

Life Quilt a legacy of hope and healing

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On October 24, 1999, the Life Quilt for Breast Cancer was unveiled in its entirety – a dream fulfilled for the woman who first conceived of it five years ago, and whose personal odyssey with breast cancer continues to inspire Canadians from coast to coast.

Judy Reimer, former Registered Nurse and single mother of two children, Brolin and Louse, founded the Life Quilt for Breast Cancer as a legacy of hope and healing for the over 18,000 women who are diagnosed with breast cancer each year in Canada. She also wanted to leave something beautiful behind for her children to remember so that they would know that even though she had breast cancer, it didn't destroy her.

Her friend Anne Massey, a Medical Radiation Technologist at Langley Memorial Hospital, is very active on the project. "I became involved with the Life Quilt for Breast Cancer at its inception," she said. "The idea came out of a 'dream night' where Judy invited all her friends to brainstorm about how to create this beautiful legacy. The strength that she showed that night about reaching out to others when she herself had so many difficulties, inspired me to make the commitment to help her make it happen."

For those who have followed the progress and development of the Life Quilt for Breast Cancer, this event was an exciting culmination of four years of an amazing journey across the country, from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland and back again to Vancouver, where it was unveiled at the Great Hall of the Law Courts. More than 20,000 Canadians have reached out to one another in their fight against breast cancer, by joining to take a stitch in the three centre panels or by creating individual squares which tell their own personal stories. Images of each of the over 700 squares with their accompanying stories will be on display along with the completed Life Quilt.

While the unveiling of all three completed panels on October 24 brought an end to the actual construction of the Life Quilt, it also ushered in a new stage in the growth of this project. The goal of the Life Quilt for Breast Cancer is to offer practical support to women, their families and friends. The LQBC Society has already published a resource handbook which will enable women easier access to existing resources and services available to them during their initial diagnosis, often a time of personal crisis.

Funds raised at this October unveiling will go towards distributing this resource handbook to all the family physicians throughout British Columbia and towards various initiatives to meet the huge need for practical support.

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