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Parents to walk for breast cancer research

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Karen Ligon pauses before she answers a seemingly simple yes or no question: Are you scared of getting breast cancer?

"No, I don't fear getting it as much as I fear the lack of a cure," said the 48-year-old mother of two Riverhill Elementary students. "That's not to say I'm not concerned for myself. After all, I've lost family members to breast cancer. But my goal is to do my part to raise money for research so that my children won't have to worry about this disease."

Her children are her motivation to walk today through Sunday in Washington, D.C., a total of 60 miles, for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. It's her third walk in four years.

Ligon, of Waynesboro, Tenn., lost her mother to breast cancer in 1982. Three of her mother's six sisters also had breast cancer. Two died.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Riverhill School on Wednesday celebrated with an event called, "Pink Out for Breast Cancer." The students and faculty dressed in pink and released pink balloons at the end of the day.

The students also heard from Jeanne Elkins Chenault, a three-year breast cancer survivor, who described her life after cancer as "forever changed but in a good way."

Chenault did not have a family history of breast cancer, a fact she stressed to students. "This can happen to anyone, and it's a scary thing," she said. "I got



Jim Hannon/TimesDaily

Caroline Richey wears shiny pink eyelashes while Rachel Armstrong has the word pink written on her forehead for a breast cancer awareness event at Riverhill School in St. Florian on Wednesday. Two Riverhill parents will travel to Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, respectively, this weekend in walks to raise money for breast cancer research.

through that time by living one day at a time. My challenge to you, students, is to think pink and do some good.”

Riverhill Principal Lori Brocato praised Ligon and another Riverhill parent, Mayssa Alloul, who will participate in the Susan G. Komen walk for a cure in Atlanta. She said the two are examples of “women committed to making a difference.”

For Ligon, the fundraising walk is not only a physically taxing event but an emotional experience.

“Everyone has a story at this event, and you meet people and hear their stories and you think, ‘how did you make it through such an ordeal?’ ” she said.

She exceeded her fundraising goal of \$2,300 and said money can be donated through the first of November. Donations can be made in Ligon's or Alloul's name or any other walk participant online at the3day.org.

Today through Sunday, Ligon will walk from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“It's tough on a body but I'm not trying to beat any certain time,” she said. “I just want to keep a good pace. My husband and kids, J.R. and Marilyn, will meet me on the course and walk with me the last day. When I see them there waiting on me, that's when the emotion of it all really hits me.”

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