

Valley breast cancer support group offers education, information, hope

By CHRISTINA HILL
Correspondent

On average, one out of every eight women will get breast cancer once in their lifetime.

Unfortunately for Illinois Valley resident Sally Clements, she became a victim to the disease in August.

But instead of losing, Clements fought and didn't become just another statistic. In fact, she is using her experience to help other breast cancer victims, through a support group she recently started, known as the Illinois Valley Breast Cancer Support Group.

The group meets on second Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon at the Illinois Valley Family Resource Center, home of the I.V. Family Coalition on E. River Street.

Clements said that she is very thankful for everyone at the coalition as "they have been so generous to help us out by opening their doors and offering a place for us to meet.

"Within the support group, there's a great mix of women who have experienced breast cancer," said Clements. "There are people who've been recently diagnosed, to those who've been cancer-free for 20 years.

"It's really in a sense a kind of sisterhood. It's very confidential, and it's where women can come together, and we have an underlying understanding of each other," Clements said.

"Our meetings consist of sharing personal knowledge, answering questions and sometimes there are guest speakers," she said. "We also would like to be an outreach for women who cannot come to meetings or who are just diagnosed and would like to speak with someone."

Clements, who after finding out the devastating news last summer, underwent extensive surgery and extreme chemotherapy and radiation is now in remission.

"When you find out," she said, "you go through all

the emotions. It's shocking, it's fear, it's the unknown, it's invasion, it's disbelief. It's definitely a whole range of emotions, but you find a path, a positive path and walk that path with clarity.

"It's self-centering, and spirituality comes into focus -- and you realize that it's all about you against the cancer. You have to be your own advocate and be strong to deal with the medical

world and to speak up for yourself. It's definitely a growth."

Clements added, "I found there was a real need to begin a support group because Cave Junction doesn't have a support group, and I found there were many women in the valley who have or had breast cancer.

"These women wanted to come together and talk

and share information; hence a group formed." Clements said she believes the support group gives people hope, faith and belief.

"Education and support are the purpose of our group," she said. "It's important to know that you're not alone in whatever stage you're in with breast cancer, because it can definitely be overwhelming. I'd love to continue to help women,"

Clements added.

Besides being a support group leader, Clements is a first-grade school teacher at Evergreen Elementary School. She also has taught at Dome School and the former Selma Elementary School.

Her rock through her stormy days of cancer has been her husband, Don Shaw.

"The rainbows in the

storm have been the wonderful folks in the valley who have continued to shower me with gifts, food, rides to radiation, cards, prayers and love," said Clements.

"With this support I was able to keep a focused, positive attitude and did well through treatment," Clements concluded.

For more information on the support group, phone

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Campus News

OSU Honors Two From Illinois Valley

Jessica R. Hendrix, of Cave Junction; and Michael C. Lewis, of Selma, attained the Honor Roll at Oregon State University at Corvallis for winter term.

Each carries a minimum 12 graded units and earned grade-point averages of at least 3.5.

Hendrix is a junior majoring in history. Lewis is a senior majoring in civil engineering.

CJ needs two for budgeting

Two more residents who live in the city of Cave Junction are needed for the Budget Committee.

The committee will meet Wednesday, May 25 at 7 p.m. in city hall.

To volunteer, or for more information phone 592-2156.

Truth often suffers
more by the heat of
its defenders than
the arguments of
its opposers.

- William Penn -

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