



Friends of the Foundation Resource Book

VOLUME 31

 vera bradley
FOUNDATION FOR BREAST CANCER

The background of the page is a repeating pattern of pink line-art illustrations of butterflies and flowers. The butterflies are in various poses, some with wings spread, and the flowers are in various stages of bloom. The pattern is dense and covers the entire page.

A New Era of Hope

Gone are the days of single impact discoveries. Advancements, breakthroughs, and vaccines related to breast cancer now benefit research for other cancers. Collaboration is key to growth, and our research team at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research at the Indiana University School of Medicine has fully embraced this mindset.

When Mary Sloan passed away from breast cancer in the early 1990's, her longtime friends Barbara and Patricia, Vera Bradley co-founders, were moved to action. Connected by a passion to find a cure, the global impact of the research and the number of friends lending support for the Foundation grows by the day.

Together with our esteemed research team, we honor the legacy of all who have braved this disease by pushing the boundaries of modern medicine to spread hope and find a cure.

“ One friendship forever changed the lives of countless women across the globe. I’m so thankful for the research *advancements* and *discoveries* happening because of our special partnership with Indiana University. *Hope is here!*”

Barbara Bradley Baekgaard
Vera Bradley and Vera Bradley Foundation co-founder



“ Research is the key that keeps hope moving forward. Thank you to every supporter, sponsor, and scientist who passionately pursues a future free from breast cancer. *Discoveries* that were once unimaginable are now a *reality!*”

Patricia R. Miller
Vera Bradley and Vera Bradley Foundation co-founder

“ The Foundation has become a *globally* recognized not-for-profit organization, funding some of the most *gifted* and *accomplished* breast cancer researchers in the world. I’m honored to lead this team!”

Stephanie Scheele
Vera Bradley Foundation Executive Director





C O N T

Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research

- 7** Research Update
- 10** Making Cancer Connections
- 14** A New Era of Hope
for Black Patients
- 17** Transforming Challenges
into Sparks for Discovery
- 26** Researcher Spotlight
- 28** Clinical Trials
- 30** Around the Globe

We're Here for You

- 33** Ask An Expert
- 35** New Mammogram Guidelines
- 36** Stories of Strength
- 40** How to Care for Yourself after
a Breast Cancer Diagnosis
- 42** How to Care for Loved Ones
with Breast Cancer

Printing of this book was generously donated by Baesman Printing



46



56



75

EVENTS

Join the Movement

- 45 Mastectomy Pillow
- 46 Gifts of Hope
- 47 Foundation Classic
- 48 Quilt with a Cause
- 49 Ribbons for Research
- 50 Direct Giving
- 51 Planned Giving
- 52 Social Media
- 53 Volunteer

Host an Event

- 55 Event in a Box
- 56 Planning Tips
- 66 Partner with Us

Meet the Team

- 72 Foundation Team and Board

Foundation Sponsors

- 75 Generous Supporters
- 78 Sponsor Tributes

Managing Editor/Content Contributor: Ruth Cook
Creative Director/Production Manager: Kris Reese
Senior Editor/Content Contributor: Anna Shelton



Learn more at verabradley.org



Vera Bradley
Foundation Center for
Breast Cancer *Research*

The Foundation's Mission: Raising funds for research to find a cure and to improve the lives of the many affected by breast cancer.

Researchers at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research work together to prevent breast cancer and improve cancer treatments and care. Research is conducted in four ways—laboratory, clinical, translational, and population/prevention sciences. Scientists work collaboratively across disciplines to tackle breast cancer from each uniquely skilled perspective.



Laboratory researchers study cancer cells, tissue surrounding tumors, and immense data sets to understand how cancers work. They test their discoveries with human cells in petri dishes and in vivo models. Laboratory scientists are microbiologists, chemists, bio-informaticians, immunologists, molecular geneticists, and pharmacologists – among other scientific specializations.

Clinical researchers focus on testing new ways to manage cancer with patients – approaches, treatments, or drug combinations. They are surgeons, oncologists, hematologists, pharmacologists, radiation oncologists, radiologists, nurses, psychologists, physical therapists, and more.

Translational researchers take what is learned in the lab to patients and what is learned from patients back to the lab. Translational scientists are typically MDs and PhDs who work both in the clinic and in the lab.

Population/Prevention researchers focus on reducing cancer incidence and improving cancer outcomes. These scientists identify cancer risks and develop ways to reduce them. They include scientists from medicine, public health policy, community engagement, health communication, psychology, and epidemiology.

Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research

Indiana University School of Medicine

IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
VERA BRADLEY FOUNDATION CENTER
FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

Director

Kelvin Lee, MD

Executive Committee

Kathy D. Miller, MD
Hari Nakshatri, BVSc, PhD
Bryan P. Schneider, MD
Mateusz Opyrchal, MD, PhD
Pravin Kaumaya, PhD
Tarah Ballinger, MD

Basic Science Research Group

Pravin Kaumaya, PhD*
Steve Angus, PhD
Richard Carpenter, PhD
Emma Doud, PhD
Chunhai Hao, PhD
Mark Kaplan, PhD
Jaeyeon Kim, PhD
Hari Nakshatri, BVSc, PhD
Amber L. Mosely, PhD
Kenneth P. Nephew, PhD
Jenifer Proserpi, PhD
Sara K. Quinney, PharmD, PhD
Xiongbu Lu, PhD
Alo Ray, PhD
Hiromi Tanaka, PhD
Claire E. Walczak, PhD
Reggie Wang, PhD
Elizabeth Yeh, PhD
Hiroki Yokota, PhD
Xinna Zhang, PhD

Clinical Research Group

Tarah Ballinger, MD*
Mateusz Opyrchal, MD, PhD*
Michael Feldman, MD, PhD
Carla Fisher, MD
Folasade Imeokparia, MD
Nawal Kassem, MD
Kandice Ludwig, MD
Kathy D. Miller, MD
Anna Maria Storniolo, MD
Steven Westphal, MD
Richard Zellars, MD

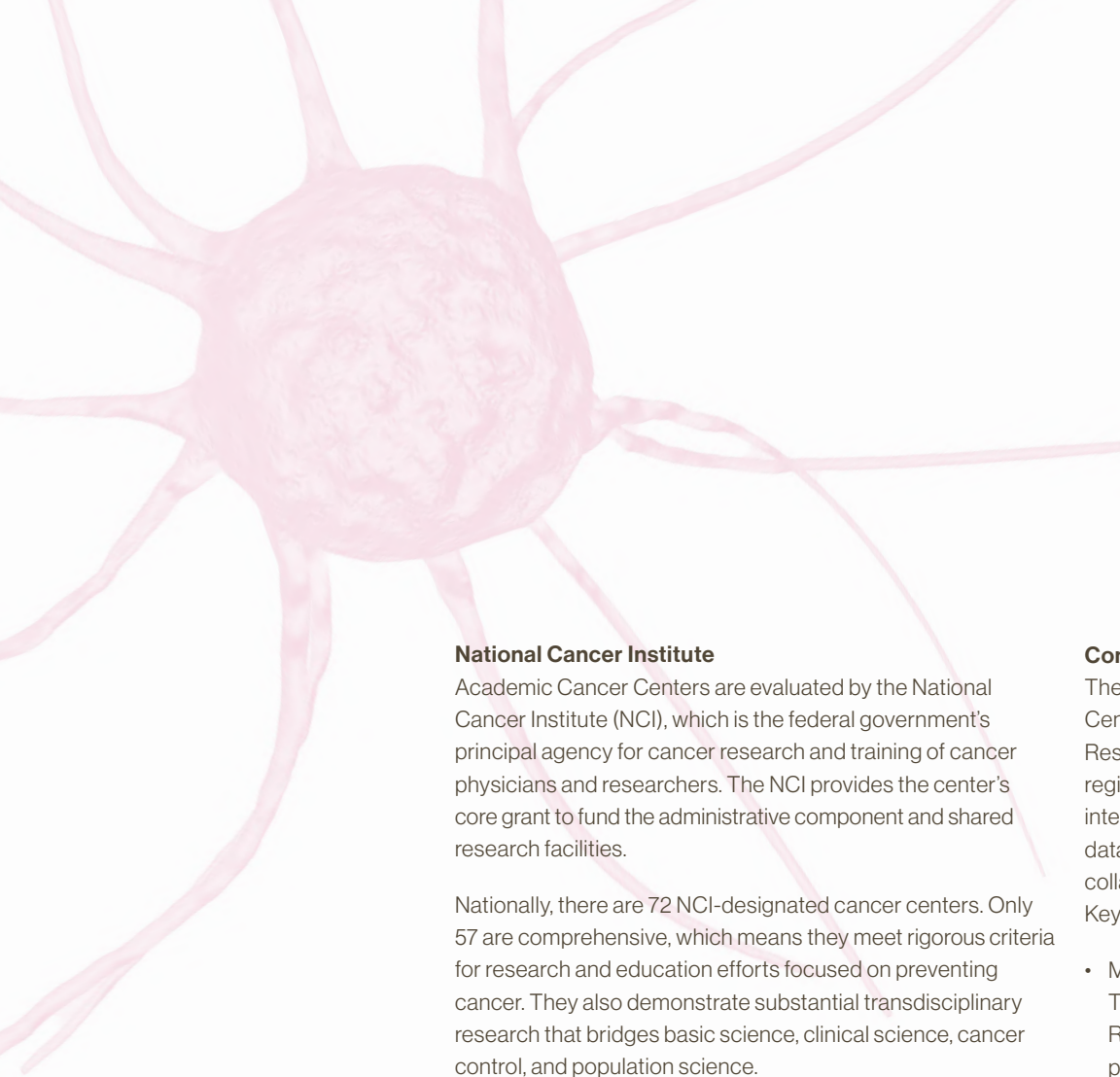
Precision Medical Group

Bryan P. Schneider, MD*
Yunlong Liu, PhD
Steven M. Johnson, PhD
Todd C. Skaar, PhD

Population Science Group

Janet S. Carpenter, PhD
Victoria Champion, PhD, RN
Andrea Cohee, PhD
Michele Côté, PhD
Brenna McDonald, PsyD
Patrick Monahan, PhD
Julie Otte, PhD, RN
Andrew Saykin, PsyD
Susan Storey, PhD
Diane M. Von Ah, PhD, RN

* Denotes a Vera Bradley Foundation Chairholder



National Cancer Institute

Academic Cancer Centers are evaluated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), which is the federal government's principal agency for cancer research and training of cancer physicians and researchers. The NCI provides the center's core grant to fund the administrative component and shared research facilities.

Nationally, there are 72 NCI-designated cancer centers. Only 57 are comprehensive, which means they meet rigorous criteria for research and education efforts focused on preventing cancer. They also demonstrate substantial transdisciplinary research that bridges basic science, clinical science, cancer control, and population science.

Indiana University's Melvin and Bren Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center (IUSCCC) is the only comprehensive cancer center in Indiana with the rigorously maintained NCI designation.

The IUSCCC, home of the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research, holds the same designation as Memorial Sloan Kettering, MD Anderson, and Mayo Clinic. As a member institution of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, the IUSCCC physicians have a role in determining the recognized standard of clinical care for cancer patients.

Consortium

The Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research networks with regional, national, and international peers to share data and ideas, and to collaborate on clinical trials. Key partnerships include:

- Membership in the Translational Breast Cancer Research Consortium – a partnership of the 18 largest breast cancer programs in the country.
- Leadership of NCI-funded national collaborative research groups (ECOG-ACRIN).
- Leadership of the NCI's Breast Cancer Steering Committee, the body responsible for setting national research priorities.
- Leadership of a team from four universities specifically focused on improving outcomes for black patients.

Foundation Chairs

Bryan P. Schneider, MD Vera Bradley Chair in Oncology

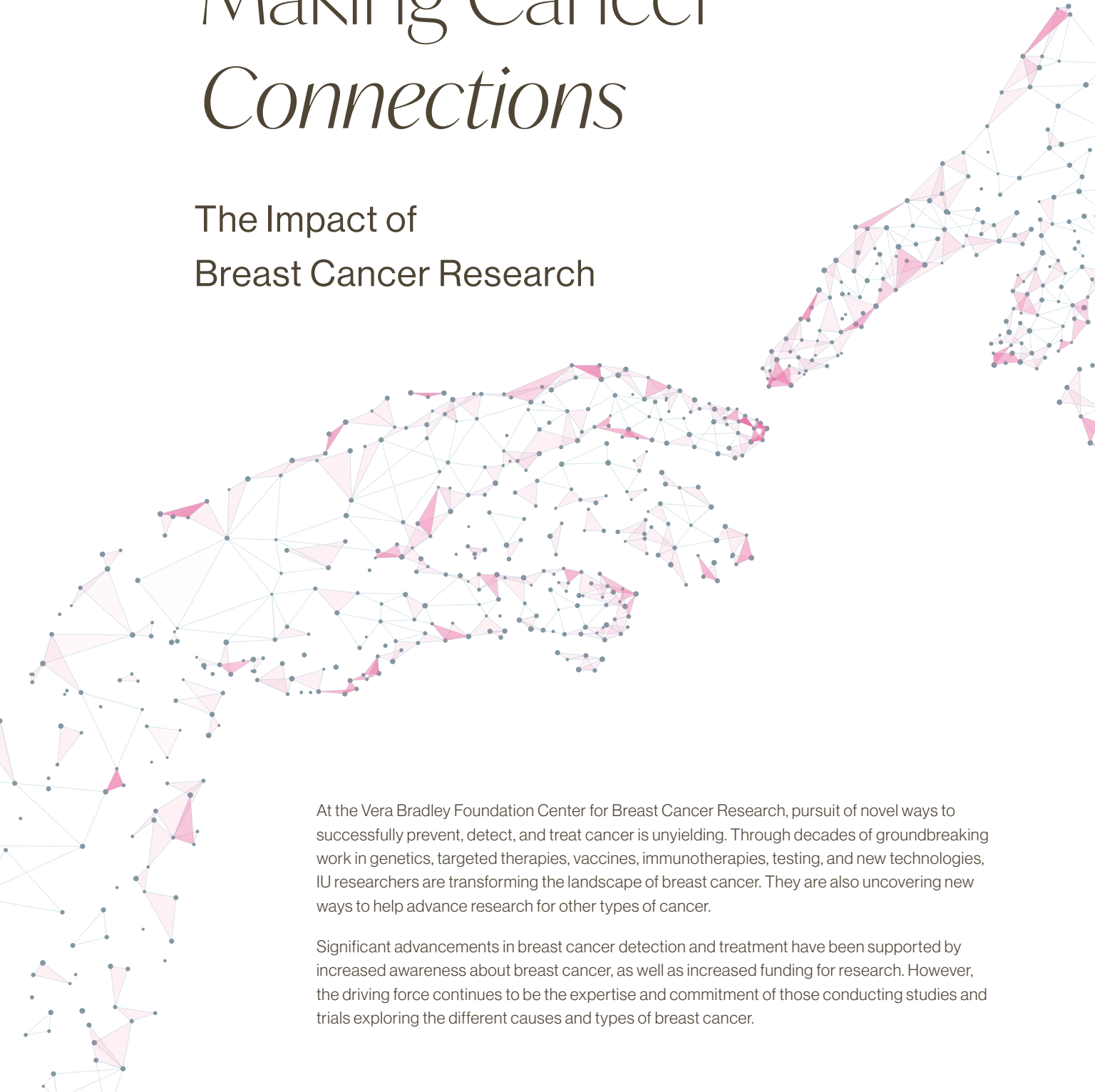
Mateusz Opyrchal, MD, PhD Vera Bradley Foundation Scholar in Breast Cancer Discovery

