



By Katie Ryan

Introducing a program that helps increase breast cancer awareness among African-American women

ANGELS

at South
Pointe
Hospital

South Pointe Hospital is opening an ANGEL Network sister chapter supported by a grant from the Northeast Ohio Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

The ANGEL Network mission is to reduce the number of deaths among African-American females by offering early detection programs, access to screenings and encouraging African-American women to take an active part in their own healthcare.

South Pointe's sister chapter includes breast cancer survivors, laywomen and health professionals who offer the following services: free instructional breast exams, early detection educational programs, assistance for those with physical disabilities and/or a lack of transportation, and free or low-cost mammograms for individuals without insurance.

Twenty free mammograms have been provided to date. Additionally, ANGELS have participated at eight community health fairs this year where instructions in correct breast health self-exams were given.

ANGELS raise awareness in the community about the ANGEL Network and the Susan G. Komen Foundation, and certify new ANGEL members so they may provide education and instruction on breast

Get Screened

The number of women needing a breast health screening continues to grow. To date, more than 1,500 women nationally have been taught instructional breast self-exams and to take their own steps toward regular breast health practices while encouraging fellow women to do the same. To learn more about the ANGEL Network at South Pointe Hospital, call **216-491-7827** or visit our website at **www.southpointehospital.org**.

health. Most important, the ANGELS provide fellowship and support to the women they encounter. On two occasions, ANGELS accompanied women who needed a biopsy following a questionable mammogram. In both of these cases, there were problems with access to these services, so advocacy also was needed and provided. Additional ANGEL sessions will be conducted in October, November, December and, if needed, January for those who are interested in becoming certified breast health advocates.

Taking Action

All women are at risk for breast cancer. But statistics show that although there is a lower incidence of breast cancer in African-American women,

there is a much higher mortality rate compared with women of other races.

Due to fear, fatalism and silence, many African-American women die needlessly from breast cancer. Presently, many African-American women are head of the household, and they worry about being unable to provide and care for their families.

Eileen Matteo, oncology social worker at South Pointe Hospital and project director, says, "The ANGELS have been out in the community since April, and the response has been amazing. By providing correct information, support and access to screenings we hope to reduce the fear that seems to be prevalent among African-American women."

Currently, South Pointe Hospital has seven ANGELS, three of whom are breast cancer survivors. The following ANGELS are certified breast health advocates: Yvonne Bell, Sherry Hall, Pat Heard, Diane Jofferion, Eileen Matteo, Bonita Thompson and Oda (Kandy) Wooten. ■

(From left) Diane Jofferion, Sherry Hall, Patricia Heard, Eileen Matteo, Oda Wooten and Yvonne Bell



What Is an ANGEL?

**African-American Women
Nurturing and
Giving
Each Other
Life**



More details:

- ◆ Women teaching women and girls about breast health.
- ◆ Women raising awareness in our community about the ANGEL Network, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the Northeast Ohio Race for the Cure.
- ◆ Certified breast health advocates teaching the ANGEL Network's breast health awareness education program at churches, places of employment, etc.
- ◆ ANGEL breast health advocates teaching fellow women how to do breast self-exams.
- ◆ ANGEL breast health advocates are in congregations.
- ◆ ANGELS collecting stories for an "ANGEL" inspiration handbook.
- ◆ ANGELS helping fellow women navigate the healthcare system so they have easy access to mammograms, breast exams and pelvic exams.
- ◆ ANGELS identifying fellow women who need breast exams, mammograms, transportation and sometimes just a comforting and understanding ear.
- ◆ ANGELS helping with the ANGEL education booth at health fairs and community events.
- ◆ ANGELS attending and helping recruit for the Northeast Ohio Susan G. Komen Foundation Race for the Cure.

The colors of an African-American Ribbon of Life to support breast cancer awareness and education symbolize the following: Black is for the people, red is for the struggle, green is for our future and hope, and pink is to support breast cancer awareness and education.