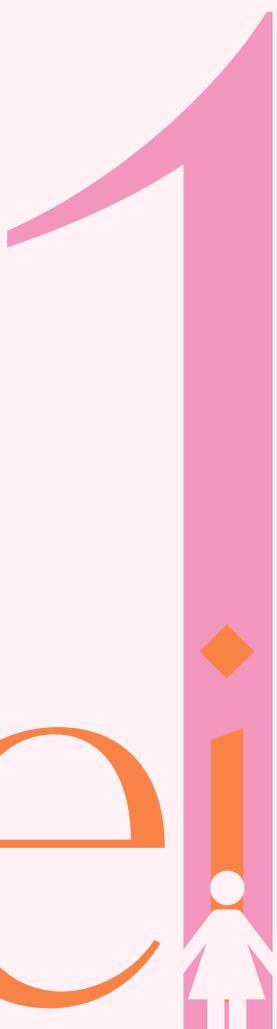




Vera Bradley Foundation

OUR MISSION, YOUR IMPACT



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!

eight

Welcome!

To our incredible supporters, thank you for your unwavering support, belief in our mission and trust in our process! For over three decades, you've been our steadfast companions on this journey, helping us raise more than \$42 million to advance life-saving breast cancer research. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and proud of the progress we've made together. Because of you, hope continues to flourish and the future holds brighter prospects for all affected by breast cancer.



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



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

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Printing of this book was generously donated by Baesman Printing.

Our “Why”

We're funding critical research so women can thrive, not just survive, after a diagnosis.

\$42 million of Impact **AND COUNTING!**

In 2018, the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research was created as the central hub for all breast cancer research at IU.

Funding Allocations:



Your belief in our mission is invaluable. You've placed your trust in us, and we promise to be the best stewards of your investment of time and resources. Every decision we make is guided by a commitment to transparency, positive impact and tangible results. Because of you, we're not just funding research—we're accelerating it—and lives are being changed with hope and healing!

Stephanie Scheele, Vera Bradley Foundation Executive Director

Breast Cancer Research
Laboratory Support

36%

Development of
New Therapies

24%

Vera Bradley
Foundation Chairs

23%

Immunotherapy
Research

10%

Vera Bradley
Foundation Scholars

7%



OUR MISSION:

Raising funds for research to find a cure and to improve the lives of the many affected by breast cancer.

Breast Cancer: The Facts

NOT JUST A NUMBER—IT'S LIVES



Today, there are **3.8 million breast cancer survivors** in the US, including women currently being treated and those who have finished treatment.

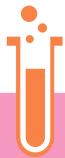


About **85%** of breast cancers occur in women who have **no family history** of breast cancer.

BREAST CANCER IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF CANCER DEATHS FOR WOMEN AGED 20-39

United States 2024:

- **316,950 new cases** of invasive breast cancer
- **59,080 new cases** of Ductal Carcinoma in situ (DCIS), a non-invasive breast cancer



The **5-year survival rate** has improved, with an increase from 85.7% in 1990, to over **92% today** (but varies by stage at diagnosis).

92%
2025
85.7%
1990

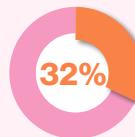
100%

BREAST CANCER REMAINS THE MOST COMMON CANCER AMONG WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES



11% of all breast cancer cases in the US are diagnosed in **women under 40**.

Young women are more likely to be diagnosed with aggressive subtypes like triple-negative breast cancer.



About **32%** of **all newly diagnosed cancers in women are breast cancer**



In the US, breast cancer **mortality rates have decreased** by approximately **40%** from 1990 to today, largely due to increased mammography screening and advances in treatment.



Black women experience a **41% higher mortality rate** from breast cancer compared to white women.





Join the Movement



Purpose



Hope



Foundation Moments





Mission Driven



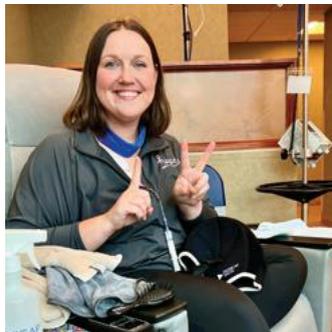
Treasured Volunteers



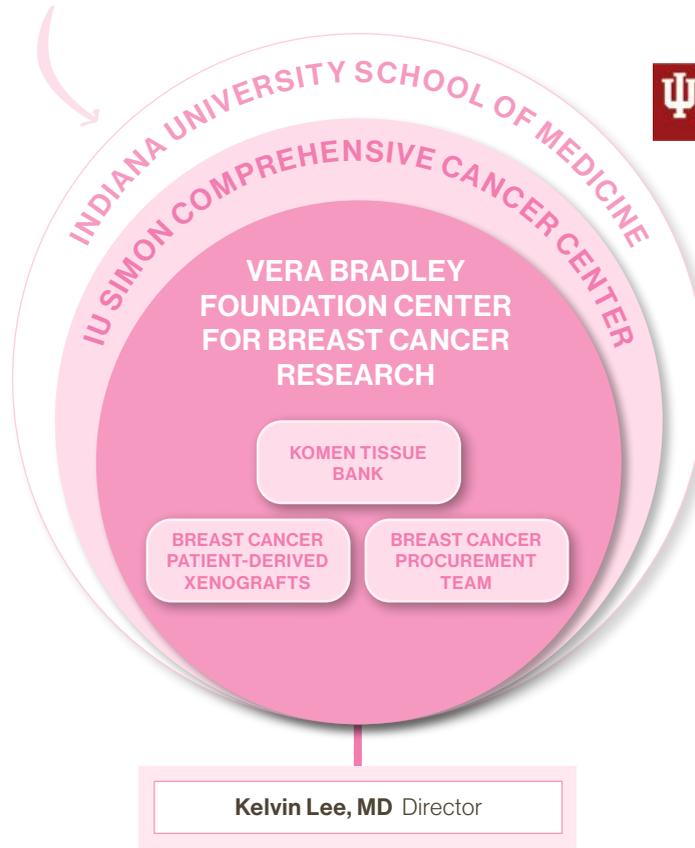
Progress



Impactful Research



Generous Supporters



VERA BRADLEY FOUNDATION CHAIRS

- Bryan P. Schneider, MD** Vera Bradley Foundation 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

* Denotes Executive Committee

Transforming the Landscape of Breast Cancer Research

More than 30 physicians and scientists at Indiana University's Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center (IUSCCC), home of the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research, are reshaping our understanding of breast cancer. This elite center is a place where science becomes solutions — for women at risk, for those fighting the disease and for survivors. Breast cancer remains the most common cancer diagnosis in women in the United States. Enduring the often-debilitating treatment can be as harrowing as the diagnosis itself.