Pravin Kaumaya, PhD Vera Bradley Foundation Chair in Breast Cancer Innovation

Tarah Ballinger, MD Vera Bradley Foundation Scholar in Breast Cancer Research

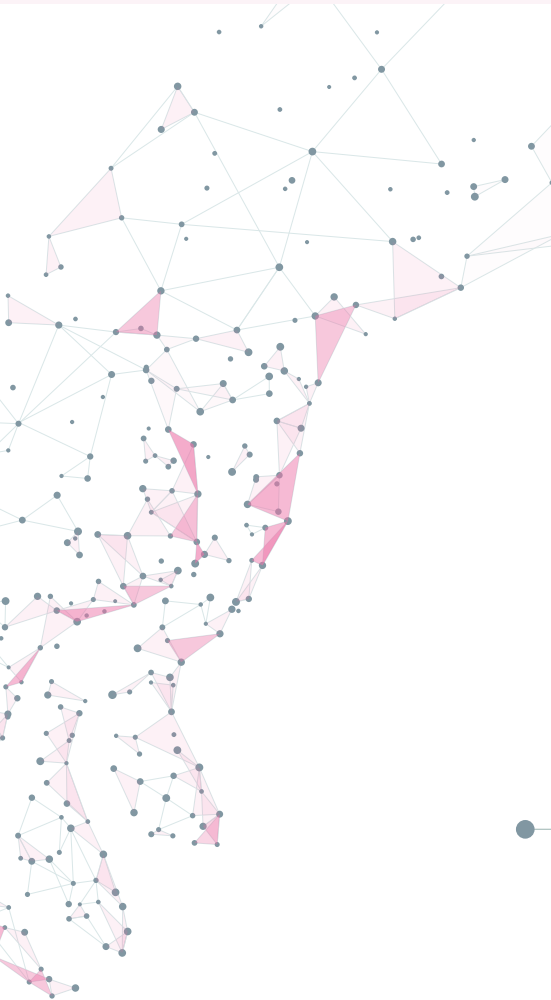
Making Cancer *Connections*

The Impact of Breast Cancer Research



At the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research, pursuit of novel ways to successfully prevent, detect, and treat cancer is unyielding. Through decades of groundbreaking work in genetics, targeted therapies, vaccines, immunotherapies, testing, and new technologies, IU researchers are transforming the landscape of breast cancer. They are also uncovering new ways to help advance research for other types of cancer.

Significant advancements in breast cancer detection and treatment have been supported by increased awareness about breast cancer, as well as increased funding for research. However, the driving force continues to be the expertise and commitment of those conducting studies and trials exploring the different causes and types of breast cancer.



Researchers are making critical strides in gaining a better understanding of breast cancer, as well as developing novel detection and treatment options for the different forms of the disease. They are also establishing links between breast cancer research data and its potential impact on advancing oncology research overall, extending far beyond breast cancer.

Despite being the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths for women in the U.S. – surpassed only by lung cancer – the progress made in breast cancer research over the decades is nothing short of remarkable. From identification of gene markers, to surgical interventions, to innovative programs targeting those with higher risk factors, the landscape of breast cancer treatment and outcomes is changing. The five year survival rate for those diagnosed with breast cancer continues to rise, while the death rate continues to fall.

Breast Cancer Immunotherapy:

Forging Pathways to Next-Generation Personalized Cancer Treatments

Our immune system is designed to identify and kill abnormal or foreign cells in the body. However, cancer cells can sometimes find ways to either hide from the immune system's response or weaken it. This is the challenge that immunotherapies address.

Unlike traditional chemotherapy and targeted therapies, which attempt to target and kill cancer cells, immunotherapies work in a different way – harnessing the power of a patient's own immune system.

Immunotherapies turbocharge the immune system by either increasing the activity of immune cells in ways that help them become more effective in recognizing and destroying cancer cells, or by decreasing the suppressive elements of the immune system that cancer cells use to weaken the response against them.

With his colleagues, Mateusz Opyrchal, MD, PhD, the Vera Bradley Foundation Scholar in Breast Cancer Discovery, is focused on identifying and understanding how breast cancer activates and recruits suppressive elements of the immune system. A specific immune suppressive cell has been discovered. This cell – a T-cell – can essentially be reprogrammed to reduce its suppression of the immune system, instead promoting a response that fights breast cancer.

Although there are major differences in how our immune system interacts with different types of cancers, there are also key similarities. For example, T-cells suppress immune system activity in a variety of cancers that present as “solid” tumors – such as melanoma and colon cancer – and other “liquid” cancers that appear in the blood – such as leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma. Because of this shared aspect of immune system response, reprogramming T-cells can be an effective strategy for treating multiple cancers and other diseases – including auto-immune diseases.

Targeting HER-2:

A Key Focus for Moving Precision Medicine Forward

HER-2, which stands for human epidermal growth factor receptor 2, is a gene that produces a protein found on the surface of breast cells. At normal levels, it helps with healthy cell growth and repair. However, if it begins producing more copies of itself than needed, this can lead to an overexpression of HER-2 proteins on cell surfaces – which is a contributing factor of some types of breast cancer.

HER-2-positive breast cancers make up approximately 20-30% of all breast cancers. They tend to be more aggressive, and compared to HER-2-negative breast cancers, also have a greater likelihood of recurrence. However, they have been found to be particularly responsive to targeted therapies designed to block the activity of HER-2.

Pravin Kaumaya, PhD, the Vera Bradley Foundation Professor of Breast Cancer Innovation, is exploring the development of a vaccine that will stop this overexpression from occurring by blocking HER-2. If this can be done, the vaccine could represent a cure for those with HER-2-positive breast cancer. It could also play a critical role in treating other types of HER-2-positive subsets of cancers, including gastroesophageal, esophageal, endometrial, uterine, ovarian, lung, and colon cancers.

The role of HER-2 in colorectal cancers has been receiving increased attention. Approximately 15-20% of colorectal cancers are HER-2 positive. Dr. Kaumaya and his colleagues are looking at how HER-2 vaccines for breast cancer might also be applicable to the treatment of HER-2-positive colorectal cancer. As with HER-2-positive breast cancer, HER-2-positive colorectal cancer is often more aggressive, carries an increased risk of metastasis, and decreased survival. The hope is that research conducted by Dr. Kaumaya and his colleagues will lead to more effective treatment for these types of cancers.

Exploring Biological Disparities in Cancer:

The Genetic Links of Breast Cancer

One of the most well-known genetic links to cancer – specifically breast and ovarian cancers – involves the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations. Harikrishna Nakshatri, PhD, Professor of Breast Cancer Research at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research, has conducted extensive research focusing on the relationship between these gene mutations and the development of breast cancer. His work is leading to a more comprehensive understanding of how these mutations contribute to cancer development at the cellular level. The findings of this research could lead to new and more effective ways to treat breast cancer, particularly in patients with BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations.

Dr. Nakshatri is also studying biological disparities which impact the propensity of black women to have a higher incidence of metaplastic breast cancer (MBC) – a rare and aggressive form of the disease. His research team looked at specific breast cells – known as PZP cells – one of the MBC originating cells. They found that women of African descent have PZP cells in greater numbers than women of European descent. These cells can cause other breast cells to become cancerous. In some cases, this can result in the development of metaplastic breast cancer. Because women of African descent have a higher number of PZP cells, this may explain why black women develop this aggressive form of breast cancer in greater numbers.

Working with Michael D. Feldman, MD, PhD, chair of the IU School of Medicine's Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Dr. Nakshatri has expanded his research into prostate cancer. Together, they are studying the role of BRCA1 in a certain subset of prostate cancer. As with breast cancer, the BRCA1 mutation has been linked to more aggressive disease, an increased risk of disease recurrence, and a decreased rate of survival.

The expansion of BRCA1 and BRCA2 research into prostate cancer research is leading to an awareness of the importance of men knowing their family health history – including incidents of breast cancer in female and male relatives. With this information, they can request testing to see if they are carriers of the BRCA1 gene mutation.

Cascade Screening:

Inspiring Proactive Prevention in Breast Cancer and Beyond

Approximately 10% of all cancers are caused by genetic alterations that are passed down through families, generation after generation. While having these alterations doesn't mean an individual will develop cancer, it does mean their risk is heightened. Knowledge of genetic risk and seeking out appropriate preventative care – including screenings – is potentially lifesaving.

Two types of cancer that are commonly linked to genetic mutations are breast cancer and ovarian cancer. As a result, the concept of cascade testing has been implemented to help improve detection and prevention. This type of testing involves putting at-risk family members on a surveillance program to help find these cancers at their earliest stages when they are also most treatable.

Nawal Kassem, MD, Assistant Professor in the IU School of Medicine Department of Clinical Medicine, has been studying the low rate of cascade testing in black women compared to white women. The goal of her research is to develop interventions that will improve testing rates among black women.

While cascade testing is most often associated with women who might be carriers of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations, it's also applicable to those with any type of hereditary cancer syndrome – including colon cancer, pancreatic cancer, sarcomas, and others. It gives individuals the information they need to help protect themselves and their loved ones.

The Onerous Side Effects of Treatment:

Finding Answers for Cancer-Related Lymphedema

Lymphedema is a painful, and often debilitating, side effect of cancer treatments – particularly those that involve the removal of lymph nodes. This disruption of the lymphatic system, which is responsible for draining excess waste and fluid from the body's tissue, can cause limbs to swell. The risk of infection of these extremities increases, and the patient's quality of life significantly decreases.

Lymphedema occurs in 20-30% of women treated for breast cancer. While there are surgical interventions that can help relieve the effects of this condition, there are currently no cures. This has led Al Hassanein, MMSC, MD, an Associate Professor of Surgery at the Indiana University School of Medicine, to investigate novel strategies for treating and preventing lymphedema.

The goal of this research is to find ways to prevent lymphedema from occurring during cancer surgery and to treat existing lymphedema with a topical treatment delivered through the skin. Dr. Hassanein and his colleagues are working to create new targeted gene therapies to achieve these goals.

Although lymphedema is most commonly associated with breast cancer treatment, it also occurs frequently with treatment for other types of cancer that involve lymph node removal – such as melanoma, sarcoma, and pelvic tumors. The approach Dr. Hassanein and his colleagues are developing would also prevent and treat lymphedema in these cancers.





A New Era of Hope for Black Patients
with Breast Cancer



Researchers have found that black women treated with docetaxel, a chemotherapy, experience less of the harmful side effect peripheral neuropathy. Their findings represent an important discovery for a patient population historically underrepresented in breast cancer research.

Taxane-based chemotherapies are the primary therapies for breast cancer, but they can lead to taxane-induced peripheral neuropathy (TIPN). Neuropathy symptoms include numbness, tingling, and pain in the hands and feet. These side effects can become debilitating and impact the ability to deliver prescribed chemotherapy treatment.

Results of a clinical study*, led by Dr. Bryan Schneider, MD, Vera Bradley Professor of Oncology, found that breast cancer patients treated with docetaxel every three weeks had less TIPN and could tolerate treatment as planned.

“ Given the disparities we see with black patients in terms of survival and toxicity, *we felt compelled* to design a clinical trial built specifically to better personalize our medications and try to *improve outcomes* in all ways.

Dr. Bryan Schneider, MD

Tarah Ballinger, MD, Vera Bradley Foundation Scholar in Breast Cancer Research, shares, “Black women have much higher rates of neuropathy, and that neuropathy tends to be more severe and toxic. We’re seeing unplanned dose reductions in black women and ultimately, reduced survival because of this.”



This study is one of the first trials to focus enrollment solely on a minority population that has disparate outcomes.



“That’s really important because in previous trials black women have been underrepresented, so our standard of care is based on women who are not black,” Dr. Ballinger said. “We know that black women have a different disease biology, different risk factors, respond differently to chemotherapy, and have higher rates of neuropathy. We now have a whole set of data that applies specifically to these patients.”

The study also sought to determine if two inherited gene alterations predicted which patients would have less peripheral neuropathy. While inherited gene alterations were more common in patients who developed TIPN, the data was not statistically significant.

“This study is really exciting because it shows us that we can do better in terms of designing and delivering research trials that ask important and necessary questions for underrepresented populations,” Ballinger said. “This starts us down a whole line of research where we can stop describing the disparity in breast cancer outcomes, and actually change our practice.”



*The clinical study enrolled 249 black patients with 121 receiving at least one dose of paclitaxel and 118 receiving one dose of docetaxel. The severity of side effects was graded on a scale of 1-4, with four being the most severe and life-altering. Grade 2-4 peripheral neuropathy was significantly higher in patients receiving paclitaxel than those receiving docetaxel as reported by both physicians (44% vs. 29%) and patients (40% vs. 24%). Patients receiving paclitaxel required more dose reductions due to peripheral neuropathy (28% vs. 9%) or due to any cause (39% vs. 25%) compared to patients receiving docetaxel.

This study was built on more than a decade of research at the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center. In addition, it drew from the results of a previous clinical trial, E5103, a 5,000-patient, NCI-sponsored study led by Kathy Miller, MD, Associate Director of Clinical Research at IUSCCC and the Ballvé Lantero Professor of Oncology at IU School of Medicine. The study laid the groundwork for Schneider’s research to determine the association of genetics with treatment efficacy and chemotherapy-induced toxicities. While performing an analysis, his research team discovered that black women with breast cancer had a higher risk of developing neuropathy as a side effect of chemotherapy.



Transforming *Challenges* into Sparks for *Discovery*

Breast cancer researchers at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research embody the urgency reflected in the adage “necessity is the mother of invention.” Patients need earlier detection, more effective treatments, and a cure. This is what IU researchers are committed to delivering.

The road to a cure for breast cancer is getting shorter. Knowledge of the cellular structure of breasts is expanding. A more precise understanding of how biological and sociological disparities affect breast cancer detection, development, and treatment is forming. Data regarding a possible vaccine that may stop cancer from recurring is emerging. And new approaches that will help minimize the complications of treatment are developing.

Researchers continue to encounter challenges in their effort to eliminate the devastating impact of breast cancer. However, it's these very challenges that are sparking new discoveries leading to renewed hope.



Tracing Cancer's Origins

Challenge

The breast contains more than 20 known cell types. HARI NAKSHATRI, PhD, and his team have identified four of the 20+ cell types as points of origins for more than 75% of breast cancers. This knowledge increases the potential for developing more targeted – and perhaps less invasive – treatments for breast cancer. But the characteristics of cell types can differ from person to person – particularly in those who have different genetic backgrounds. Understanding the consequences of these variations is essential.

Discovery

Dr. Nakshatri has expanded his research to explore the role genetic ancestry might play in cell type variations and whether these differences increase a person's likelihood of developing breast cancer. Understanding how these factors affect breast cancer aggressiveness and treatment response is crucial. By gaining a deeper understanding of these distinctions, novel methods for prevention, detection, and treatment can be developed.





Early Detection

Challenge

Carriers of BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 gene mutations have a greater risk of developing breast cancer. By gaining a deeper understanding of the reasons for increased risk, and the effects of these mutations on breast cancer development, advancements can be made in early detection.

