

A survivor sells her heart

By Ann Marie McQueen
STAFF WRITER

WOODSTOCK - A breast cancer survivor who has been awarded the Canadian Cancer Society's top honour will speak here next week.

Carol Ann Cole has raised \$700,000 for the society through sales of the Comfort Heart. The small pewter ornament that brings comfort to cancer patients also raises money for cancer research.

On Sunday Cole will receive the cancer society's most prestigious award, the Terry Fox Citation of Honour. Despite having survived cancer, receiving the award is "probably the most humbling thing that's ever happened to me," said Cole in a telephone interview from Barrie.

The Halifax resident will tell her story Thursday night during the Oxford County cancer society unit's 50th anniversary celebration at Goff Hall.

In 1992 both Cole and her mother were diagnosed with breast cancer. The pair took radiation treatments together, but while Cole beat the disease, her mother died 11 months later.

Cole said much of her work for the cancer society is done in her mother's memory. And despite the loss, she tries to use humour to stress the positive when she tells her story.

"There is life after cancer," she said. Cole seems to strike a chord with women, who often approach her after her speaking engagements.

"They line up to share a story with me," she said. "They seem to be anxious to share a little bit of themselves, given that I've been so open."

In 1994 Cole decided to retire from her position as a vice-president at Bell Canada and become a full-time volunteer for the cancer cause. She negotiated an agreement to manufacture a pewter "worry heart" - that she had found to be a source of comfort - as a fundraiser for the cancer society. Since then about 100,000 of the hearts have sold.

Just rubbing the smooth surface of the heart can give cancer patients comfort, but they also serve as a constant reminder that they aren't alone, said Cole.

Sixty per cent of every \$10 heart goes to cancer research. Many of the people who buy the hearts for themselves, family or friends write Cole to tell their stories. She has saved dozens of those letters and plans to use them in a book on her experiences.

Cole's appearance in Woodstock Thursday is sponsored by the Zonta Club of Woodstock and will feature a display and resources by the Oxford County Board of Health and the Ontario Breast Screening Program. Tickets for the evening, which begins at 7:30 p.m., are \$5 per person.



Carol Ann Cole



CANADIAN
CANCER
SOCIETY

SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DU CANCER



OXFORD COUNTY UNIT

50 YEARS (1948-1998)

"WE ARE SURVIVORS"

JOIN US IN CELEBRATION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1998 7:30 P.M.

GOFF HALL, WOODSTOCK DISTRICT COMMUNITY COMPLEX
381 FINKLE STREET

GUEST SPEAKER: CAROL ANN COLE
BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR

PRESENTATION OF SERVICE AWARDS

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

DISPLAY AND RESOURCES BY
OXFORD COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH AND OBSP
(ONTARIO BREAST SCREENING PROGRAM)
(OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH)

EVENT SPONSORED BY THE ZONTA CLUB OF WOODSTOCK

SUPPORTERS: WOODSTOCK/OXFORD ROTARY CLUB
WOODSTOCK ROTARY CLUB
TILLSONBURG ROTARY CLUB
OXFORD DISTRICT WOMENS' INSTITUTE

TICKETS \$5.00 PER PERSON AVAILABLE FROM THE
CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY 519-537-5592 OR
BRANCH VOLUNTEERS



A special moment

Carol Ann Cole, a cancer survivor and organizer of 'The Comfort Heart Fundraising Initiative,' lights the hope candle at the 50th anniversary of the Oxford County Unit Canadian Cancer Society at the Woodstock District Community Complex. The ceremony, which was called 'We Are Survivors,' Cole was also given the Terry Fox Citation of Honour for her fight against cancer and the history of the Comfort Heart Initiative.

"For Safe & Healthy Communities" - WE helps sponsor Cancer Awareness Programs

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