

## **Sharp Grossmont Hospital Vital Spirits Fund**

At Sharp Grossmont Hospital, the Komen funded “Vital Spirits” helps underinsured women pay for costly surgeries. Here’s a message from Clear Channel’s Little Tommy about how this grant has changed just one life – and the life of her family!

“When I had my final reconstruction surgery in July there was a \$150 co-pay. There was also a \$1000 deductible. The bill arrived just last month. When I spoke to Sharp Hospital, I told them that I was out of work and didn’t know how I could pay the bill. The woman I spoke to said that the hospital has sometimes granted financial assistance and that she would send me the forms to fill out. The forms were considerable and I had to make copies of every thing from bank statements to tax returns. I sent it all in and in less than a week I received a phone call from Sharp telling me that the Susan B. Komen Foundation would be paying the entire \$1000 and would also send me a check for the \$150 co-pay that I had already given them. I’m still in shock. I never thought that all the fundraising they do would affect me directly. Can’t even put into words what it feels like.” Look what you did Tommy. I am so proud to be a listener. I am also currently undergoing treatment for chemotherapy and financially we are struggling because I don’t qualify for disability. But I have to tell you, I am RICH! I am rich because of my friends, my family, my health (my tumor markers are down so the chemo’s working)and you guys. I can’t always listen because I have young kids, but I still love you guys to death. Please tell this story because people need to know what Susan G. Komen and your cancer team have done to impact lives. This is just one person. You are wonderful!”

## **San Diego County Cancer Navigator Komen-funded Breast Cancer Patient Navigator Grant**

Maria was diagnosed with breast cancer in September 2008. She is Latina and speaks only Spanish. Her fears about having breast cancer caused her to be reluctant to visit the doctors or talk with her family about her disease. Her daughter called Cancer Navigator and requested that **Breast Cancer Patient Navigator**, Veronica, speak with her mother. After speaking with both clients, Maria agreed to have Veronica join her at her oncologist appointment to provide translation and support. In addition, she was provided with a packet of breast cancer educational information, which included Komen materials. Following the appointment, Maria was very relieved and willing to consider the treatment options her oncologist recommended. She decided to undergo a lumpectomy. Veronica also attended Maria’s appointment to discuss chemotherapy options, which Maria decided not to have.

BCPN was instrumental in bringing expertise and support to this vulnerable patient. Both Maria and her daughter stated that it was Veronica’s presence, knowledge, and support that enabled them to move forward and make life-saving decisions. Maria said she couldn’t talk to her family about things she could discuss with Veronica. Her daughter shared that her mom is “thinking positive and most likely to follow thru because Veronica has been there for her.” Maria calls Veronica, “her guardian angel.”

## **San Ysidro Health Center’s “Mujeres con PODER”**

*San Ysidro Health Center’s Mujeres con PODER provided services to over 1000 women over age 40. Of these women, 47% had not had a mammogram in 3 or more years. The screening day case manager scheduled over 94 diagnostic mammograms at Scripps Chula Vista, and of these women, 10 were diagnosed with breast cancer.*

*Because of the expressed need for Spanish speaking support services, beginning January 2007, the PODER Program began offering support services including a support group, yoga and music therapy to breast cancer patients diagnosed through the program.*

The following letter was written by Marina Guerrero, one of the PODER patients and breast cancer survivor regarding the group and other services offered under the Komen grants.

*"Hi, my name is Marina Guerrero, I'm 48 years old, I have three children and I have "survived" breast cancer. For many days and many nights I have asked myself, "Why me? What did I do wrong?" And the more I thought about that, the more I fell into a black hole of depression. At the same time I brought my husband, my children into the depression with me. It began to affect my sisters psychologically, who were suffering in silence for me.*

*Even though I knew that having cancer was the worst, it was not like that. The worst was yet to come. Chemotherapy and Radiation were the factors that were helping me kill this enemy that was invading me, but at the same time the secondary effects made me feel very depressed.*

*Today, almost two years have past and I would like to think that I have left everything behind. I have been able to live my life to the fullest. It hasn't been easy, but a great part of my psychological recuperation I owe to the "Mujeres en PODER" support group, to which I am very grateful for. They have helped me navigate through other aspects and activities like Yoga, nutrition and music.*

*Something very special that I want to say regarding the yoga class is that I feel so identified with the group. I have achieved relaxation, but most of all I have been able to identify myself. I have found my own personal space which I am very grateful for.*

*I haven't forgotten all that I have gone through. I have begun to put more attention to my nutrition, and most off all... my family. I have learned that they are an essential part of my life and sometimes we take that for granted".*