Discovery

HARI NAKSHATRI, PhD, and his team compared the breast tissue of BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 carriers to the breast tissue of healthy women. In women who aren't carriers of these genetic mutations, it typically takes a substantial number of mutations for a cell to become cancerous. However, Dr. Nakshatri and his team discovered that women who carry BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 need fewer cell mutations for cancer to develop. This explains why these women are more susceptible to breast cancer and often develop it at a younger age.

By identifying the minimum mutations required for cells of BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 mutations to become cancerous, more targeted early detection methods can be developed to help protect women who are carriers.



Minimizing Complications

Challenge

Anti-estrogen medications the majority of survivors take to help reduce the risk of recurrence can cause long-term and short-term side effects, including bone loss and muscle weakness. While exercise has proven to be beneficial for women with early-stage breast cancer, its potential benefit for women living with metastatic breast cancer (MBC) hadn't been studied.

Discovery

Looking for ways to help breast cancer patients and survivors thrive is a primary research focus for TARAH J. BALLINGER, MD. Her team is currently exploring how muscular health can be improved in breast cancer survivors who are on an anti-estrogen therapy. Anti-estrogen medications cause bone breakdown, which seems to release chemicals that cause muscle dysfunction. In an attempt to counteract this, Dr. Ballinger is looking at the possibility of adding low intensity vibration to survivors' exercise programs to preserve their bone and muscle health.

Another study involves delivering a 1:1 virtual exercise training program to women with MBC. The goal is to determine whether exercise can improve outcomes for these individuals, including cardiovascular fitness, physical functioning, quality of life, metabolism, and levels of circulating tumor cells. In addition to its primary research objective, the study also represents the need for survivorship research to include those with metastatic disease.





Preventing Cancer's Recurrence

Challenge

For breast cancer survivors, the fear of recurrence is ever present. KATHY MILLER, MD, and PRAVIN KAUMAYA, PhD, are focused on developing a vaccine that could prevent cancer's return.

Discovery

As part of the development of this vaccine, Indiana University will open the first clinical trial to test this vaccine in women who have Stage IV breast cancer. The vaccine is designed to block the growth and spread of breast cancer.

During the trial, which is expected to begin late 2024, investigators will track the impact of the vaccine on the disease, any side effects experienced, and dosing levels. The initial trial will exclusively include women with HER-2 positive breast cancer. Future trials will include women with triple negative breast cancer.



Surgery Prevention

Challenge

BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 gene mutations can increase a woman's risk of developing breast cancer. However, not all women who are carriers will actually develop breast cancer. Without a way to determine risk levels, mastectomies are often recommended as a preventative treatment. This decision can be challenging both physically and emotionally. Researchers see the need to differentiate between those who have higher risk and would benefit from surgery, from those with lower risk who may not need mastectomy surgery.

Discovery

JAHEYON KIM, PhD, and his research team have developed a hypothesis: Women who are carriers of BRCA 1 and/or BRCA 2 mutations, who also have higher levels of progesterone, may be most likely to develop breast cancer.

To test this hypothesis, Dr. Kim's team is studying tissue samples from 461 donors, including 51 individuals who are carriers of BRCA 1 and/or BRCA 2. Their focus is on identifying gene mutations that could elevate progesterone levels, thus heightening the cancer risk for BRCA 1 and/or BRCA 2 carriers. Serum samples from the same group of donors are also being studied to identify any changes in metabolites, such as fats and sugars, that could affect progesterone levels.

This research may determine which carriers of BRCA 1 and/or BRCA 2 mutations should consider surgery as a preventive measure. Additionally, it may lead to the use of progesterone-blocking drugs as a non-surgical method to prevent both breast and ovarian cancer.

Benign Breast Disease

Challenge

Approximately one million breast biopsies are performed annually, most of which are benign. These non-cancerous lesions may fall under the umbrella term of “benign breast disease.” This condition puts women at a higher risk of developing breast cancer. There is currently no standard of care for benign breast disease.

Discovery

MICHELE CÔTÉ, PhD, MPH, is studying breast tissue samples from a diverse cohort of women. The study involves searching for markers in blood and tissue samples, as well as collecting and evaluating mammograms.

The goal of this study is to identify women with benign breast disease who have a higher risk of developing breast cancer. These individuals may benefit from additional surveillance, preventative chemotherapy, Tamoxifen, and other precautionary measures. Ultimately, the goal of Dr. Côté’s research is to establish a standard of care to prevent or intercept the development of cancer in women who have been diagnosed with benign breast disease.



Race and Ethnicity

Risk Awareness

Challenge

Black women face a 40% higher risk of death from breast cancer compared to white women. They are likely to be diagnosed at more advanced stages, younger ages, and with more aggressive subtypes – such as triple negative breast cancer. Breast cancer screening isn't commonly pursued by younger black women.

Discovery

TARAH J. BALLINGER, MD, and her team have partnered with an advocacy group focused on increasing breast cancer awareness in minority communities. Together, they are exploring the implementation of a black lay navigator program created to help improve access to breast cancer prevention services for black families.

Researchers are identifying black women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and enrolling their sisters, daughters, mothers, and aunts in the high-risk breast cancer prevention program. This program creates individualized surveillance plans for participants who carry a genetic marker for breast cancer and/or who have a family history of the disease. The plans take a holistic approach and encompass recommendations such as state-of-the-art screening options, support for lifestyle changes to minimize risk, education on breast cancer, genetic testing, and other elements. The aim is to increase rates of mammograms, breast MRIs, and genetic testing for high-risk black women and their families.

Ancestry-Driven Genetic Differences

Challenge

The role of biology related to genetic ancestry, specifically the DARC gene, has yet to receive an adequate level of attention. The DARC gene is prevalent in western Africa and impacts how the immune system functions. This gene may cause breast cancer to be more aggressive and resistant to treatment. The DARC mutation is found in roughly 40% of black individuals in the United States.

Discovery

KATHY MILLER, MD, and her research team have developed a trial drug that, when added to standard chemotherapy, may be beneficial to black women who carry the DARC gene mutation and are diagnosed with breast cancer.

Exploring the DARC gene mutation is merely the starting point for research looking at ancestry-driven genetic differences in other populations. Through an increased understanding about the underlying biology of breast cancer, improvements can be made in how the disease is treated in those who have genetic variations.

Researcher *Spotlight*

Introducing Pravin Kaumaya, PhD

We are pleased to announce that Pravin Kaumaya, PhD, has accepted a new role as the Vera Bradley Foundation Professor of Breast Cancer Innovation, and Director of the Immuno-Oncology and Vaccine Immunotherapy Laboratory.

From Mauritius, a small country in East Africa, to Great Britain for education, and then to the United States – Dr. Kaumaya has always enjoyed exploration and discovery.

Dr. Kaumaya is a renowned innovator of vaccines for cancer treatment. He is internationally recognized for creating a cancer treatment blueprint that uses peptides in vaccines to block the growth and spread of cancer.

With Dr. Kaumaya's research and work already in clinical trials, progress in the quest for a cure is being expedited. The addition of Dr. Kaumaya moves us one step closer to a future free from breast cancer.

"We're creating a paradigm shift in cancer therapy with novel chimeric B-cell-epitope vaccines," he shares. "Being part of the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research will accelerate the process of translating our discoveries to patients."

Dr. Kaumaya has developed numerous cancer vaccines in his career and translated two breast cancer and colon cancer vaccines into Phase 1 clinical trials. His discoveries may be used in ovarian, lung, and gastrointestinal stromal tumor cancers one day – yet another example of cross-functional collaboration. Today, peptide cancer vaccines and immune-therapeutic technologies are at the forefront of cancer treatment and prevention.

"Current targeted therapies face many obstacles in the clinic – the rapid development of resistance, high toxicity rates, on-or-off target effects, and weak efficacy," Dr. Kaumaya said. "The promise of peptides will invigorate drug innovation and discovery, and challenge the ingenuity of researchers to develop cancer cures and future therapies that are safe and non-toxic."

“ Our novel targeted immunotherapy approach holds the promise of making a major leap in the clinical treatment of cancer.

Q&A

Q. You were born on a 2,000-square-kilometer island, Mauritius. Describe your journey to Indiana.

A. My entire family was educated in England. My dad was educated at the University of London and then founded the University College in Mauritius in the 1950s. He was proud of me for obtaining my PhD, and on my departure to the United States in 1981, said, “the U.S. is the best country for you to follow your dreams.”

Q. What is your favorite quote?

A. “Some men see things as they are and ask why. I dream things that never were and ask why not?” – Robert F. Kennedy

Q. What has surprised you about your experiences as a cancer researcher?

A. The resilience of cancer patients and their inventiveness in seeking a better outcome in light of their diagnosis.

Q. What do you like to do in your spare time?

A. I used to play soccer, and I coached my daughter and her travel team. Now I watch soccer, particularly the English Premier League. My team is Manchester United!

Q. What’s one thing you can’t live without?

A. Love and technology.

Q. What is your favorite childhood memory?

A. When I was 12 years old, my cousins and I took a boat out sailing and got stuck for two hours in the middle of the ocean off the coast of Mauritius. We were oblivious to the phenomenon of ocean tides!

Q. What makes you laugh?

A. Silliness! Watching John Cleese in Fawlty Tower episodes makes me laugh.

Q. What does family mean to you?

A. Family is everything to me. Branka, my wife, and I have installed the same family values to our kids that our parents did in us. We talk and facetime with our daughters and twin grandkids every day.

Q. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A. An American cowboy!





Clinical *Trials*

Definition of a Clinical Trial

A research study in which one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions (which may include placebo or other control) to evaluate the effects of those interventions on health-related biomedical or behavioral outcomes.

Clinical trials originating at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research are providing hope.

Enrolling Now

- 1. BRE18-334** | Dr. Bryan Schneider
This trial is enrolling patients with triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) with residual disease at surgery. It is investigating effects of using certain medication combinations or standard treatment based on the presence of circulating tumor DNA in the blood and other genetic differences in the tumor.
- 2. IUSCCC-0819** | Dr. Bryan Schneider
Enrolling patients with advanced or metastatic breast cancer who are planning to undergo molecular testing, to understand the differences in levels of treatment in precision medicine.
- 3. IUSCCC-0817** | Dr. Kathy Miller
This trial tests the effectiveness of the combination of two drugs, Tocilizumab and Carboplatin, versus Carboplatin only, to treat subjects of different racial and ethnic groups diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. This trial is for those diagnosed with either triple negative or Estrogen Receptor (ER)-low breast cancer.
- 4. IUSCCC-0680** | Dr. Tarah Ballinger
A type of breast cancer medicine called aromatase inhibitors (AI) causes muscle weakness and bone loss in patients. This research is being done to test whether low intensity vibration (LIV) can prevent the loss of muscle and bone strength in patients receiving AI medicine.
- 5. IUSCCC-0781** | Dr. Tarah Ballinger
This study examines how a multi-modality exercise intervention may improve survival, function, and quality of life in participants with metastatic breast cancer.
- 6. IUSCCC-0677** | Dr. Erin Newton
This study is to test a potential handheld vibration treatment for nerve damage caused by chemotherapy.

Upcoming

- 1. CTO-IUSCCC-09138** | Dr. Kathy Miller
This study is testing an investigational vaccine to activate the immune system so it can fight breast cancer.
- 2. CTO-IUSCCC-0861** | Dr. Tarah Ballinger
This study is for patients who are pre-menopausal with some risk factor for breast cancer. This may include, but is not limited to, family history for breast cancer, atypical breast lesions, genetic mutations, or dense breast tissue. The purpose of this research is to find ways to encourage women at increased risk to participate in exercise, make exercise a part of their daily habits, and to understand risks and motivators to exercise for breast cancer prevention. This study also investigates how increasing exercise can change blood and breast tissue markers of increased risk of breast cancer.
- 3. CTO-IUSCCC-0855** | Dr. Tarah Ballinger
The purpose of this study is to test a program for black women and their family members who are at risk of breast cancer. The study will provide access to community health advocates who will help them understand their risk of developing breast cancer, navigate screenings, and access additional ways to reduce their risk.
- 4. CTO-IUSCCC-0812** | Dr. Nawal Kassem
The purpose of this study is to improve genetic testing rates in families of black patients who are found to have a hereditary cancer syndrome – certain patterns of cancer that may be seen within families.

Around the *Globe*

The quest for a cure is rooted in our vital partnership with the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research. Progress requires research collaboration, clinical trials, gathering healthy breast tissue from volunteers, and support from all over the world.

Hope is spreading and lives are changing – in the United States and beyond – because of a shared dream. We now have a presence in six of the seven continents around the globe!

6 current clinical trials

4 new clinical trials coming soon

ACT



8

countries
collaborating
on research

15

countries
supporting the
Foundation

The background is a solid light pink color. It features several large, white, geometric shapes that resemble stylized letters or abstract forms. At the top, there are two white shapes that look like the top parts of the letters 'V' and 'Y'. In the center, there is a large white shape that looks like the letter 'Y'. At the bottom, there is a white shape that looks like the letter 'Y' again, but it is partially cut off by the bottom edge of the page.

We're here for *you*

A breast cancer diagnosis comes with questions, changes, and challenges. Navigating a new normal can be overwhelming, but you are not alone.



Ask An Expert



Dr. Storniolo answers your questions

Anna Maria Storniolo, MD, a specialist in breast care and cancer treatment for over 40 years, serves on the Vera Bradley Foundation Board of Directors. Dr. Storniolo was an active participant in bringing science to the bedside and clinical observations back to the laboratory. With over 140 publications, Dr. Storniolo's work has impacted women—and the research world – forever!

Besides a lump, are there any other physical symptoms to look for that might be a sign of breast cancer?

I always advise women to “know” their breasts. You need to be aware of what they look and feel like, and if you're premenopausal, how they feel at different times in your cycle. If you notice a change, and it persists for two weeks, it's time to see your doctor.

Signs of breast cancer may include:

- Lump in the breast, usually painless
- Thickening of the breast tissue
- Unexpected nipple discharge, especially bloody
- Redness or warmth of the breast, which can also result in one-sided swelling
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin of the breast
- Change in the nipple or distortion of the nipple direction
- Firm lump(s) under the arms or above the clavicle

Does the size of your breasts increase or decrease your risk for breast cancer?

Thankfully for women at all points of the “size spectrum,” there is no scientific evidence to support correlation of breast size to breast cancer risk.

What do I need to know about reconstruction surgery?

Reconstruction is a personal choice. There are different kinds of reconstruction and some are better than others depending on the situation. I strongly advise you ask a plastic surgeon to be involved in your initial care plan, so you know what options are best for you.

How important is it to get a second opinion?

The breast cancer journey is as much a battle of medicine vs. cancer, as one of doubt vs. peace of mind. Though getting a second opinion isn’t always necessary, it’s never wrong. You need to feel like you’re on the right path. And don’t worry about your doctor’s feelings ... we can take it!

Will I lose my desire for sex?

Some of the anti-estrogens used to treat breast cancer can cause lessening of your libido, or sex drive. Also, breast cancer most commonly affects women during their menopausal or perimenopausal years, times when libido is naturally waning. My advice is to talk with your partner about approaches to arousal and foreplay. This can be seen as an excuse to have some fun during a very trying time!

