

Health and Fitness - Sisters "Fit" For The Cure

Written by Valencia Weeks
Friday, 02 November 2012 10:19



I had the opportunity to attend the "Gift For Life Block Walk", sponsored by the Bayou City Chapter of Sisters Network. Although the Bayou City Chapter is headed by Landa Harris, I really observed a real "sisterhood" while watching all the sisters working well together to make this event a success.

Sisters Network, Inc. is a nationally recognized educational outreach initiative. The purpose for this walk was for breast cancer survivors along with other volunteers to canvass door-to-door in African American communities for the purpose of distributing breast health education, brochures, and resource information.

Some of the goals of this program are

- to inform ladies that breast cancer is curable and treatable if detected
- early emphasize to women of color that breast
- cancer is not just a white woman's disease
- understand that fear and taboos hinder one's quality of life

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- there is life after breast cancer
- inform women where to obtain a free or low cost mammogram and other breast cancer related services.



The Bayou City Chapter of Sisters Network also tied in the importance of physical exercise to staying healthy. Prior to the walk, they invited me to come in and offer warm up exercises during which time I was able to advise the ladies of proper exercise technique and explain the importance of warming up and stretching before beginning any exercise regimen including walking.

Stretching - Breast cancer treatment causes shoulder stiffness and tightness throughout the chest wall region. Stretching the arms overhead can restore motion. A stretching program that is initiated gently and progresses slowly should not cause lingering pain. Yoga, tailored to the breast cancer survivor, is increasing in popularity and is typically available at cancer centers.

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Aerobic Exercise - I recently read a study which indicated that breast cancer survivors walking nine hours a week cut their risk of dying from the disease in half. Women who exercised regularly prior to diagnosis will find it easier to return to working out, while newcomers need to focus on setting smaller goals such as walking 20 minutes three days a week.

Exercise is paramount in breast cancer recovery. Stretching, lifting weights and aerobic exercise are basic and effective. Exercise improves strength, cardiovascular fitness, quality of life and fatigue management in breast cancer survivors. For most women, returning to a favorite sport after diagnosis can be a realistic goal. As with any exercise program, it is very important that you talk with your health care provider to make sure you are cleared to begin. {jcomments on}