Research is enabling data gathering, the launch of clinical trials and ultimately changing how we prevent, detect and treat breast cancer. 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.

PERSONALIZING TREATMENT TO DECREASE HARMFUL SIDE EFFECTS



Researchers have discovered that black women have different disease biology, different risk factors, respond differently to chemotherapy and have higher rates of neuropathy. A clinical study led by

Bryan P. Schneider, MD, found that black women treated with a chemotherapy called docetaxel 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 the prescribed treatment. Unplanned dose reductions ultimately reduce survival rates, making this research vitally important for black women. Research showed that patients treated with docetaxel had less TIPN, and could tolerate life-saving treatment as planned.

The study is among the first National Cancer Institute (NCI) cooperative group trials to focus enrollment solely on a minority population that has experienced disparate outcomes. **Tarah J. Ballinger, MD**, presented the results of the study at the 2024 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting, the world's largest oncology meeting.

In January of 2025, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) changed their guidelines as a result of this trial. Along with ASCO, the NCCN provides the most influential cancer guidelines for much of the globe. Based on Google searches, there were more than 15 million downloads of the NCCN guidelines last year.



IMPROVING COSMETIC SURGICAL OUTCOMES



Surgery is part of breast cancer treatment for nearly all patients, including breast-conserving surgery (BCS) commonly known as lumpectomy. Numerous factors affect how the breast looks after BCS.

In collaboration with researchers at Purdue University, **Carla Fisher, MD**, is developing a novel collagen compound to

be used as a filler after BCS. This compound is currently in the pre-clinical research phase, with plans for a clinical trial at the IUSCCC soon.

Additionally, Fisher is collaborating with Purdue engineering researcher Adrian Buganza Tepole, PhD, to evaluate cosmetic and physical outcomes after BCS using computational modeling of outcomes based on factors related specifically to the patient and tumor type.

A study of patients' pre-operative factors along with images, followed by documentation of post-operative outcomes, will inform the model. Ultimately, Fisher believes this collaborative work will assist in predicting cosmetic outcomes—shape, size of breast, any noticeable defects—to help inform surgical decisions.

VACCINE THERAPY TO TREAT AGGRESSIVE BREAST CANCER



Breast cancer is highly variable, making targeted treatment critical to successfully attack the disease. **Pravin Kaumaya, PhD**, is doing just that with a combination vaccine therapy that uses the immune system's natural ability to fight cancer.

Working alongside **Kathy Miller, MD**,

Kaumaya is developing a vaccine that triggers the body's B-cells to produce the antibody needed to attack the cancer cells. His groundbreaking work includes developing several immune checkpoint vaccines intended to be used in combination with

immunotherapies. Unlike existing immunotherapies for breast cancer, these combination vaccine therapies are designed to stimulate a sustained immune response with minimal toxicity.

Dr. Kaumaya's lab is prioritizing TIGIT, a protein, as a target of immunotherapy for invasive breast cancer for the immune checkpoint vaccines. These vaccines will be used in combination with other vaccines for both triple negative and HER2+ disease. Enrollment for the Phase I HER2 breast cancer vaccine trial has opened.



REDUCING RISK THROUGH MOVEMENT & EXERCISE



Researchers at the IUSCCC are studying the role of exercise in preventing breast cancer. Research has shown that movement and exercise are associated with reduced risk of breast cancer.* However, to date, the mechanism behind this association is unclear.

Tarah Ballinger, MD, is leading a study in breast cancer prevention. Women at high risk for

breast cancer are participating in a six-month exercise intervention. In partnership with the Komen Normal Tissue Bank, housed at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research, participants are donating breast tissue before and after the exercise program. The goal is to use these samples to evaluate changes in the tissue microenvironment.

**See pages 12 and 13 for a deeper understanding of the importance of movement and exercise.*

CREATING AN ATLAS OF “NORMAL” TO UNDERSTAND BREAST CANCER ORIGINS



Led by **Hari Nakshatri, PhD**, researchers at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research have completed the most extensive mapping of healthy breast cells to date. These findings offer an important tool for researchers around the globe to understand how breast cancer develops and identifies differences in breast tissue among diverse genetic ancestries.

Nakshatri developed a comprehensive atlas of breast tissue cells—including details on how the genome is organized in each cell type, the genes expressed and which specific gene expressions are limited to each cell type.

These details assist researchers in understanding drivers of each cell type's function in various parts of the breast.

Nakshatri's lab sequenced 88,000 cell nuclei from 92 women who donated healthy breast tissue to the tissue bank at the IUSCCC. The donors included people of African, European, Indigenous American, Hispanic, East Asian, Southeast Asian and Ashkenazi-Jewish ancestry.

Researchers know breast cancer most often originates in specific cell types. Understanding cell type origins can lead to understanding different cancer types and treatment responses. This study could improve understanding of breast cancer development and lead to identifying new treatment targets.

BOLD NEW IDEAS



Liz Yeh, PhD, is working on targeting an enzyme called HUNK. Macrophage cells usually perform essential tasks as part of the immune system, but breast cancer cells can hijack them to protect cancer cells and help them metastasize.

When this happens, they become tumor-associated macrophages (TAMs). The presence of HUNK in breast cancer cells leads to communication with TAMs to promote this metastatic process.

Yeh's research has identified a HUNK inhibitor that shows efficacy toward breast cancer in models. A research pilot project is developing this inhibitor with hopes of advancing it through the translational drug development pipeline.

Angela Richardson, MD, PhD, and **Ann Kimble-Hill, PhD**, are aiming to revolutionize the detection and treatment of triple negative breast cancer (TNBC). This

research aims to identify novel types of lipids associated with TNBC aggressiveness and brain metastases. In their pilot study, Richardson and Kimble-Hill are testing contrast agents capable of detecting TNBC cells with high sensitivity and specificity, and assisting antibodies to cross the blood-brain barrier. This barrier is often an obstacle for drugs to treat the spread of cancer to the brain.