Why do my ribs hurt a year after chemo and radiation?

This is a very common complaint. The removal of breast tissue, especially in a mastectomy, involves the cutting of many tiny nerve endings. Most of these heal or reconnect, however, occasionally the discomfort persists for a long time. Radiation further irritates these nerve endings. If bothersome enough, taking an NSAID – ibuprofen or naproxen – can help.

I’ve heard that aluminum deodorant can be linked to breast cancer. Is this true?

No scientific evidence links the use of these products to the development of breast cancer.

Is there anything I can take to help prevent or manage hair loss?

Hair loss is one of the most distressing side effects of some breast cancer therapies. There’s nothing that will guarantee your hair will not fall out. However, scalp hypothermia during chemotherapy, or “cooling caps,” work to some degree in most patients.



Scan for more
FAQ's or to
ask your own
question



Someone suggested I start drinking tart cherry juice to help with the side effects of long-term medication – and it’s working! Why does tart cherry juice help?

Tart cherry juice hasn't been carefully studied as a means of decreasing side effects from any form of cancer therapy. There is some evidence in nutrition literature that it has anti-inflammatory and melatonin-like properties. Check with your oncologist, but if you do decide to try it, avoid products with high sugar content.

Do exercise and nutrition reduce your chances of getting breast cancer? If not, what does?

To date, we have no clear evidence of the cause for 70% of breast cancers. Women who learn they are at high or moderate risk may consider taking tamoxifen, which lowers lifetime risk by at least 50%. However, I encourage all women to adopt a healthy, balanced diet – nothing fancy – and moderate exercise. These lifestyle changes have been shown to reduce breast cancer risk in several excellent, well-done studies.

New Mammogram Guidelines

I often read stories about young women being diagnosed with breast cancer. As a younger woman myself, why wouldn't I start screenings and mammograms before age 40?

Earlier this year, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued new breast cancer screening guidelines. The new guidelines, issued on April 30, 2024, recommend:

- Women with an average risk for breast cancer should have mammograms every other year from ages 40 through 74.
- People with a higher-than-average risk for breast cancer, such as a family history or genetic factors, should talk to their doctor about when to start screening.

Previous USPSTF guidelines (2016), recommended screening every two years for average-risk women, starting at age 50. As with every other set of breast cancer screening recommendations, this is controversial and has already prompted many diverging opinions. The new recommendations address the increasing incidence of breast cancer in younger women, especially in black women. However, many experts are concerned that the recommended two year interval will miss detecting more aggressive cancers in younger women.

Several points need to be emphasized here:

- The recommendations apply to women of average risk. This assumes that women are all aware of their breast cancer risk, which is far from the truth.
- The USPSTF has a very strict approach to absolute benefit vs. absolute harm for the whole population of women in the U.S., which results in a “one size fits all” approach.

As a patient, how do you sift through all of this? Like many other aspects of life, one size does NOT fit all. Deciding what’s right for you involves talking to your doctor and getting a proper breast cancer risk assessment. If you’re black, have a strong family history of breast cancer, or are of Ashkenazi Jewish descent, that risk assessment should be done by age 25.



Stories of *Strength*

Accepting Survivorship & Focusing on Thriving



The Journey Ahead

Five years ago, 35-year-old Mika was coaching students on how to succeed in college and planning a trip out west.

Then, almost by accident, she noticed a lump in one of her breasts. Mika had no history of cancer in her family. Still, her primary care doctor described it as a “significant lump” and ordered a mammogram and biopsy to be safe.

Those tests revealed a clear diagnosis: Mika had stage 3 breast cancer that was very serious, and she needed to start treatment right away. She remembers her doctor saying, “You’re not going on the trip you were planning.”

Mika had the most common type of breast cancer, estrogen positive, which uses the hormone estrogen as fuel to grow. Additional genetic testing revealed Mika had a genetic mutation, PALB2, which meant she was predisposed to developing breast cancer. Like the better-known mutations BRCA 1 or BRCA 2, it meant one of her parents had the mutation. This prompted the need for cascade testing – genetic assessments of others in her family.

Testing revealed that Mika’s mother had the PALB2 gene, prompting closer monitoring of her health. Last year, Mika’s mother was diagnosed with early stage breast cancer. Her prognosis is excellent!

Mika

Following Mika's diagnosis, she began chemotherapy to shrink the tumor before surgery. After five rounds of chemo, she had a serious negative reaction that required 10 days of intensive care – and an end to chemo. Fortunately, her tumor shrunk enough that surgery could proceed. She had a double mastectomy and some lymph nodes removed. As a further precaution, she will eventually have a hysterectomy.

"The journey is not over, but right now I'm in a good place," Mika shared.

Until her illness, Mika had little knowledge of the work done at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research.

That changed when Mika began looking for a new job. She found one handling social media and digital communications for the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center. Her job includes telling the story of research at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center.

"The stars aligned," Mika said. "It was the perfect job at the perfect moment."

Now, five years after postponing her trip west, she's looking in a new direction. A trip of a lifetime to London, Scotland, Norway, and Denmark will soon be underway!

Research at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research is helping patients like Mika. Her cancer treatment, along with other patients, are more personalized today than in years past due to the Foundation's support of Monogrammed Medicine.

Tarah Ballinger, MD, and Nawal Kassem, MD, are conducting research on ways to improve rates of cascade testing.

Mika's treatment included therapy to reduce the estrogen that fed her cancer. Dr. Ballinger is studying ways to reduce long-term side effects of that therapy. Other Foundation-supported research includes methods to lower the risk of triple negative breast cancer recurrence in patients with the BRCA mutation using the drug Olaparib. It's currently unclear whether this drug could affect PALB2 and other mutations.





Julie

Grace and Grit

Just a few weeks after Julie underwent a double mastectomy, one of her friends introduced her to a mutual acquaintance as a “breast cancer survivor.” Julie’s reaction to those words came swiftly.

“I immediately put the brakes on that,” she recalled, wondering whether the word “survivor” truly applied to her.



Julie was diagnosed with triple positive and invasive ductal breast cancer in September, 2021 after multiple MRIs and biopsies. She opted for a complete mastectomy to avoid possible recurrence, but pathology showed cancer in her lymph nodes. That meant chemotherapy in addition to surgery.



The first prescribed regimen left Julie with side effects that put her in the hospital for a week. She didn’t fare much better with the second regimen. Her oncologist, Bryan Schneider, MD, who serves as the Vera Bradley Foundation Chair in Oncology, kept looking for better options.

“He’s a trailblazer who is relentlessly searching for ways to improve the lives of women like me,” Julie said. “And he found a tolerable course of treatment.”



Even now, two years removed from treatment that proved harrowing, Julie sometimes grapples with the word “survivor.”

That changed when Julie joined a dragon boat racing team of fellow survivors, cleverly named the Indy SurviveOars. Their weekly practices gave her the chance to learn about what other women endured to halt their own disease. Some women said they “only” endured radiation. Others underwent a lumpectomy. To them, their treatment paled in comparison to what Julie had endured.

“What struck me was how many other women felt like I did. Many of us felt we hadn’t suffered enough or gone through enough trauma to be called a survivor. But I fought for my life for 18 months!

When asked how she coped with a grueling regimen, she applies the term “grit” – sticking to a plan and stacking up successful days.

Thanks to that plan, the work of her care team, and a therapist to process her emotions, Julie is back to enjoying time with her husband and three children. She spends most of her free time attending football, basketball, track, cheerleading, and theater events for her kids, whom she calls her “compass for survival.”

Instead of worrying about the future or recurrence, Julie clings to these wise words from her therapist: Love as hard as you can for as long as you can. That’s exactly what Julie does now!



Scan to share your story or to read other stories of strength

Moved to Action

When I was seven years old, I lost my amazing mother to breast cancer. She was only 31 years old. When my mother was diagnosed, she had a double mastectomy. Unfortunately, the cancer had spread to her liver. I remember my father giving her injections in her stomach, which ended up looking like a tic-tac-toe board. With four small children at home, my father was doing everything he could as my mother was fighting for her life. My father even took her to Mexico for treatment, where she ended up passing away.

I’m passionate about the work the Foundation is doing because it’s saving lives. The dollars raised are helping to fund the amazing team of researchers who are making a difference. Monogrammed medicine has come such a long way giving patients a better quality of life during treatment.

I’ve always said I want to be a philanthropist of both money and time. There are so many wonderful causes in the world, but the Vera Bradley Foundation will always be my number one focus.



Lisa



EDUCATE YOURSELF

The internet can be overwhelming and even misleading. Most physicians' offices have information available – that's the stuff worth reading!

– Elizabeth



HAVE A LOVED ONE AT APPOINTMENTS

When I first received the diagnosis, I was in complete shock. My thoughts were all over the place.

– Ashley



KEEP AN OPEN MIND

My oncologist asked if I'd be interested in joining a clinical trial. I said, 'Why not?' Participating brings a fuller understanding of the disease and enriches the support I can give others.

– Kimberly



How to Care for Yourself after a Breast Cancer Diagnosis

Tips from breast cancer survivors

TALK TO OTHERS

When I initially received my cancer diagnosis, I felt ashamed, embarrassed, and wanted to keep everything a secret. However, I quickly learned that more people knowing about my journey meant more prayers being said for healing.

– Salena



BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF

When you go through cancer, you feel far removed from everyday life. I've changed, and I'm learning how to emerge back into the world.

– Ivy



LET FRIENDS AND FAMILY HELP

After surgery, I couldn't lift anything larger than a fork. Friends and family did everything for me!

– Victoria



SET GOALS

While enduring hormone and radiation therapies, my mom began to set goals. Mom's goals kept her alive longer than expected.

– Sue



START A BINDER OR NOTEBOOK

Check out this helpful checklist, created by friends of the Foundation.



Scan to access the checklist

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS

It's okay to not be okay.

– Tamyra



USE COPING STRATEGIES

Rather than watch my hair fall out, I had a haircutting party. It ended with my husband, father and stepmother all leaving with shiny domes too.

– Christy



CONSIDER A SECOND OPINION

No matter how comfortable you feel with your initial diagnosis or provider, seek out a second opinion and compare what they say – if for no other reason than just peace of mind. I'm so glad I did!

– Lynne



DON'T STOP DOING WHAT YOU LOVE

Put that swimsuit on, go confidently to the pool, and enjoy the beautiful day! Body image is a choice we make each day.

– Beth



ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF

Know your body and know it well. Your physician will never know your body as well as you.

– Anna



LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Life gets busy and you lose track of self-care. Go to the doctor, keep the appointments, and get mammograms and blood checks. It could save your life!

– Stacy



YOU'VE GOT MAIL

Mary Ellen is a breast cancer survivor and a committed Foundation volunteer. Finding that she was often asked for advice from newly diagnosed friends, Mary Ellen crafted a comprehensive email filled with advice and tips.

She recommends sending this by email so it's a resource to refer to when needed. And of course, personalize it for your friend or loved one!



JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Breast cancer can be an emotional roller coaster. I've made so many friends online and in cancer support groups, where tips and wisdom are frequently exchanged.

– Tina

Scan for more advice from Mary Ellen and to see a sample email



How to Care for Loved Ones

with Breast Cancer

During a challenging time, show you care



Watch for a new line of breast cancer products from Vera Bradley arriving Spring of 2025.

LET HER KNOW YOU'RE THINKING OF HER

Having my friends pray for, and with me, gave me such comfort. It was also important that I not be treated differently. Talk like you did before and include them even when they'll need to decline. Keep sending funny dog memes and sharing recipes!

– Alex

I found so much strength and support from my community. My students and staff made a quilt marked with words of encouragement. I've passed it on to 20-some other women who have used it during treatment!

– Gayle

HOT WATER BOTTLE

Warm and soothing



NICE MUG WITH TEA

Give a hug in a mug

SOFT BLANKET, SILK PILLOW, OR SLEEP MASK



GIFT CARD BOUQUET

Gather items your loved one would enjoy



ORGANIZE MEALS

My friends stepped in. They prepared meals and started a meal train. A good friend still helps me prepare fruits and vegetables today. Sites like Mealtrain, TakeThemAMEal, or SignupGenius make this very easy!

– Penny

FOUNDATION "GIFT OF HOPE"

Getting a Gift of Hope was awesome and unexpected. I loved the thought put into it and just sat and cried at the reality of my journey, as well as the love and care from those who sent it. A highlight of my battle!

– Becky



MASTECTOMY PILLOW

The pillow is perfect, especially for car rides back and forth to the doctor – which is an hour and a half drive for me!

– Jan



LIGHTLY SCENTED CANDLE

Strong scents can be overwhelming



GIFT CARD FOR AUDIO BOOKS

People from school, church – everywhere – appeared bringing food, books, movies ... and everlasting friendships.

– Kathy



FUZZY SOCKS ROBE, OR SHAWL

BUTTON FRONT PAJAMAS

Easy access to treatment area

LOTIONS AND LIP BALMS

Cancer treatment can cause chapped lips and sensitive skin



TAKE TIME TO VISIT

I accepted ALL the great offers – meals, shopping, anything!

– Liz



Join the movement

Together we make a difference. Because your support is crucial to our cause, we strive to make giving fun and interactive all year long.

Mastectomy Pillow

When Elizabeth Miller, a Foundation supporter and board member, had a double mastectomy she shared she'd fallen in love with a hand-sewn pillow during recovery. Thanks to our friends at Vera Bradley, a similar pillow can now be shared with a friend or loved one to bring comfort and relief as they heal!

“This pillow was a complete game changer and became my best friend! Whether sitting in my lounge chair with ice packs, in the car, or just trying to sleep at night, this pillow made a huge difference!”

– Candi, Breast Cancer Survivor



Scan to learn more about
the Mastectomy Pillow



Gifts of Hope

Give the gift of hope all year long! With a Gifts of Hope donation, the Vera Bradley Foundation will send a beautifully packaged gift set to a special person in your life. Each set includes Vera Bradley products in patterns that support our cause.

Ideal for:

- a breast cancer survivor or someone recently diagnosed with breast cancer
- a birthday, holiday, Mother's Day, or thank you gift
- a little "happy" for anyone going through a tough time
- a special treat for yourself



Scan to learn more
about Gifts of Hope

Foundation *Classic*

The annual Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Classic, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, brings guests, players, and volunteers from across the country together to raise funds for breast cancer research. This multi-day fundraiser features women's golf tournaments, pickleball tournaments, a sponsor reception, and a Foundation Celebration. Through this hope-filled weekend, guests are investing in the best, the brightest, and the most passionate researchers in the world.

With exciting updates from our research team, silent and live auctions, cocktails, fabulous food, and more – the annual Foundation Celebration is a gathering of good friends who support us in our mission to find a cure!

Scan to learn more
about the Classic





Quilt with a Cause

Each year, a dedicated Foundation volunteer designs and crafts a one-of-a-kind quilt using Vera Bradley patterns. Come springtime, Vera Bradley enthusiasts and Foundation supporters delight in entering for a chance to win. Donations can be made in Vera Bradley stores across the country or online at verabradley.org. A stunning way to support breast cancer research!

“ Every stitch sewn and every dollar raised is one step closer to finding a cure!

— Erica Friend, the Foundation's most recent quilter



Scan to learn more
about Quilt with a Cause



Ribbons for Research

Every fall, the Vera Bradley Foundation proudly shows our support in the fight against breast cancer by hanging beautiful pink ribbons in our hometown. Each ribbon represents a donation made in honor or memory of a loved one.

