

## Co-worker's diagnosis inspires pair to form cancer walk team

by Kristal Dixon

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*Joy Shaw, left, assistant director of Sunbrook Academy at Trickum in Woodstock and Ivonne Rodriguez, director of the school, walk on their lunch break on Thursday afternoon. The women are participating in the Atlanta 2-Day Walk this weekend in honor of a co-worker battling breast cancer.*  
- Photo by Samantha Wilson

Both Ivonne Rodriguez and Joy Shaw have no breast cancer history in their families, but they were inspired by a co-worker to fight the disease.

Mrs. Rodriguez, director of Sunbrook Academy at Trickum in Woodstock, and Mrs. Shaw, the school's assistant director, will participate in the It's The Journey's Atlanta 2-Day Walk this weekend.

The walk, which this year is called "Operation Wipeout Breast Cancer," will raise money to provide research, education and awareness for breast cancer in the metro Atlanta area.

The seventh annual event will begin at 7 a.m. Saturday, and walkers will cover between 10 and 30 miles over a two-day period.

Along with a \$125 registration fee, each walker has to raise \$1,000 to participate.

A co-worker's diagnosis of breast cancer put both women on the path to raise money and participate in the event.

Lynn Menderak, Sunbrook's cook, learned last December she has breast cancer.

Mrs. Rodriguez and Mrs. Shaw decided to form an Atlanta 2-Day Walk team, which they named the Cold Weather Indicator Savers.

In August, parents of Sunbrook Academy students were asked to help the cause, and they raised \$1,100.

"I was not expecting that at all," Mrs. Shaw said of how much money was raised. "The parents really exceeded our goal."

The team has raised \$1,760 so far. The rest of the funds needed, Mrs. Rodriguez said, will have to come out of the team's pockets.

Mrs. Menderak of Woodstock said she found a lump in her left breast after performing a self-exam. After the discovery, she had a left-side mastectomy and began six months of chemotherapy.

She's being treated with Herceptin every three weeks and Zometa every six months. Her last dose of Herceptin will end in December, and the Zometa treatments will go for a total of three years, she said.

According to the National Cancer Institute, there will be an estimated 192,370 new breast cancer cases among

women and 1,910 new cases among men this year. The institute also estimates about 40,170 women and 440 men will die this year from breast cancer.

Mrs. Menderak said she's overwhelmed by the school's efforts.

"They are so awesome," she said of Mrs. Rodriguez and Mrs. Shaw. "They've been just great."

All three women said they believe breast cancer's prevalence should be enough to propel everyone to help stamp out the disease.

"I want to show people I'm doing something," Mrs. Shaw said.

Mrs. Rodriguez added those who donate can feel confident the money will help fellow metro Atlanta women and men diagnosed with breast cancer.

"We know for sure the money goes here," she said.

But for Mrs. Menderak, while money funds research for a cure, the only way to prevent a fatal end is for everyone to routinely examine themselves for abnormalities.

"That's so important," she said.

For information, see the Web site at [www.itsthejourney.com](http://www.itsthejourney.com).