgordon@cbcnc.ca](mailto:jgordon@cbcnc.ca) if you are interested in participating in one of these focus groups and sharing your unique experience.

## BCAA in the Community

**Save the Date.... March 23, 2022. Kingston Frontenacs hockey at the Leon's Centre.**

BCAA will be on hand for the Frontenacs versus Ottawa 67s hockey game March 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will have a booth in the concourse similar to previous years with our Pink items and information packages displayed. Tickets are on sale on our website for \$19.50 each. As an added bonus, we have set up a link that will kick back \$2.00 to BCAA for every ticket bought through the link, so it’s a small fundraiser for us as well as an awareness event. This information is also on our website.

To purchase tickets : <https://frontenacs.isportstix.com/order/group/BCAA/>

## Covid Support

In these difficult times we are thinking about all members past and present. Functioning within this pandemic is isolating and hard. When you add cancer, or cancer treatment, delayed treatment, isolation, or covid itself, things become even more challenging.

While omicron is reputed to be milder, that is not true for everyone and depends upon individual circumstances. Even those who have had mild Covid know it can still be difficult. Fatigue, isolation, and symptoms can linger. Omicron is also likely to affect more of us, even those who have been vaccinated and careful.

We would like to make sure everyone in our cancer family is well supported through the ongoing stresses of this pandemic. To this end, we would like to offer support to anyone who would appreciate some friendly contact, an opportunity to speak with a member who has had Covid, or any other assistance you may need. Please let us know how we can help by contacting BCAF. We will ensure that all your information is kept confidential

## Amanda's Story

In our December newsletter we asked our members to help make Christmas a little more bearable for a local family. Over 30 of our members sent cards to Spencer and Ryerson Hulton and their mom, member Amanda Hulton, was most appreciative. Amanda was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma spread to lymph nodes Aug. 16, 2018. Three years of constant treatment ended for Amanda in 2021.

This December Amanda had some devastating news. The breast cancer metastasized to the humerus in her right arm. She has to start all over again.

It turns out Amanda is quite a writer. She began a blog and wrote some very poignant stories in the blog. <https://www.breastcancerbeyond.com>. Her story is worth the read if you have time.

Amanda decided to help others affected so she partnered with her good friend, Jessica Bright of Stella and Dot to raise funds for BCAF. In 2020 Jessica's commissions for the month of October (\$400.00) were donated and this year the fundraiser netted \$925.00. BCAF are so appreciative of Amanda and we hope we can continue to help her through yet another difficult period in her life.

## And in closing...

Our exercise programs are now back in session in our gym. We are waiting to hear from the Royale when our aquafit program can begin.



2022 BREAST CANCER ACTION KINGSTON

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**MEMBERSHIP** is renewable on an annual basis (January to December) for a fee of:

- Basic: \$35.00 for an individual (survivor or supporter), family of a survivor (at the same address) or a charitable organization
- Gold: \$55.00 includes Exercise classes, Yoga, Aqua Activities and Chestmates (A Chestmate must be a breast cancer survivor). Tax receipt provided for \$35.00 membership fee but not Activity fee of \$20.00
- Corporate: \$55.00 for agencies and corporations/organizations.

Membership payments are deemed donations and a charitable tax receipt will be issued.

Charity number: 89056 7241 RR0001

Please complete the form below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment can be made at the office with cash, cheque, credit card or Interac or by mail to Breast Cancer Action Kingston 110 - 650 Dalton Avenue, Kingston K7M 8N7. We also accept e-transfers at: [donations@bcakingston.ca](mailto:donations@bcakingston.ca) (please be sure to give us your phone # or email address in the comment line of your bank's e-transfer form).

Would you like to volunteer? Yes \_\_\_\_ NOTE: Do you wish a monthly newsletter sent via email? Yes \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

If you have no email address and wish your newsletter mailed to you, please check here \_\_\_\_\_

In order to direct information to specific groups, we would like the following information.

**IT IS NOT MANDATORY TO FILL OUT THIS SECTION. All personal information collected remains confidential.**

Age Category	UNDER 40	OVER 40	OVER 65
Physical Activity Level	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Your Interest in Group Outings, Retreats, Events, etc. (circle interest)	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Suffer from lymphedema	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Suggestions for new programs/activities:			

For more information call (613) 531-7912, email [admin@bcakingston.ca](mailto:admin@bcakingston.ca) or visit our website at <http://bcakingston.ca>