Neighborhoods, businesses, and individuals across the nation come together during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month to support breast cancer research. You can join us all year long in turning any location pink!



Scan to learn more about
Ribbons for Research



Direct Giving

General Donation

We are reminded daily of the importance of not giving up the fight. At the heart of our dedication to breast cancer research is our commitment to the many women affected by breast cancer: Our mothers, daughters, sisters, co-workers, neighbors, and friends.

Because of your generous support, a cure is on the horizon!



Scan to
join us today



Every financial donation provides incredible impact to the Foundation. Having a front row seat to the magnificent discoveries and progress made has given my family great hope in times of need. There's no better feeling than seeing generosity improve outcomes and change lives!

– Patricia R. Miller, Vera Bradley & Vera Bradley Foundation co-founder, with her family





Planned Giving

Leave a Legacy

Our mission is to raise funds to find a cure and to improve the lives of the many affected by breast cancer. We'll continue to make an impact in the world of breast cancer eradication until our mission is accomplished. We want to see women thrive, not just survive! You can leave a legacy and ensure the Foundation's mission will live on – today and tomorrow – through planned giving. Gifts can be designated in the form of appreciated stock, real estate, life insurance, cash, or a designation of a gift in a will or living trust.

“Leaving a gift to the Foundation in my will has provided a simple way for me to continue to shape the future of breast cancer research for my family, my friends, and future generations.

My dear mother, Vera Bradley, would say, “It doesn't matter how much you give, just give what you can when you can.” I'm so grateful for the good fortune and good health I've enjoyed, and for the many many friends who've stepped up to support the Foundation for so many years. It's definitely gratitude that fuels my generosity! But we aren't done just yet. I still hope a cure will be found in my lifetime, but in the event it isn't, I want the work to continue.

— **Barbara Bradley Baekgaard, Vera Bradley & Vera Bradley Foundation co-founder, with her sister, Joan Bradley Reedy, Breast Cancer Survivor**

“Planned gifts create tremendous opportunities for the Foundation and may also provide tax benefits for your family. We recommend you work with your financial or legal advisor.”

— **Andrew Suci, CPA**



Join the Movement on *Social Media*

We believe social media is a powerful tool for raising awareness and uniting our communities in the fight against breast cancer. Here are three ways you can join us to amplify our mission:

1. Be an ambassador for our cause

Lend your voice by reposting, sharing, liking, and commenting on posts from our official @verabradleyfoundation accounts. Your simple engagement can make a big impact by introducing our cause to new audiences.

2. Use #vbfoundation to join the conversation

This hashtag connects you with a passionate community rallying around breast cancer awareness. Share your story, post photos from our events, or give a shoutout to someone on their cancer journey.

3. Tag @verabradleyfoundation in your posts

Did you attend an event, make a donation, or have a personal experience to share? Tag us in your photos, stories, and reels. We love amplifying the voices of our supporters!



"Together, we can build an online community rallying around the fight against breast cancer!"

— Anna Rudicel, Social Media Specialist



Volunteer

Lives continue to change because of the incredible dedication of our committed volunteers. Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who donate their time, talent, and treasure. We couldn't make the impact we do without YOU!



“Volunteering is a great way for our team to get involved in the community and display that what we do is bigger than volleyball. We genuinely enjoy our experience with the Foundation as we are always met with kindness and enthusiasm for helping others.

– Kelsey, Huntington University Head Volleyball Coach

“Being part of this passionate community feels like a true privilege!

– Debby, Community Volunteer

Host an event

Partnering with the Foundation has never been easier.

Event in a Box

Our customizable Event in a Box is brimming with the essentials needed to start your planning. We'll provide decor, tips, and guidance, and you'll provide hope for a world without breast cancer. A win/win!




Scan to learn more
about Event in a Box

*Minimum donation of \$250 per box

*Contents and materials shown are subject to change



Event *Planning* Tips



While much progress
has been made in treating
breast cancer, this disease still
affects 1 in 8 women.

Chances are you already know
or can anticipate knowing
someone who will be diagnosed.

Your support not only
funds research, it funds
impactful results!

1. Set your fundraising goal:

- Be specific about the amount you hope to raise and consider what it will take to meet your goal.

2. Choose a theme:

- Whether you're planning an intimate party with a circle of friends, a team or club event, a company event, or a retail store event – we've got you covered! Check out the pages that follow for lots of inspo.

3. Dig into the details:

- Customize your theme with our help.
- Factor in food, drinks, decorations, and entertainment. Consider cost-saving options such as a carry-in or backyard gathering.
- Try an engaging activity! Think silent auction, raffle, game night, or photo op to keep guests entertained. We've included a balloon swag in our "Event in a Box" that makes a great photo backdrop.
- Live music from a local musician, a DJ, or a Vera Bradley Foundation guest speaker can add to the atmosphere.



“Stay in touch! We have great resources to help you host a perfect event, and we’re here to help. We love to make new friends across the country!”

Stephanie Scheele, Foundation Executive Director

4. Spread the word:

- Throughout the event, share the information we provide in our “Event in a Box.”
- Use social media, email marketing, and community forums to spread the word.

5. Gather support:

- Recruit volunteers and delegate tasks like set-up, food prep, activity management, and guest registration to ensure smooth execution.
- Partner with local businesses who may donate items, services, or match a portion of the funds raised.

6. Day-of preparation:

- Arrange tables, chairs, decor, audio/visual equipment (if needed), and have a plan for parking.

7. The big day:

- Create a welcoming atmosphere. Mingle with guests and express gratitude for their support.
- Help raise awareness for the Foundation. Take photos and share stories of the event on social media.
- Have fun! Celebrate the positive impact you’re making in the fight against breast cancer.

8. Follow-up:

- Send thank you notes to attendees, volunteers, and sponsors.



Customize Your Theme

We provide a suite of downloadable digital assets. Use our easily customizable templates to create your invitation and other signage. Invites and event promos can be sent by email or printed!



Scan to learn more about hosting an event



Budget Friendly Tips

With a nod to the research, and to the ribbons that symbolize hope, this year's HOT (pink) list for easy, standout decor features bud vases, beakers, & bows!





Start with a color palette

Oh wait! You already have that covered – pink, pink, and more pink!

Bows and more bows

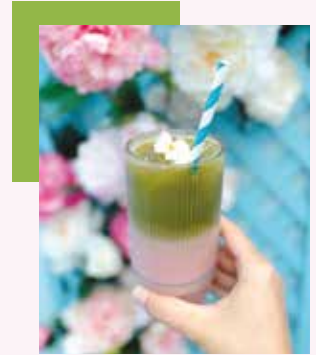
We've embraced pink ribbons for years as a symbol of hope, but there's no question BOWS are having a moment! Tie ribbons around napkins, stems of glassware, taper candles, beakers, cake platters, and more. Satin or wired ribbon works best for a soft, flowy bow!



Make your flowers fuss-free

Supermarket flowers in single BUD VASES or lab BEAKERS are all the rage, and the most budget friendly floral option!





Pink is the new black

Consider pink to be the neutral color in your decorating. Pink plays beautifully with a whole host of colors, and maximalism is all the rage today! If you have dishes, taper candles, or other favorites you love to entertain with – mix them in with your pink palette.

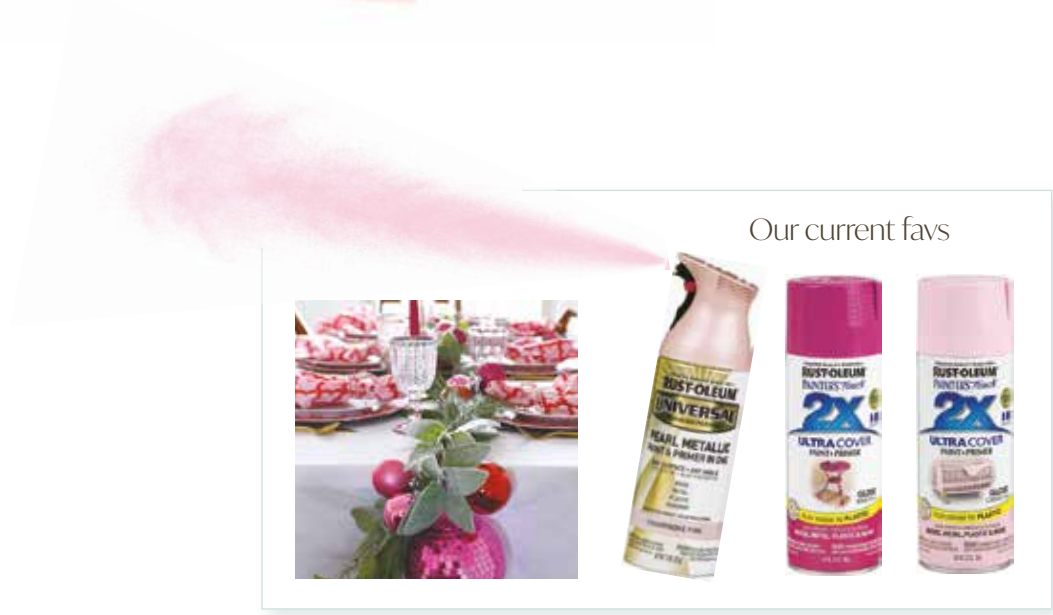
Pink & blue? Pink & orange? Pink & green?
Yes, yes, and yes!





Spray paint, glitter, & glue are your new besties

They're favorites of ours. Purchasing pink decorations may not be in your budget, but you can spray paint or glitter just about anything you have on hand or find on a thrifting adventure. Branches, fruits and veggies, pasta sauce jars, vases, baskets, old toys, or props – an endless list of possibilities.

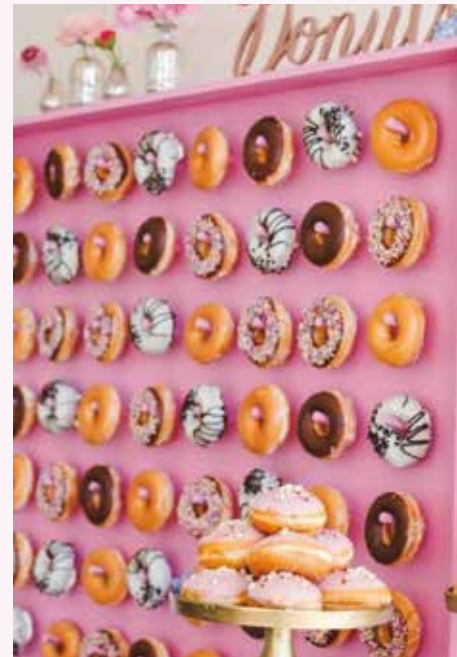


Our current favs



Everybody loves a photo op

With a festive photo backdrop, your decor can double as a fun event activity. Hanging our easy-to-create balloon swag in a visible spot makes a perfect place for guests to take pictures. Sweet & simple or swanky & spectacular ... it'll be a big hit!





We provide
cute *pink straws*

Start with a pink drink

A grouping of pink drinks or bottles makes a stunning display.
If you're offering a signature cocktail, add a signature mocktail too!





Effortlessly elegant



Use beakers, fun individual carryout cartons, or pedestal cake plates to serve food.

Your food spread becomes a conversation starter when savory or sweet bites are served in unique vessels!





Scour your supermarket for pink food & beverages

Take a stroll through your local grocery store or Trader Joe's, and you'll discover a huge assortment of ready-to-serve treats and beverages.



You, Your Circle of *Friends*,

or Your Club

can partner with us to benefit the Foundation

We'll get the party started by sending you an Event in a Box after you commit to raising funds and awareness for the Vera Bradley Foundation. Our team is ready to guide you in your efforts!

Host a Pink Party with a Purpose. Whether your group is small or large, gathering with friends is always a good thing! Introduce the Foundation to your Book Club, Sports Team, Sorority, Fraternity, Key Club, Life Group, Family Reunion, or Neighborhood Association. The party can be sweet and simple or you can go all out – either way, you'll be funding breast cancer research.

Turn YOUR Campus, YOUR Club, or YOUR Neighborhood Pink! Pre-sell pink ribbon kits. Let us know how many you need, and then distribute them to your "community." Set up a display at your sorority house, sporting event, school, country club, community center, or church. We'll send all you need to festively decorate a table and draw a crowd! Your circle of support will hang the ribbons and you'll make a world of difference in raising awareness for breast cancer.

Create a Digital Campaign. Use social media to create a digital "Giving Tree" on Giving Tuesday or any day of the year. Invite friends and family to donate to the Foundation in lieu of birthday gifts or in honor of someone special battling breast cancer. Easiest of all, we can partner with you to set up a digital fundraising platform where friends can easily join you in raising funds.



A Little Inspo

Big Man on Campus
bachelor pageant

Bouquets for Breast Cancer
make your own flower bar

Breast Weekend Ever
wellness retreat

Brunching for Breast Cancer

Cornhole Tournament
turn the bags shades of pink

Cupcakes for a Cure
host a bake sale

GNO for the "Girls"
girls' night out

Hope for the Holidays

Hope Sweet Hope
offer pink drinks and desserts

"How To" for Hope
host a cooking or crafting class

Mimosas for Moms

Painting with a Purpose

Party on the Patio
wine and cheese

Pink Picnic
backyard, on campus,
or at a park

Sips & Sweets Soirée



Your Sports Team

or Association

can partner with us to benefit the Foundation

We'll get the ball rolling by sending you an Event in a Box after you commit to raising funds and awareness for the Vera Bradley Foundation. Our team will coach you along the way!

Host a pink out. You pick the sport – we've got the theme. And remember ... real men (and women) wear pink!

Donate a portion of the entry fees. Every dollar makes a difference.

Wear special jerseys and auction them to the highest bidder! You'd be surprised how much a PINK jersey with a special name or number can raise.

Have teams or players compete to see who can raise the most money. Who doesn't love a little extra competition? Especially when bragging rights are involved!





A Little Inspo

Dig Pink

Golf Fore a Cure

Pickleball in the Park

Pink Ribbon Run/Walk

Pink-A-Palooza

Badminton, Croquet, Bocce,
Corn Hole, Capture the Flag

Pink the Rink

Stick it to Cancer

Turn the Ballpark Pink

Shoot for a Cure

Yoga on the Lawn



Your Company

or Retail Location

can host an event to benefit the Foundation

Companies

With your help, we're accelerating the pace of life saving research. Someone you work with has likely been affected by breast cancer. Give your company an important cause to rally around!

Turn your business pink with our Ribbons for Research kits! Recruit an employee to organize an internal campaign. Order pink ribbon kits from us, and sell them to employees to promote awareness for the Foundation. We'll send you all you need to festively decorate a table and pink up your offices for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month – or any month of the year!

Offer employees direct payroll deduction as an easy means of giving. Introduce the Foundation at a Town Hall or through your preferred method of communication. We're happy to assist with presentation format. In certain situations, a Foundation ambassador can travel to your location and present to your company. Digital presentation options are also available as a resource.

Display or distribute a QR code for direct giving. Set up a pink display in your cafeteria or break room, and let our customizable signage do the talking!

Host a party with a purpose! Turn your company picnic or holiday party pink. Offer prizes or incentives to employees who donate during the event.



... because it's personal even when there's a business involved!