Richard Carpenter, PhD, is studying how a protein called Heat Shock Factor 1 (HSF1) plays a role in regulating the presence of anti-tumor immune cells in breast tumors. Carpenter's long-term goal is to understand what regulates tumor-immune interactions in metastatic tumors in order to identify better therapeutic approaches for metastatic breast cancer patients.



National Cancer Institute

Academic Cancer Centers are evaluated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), 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 administrative components 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, 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.

What Is a Clinical Trial?

Clinical trials are vital to breast cancer research, and ultimately to improving outcomes for patients.



Clinical Trials are the essential links translating scientific discoveries from the lab into effective and safe patient care.

The progress seen in breast cancer survivorship over the past few decades is a direct result of the continuous, rigorous testing performed in clinical trials.

Why are clinical trials so important?

Advancing Scientific Knowledge:

- Establishing the standard of care: Every effective, approved breast cancer treatment currently used — from surgical techniques to drugs like tamoxifen and Herceptin — began as an experimental therapy tested in a clinical trial. Trials are the definitive method for gathering the evidence needed to create new, official treatment guidelines.
- Improving all aspects of care: Clinical trials go beyond just new drugs.

They study better ways to:

- Prevent breast cancer or recurrence (lifestyle or risk-reducing drugs).
- Screen and diagnose earlier and more accurately (e.g., comparing 2-D vs. 3-D mammography).
- Treat by optimizing doses, combinations, or sequences of existing therapies.
- Enhance quality of life by managing side effects and long-term effects of treatment.
- Precision Medicine: Trials allow researchers to identify specific genetic or molecular drivers of different breast cancer subtypes (HR-positive, HER2-positive, Triple-Negative) and test highly targeted therapies against them, leading to more personalized and less toxic treatment plans.

Benefits to Patients:

- Access to innovative treatments: Participants often gain access to promising new drugs or procedures that are not yet widely available to the general public. This can be especially critical for patients whose cancer has not responded to standard therapies.
- High-quality monitoring: Patients in clinical trials are typically monitored with exceptional care and more frequent testing by an experienced medical team.

Clinical trials drive the future of care by establishing new life-saving standards and precision treatments.

CLINICAL TRIALS ORIGINATING AT THE VERA BRADLEY FOUNDATION CENTER FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH ARE PROVIDING HOPE.

OPENING SOON

Immune System vs. Cancer: Vaccine to activate the immune system

IUSCCC-0864 | Dr. Pravin Kaumaya

This study is testing an investigational (not approved for general use by the United States Food and Drug Administration — FDA) vaccine to activate the immune system so that it can fight cancer that has a high risk of recurrence (cancer that returns after previous treatment).



ACTIVELY ENROLLING

1 **IUSCCC-0781** | Dr. Tarah Ballinger

This trial is designed to compare the effect of exercise versus usual care control on the clinical parameter of cardiorespiratory fitness, in patients with metastatic breast cancer.

2 **IUSCCC-0819** | Dr. Bryan Schneider

This study proposes an innovative approach across four comprehensive cancer centers, where real-world, diverse patients with metastatic cancer are seen receiving a broad scope of therapies in the context of precision medicine. The study plans to collect detailed clinical, social, and genomic data from patients to identify significant contributors of disparate survival and toxicity outcomes for patients with metastatic cancer.

3 **IUSCCC-0880** | Dr. Tarah Ballinger

The primary objective of this study is to assess the feasibility of using the NearWave monitoring system to monitor therapy progression in breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy before other treatment. This study will measure the data quality captured with the device.

4 **IUSCCC-0879** | Dr. Tarah Ballinger

The purpose of this study is to better understand why eligible participants opt out of exercise programs tailored to fit the needs of women living with metastatic breast cancer by administering surveys.

5 **IUSCCC-0817** | Dr. Kathy Miller

The purpose of this study is to test the effectiveness of the combination of two drugs, Tocilizumab and standard of care (SOC) Chemotherapy versus SOC Chemotherapy only to treat subjects of different racial and ethnic groups diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer that is either triple negative (test negative for all three proteins estrogen, progesterone and HER2) or Estrogen Receptor (a group of proteins found inside cells that are activated by the hormone estrogen) (ER)-low.

6 **IUSCCC-0855** | Dr. Tarah Ballinger

This trial uses lay navigators to conduct outreach and risk assessment in Black families affected by breast cancer.

7 **IUSCCC-09138** | Dr. Pravin Kaumaya

This phase I trial studies the side effects and best dose of vaccine therapy in treating patients with metastatic solid tumors. Vaccines made from antibodies and peptides combined with tumor cells may help the body build an effective immune response to kill tumor cells.

8 **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.

Let's Move!

How exercise and healthy weight impact breast cancer risk and recovery.



Obesity is associated with about a 30-40% increased risk of postmenopausal breast cancer, as well as more advanced stage at diagnosis and more complications from therapy.

BUT WEIGHT ALONE DOES NOT TELL THE WHOLE STORY

We also know that within women of normal weight, higher body fat percentage is associated with significantly increased risk.

Being more physically active (guidelines suggest 150 minutes of moderate activity per week) **reduces risk of breast cancer by about 20-40%** depending on the data set — even if you don't lose weight — because of physiologic changes in the body with each “dose” of exercise.

Meeting activity guidelines also reduces risk of breast cancer recurrence by over 20% depending on the patient population, which is similar to results for those taking tamoxifen.

per week
150
minutes = per day
20
minutes

20-40%

EXERCISE CAN BE GIVEN AS A “PRESCRIPTION”



Pre-diagnosis physical activity

is associated with **improved survival after diagnosis** of many different cancers, including breast cancer.



Muscle impacts prognosis even in early-stage disease.

A study of over 3,000 patients with Stage II and Stage III breast cancer showed that patients who were sarcopenic (progressive loss of muscle mass and strength) showed a 40% increase in mortality.



NOT JUST A NUMBER—IT'S LIVES

1 IN 8 WOMEN will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.



HIGHER LEVELS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER RISK OF BREAST CANCER

Physical activity is associated with **prevention or improvement of many cancer therapy side effects**, including anxiety and depression, fatigue, peripheral neuropathy, lymphedema, bone and muscle loss, cognitive function and insomnia.



1 2 WEIGHT LOSS* SUCCESSFULLY REDUCES RISK OF BREAST CANCER

The best example of this is bariatric surgery, which reduces risk of breast cancer approximately in half.

