

Lifestyles

Women in training for breast cancer marathon

Miltonians (from left) Lianne Krane, Kim Morden-Bagen, Kelly Clayton and Nancy Van Dorp get in a workout in preparation for their 60-km walk in September in support of breast cancer research.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Local foursome tuning up for 60-km walk in September

By STEPHANIE THIESSEN
The Champion

Turning 40 is a milestone in any woman's life. But for Milton's Nancy Van Dorp, the upcoming day in September will hold special meaning — for several reasons.

Back in January, Ms Van Dorp was looking for a way to celebrate the big day, she said, when she found out about the Weekend to End Breast Cancer event, which, coincidentally, was to be held the same weekend as her September 21 birthday.

The event involves collecting pledges and walking a 60-kilometre marathon. It'll be held September 19 to 21, with the opening ceremony on the first day and the race being run September 20 and 21.

Since her mother died of breast cancer 17 years ago at the age of 54, Ms Van Dorp said she saw the marathon as a way to help a cause dear to her heart and in the meantime, feel closer to her mother on her birthday.

"It makes me think about her a lot," said Ms Van Dorp of the marathon preparations.

Ms Van Dorp is one of several Milton women who will take part in the marathon. The group trains together by walking "all over town," Ms Van Dorp said, and has a core group of four, although other women join them periodically.

The women come from different walks of life and have been drawn together for a variety of reasons. But they all share a common desire — to help eradicate breast cancer.

The training schedule is demanding, particularly for someone who has never done a marathon before, Ms Van Dorp said. The women train five days each week, gradually increasing the distance they walk. They're now up to 15 km. They're constantly on the lookout for new places in Milton they haven't yet passed through and explored, Ms Van Dorp said.

"We've been to every nook and cranny. We talk to help the time pass," she said, adding, "If someone doesn't feel that they're going to make it, we encourage them."

Women prepared for bad weather

Whatever the weather, the group is determined to keep to the training schedule.

"We've walked in snow, in blizzards on sidewalks that weren't plowed, and in torrential rain. Our response is always the same — it can't get any worse. If we can do it now, we can do it then."

The thought of walking 60 km over two days is somewhat daunting, Ms Van Dorp said. She clocked the distance while driving and said, "That's like driving 30 minutes."

Nevertheless, she said she's determined to make it.

The group of women met over the Internet a few months ago. Ms Van Dorp was on the Weekend to End Cancer Web site and posted a message asking if there was anyone else in Milton who was participating and wanted to train together. The rest is history.

Ms Van Dorp said she has made many friends as she prepares for the marathon.

"The friendships are getting solid," she said. "You meet people you probably wouldn't in your day-to-day activities."

Not only does Ms Van Dorp get a sense of satisfaction over raising money for cancer research, she said she's also enjoying her healthier lifestyle and realizes her children are taking note.

"We read a lot about children being obese and not active. That concerns me. I want my children to see that they can participate (in activities)," she said, adding that she wants to continue participating in charitable events and getting exercise on a regular basis after the marathon.

Each participant in the Weekend to End Breast Cancer is required to raise \$2,000 in order to help race organizers reach their overall goal of \$10 million. So far, Ms Van Dorp has raised \$1,650. Money raised will go to breast cancer research at Princess Margaret Hospital, an international leader in the fight against cancer and the largest institution in Canada devoted to cancer treatment, research and education programs.

Those who wish to sponsor a participant can do so by visiting <http://www.endcancer.ca>. There's also still time to join the event, and Ms Van Dorp said the group welcomes newcomers. For more information, e-mail Ms Van Dorp at nancyv@cogeco.ca.

Stephanie Thiesen can be reached at sthiesen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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Check out Murray Townsend's Lifestyles column on page 18.

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We are opening our doors on June 7th for an information session for students, parents and any other community member who would like to volunteer their time this summer.

To offer information and answer questions regarding the summer program.

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