Retail Locations

Chances are, a loyal customer or associate has already been affected by breast cancer. Give your store an important cause to rally around!

Ask customers to donate a small amount or round up at the register.

Point of sale signage and a smiling face go a long way when it comes to encouraging others to give. In fact, the experience of countless businesses show cause marketing often has positive results for both the acting business and the non-profit taking part in the campaign.

Host a Girls' Night Out shopping event. Charge a small ticket price for admission or donate a portion of the evening's sales to the Foundation. Serve pink sips and sweets!

Display a QR code for direct giving. Set up a pretty pink display in your store and let the signage do the talking! Leave it up for a day, a weekend, a week, or a month. Breast cancer affects women and their families year round.

Set up a pink photo backdrop in your store. You'll help promote the Foundation as you ask customers to post pictures on social media and tag us.



We welcome friends old and new. You are the cornerstone of our success!



"We put the FUN in fundraising! Whether you raise \$500 or \$5,000 dollars – let us help you throw the pink partner event of your dreams."

Kathy Ray, Partner Event Specialist

Foundation *Team*

and Board

We're here to partner with you



Few people are fortunate enough to serve in a role that ignites their passion. I am so thankful to be surrounded by a team and board who share my passion. Our staff is dedicated to the eradication of breast cancer. The unique blend of personalities, strengths, talents, and life experiences help us achieve our goals. We complement each other, communicate well, and never forget to find the fun in what we do.

Our staff would never be able to succeed without the unwavering support of our board and a dedicated group of volunteers.

While our team may be small, we are mighty! Never doubt that a small group of dedicated and passionate individuals can change the world. Why?

Because it's the only thing that ever has.

Stephanie Scheule

Foundation Team



Kris Reese
Brand Manager

Anna Rudicel
Social Media Specialist

Kathy Ray
Partner Event Specialist

Stephanie Scheele
Executive Director

Andrew Suci
CPA

Anna Shelton
Communication Specialist

Amelia McArdle
Development Coordinator

Foundation Board



Barbara Bradley Baekgaard
Co-Founder /
Vice Chair



Patricia R. Miller
Co-Founder



Ruth Cook
Board Chair



Stephanie Scheele
Executive Director



John Brooks
Treasurer



Elizabeth Miller
Secretary



Sue Britton



Katie Law



Matt McGee



Anna Maria Storniolo



Reneta Thurairatnam-Sandkuhler




Brender Gerber Vincent

A large, stylized number '8' is the central graphic element, rendered in a light pink color against a darker pink background. The '8' is composed of two thick, rounded strokes that meet at the top and bottom, creating a sense of depth and movement. The background is a solid, muted pink color.

Foundation Sponsors

Thank you for believing with us!



Something special happens when we come together – we get one step closer to achieving our dream of finding a cure and improving the lives of those affected by breast cancer. With your sponsorship, we'll accelerate the pace of meeting our fundraising goals and finding a cure!

Platinum
\$100,000 +

Barbara Bradley Baekgaard Family Foundation
Patricia and P. Michael Miller & Family
Vera Bradley Associates and Customers

Pink Diamond
\$50,000 +

Master Spas
The McGee Group

Double Diamond
\$25,000 +

The Children and Grandchildren
of Barbara Bradley Baekgaard
Linda and Wayne Boyd
Kristy and John Simon

Champagne Diamond
\$15,000 +

Jacqueline Ardrey, Michael Moyle and Family
Kathy Callen and John Powell
Jeanette D. Schouweiler
Steel Dynamics
The Vann Family Foundation

Diamond
\$10,000 +

Anonymous Friend
Victoria Boyd-Devine and Michael Devine
DeHaven Chevrolet
Deister Machine Co., Inc.
Forvis Mazars, LLP
Gilead Oncology
The Journal Gazette Foundation
JPMorgan Chase & Co.
LC Nature Park
Lutheran Health Network
John and Gale Mann Foundation
Elizabeth and Jay Miller
Sue and Jeff Miller & Family
Vera Bradley Board of Directors
The Windward Foundation

Ruby
\$5,000 +

Anonymous Friend
Sue Gray Altum
The Siblings of
Barbara Bradley Baekgaard
Brotherhood Mutual
The Chapman
Charitable Trust
Alex and Jerry Cooper
Dirty Dough Fort Wayne
Faegre Drinker
Fort Wayne Medical
Society Foundation
Alison and John Hiatt & Family
Hylant
Ice Miller LLP
Kanaan Co., Ltd.
Kelley Automotive Group
Rea Magnet Wire Co.
Ruoff Mortgage
STAR Financial
Drs. Anna Maria Storniolo
and Joel Scherer
TBS International Co., Ltd.
UPS
Beth and Wallace Wetherill

Sapphire
\$2,500 +

AssuredPartners
Avery Dennison
Carlye Baenen,
Coldwell Banker
Belmont Beverage
Jacqueline and Steve Bohman
Lisa and Doug Bragg & Family
Britton Marketing
& Design Group
Bruce Ewing Landscaping, Inc.
Susan and James Campbell
& Family
Kim and Chris Colby & Family
Ruth and Jim Cook
The DeHayes Group
The Dely Family
Drs. Charlotte
and Kevin Dugan
Dongguan LanHui
Dongguan Shi Xingshun
Textile Co., Ltd.
Dongguan Yida Textile
Co., Ltd.
Glenbrook Dodge
Chrysler Jeep
Jill and Grant Goeglein Family
Harrison Dental Group
Korrund International PTE, LTE
Tammy and Jim Kunce
Lake City Bank
The Leyboldt Family
Mrs. Donna Long
Indiana University Melvin and
Bren Simon Comprehensive
Cancer Center
NATco
Julie and Grant North & Family
Dr. and Mrs. Andy and
Kathy O'Shaughnessy
Family Foundation
Owen & Jean Pritchard
Charitable Foundation
Parrish Leasing Inc.
PNC Bank
Premier Truck Rental
Rothberg Law Firm
RW Robrock Design-Build, Inc.
Stephanie and Jason Scheele
Shanghai Sunwin Industry Co.
Shen Zhen Changfeng
Handbag
Shen Zhen Shui Shing
Handbag Co.
Lisa Strubel
Mary Trabel
Weigand Construction
Whitefields Private Limited
You Shun Tao Chen Wang



"Hi, it's the Foundation calling! We love partnering with individuals and organizations who help us raise funds for breast cancer research. Consider becoming a sponsor and support this life changing cause!"

– Amelia McArdle, Development Coordinator



Pearl
\$1,000 +

All Strong Industry (USA), Inc.
Awesome CX
Alyson Bohren
Bojrab, Kaufman & Co.
Jennifer and Paul Bojrab
Chungwoo Textile Co., Ltd.
Drs. Lorrie and Bill Deschner
Design Collaborative
Don Ayres Honda and Acura
Mary Ellen and James Elizondo
EPCO Products Inc.
Nanjing Eagle Emperor
Troy Forrest
Fujian Tiancheng Holdings Garments Imp & Ex Corp., Ltd.

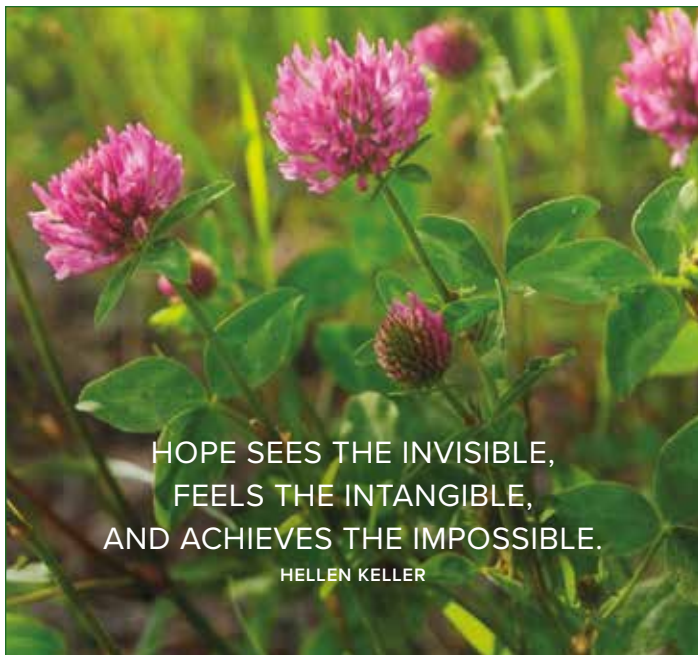
The Hadley and Hines Families
Haines, Isenbarger & Skiba, LLC
Huang Hsiu Fang
Julie Inskeep and Bobby Simpson
Katmandu
Kelly Box & Packaging Corp.
Kona International Co. Ltd.
Lassus Foundation
Leonard J. Andorfer & Co., LLP
Parrish Orthodontics
Dawn and Michael Schwindle
Shambaugh & Son, L.P.

Shantou Jiacheng Plastic Factory
Shanghai Neoent International Trading Co.
John Shin & Family
Pam Sours
Sunrise Technologies
Weiliang Tang
Amy and Ryan Thwaites
Brenda and Scott Vincent
Wah Sun Handbags
YKK
Stacie and Jim Zurawski

In-Kind with Distinction
\$2,500 +

Ace Pickleball
Baesman Printing
Blu Spoon Catering by Catablu
Britton Marketing & Design Group
Force Technology
Fort Wayne Country Club
Erica Friend
Gail Herendeen Photography
Markey's Rental and Staging
The McGee Group
Ruby Moon Floral
WANE 15
WPTA 21 Alive





HOPE SEES THE INVISIBLE,
FEELS THE INTANGIBLE,
AND ACHIEVES THE IMPOSSIBLE.

HELLEN KELLER

PROUD TO SUPPORT THE
VERA BRADLEY FOUNDATION FOR BREAST CANCER



Though I know
I'll never lose affection
For the people and things
That went before

The Beatles, *In My Life*

Proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation
for Breast Cancer Research

The Campbell Family
James, Susan, William & Julian

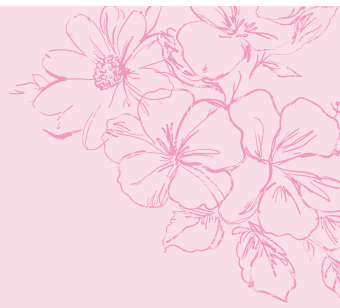
HONORING
THOSE BATTLING BREAST CANCER &
REMEMBERING THOSE WE'VE LOST.

**DRIVE HOPE
FORWARD**

GLENBROOK
FORT WAYNE'S CHOICE SINCE 1979
CHRYSLER DODGE JEEP RAM
PROUD SUPPORTERS OF THE
VERA BRADLEY FOUNDATION FOR BREAST CANCER

PROUD TO SUPPORT THE VERA BRADLEY
FOUNDATION FOR BREAST CANCER

blu.spoon
CATERING
260-456-6563



“Once you choose hope,
anything’s possible...”

Christopher Reeve

Grant and Julie North & Family
proudly support the
Vera Bradley Foundation
for Breast Cancer



Connecting life-changing research
with women everywhere
is truly inspiring.

We are deeply grateful to the
Vera Bradley Foundation.

Ruth & Jim Cook



b *hopeful*
It's what we do.

Design/Build, Maintenance, Irrigation
Bruce Ewing | 124 North Thomas Road | 260.432.2785 |
bruceewinglandscaping.com

We embrace hope and proudly
support the Vera Bradley Foundation

Jill and Grant Goeglein Family





FORCE.TECH

AUDIO, VIDEO, LIGHTING INSTALLATION, RENTAL, AND PRODUCTION



www.Force.Tech or (317) 586-2844

In **heartfelt tribute** to Marilyn Leyboldt, a courageous breast cancer warrior, and survivor, Kristen Leyboldt, we honor their indomitable strength and resilience. Inspired by their legacy, we are unwavering in our support of the Vera Bradley Foundation, striving to bring hope and healing to those affected by this disease.

Kelly & Fred Leyboldt and Family

PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE VERA BRADLEY FOUNDATION FOR BREAST CANCER



LIVE EVENT? WE'VE GOT IT COVERED.

MARKEY'S
CREATING DEFINING EXPERIENCES

MARKEYS.COM

Belmont Beverage

Goes Great With Life!


Proud to support the life saving
research made possible by the

Vera Bradley Foundation For Breast Cancer



*In memory of
Margaret Trabel
and her generous
spirit of giving.*

September 18, 2010
☞ Mary Trabel ☞



As our family grows, so does our
determination to support research for
advanced therapies and personalized medicine.

We dream of a world without breast cancer.

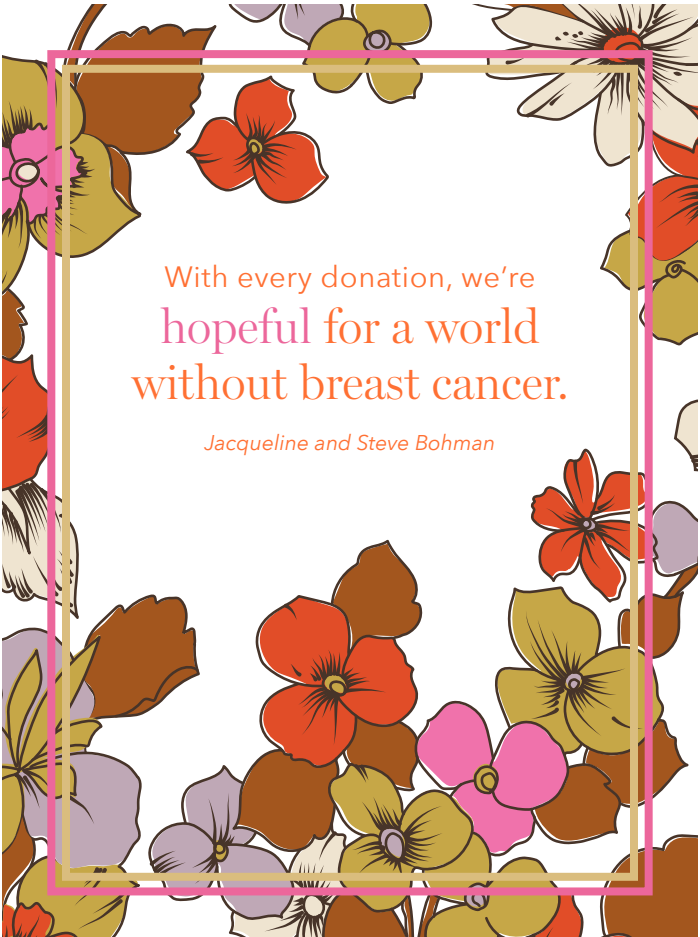
The Bragg Family



PTR proudly supports the efforts of the
Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer
and the work being done to drive towards a cure.



Rooted in Fort Wayne, IN
9138 Bluffton Road | RENTPTR.COM

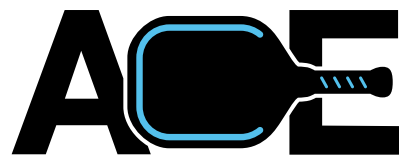


With every donation, we're
hopeful for a world
without breast cancer.