** See page 15 for GLP-1 information*



recurrence

24 percent



In terms of survivorship, **better body weight and exercise also reduce risk of recurrence, and improve tolerability of therapy.**

For example, among 2,987 women with stage I-III breast cancer, participation in physical activity after diagnosis was associated with a 24% reduction in disease recurrence and a 45% reduction in mortality.

mortality

45 percent



Beyond the Headlines

Our experts answer your questions.



Tarah Ballinger, MD



Kathy Miller, MD



Anna Maria Storniolo, MD

SYMPTOMS

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

I advise women to “know” their breasts. If you’re premenopausal, know how they look and 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 — may not be uniform shape
- 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



SELF-EXAMS

How important are breast self-exams? I’ve been told to do them but I’m not sure what to feel for!

Breast self-exams by themselves are poor screening tools. Women should adhere to mammogram guidelines, especially women with a strong family history of breast cancer or other risk factors. BUT, examining your breasts is FREE! I counsel every woman, starting at about age 25, to know her breasts. While you’re in your childbearing years, examine yourself at different times in your cycle, because the breast changes with normal hormonal fluxes. After menopause, examine yourself once a month. Though breast cancer usually forms a lump, this isn’t always the case — there may be a thickness, a puckering, a change in color, or a new asymmetry. If you’re worried about “how”, just ask your primary care provider. Remember, it’s never wrong to talk to your doctor about a change in how your body feels.

EXAMINING YOUR BREASTS IS FREE!





DIET

There's so much to get spun up about on social media today! It seems like every time I scroll, there's something new to avoid or be fearful of regarding cancer. Are there any foods or consumables, like seed oils, alcohol, or "bioengineered food ingredients" that should have a warning label like tobacco?

This is a tricky question! Alcohol would be the best example with clear risks, especially for pregnant women. As of today, no universally accepted studies or data, that we're aware of, exists on genetically modified foods or seed oils suggesting they cause breast or any other type of cancer. The best data supports a healthy, well-balanced diet with a variety of foods. Try to eat from the perimeter of the grocery store, and consume more calories from plants than animals. Few foods would be evil or forbidden if enjoyed occasionally and in reasonable portions.



APPS

Are there any apps IU researchers love regarding health, wellness, or food quality?

I have recommended MyFitness Pal to my patients. It's free and easily tracks food and activity, providing immediate feedback to help those hoping to lose a few pounds or maintain their weight. The feedback is "if every day were like today, in 5 weeks you would weigh X amount." Five weeks feels doable and the difference is large enough to seem worthwhile. The Yuka app provides a fun way to scan products at the grocery store for food ratings/quality. The bottom line is the App Store is full of choices, and anything that makes you intentional about your health journey is a valuable tool.



GLP-1s

Is it true that GLP-1s are causing breast cancer? Why would anyone risk getting breast cancer just to lose a few pounds?

There is no known causal link between GLP-1s and breast cancer risk. People sometimes confuse correlation and causation. Some of the GLP-1 studies initially showed increased breast cancer diagnoses — but this was more likely because women were engaging with the health system and were getting mammograms, or were losing weight and feeling a breast mass, not that the drug was causing breast cancer. Additionally, not enough time has passed to make an association. It is more likely that GLP-1s reduce risk, as weight loss reduces risk, and the best preventative therapy for breast cancer is actually bariatric surgery. This remains under investigation.



WOMEN WITH AVERAGE RISK FOR BREAST CANCER SHOULD HAVE MAMMOGRAMS EVERY OTHER YEAR FROM AGES 40 THROUGH 74

SCREENINGS

Lately I've been seeing more stories about young women being diagnosed with breast cancer. Why wouldn't I start screenings and mammograms before age 40?

Guidelines from the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) include the following:

Women with average risk for breast cancer should have mammograms every other year from ages 40 through 74. Deciding what's right for you involves talking to your doctor and getting a proper breast cancer risk assessment. If you have a strong family history of breast cancer, are black or of Ashkenazi-Jewish descent, that risk assessment should be done by age 25.

However, many experts are concerned that the recommended two year interval will miss detecting more aggressive cancers in younger women. As a patient, how do you decide what's right for you? Like many other aspects of life, one size does NOT fit all. My best advice is that you talk to your doctor about your risk factors.

Story of Strength:

A Journey of Resilience

Hope lives in research...and hope means better detection, treatments and outcomes for all.





By Mary Ellen — Breast Cancer survivor, Foundation supporter and volunteer

I began volunteering for the Vera Bradley Foundation in 1994 as I wanted to help with a good cause in the community. Little did I know that almost 20 years after I began volunteering, I would be the bald survivor speaking to 900 people at the Foundation's cornerstone event, the Vera Bradley Foundation Classic. I played golf and tennis, and then shared my story as I managed my journey through breast cancer.

Research
is more than
wishful thinking
— it is a personal
lifeline for anyone
battling breast or
other cancers.

In 2014, I consulted with the researchers at the Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research as I searched for the best course of treatment. I had a double mastectomy and chemo to achieve successful remission results.

In September of 2024, at the Vera Bradley Foundation Classic pickleball and golf event, I was a week and a half out from two surgical procedures for a blocked bile duct. By December, I had two more procedures and was told I needed major surgery to correct the problem because after thirty biopsies and brushings, my physicians had no answers for my blockage. In February, I had a brutal Whipple procedure to replumb my digestive system. It involved removal of my gall bladder, and parts of my bile duct, liver, pancreas and intestines.

Laying in the hospital, my sister — a seasoned surgeon — read the pathology report and she tearfully looked at me. I asked if it was bad and she simply answered, “yes.” It was bile duct cancer.

My type of bile duct cancer affects 3,000 people a year. In contrast, breast cancer has over 375,000 new diagnoses a year. My cancer has an 80 percent chance of reoccurrence within three years. After “digesting” this information — a joke because I was digesting nothing at that point in the hospital — I realized I needed HOPE and a plan of attack.

I consulted at the Mayo Clinic. I flew to see the GI cancer guru at MD Anderson Houston. And, I worked with my oncology team at the Indiana University Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center where I had my Whipple surgery.

(continued on next page)

Hope

Hope lives in research, and I have hope that if my cancer returns, I might have a drug to treat it.

All centers agreed I'd have the same protocol of chemo, which entailed eight courses of oral meds I could take at home. Because of research, while still causing significant side effects, this treatment is so much better than what I had experienced in 2014 during my treatment for breast cancer.

