Fighting Breast Cancer
A Good Call
by Jami Tryer

As part of TEAM FELLOWSHIP, Lynn Doyle, Host & Executive Producer of CN8's It's Your Call, raises awareness and a ton money for a very good cause.

You know her as part of 8, as in CN8, but this article is about the power of 7 - what 7 dedicated friends can do when they put their minds to it. TEAM FELLOWSHIP helped raise more than $6.6 million dollars towards the fight against breast cancer and collectively walked 420 miles over a three-day period along side many cancer survivors. They trained intensively for months prior to the event but nothing could prepare them for the emotions and the personal experiences along the way. This is their story:

First came the training. You don’t just commit to walking sixty miles in three days without a plan. Many of the women upped their water intake and were careful not to over-indulge in eating fatty foods or foods high in calories.

Walking up to fifty miles per week could be a tad boring (especially if done solo). The group started training in April 2006 and walked about ten miles a week and ended with more than fifty-five miles per week walking on a variety of surfaces. They walked the local parks, along the canal from Washington Crossing to Lambertville, the length of Long Beach Island and in each of their respective neighborhoods. This proved to be helpful since the 3-Day took them over many terrains. They trained in all weather, including ninety-eight-degree heat and cold, blustery winds, which was fortuitous as the actual 3-Day saw both rain and sunshine.

The Philadelphia Breast Cancer 3-Day Walk took place last October, initiating at Willow Grove Park Mall (where a cold drenching rain did not dampen the will of the participants). Day Two featured quintessential, historic sites of Philadelphia. Participants made their way through Fairmont Park, passing the Japanese House and the Civil War Monument. Moving on towards Center City, they walked through Gray's Ferry, the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, down South Street, through Old City, up Elfreth's Alley and past the Betsy Ross House. Everyone noticed that fountain at Love Park had been dyed pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. As the route passed the Art Museum many jazzed walkers ran up the stairs “Rocky” style. That night, participants spent the night in camp, where, after a hot shower, a hot meal and dancing to the sounds of the Afrodiasics, they retired to their sleeping tents. Day Three took the walkers through the scenic town of Narberth where they experienced the first signs of fall colors. They also enjoyed walking past beautiful communities as they made their way through Ardmore, Haverford and Lower Merion neighborhoods. Many residents came out to the sidewalks to cheer them on their journey. The Villanova University football stadium provided a spectacular setting for the emotional and
memorable closing ceremonies, where family and friends cheered them on.

"The most exciting and rewarding part for me was when we walked down Victory Lane to the finish line and were welcomed with such enthusiasm and love from other walkers and supporters," said Lynn.

"It was an Adrenaline rush like nothing I have ever experienced. Talk about an Endorphin high! The cheers were amazing. I really got goose bumps when the survivors - who had walked - filed into the stadium and formed a circle together. They are the real heroes of this walk and the inspiration for anyone who is considering participating next year."

Eighty-five percent of the net proceeds to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, a global leader in the fight against breast cancer whose mission is to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease. The remaining proceeds from the event benefit the National Philanthropic Trust Breast Cancer Fund, which provides support for breast cancer initiatives during research, treatment, prevention and education.

So, how did Lynn and others on TEAM FELLOWSHIP feel after the walk? According to Lynn, her feet were in great shape, no blisters no aches or pains. The toughest parts of the walk to her were more about the peripheral things like carrying luggage around in the rain, and standing in line for busses to transport the walkers to a local high school on day one where they slept on the cafeteria floor (yikes!).

Tess Kelly, team captain, also weighed in on the post-walk reflection. "My feet were swollen on Monday morning, but after walking around for five minutes, they weren't bad at all. Physically and mentally I felt really good. I think if we didn't train the way that we did, we would have been in sorry shape. Mentally, we were all flying high. We set a goal and accomplished it. There is no better feeling than that."

WOULD THEY DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN?

"Yes, absolutely," said Kelly. "All the time, energy, aches and pains that we felt throughout the journey doesn't compare to the pain the women and families feel who are fighting breast cancer and all that goes along with fighting it. Nor does it compare to the exhilaration that we felt when we crossed the finish line."

Lynn's mother is breast cancer survivor and Lynn has many friends that been touched by breast cancer. When ever the training or the walk got tough, she recalled the words of Dr. Beth Dupree, a noted breast surgeon who is a frequent guest on It's Your Call and a friend. Dr. Dupree reminded Lynn that, "Instead of blisters or dehydration, she and the others on TEAM FELLOWSHIP could very well be facing Chemo, radiation or even death." Dr. Dupree's statement really puts things in perspective.

TEAM FELLOWSHIP raised more than $44,000 by soliciting friends, family and co-workers. They also held a fundraiser at the Terrace Tavern in LBI. Lynn Doyle finished as the number one individual fundraiser in Philadelphia's 3-Day (she raised more than $20,000!)

Today, there is great optimism and hope both in the way of early detection methods and finding a cure. According to the Mayo Clinic, among the easiest things you can do is to control what you eat and during and also get on a physical activity routine.

Limit alcohol. A strong link exists between alcohol consumption and breast cancer. To help protect against breast cancer, limit alcohol to less than one drink a day or avoid alcohol completely. Maintain a healthy weight. There's a clear link between obesity - weighing more than is appropriate for your age and height - and breast cancer. This is especially true if you gain the weight later in life, particularly after menopause.

Stay physically active. Regular exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight and, as a consequence, may aid in lowering your risk of breast cancer. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week.

Consider limiting fat in your diet. Results from the Women's Health Initiative Low-fat Diet Study suggest a slight decrease in risk of invasive breast cancer for women who eat a low-fat diet. For a protective benefit, limit fat intake to less than 35 percent of your daily calories and restrict foods high in saturated fat.

I would like to dedicate this article to the memory of Sylvia Nelson, Mother, Grandmother and Great-Grandmother who died of breast cancer during the time I was writing this story.