Jacqueline and Steve Bohman

Owen & Jean Pritchard

CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION



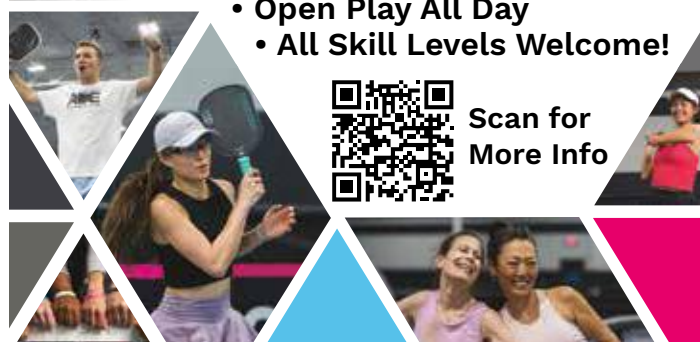
PICKLEBALL CLUB

5310 Merchandise Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46825
260-766-6183

- Indoor Professional Grade Cushioned Courts
- Clinics, Events, Mixers, and Tournaments
- Open Play All Day
- All Skill Levels Welcome!



Scan for
More Info



“
we have a *responsibility*
to help those around us
and help others in need
”

Virginia Williams

It is a privilege to help support
the beautiful foundation created
by Barb & Pat...

Lisa Strubel

Community.

LAKE CITY BANK SALUTES THE INSPIRING
WORK OF THE VERA BRADLEY FOUNDATION
FOR BREAST CANCER.



Our business is more than insurance – it is built on supporting and empowering the members of our community.

AssuredPartners is proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer



10 East Main Street, Suite 400
Carmel, IN | (317)844-7759

At Harrison Dental Group, we treat you like we would our own family



Call us at 260-627-4686 to schedule!

Banking on Fort Wayne's brilliance

Through reliable and responsible investments, PNC Bank takes a boring approach to helping our customers and communities thrive. With the steady and thoughtful guidance of our regional president, Corinna Ladd, there's no telling how brilliant Northeast Indiana can be.



Brilliantly Boring since 1865 is a service mark of The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
©2024 The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. All rights reserved.
PNC Bank, National Association. Member FDIC.

“Hope is the companion of power, and mother of success; for who so hopes strongly has within him the gift of miracles.”
Samuel Smiles

Thank you, Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer, for inspiring so much hope for women everywhere!

The Dely Family



“Strength doesn’t come from what you can do, but from overcoming what you thought you couldn’t.”
-Anonymous

We proudly support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer in their ground-breaking research.

ROTHBERG
LAW FIRM

Where every matter - matters

(260)-422-9454
<https://rothberg.com/>



FORT WAYNE FUNDS HOPE.

*Thank you,
Vera Bradley
Foundation!*



INDIANA UNIVERSITY
**MELVIN AND BREN SIMON
COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER**

NATco

THE MOST TRUSTED PARTNER IN BRAND PACKAGING



ABOUT US

NATco is a full service, one-stop, brand packaging supplier to the retail and brand markets. We exercise a business culture that embraces the customer experience, quality assurance and continuous innovation. Predictability and reliability are the foundation of our value proposition.

Established in 1991, NATco is privately held and headquartered in Los Angeles, California. With 25 manufacturing and service locations worldwide, we are strategically positioned to efficiently manage supply chain needs.

LOS ANGELES
NEW YORK
CHARLOTTE
MEXICO CITY
GUATEMALA CITY
SHANGHAI
HONG KONG
DHAKA
CHITTAGONG
BANGALORE
TAIPEI
HO CHI MINH CITY
BARCELONA
GUANGZHOU

LEARN MORE AT WWW.NATCOGLOBAL.COM

**“Optimism is the faith
That leads to achievement,
Nothing can be done without
Hope and confidence.”**

HOPE

**“Yesterday is history,
Tomorrow is a mystery,
But today is a gift
That’s why it’s called “the present”**

**WHITEFIELDS KNITS PRIVATE LIMITED / RENAISSANCE
INDIA
+91-900-396-3338**

*Your Dream
Our Reality*



RW
ROBROCK

www.robrockdesignbuild.com DESIGN-BUILD, INC. 260.432.5505

Northeast Indiana Custom Home Builder

CONSTRUCTING SPACES OF

HOPE

AND HEALING



WEIGAND
CONSTRUCTION

*Proud to be a trusted partner
of the Vera Bradley Foundation*

DRIVEN TO FIND A CURE



Parrish Leasing is honored to support
the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer

COMMERCIAL TRUCK LEASING,
RENTAL AND SERVICE
FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED
SINCE 1968



*We stand with
the Vera Bradley
Foundation for
Breast Cancer.*

**OUR GOAL IS TO HELP SPREAD
AWARENESS TO PROMOTE EARLY
DETECTION AND INTERVENTION.**





Kanaan, Co. LTD is proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer.

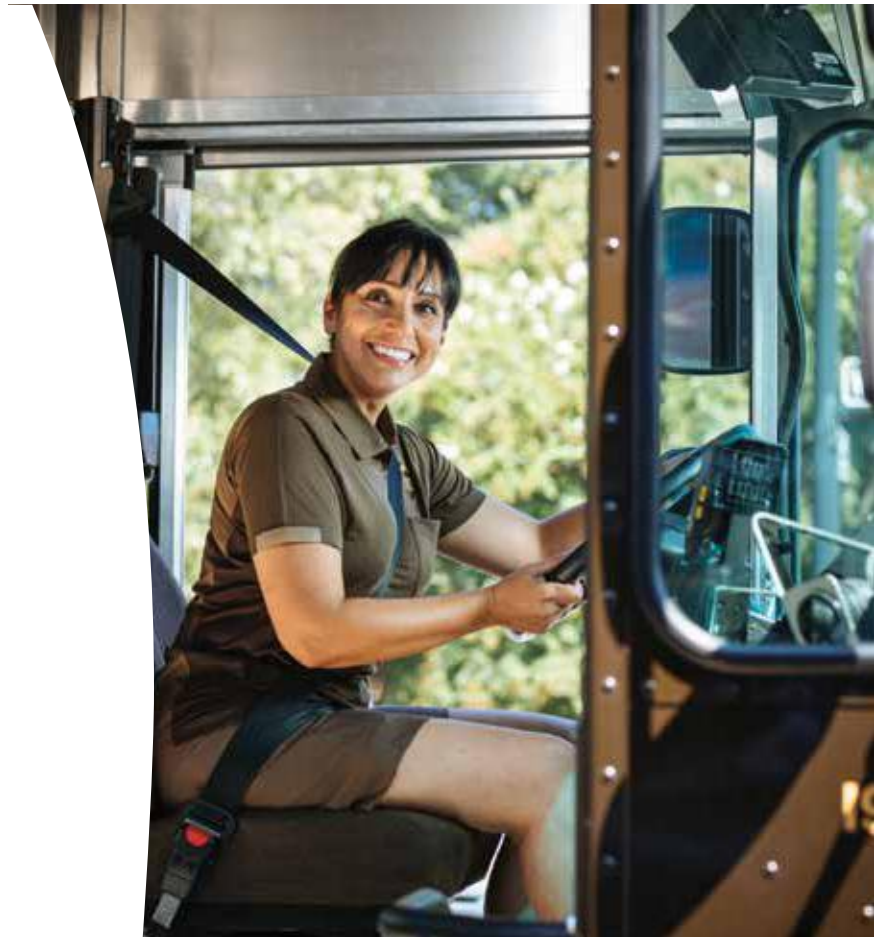


Constantly innovating to better serve you.

UPS is proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer.

ups.com

© 2021 United Parcel Service of America, Inc. UPS, the UPS brandmark and the color brown are trademarks of United Parcel Service of America, Inc. All rights reserved.





Dedicated to my mother,
a breast cancer survivor,
and future generations.

Thank you Vera Bradley Foundation
Carlye Baenen, Coldwell Banker



When cancer touches your own, it gets personal.

HERE TO FIGHT ALONG
with you

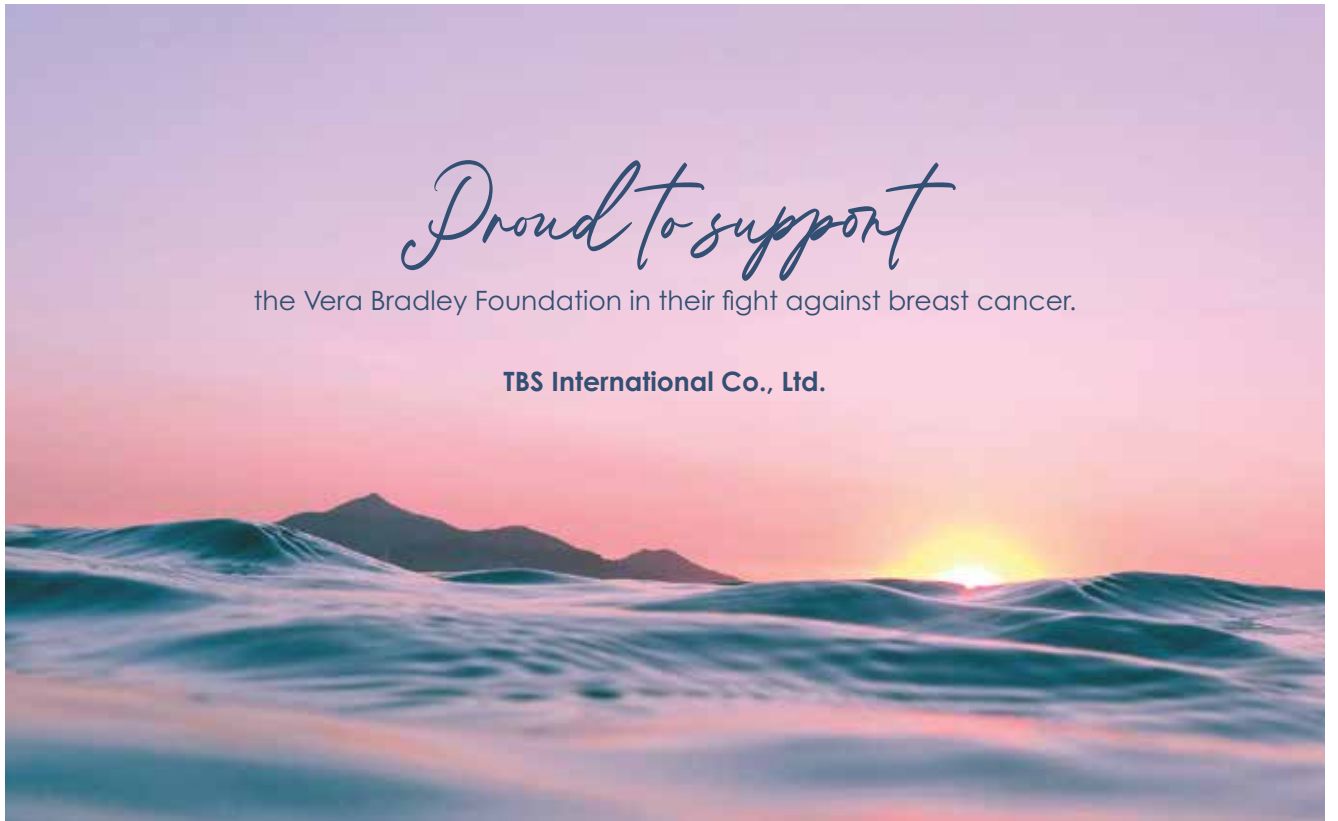
In loving memory of our dear Owen and Aunt Cindy.

The Scheele Family

Proud to support

the Vera Bradley Foundation in their fight against breast cancer.

TBS International Co., Ltd.





Cheers to the Vera Bradley Foundation for your impact in the fight against breast cancer.

Jail
HERENDEEN
PHOTOGRAPHY



Fort Wayne Country Club
is proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation



ftwaynecc.org | 5221 Covington Road | Fort Wayne, IN 46804 | 260-432-2581



Chapman Charitable Trust

The Chapman Charitable Trust is proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation.



It's an honor to support the Vera Bradley Foundation.

Together, we'll find a cure.

Drs. Anna Maria Storniolo and Joel Scherer

“I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it.”
- Maya Angelou

KELLEY
AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

Kelley Automotive Group is proud to be united with the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer.



Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer
Proud Supporters

Barbara Bradley Baekgaard's
Sisters and Brother
Joan, Susan, Kathy, and Ed

Front Row: Kathy, Susan, and Ed
Back Row: Joan, Vera, Ed, and Barbara

We're grateful for
the opportunity to be a
*small part of
a big impact.*



Sue Altum and The Kim and Chris Colby Family

Our Hope is a future without breast cancer...
without having to make impossible decisions,
without having to say goodbye far too soon,
without having to fight for our lives.

Thank you for giving us hope for
a brighter future.



Bank | Insurance | Private Advisory



©2024 STAR Financial Group



Providing Hope

Ice Miller is proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Classic. Our law firm supports more than 100 nonprofit organizations throughout our region. We are proud to work together with the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer to build dreams in our community.

350+ lawyers in Indianapolis and beyond

► icemiller.com

attorney advertising material




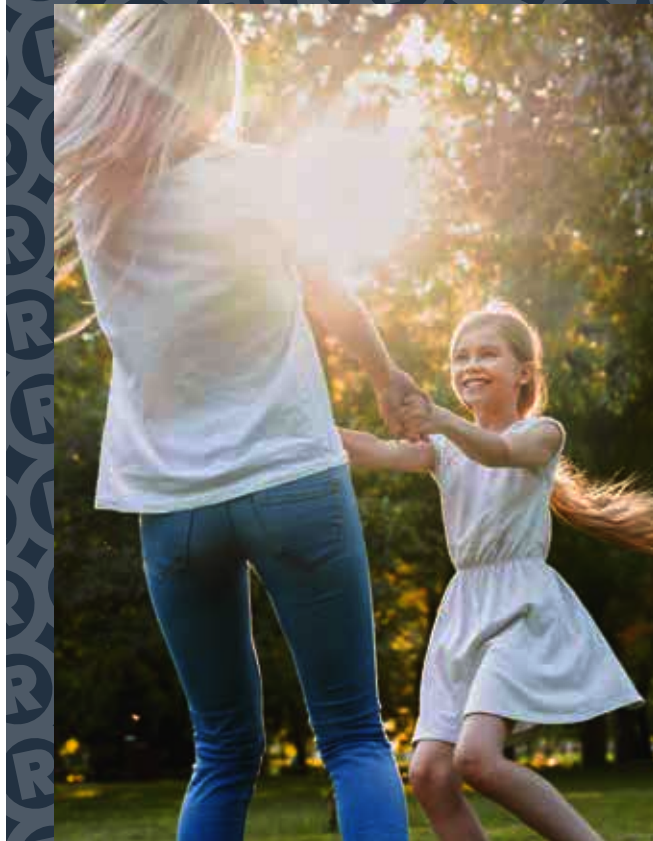
Giving you more time to experience

WHAT HOME MEANS

With an average clear to close of **just 15 days**, and a **98.4% customer satisfaction** rating, we make the homebuying process quick and stress-free, so you can focus on the things that matter most.

Ruoff Mortgage is a proud supporter of the Vera Bradley Foundation.