In addition, I wanted to find an immunotherapy drug to kick my T-cells into gear to attack foreign invaders (cancer) if it resurfaced. When I asked about immunotherapy at IU, they said, "We have a foundation based here. We have a brilliant researcher who works on breast cancer a few days a week and genomics and immunotherapy research the balance of the week. They asked, "Have you ever heard of the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer?"

Dr. Bryan Schneider is the brilliant physician/researcher they spoke of! Hope lives in research. And my hope came from our own Foundation!

Dr. Schneider was able to pinpoint the exact gene that was abnormal in my DNA. It is in a class of genes that has around eighty variants. He told me there are thirty to forty clinical trials for that gene as well as three to four for my specific mutation. I am told my bile duct cancer is in no way associated with breast cancer. Dr. Schneider told me that it used to be that one to two drugs were approved every month or so for cancer. Because of the sharing of research globally, the approval rate of drugs now is one to two a week.



Rely on your squad:
No one beats cancer alone.





If I can offer one piece of advice from experience, it would be to encourage exercise or movement even for 20 minutes each day!

The astounding revelation I had after talking with Dr. Schneider is that, we are not just funding research for breast cancer, we are investing in research that is being shared across the world with other centers, for ALL types of cancer... even my extremely rare bile duct cancer.

I also learned that movement during treatment makes a significant difference in recovery. While many days you feel tired and overwhelmed, a walk, a spin, or a bounce on a rebounder to flush the lymph system work wonders for the mind and body. As an avid pickleball player, that gave me all the more reason to play one more game of pickleball!!

I fully believe that hope and a positive outlook are critical in winning the battle. I also have an incredible squad... my husband, my children, my siblings and dear friends, all who have helped me through my past diagnosis as well as this new journey. The cancer patient is not the only one who bears the burden. The medical professionals, the caregivers and friends of the patients are warriors also and should be recognized for their amazing efforts. Bless you all!

I recently completed my chemo treatments and the side effects have been minimal. My pain and energy levels are much better. Recent CT scans and genetic blood testing are clear. Hope coupled with incredible research mean that I am in full remission.

Hope is a powerful healer.

Hope lives in research... and hope means better detection, treatments and outcomes for all.



Story of Strength: A Wake-Up Call to Focus on Health



At age 36, with no family history, Jen was diagnosed with an aggressive Grade 3, HER2 positive breast cancer.

Read Jen's inspiring story of strength online.

Stories of Strength

Scan this QR code for more inspiring stories.



How to Care for a Loved One with Breast Cancer

During a challenging time, show you care.

LIGHTLY SCENTED CANDLE

Strong scents can be overwhelming



NICE MUG WITH TEA

Give a hug in a mug



SOFT BLANKET, SILK PILLOW OR SLEEP MASK



TAKE TIME TO VISIT

Meals, shopping, good conversation —any connection is helpful

HOT WATER BOTTLE

Warm and soothing



GIFT CARD BOUQUET

Gather items your loved one would enjoy



BUTTON FRONT PAJAMAS

Easy access to treatment area



Vera Bradley Breast Cancer Products

I've just been diagnosed with breast cancer... *now what?*

SHAWL, ROBE OR FUZZY SOCKS



ORGANIZE MEALS

Sites like Mealtrain, TakeThemAMeal or SignupGenius make this very easy



LOTIONS AND LIP BALMS

Cancer treatment can cause chapped lips and sensitive skin



Educate yourself and find out as much as you can about your breast cancer — Estrogen, Progesterone, HER2, TNBC — but get the facts! The internet can be an overwhelming and even misleading place. Most physicians' offices have information available — and that's the stuff worth reading.

Write down questions you have prior to your appointments.

Have a loved one with you at all your appointments to take notes. You won't hear anything after hearing words like "double mastectomy", "chemotherapy" or "radiation".

Understand that you may have a team of doctors, not just one guiding your care.

Become familiar with your medical portal and log in for checking on appointment times and test results. This will become an important tool.

Lean on your "community", as every connection in your life can provide hope and help.

Start a notebook or binder to keep the information you collect at appointments.

Use your assigned Nurse Navigator for questions and support. Your Nurse Navigator is a gift!

Join a support group — whether in person or on social media. You can find general groups for breast cancer survivors or groups dedicated to specific types of breast cancer.

Talk to others who have walked through a similar breast cancer diagnosis, but know everyone's journey is very different.

Begin to explore post-surgery options for bras and prosthetics as there are many options. Two favorites are from Athleta and Handful.

Be an advocate for yourself and know it's okay to get a second opinion.

Let friends and family help you and try to maintain a normal lifestyle with work and activities.

Develop your own coping strategies — exercise, meditation, yoga, journaling and seeking spiritual support are all terrific options.

For Your Notebook

Scan this QR code for a helpful checklist.





Join the movement

We strive to make giving fun and interactive all year long, because your support is crucial to our 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 family member, friend, co-worker or neighbor.

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](#)

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!

Scan to learn more about the Mastectomy Pillow



Gifts of Hope

Give 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 thoughtful products that support our cause.

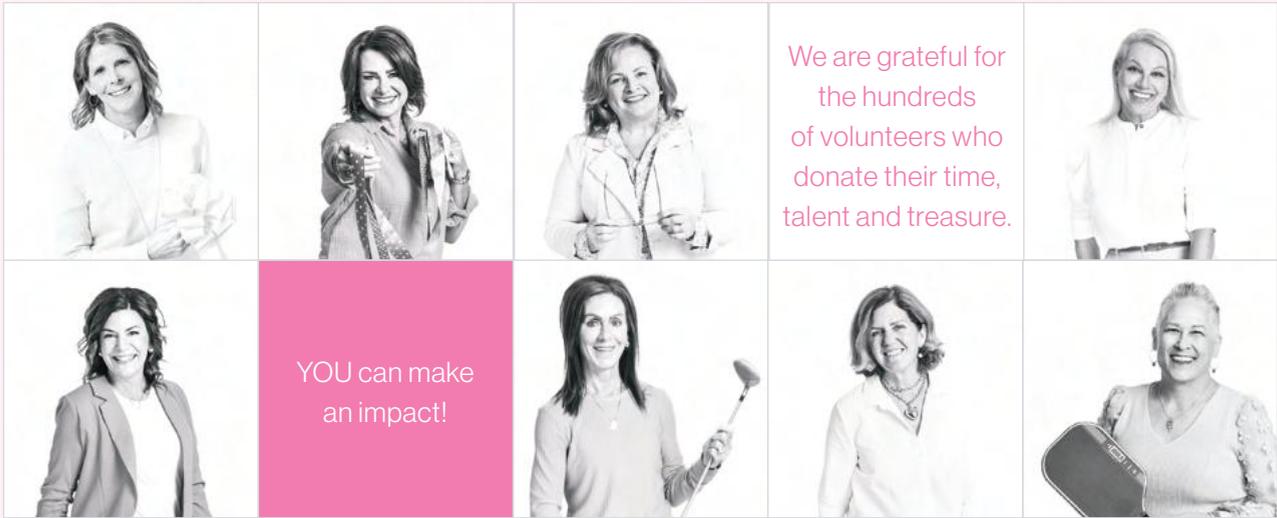
Available year-round and ideal for:

