



Breast Cancer Network of Strength **Increasing Awareness and Support**

The United Way California Capital Region is proud to have the Breast Cancer Network of Strength as one of its 142 certified agencies in our five-county region: Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo. In early 1978 two breast cancer survivors, Mimi Kaplan and Ann Marcou embarked to make the importance of breast cancer more mainstream. Together they launched the oldest and largest national breast cancer organization while bringing much needed information and support to those in need.

Their mission: To ensure, through information, empowerment, and peer support, that no one faces breast cancer alone.

Nationally the organization hosts a 24/7 hotline called YourShoes, where callers can speak directly to a breast cancer survivor. Through the hotline, peer counselors help provide much needed information, words of encouragement, and often just someone who can relate. The Breast Cancer Network of Strength operates with the idea of building future survivors through education and knowledge sharing.

On a local level the Breast Cancer Network of Strength reaches out to women in the community who may not otherwise have an opportunity for early detection. Serving the Yolo and Sacramento areas are Victoria Nguyen and Melen Vang, as well as a variety of volunteer doctors and nurses. One volunteer, Sandy Walsh a breast cancer survivor, holds monthly open door meetings in Davis, where professional Oncologists are invited to speak about the various topics and latest research.

As for community outreach, the "A Day for You" program targets underserved and uninsured women. It is a one day event where women are provided with Breast Health Awareness, taught Breast Self Examination (BSE) and receive a Clinical Breast Exam and on-site mammogram. The team also provides women with a light healthy snack while they wait for the results of their screening. Making sure they reach the maximum amount of people, the Breast Cancer Network of Strength also provides interpreters and travel to areas with more diverse populations like grocery stores and churches. On average, 30-40% of women go without early detection, and the chapter in Yolo and Sacramento is trying to eliminate that. In 2009, their mobile outreach helped them screen nearly 1,000 women. "Phrases like 'the program cares' and 'you showed me the right way to check myself'" are often overheard by the women we help serve, "stated Melen Vang, (NEED HER TITLE).

For more information about local efforts in reducing breast cancer, contact Victoria Nguyen, Outreach Coordinator at 312-379-2290 or email at vnguyen@networkofstrength.org.

If you're interested in peer counseling or need information on breast cancer support call YourShoes at 1-800-221-2141.