 *Based on 2022 independent third party customer satisfaction survey data. The average Clear to Close time is dependent on loan type, proper documentation, and other qualifying factors. Loan decision is subject to satisfactory appraisal, title review, and no change to financial condition. This is not an offer for extension of credit or a commitment to lend. Some restrictions may apply. Ruoff Mortgage NMLS #141899. Equal Housing Lender. Ruoff Mortgage Company, Inc. d/b/a Ruoff Mortgage is an Indiana corporation. For complete licensing information visit: <http://www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org/EntityDetails.aspx?COMPANY/141899> 07242024





By Your Side *Like Family*



In 1935, Edward P. Hylant founded our family-run insurance agency on relationships and trust. Today, our mission remains to support and protect the businesses and communities where our clients and employees live and work.

Hylant is proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer.

[Learn more at hylant.com.](https://www.hylant.com)

HYLANT |

Insurance, employee benefits and risk management consulting for businesses and individuals.

HYLANT-FORT WAYNE
260-969-3900



Together — **Fighting Breast Cancer**

We are a proud supporter of the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer and its mission to fund critical research.

With 1,200 attorneys and consulting professionals licensed in nearly every state in the U.S., and with strategic offices in London and Shanghai, Faegre Drinker is committed to our communities and to building a diverse and inclusive firm that reflects those communities and our clients.

Breast cancer impacts 2.1 million women each year. Like the Vera Bradley Foundation, **Faegre Drinker is dedicated to helping more women survive and thrive.**

[faegredrinker.com](https://www.faegredrinker.com)

© 2024 Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP. All Rights Reserved. 568853



*Thanks for bringing hope
by turning the town pink.*

Brotherhood Mutual is honored to support the
Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Classic®.

We thank the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer
for its deep commitment to funding research in pursuit
of life-changing treatments.



Insuring America's churches and related ministries.® | brotherhoodmutual.com | 800.333.3735

Property & Liability Insurance | Auto Insurance | Workers' Compensation | Mission Protection | Payroll & HR Solutions

Copyright 2024 Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company. All rights reserved. Brotherhood Mutual is licensed in most states. 6400 Brotherhood Way, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825



thank you

Vera Bradley Foundation
for Breast Cancer

For a survivor, a cure is not a wish.
It is a passion.

Mrs. Donnor Long



We are grateful to the Vera Bradley Foundation for making it possible to dream of a future filled with thriving survivors, and the HOPE you inspire in all of us! We are truly blessed!

The Cooper Family

The Hiatt Family

proudly supports the

Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer



Empowering Progress, Supporting Community, and Making a Difference.




Proud to Support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer

The Vann Family Foundation

wishes to show appreciation to the dedicated commitment of the thousands of volunteers for the Vera Bradley Foundation over the past 20 years. We honor their devotion to breast cancer research and are proud to live in such a caring and generous community.



Greatly loved, deeply missed.
In loving memory of Lee Vann



“Go into the world
and do *well*.
But more importantly,
go into the world
and do *good*.”

– Minor Myers, Jr

The Children, Grandchildren
and Great Grandchildren of
Barbara Bradley Baekgaard
are proud supporters of the

Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer



Amy & Mike Ray and Family



Laura & Jim Byrne and Family



Joanie & Bob Hall and Family



Marlo & Tom Byrne and Family

Because

hope

Lives in Research



**IS A PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE
VERA BRADLEY FOUNDATION**

A truly happy person is one who can
enjoy the scenery on a detour.

—unknown



Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer and DeHaven Chevrolet—a Classic pair!

dehavenchevrolet.com



#DeHavenDuo

In Loving Memory of Weezie Doermer

We are so very grateful for the Vera Bradley Foundation's support of the work of Indiana University School of Medicine to find a cure for breast cancer.

Since my Mom's passing in 2000, so much has been learned
and so many advances have been made ...
and so many survivors are living longer happier lives.

Thank you.



Kathy Doermer Callen, John Powell and Family





**Lutheran Health Network
is proud to support the
Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer
and provide cancer care to patients
throughout northeastern Indiana.**



**For more about how we're caring for you
and the place we all call home:
LutheranHealth.net/community-benefits.**

DEISTER MACHINE COMPANY, INC. IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THE

Vera Bradley
Foundation for Breast Cancer

Sponsoring events like the Vera Bradley Classic allows us to contribute to the cause on behalf of our customers, our community, and our Deister family.



Deister equipment is preferred by the world's largest producers of crushed stone, coal, and sand & gravel.



The Standard of Excellence Since 1912.

baesman:

We get personal.



**Proud sponsor of
the Vera Bradley
Foundation for
Breast Cancer**

Personalized marketing – *solved.*

Understanding people on a more personal level takes focus and effort. But closer relationships are much more rewarding for people and brands. And there's nothing more personal than health.

At Baesman, we specialize in personalized marketing and helping brands build deeper relationships with their customers. We're proud to partner with Vera Bradley in their fight against Breast Cancer. It doesn't get much more personal than that.

Strategy & Analytics | Loyalty Programs | Email & SMS
Direct Mail | In-Store Signage | Storage & Fulfillment

Visit baesman.com

PROUD to REPORT the GOOD NEWS

The Journal Gazette

LOCALLY OWNED SINCE 1863 www.journalgazette.net

Today is Vera Bradley's
TURN THE TOWN PINK
to fight breast cancer



The Journal Gazette

© 2013
The Journal Gazette

\$1.00

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA ♦ LOCALLY OWNED SINCE 1863

www.journalgazette.net

IU, Vera Bradley join vs. cancer

Research center
to be established
in Indianapolis

THE JOURNAL GAZETTE

The IU School of Medicine is creating a center for breast cancer research with significant support from the Vera Bradley Foundation, officials announced Monday night.

Indiana University is launching the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for

Breast Cancer Research, which will focus on finding a cure for triple negative breast cancer, some of the most difficult-to-treat forms of the disease.

Dr. Jay L. Hess, dean of IU's medical school, said "far too many women still die from this disease" despite medical advances.

The foundation, which has committed \$35 million to support IU's breast cancer research since 1999, is

Cancer, Page 4A



Staff photo

A crowd at Sycamore Hills Golf Club cheers Dr. Jay Hess as he announces Monday that Indiana University and Vera Bradley Foundation are teaming up to create a breast cancer research center in Indianapolis.

Classic raises \$1 million Vera Bradley event benefits cancer research

THE JOURNAL GAZETTE

The Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Classic eclipsed \$1 million in earnings for the eighth time, and organizers believe

they showed just how relevant the events will be for years to come - not just because breast cancer remains a formidable foe, but also because the Classic is mobilizing new and younger

participants.

"It's wonderful anytime you can capture a young person and get them involved early," said Lynda Houk, executive director of the Vera Bradley Foundation for

Breast Cancer. "And then, maybe, you can get them involved further with their time or talents or their treasures. We have an opportunity to get their attention with what we're doing and why



Vera Bradley
Board of Directors
is proud to support the
Vera Bradley Foundation
for Breast Cancer

Kristina Cashman Godina

Mary Lou Kelley

Fran Philip

Jessica Rodriguez

Carrie Tharp

Brad Weston

A Proud Supporter of the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Classic.



Dirk Rowley



Alyssa Ivanson



WEEKNIGHTS AT 5,6 & 11PM

LOCAL COVERAGE YOU CAN COUNT ON

In memory of a dear friend, Sharon Demarest.
While many of us are survivors, Sharon's story reminds us that the fight isn't over yet and that is why we continue to support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer.



“ My mission in life is not to merely survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some humor, some style. ”

– Maya Angelou

The Sue & Jeff Miller Family Foundation





Love and Hope



For many years, our family has been proud supporters of the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer. This incredible organization makes a significant impact by funding research for a cure and uplifting volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to the cause.

We are honored to volunteer with the foundation alongside such gracious, compassionate, and fun individuals who are all incredibly grateful for the opportunity to make a difference.

Supporting the foundation allows us to give back to our community, physicians, and loved ones who are affected by breast cancer.



Love and hope,

Wayne and Linda Boyd
Michael Devine and Victoria Boyd-Devine

**“Believe you can,
and you are halfway there.”**

THEODORE ROOSEVELT



**The Miller Family is proud to support the
Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer.**

Jay, Elizabeth, Campbell, Carter, and Emma



TOGETHER
WE CAN CURE
BREAST CANCER



BRITTON

MARKETING & DESIGN GROUP

BMDG.COM



Commitment to a cure

At JPMorganChase, we know that the battle against cancer is not a sprint but a marathon. We applaud your leadership, strength and commitment to excellence in the battle against breast cancer.

We are proud to sponsor the Vera Bradley Foundation.

© 2024 JPMorgan Chase & Co.



JPMorganChase

LC Nature Park was created to honor the life and legacy of Carol Brooks, whose warm and engaging spirit is reflected in the park's wildflowers, majestic animals and in the smiles of children, families and individuals who visit this unique nature preserve.



LC Nature Park is proud to support the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Research and the pursuit of life changing treatments.

lcnaturepark.org
9744 Aboite Road, Roanoke, IN 46783, 260.999.3153



Thank you

to the Vera Bradley Foundation Team

Stephanie, Anna, Amelia, Kathy, Anna, Kris and Andrew

With Gratitude,
An Anonymous Friend


Hope lies in dreams, in imagination,
and in the courage of those who
dare to make dreams into reality.

Jonas Salk



Proud sponsors of the Vera Bradley Foundation

Kristy and John Simon

A pair of hands is shown holding a clear glass jar. Inside the jar, a brown and white butterfly is visible. The background is a soft-focus image of a child's face, with two other butterflies flying around. The overall tone is warm and hopeful.

*A dream you dream alone
is only a dream.
A dream you dream together
becomes reality.*

— John Lennon

John & Gale Mann
FOUNDATION



Welcome to Forvis Mazars.

We are a new two-firm network with a 100-year legacy and a common commitment to our clients, people, and communities. Global to see the big picture and local to understand it. We provide advice that builds our clients' confidence and prepares them for what's next.

Providing clarity. Building confidence.

forvismazars.us

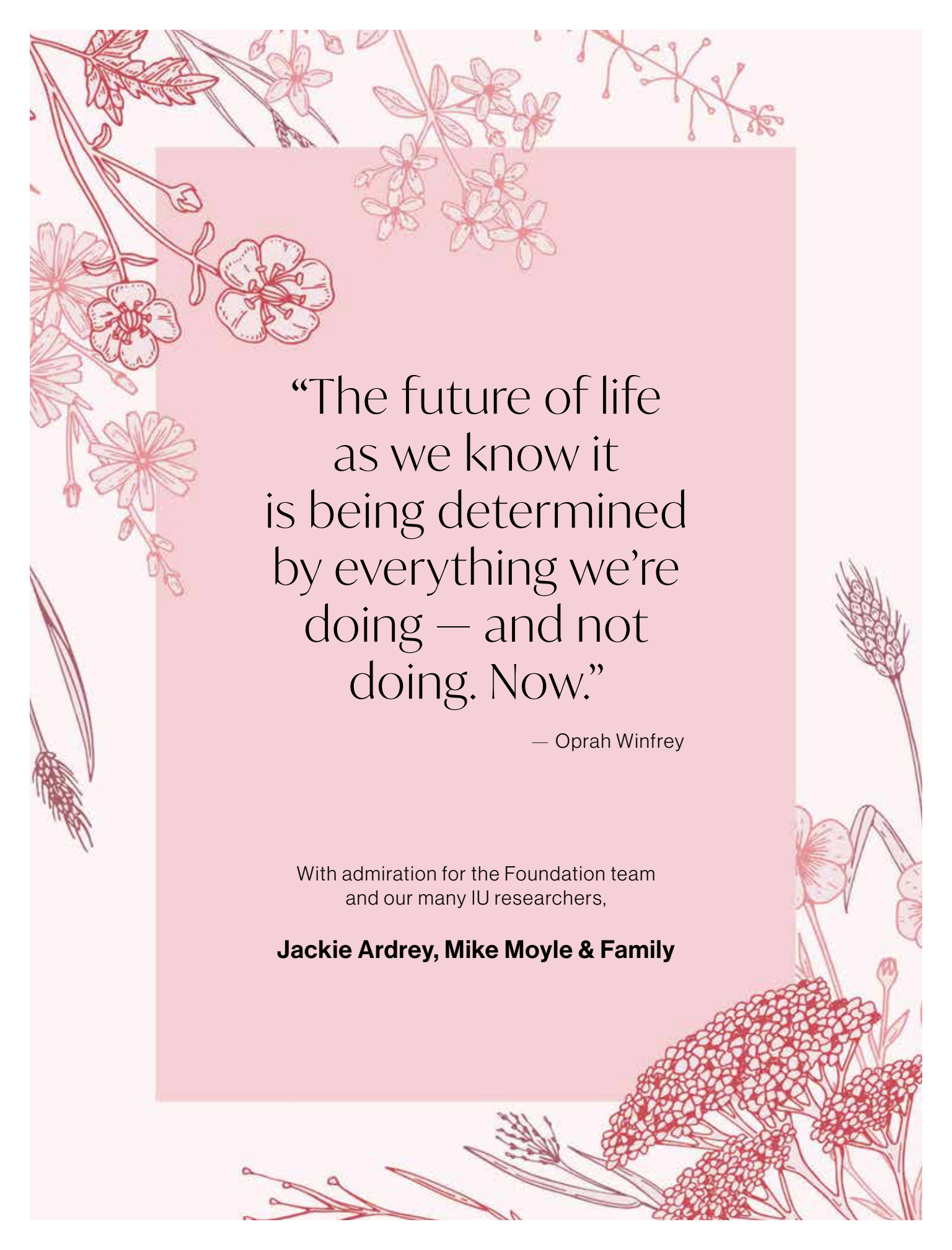
Assurance | Tax | Consulting

forvis
mazars



A PATTERN OF **HOPE**

Steel Dynamics is proud to support the
Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer
and their research toward finding a cure.



“The future of life
as we know it
is being determined
by everything we’re
doing – and not
doing. Now.”

— Oprah Winfrey

With admiration for the Foundation team
and our many IU researchers,

Jackie Ardrey, Mike Moyle & Family





Together in hope

Master Spas proudly supports the
Vera Bradley Foundation for
Breast Cancer.



America's finest ultra-therapeutic hot tubs, cold tubs
and swim spas, manufactured in Fort Wayne, Indiana

MasterSpas.com





The McGee Group®

800.966.2020 | mcgeegroup.com

*Seeing a Future Free
from Breast Cancer*

The McGee Group is honored to be a part of the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer in the fight for a cure. This cause is close to our hearts and we are grateful to support this vital research. Our vision is a future where every mother, sister, and daughter can live free from this disease.

*In loving memory of Jenny Lynn McGee
Wife. Mother. Friend. Warrior. Angel.
March 31, 1948 - January 24, 2008*

Proud Supporter of





“This *new day* is too dear,
with its hopes and
invitations, to waste a
moment on the yesterdays.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

**With vision and purpose, anything is possible.
With hope, we work toward a new day
free of breast cancer.**

vera bradley





where HOPE lives

Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research
Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center



Patricia and Michael Miller
Maggie Sin and Mark Miller
Sanders and Matthew Miller, Kate and Jackson
Elizabeth and Jay Miller, Campbell, Carter and Emma







Our hope for a cure lives on.

The Barbara Bradley Baekgaard Family Foundation
shares the commitment to
finding a cure for breast cancer.

In Memory of Peer Baekgaard





Over \$40 million and counting for impactful research!

 **vera bradley**
FOUNDATION FOR BREAST CANCER

Learn more at verabradley.org