- 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 needing a little hope
- a special treat for yourself

Scan to learn more about Gifts of Hope



Volunteer



Top Row: Elizabeth Miller, Jen Bojrab, Sue Britton, Ruth Cook*

Bottom Row: Jen Yack, Lisa Bragg, Amy Ray*, Mary Ellen Elizondo*

* Indicates 30+ year volunteer

Scan to learn more about volunteering



Quilt with a Cause

Each year, dedicated Foundation volunteers design and craft 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 online at verabradley.org or in Vera Bradley stores across the country. A stunning way to support breast cancer research!

Scan to learn more about Quilt with a Cause



Join the Movement on Social Media

Social media is a powerful tool for raising awareness! Here are three ways you can join us to amplify our mission:

1. Follow us!



2. Repost, share, like and comment

on posts from our official accounts. Your engagement can make a big impact by introducing our cause to new friends.

3. Use our hashtag — #vbfoundation

to join the conversation. Share your story, post photos from our events or give a shout out to someone on their cancer journey.

4. Tag us — @verabradleyfoundation

in your photos, stories and reels. We love amplifying the voices of our supporters!



Scan to follow us on Instagram



Host an Event on Behalf of the Foundation

Help raise funds and awareness for the Foundation! Plan an event with your team or club, a corporate effort for hundreds, or an intimate gathering with girlfriends. We're here to assist and guide you. Depending on the amount you commit to raising for breast cancer research, we'll provide prizes for your guests, employees, or fans.

Scan to learn more about hosting an event



Who Can Host an Event?

You, Your Circle of Friends, or Your Club
Your Sports Team or Association
Companies and Retail Locations

Need Tips?

Easy Planning Tips
Budget Friendly Style Tips

For event ideas and tips, see pages 26-31.

Simple Steps, *Big Impact!*

Easy Planning Tips for Hosting an Event

- 1 SET A 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:**
Check out the pages that follow for lots of inspo!
- 3 DIG INTO THE DETAILS:**
Customize your event with a suite of downloadable digital assets we'll provide. Our easily customizable templates can be used to create your invitation and other signage. Invites and event promos can be sent by email or printed!

Consider all anticipated expenses when budgeting. Plan an engaging activity!
- 4 SPREAD THE WORD:**
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.
- 6 THE BIG DAY:**
Help raise awareness and support for the Foundation. Share pictures of the event on social media.
- 7 FOLLOW-UP:**
Send thank you notes to attendees, volunteers, and sponsors.

“Have fun and celebrate the positive impact you’re making in the fight against breast cancer. Stay in touch as we have great resources to help you host the perfect event!”

Stephanie Scheele, Foundation Executive Director



Who can partner with us to benefit the Foundation?

Anyone Can!

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

You, Your Circle of Friends, or Your Club can partner with us to benefit the Foundation

Host a Pink Party with a Purpose. Introduce the Foundation to your sports team, sorority, fraternity, key club, life group, family reunion, neighborhood association or circle of friends. 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 Ribbons for Research kits, and then distribute them to your "community." Set up a display at your sorority house, sporting event, school, country club, community center, or church. Your circle of support will hang the ribbons and you'll make a world of difference in raising awareness for breast cancer.

Create a Crowdfunding Campaign. Pick a platform, and set up an online donation page. Invite friends and family to donate to the Foundation. In lieu of birthday gifts or in honor of someone special battling breast cancer, a virtual campaign is both quick and free to you.



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

Cupcakes for a Cure
host a bake sale

Flower Bar for the Foundation

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

Mahjong & Mimosas

Painting with a Purpose

Party on the Patio
wine and cheese

Pink Picnic
backyard, on campus, or at a park

Sips & Sweets Soirée

Tea Time for the Ta-tas
pink-themed tea party

Your Sports Team or Association

can partner with us to benefit the Foundation

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 a theme.

And remember ... real men (and women) wear pink!

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

Wear special jerseys or uniforms 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 (more) INSPO



Bowling for Breast Cancer

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

Someone who works for or with your company has likely been affected by breast cancer. Give your team 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.

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 invite employees to participate.

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. 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.

Budget Friendly Tips for Hosting an Event

Smart Style, Small Spend!

The fun before the fun.



Our current *favs*

Make some magic with spray paint or decoupage

Purchasing pink decorations may not be in your budget, but you can spray paint or decoupage just about anything you have on hand or find on a thrifting adventure. Fruits & veggies, pasta sauce jars, vases, tissue lanterns, lamp shades, old toys, or props — an endless list of possibilities.



Pick a palette

Pink, pink, and more pink is always in fashion in our world! As an alternative, 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 decorative favs in any shade — mix them in with your pink palette.

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



Mix flowers with fruit for fuss-free, budget friendly arrangements

Supermarket flowers in single BUD VASES are all the rage, and the most budget friendly floral option! Mix in tangerines, kumquats, passion fruit or any other fruit or veggies that match your color scheme.



Everybody loves a photo op



With a festive photo backdrop, your decor can double as a fun event activity.

We've embraced pink ribbons for years as a symbol of hope, but there's no question BOWS are still having a moment!

Sweet & simple or swanky & spectacular... it'll be a big hit! Looking for big bang on a shoe-string budget? Try our plastic tablecloth bows — what could be better than creating TWO giant bows from ONE dollar store table covering?!



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!

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. Transfer pink foods to fun or unique serving pieces to make guests feel special.



Direct Giving

Power Our Purpose and Discover Ways to Give



Patricia and P. Michael Miller & Family, Foundation Supporters



General Donation

Every financial donation provides incredible impact to the Foundation. Magnificent discoveries and progress fuel our passion for breast cancer research. Our mothers, daughters, sisters, co-workers, neighbors and friends are at the heart of our dedication. Because of your generous support, a cure is on the horizon!

