



Champion

COMMUNITY *Page*

Local woman who beat breast cancer and today leads normal life is this year's Terry's Teammate

By **FANNIE SUNSHINE**

The Champion

When Carol Kerklaan was diagnosed with breast cancer nine years ago, she never saw or felt a lump.

In fact, it took a routine mammogram to detect the potentially-deadly disease.

"I started going for mammograms at the age of 40 and I was diagnosed with breast cancer 10 years later," she recalled, adding there wasn't a history of cancer in her family. "I was sent to a specialist and they did a needle biopsy but they couldn't find anything. I was told the lump was cancerous after they did the surgical biopsy."

Although she was prepared for the worst after the surgical biopsy, hearing the word 'cancer' was tough to digest.

"People always ask me how I reacted and I can't put it into words. After they told me the lump was cancerous I said, 'Okay, when do we get rid of it?'"

A week later doctors removed the lump from her right breast along with 12 lymph nodes, and informed Ms Kerklaan she would now have to go through six weeks of radiation treatment.

Five days a week she made the trip to Hamilton General Hospital for the life-saving procedure.

"It just drains you," she said, adding she didn't require chemotherapy treatment. "I felt so tired and the treatment really burns."

After the radiation sessions were over, she was prescribed tomoxophin, a cancer blocking agent, which she took every day for five years.

Nowadays, except for a yearly visit with an oncologist, Ms Kerklaan has resumed life as she once knew.

This year, the mother of four agreed to act as Terry's Teammate for the town's upcoming Terry Fox Run September 15.

Terry Fox was diagnosed with osteogenic sarcoma (bone cancer) and eventually had his right leg amputated six inches above the knee in 1977.

In 1980, at the age of 22, Mr. Fox decided to run across Canada in hopes of raising funds for cancer awareness. His journey, The Marathon of Hope, raised more than \$24 million.

Mr. Fox died in 1981 after cancer had resurfaced in his lungs.

"I had to think about it at first (acting as Terry's Teammate). For the first few years after I was diagnosed I had a hard time watching TV if they were talking about cancer. Then I thought I could help other women who are going through this by telling my story and how it affected my life and how it doesn't affect my life."

Even though she claims her outlook on life has remained relatively the same since she was diagnosed with cancer in 1994, she does admit she now lives more for the moment.

"I'm grateful for the time I've had on Earth with my family. I have a very supportive husband."

During the Terry Fox Run, Ms Kerklaan said she'll ride her bicycle alongside one of her granddaughters.

"I know the story of Terry Fox but we were living in Quebec when he did his marathon and only saw bits and pieces of it on the news. It's too bad he couldn't have finished."

Run starts at 10 a.m.

This year's run will take place on the grounds of E.C. Drury High School between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Participants can walk, run, roller blade or cycle along the 5-km route. The route is also wheelchair accessible.

Pledge forms are available at local banks, drugstores and The Champion office.

Last year, Milton's Terry Fox Run raised \$44,741, which placed the town among the top 20 contributors in Ontario.

New this year to the local run is Metres of Memories. For a donation of \$50 (tax receipt provided), 10 metres of the run will be dedicated to the memory of a loved one in the form of a 'Metres of Memory' sign with their name along the course.

A corporate challenge will also take place this year. Groups can purchase t-shirts with their company name to wear during race day.

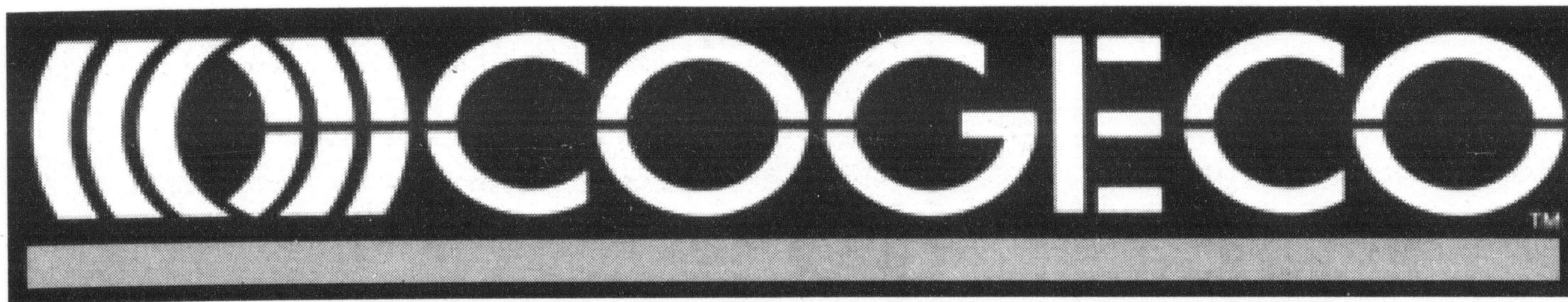
Terry Fox wear will be sold on run day.

For more information about 'Metres of Memories' or the corporate challenge, call (905) 878-1206.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Carol Kerklaan now lives more for the moment after her battle with breast cancer.



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