Scan to donate today



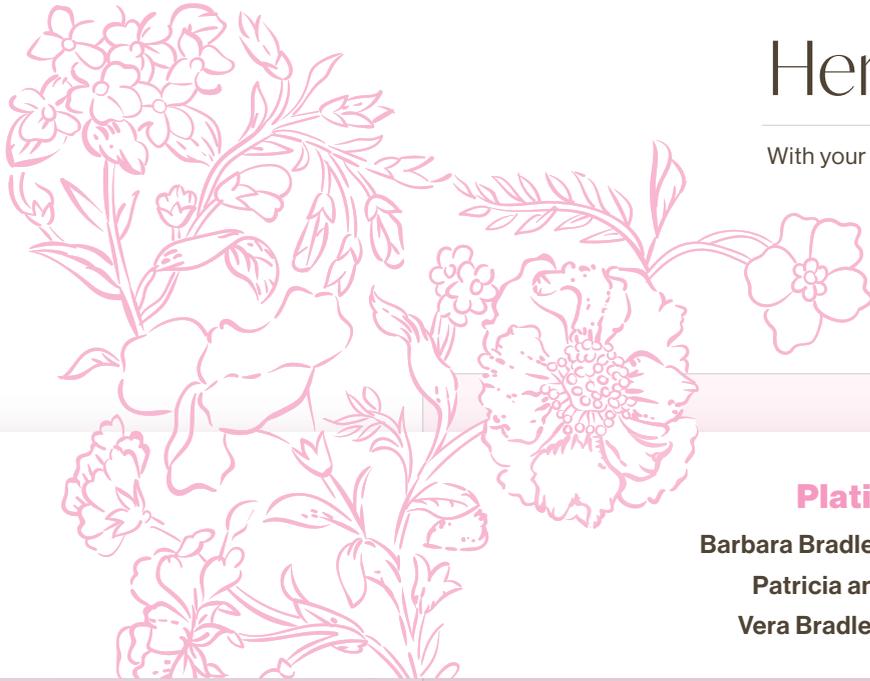
Barbara Bradley Baekgaard & Children, Foundation Supporters

Planned Giving

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 a will provides a simple way to ensure the future of breast cancer research.

Scan to start a legacy conversation with us





Heroes of Hope!

With your support, we're accelerating the pace of 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 +

The McGee Group

Double Diamond \$25,000 +

Linda and Wayne Boyd
Children, Grandchildren
and Great Grandchildren
of Barbara Bradley Baekgaard
Master Spas
Kristy and John Simon

Champagne Diamond \$15,000 +

John and Gale Mann Foundation
Jeanette D. Schouweiler
Steel Dynamics
The Vann Family Foundation

Diamond \$10,000 +

Anonymous Friend
Victoria Boyd-Devine and Mike Devine
DeHaven Chevrolet
Deister Machine Co., Inc.
Forvis Mazars LLP
Gilead
The Journal Gazette Foundation
JPMorgan Chase & Co.
LC Nature Park
Lutheran Health Network
Elizabeth and Jay Miller
Sue and Jeff Miller & Family
Premier Truck Rental
Rea Magnet Wire Co.
Vera Bradley Board of Directors
The Windward Foundation

Making a Difference Possible



Foundation *Team*

We're here to partner with you.



Stephanie Scheele
Executive Director

Kris Reese
Brand Manager

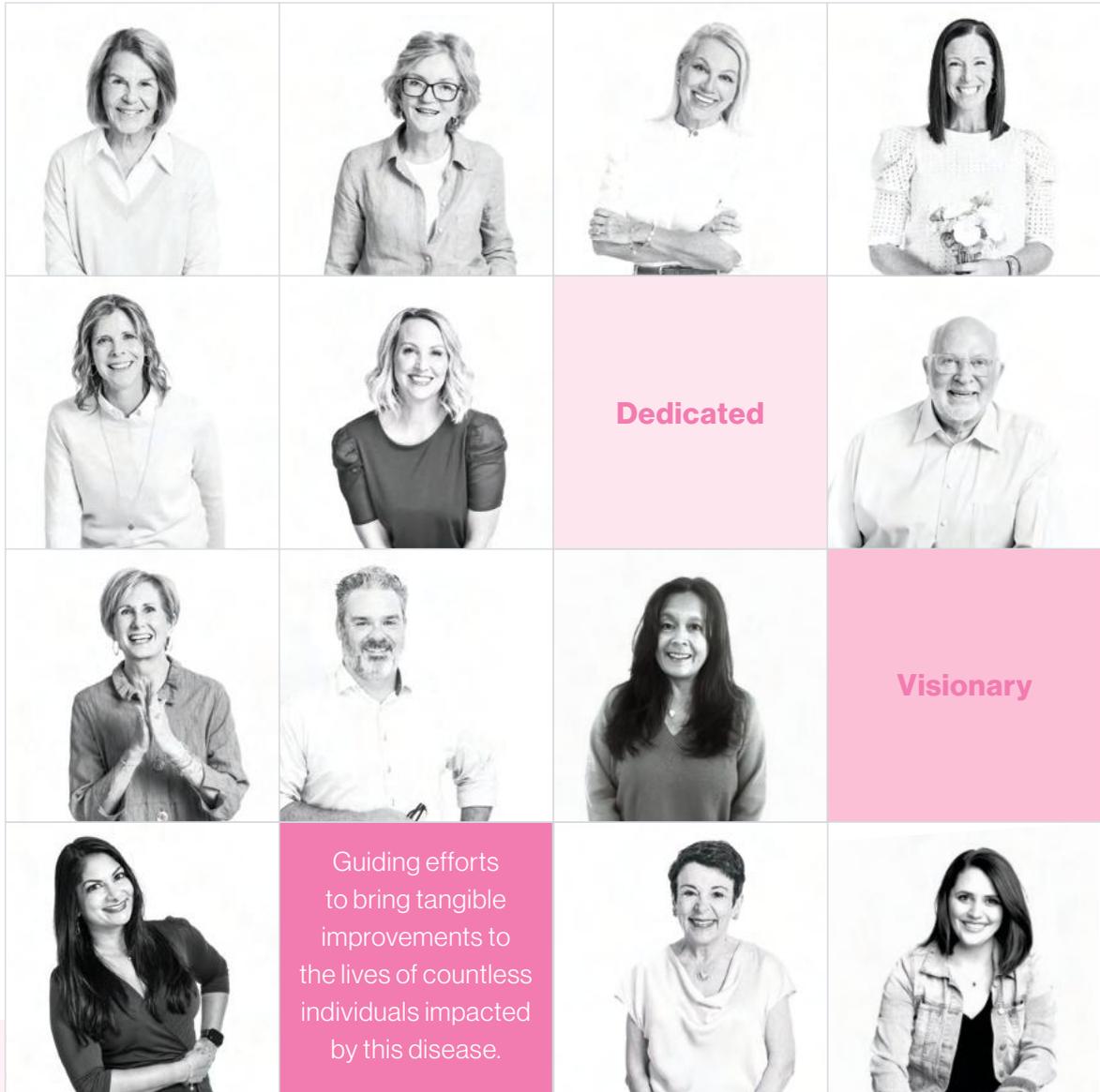
Amelia McArdle
Development Manager

Kathy Ray
Foundation Coordinator

Andrew Suci
Controller

Anna Rudicel
Social Media Specialist

Foundation Board



Top Row:

Patricia R. Miller
Co-Founder

Barbara Bradley Baekgaard
Co-Founder / Vice Chair

Ruth Cook
Board Chair

Stephanie Scheele
Executive Director

Second Row:

Elizabeth Miller
2nd Vice President
— Development

Katie Law
Secretary

John Brooks

Third Row:

Brenda Gerber Vincent

Matt McGee

Mela Miroff

Fourth Row:

**Reneta
Thurairatnam-Sandkuhler**
Treasurer

Anna Maria Storniolo

Meg Tiffany

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—Helen, Campbell & Lawson, Carter & Erin, and Emma





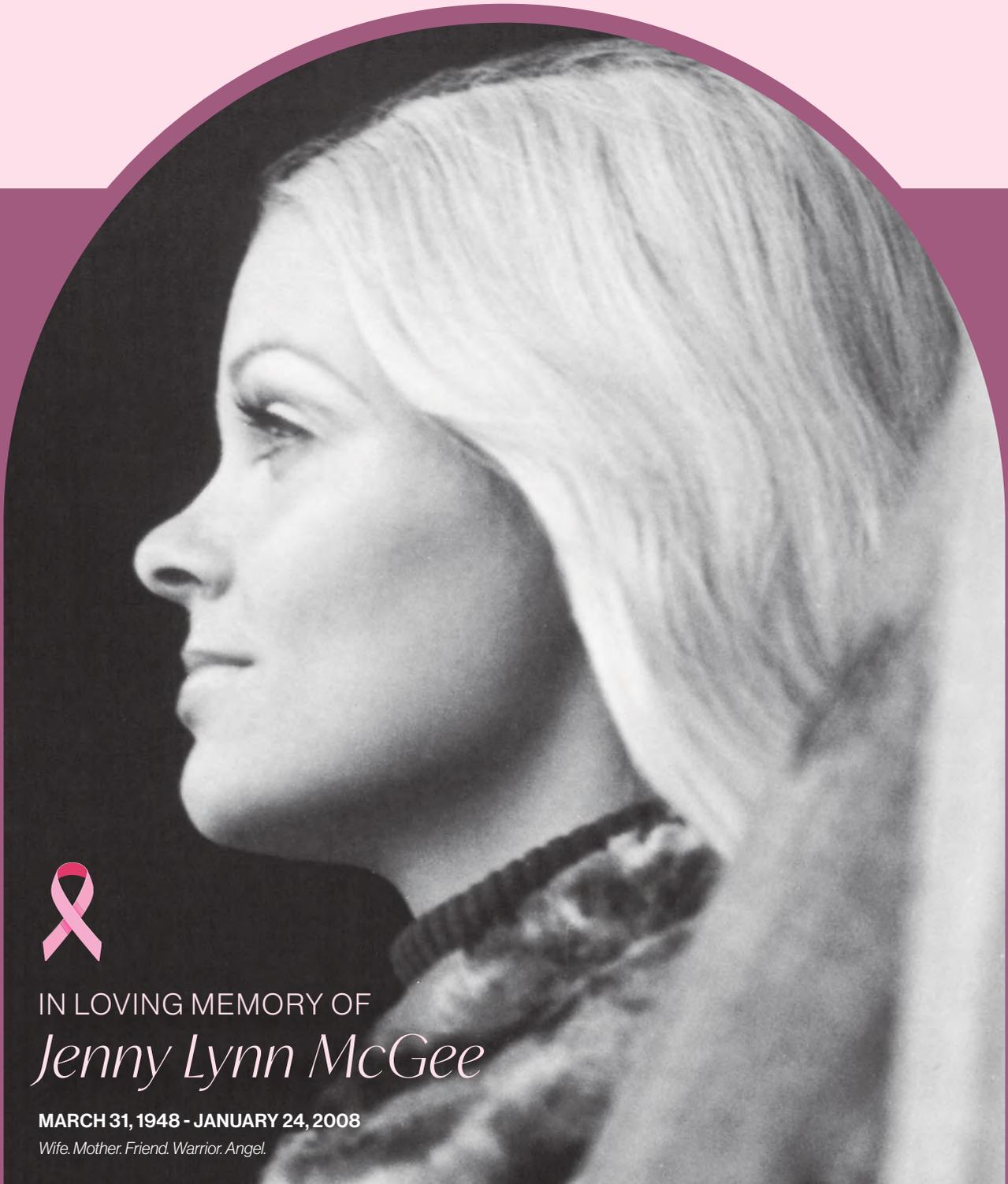


Seeing a Future *Free from Breast Cancer*

For twenty years, **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.

The McGee Group[®]

800.966.2020 | mcgeegroup.com



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Jenny Lynn McGee

MARCH 31, 1948 - JANUARY 24, 2008

Wife. Mother. Friend. Warrior. Angel.



vera bradley

Patterns with a Purpose

In 1993, Vera Bradley co-founders Barbara Bradley Baekgaard and Patricia R. Miller began raising funds for breast cancer research after the loss of their dear friend, Mary Sloan. Today, the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer continues their legacy. A portion of every purchase from the Flourishing Garden Collection helps fund research and provides support for those impacted, bringing us closer to a future free from breast cancer.







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





vera bradley

FOUNDATION FOR BREAST CANCER