Strength & Survival: The Universal Language
An original program revolutionizing breast health education & empowerment
Across cultural barriers... for generations.

Situation Overview

For over a decade, Susan G. Komen Philadelphia® has empowered women in the fight against breast cancer through a series of educational events customized for the unique breast health challenges of cultural groups. Held as separate annual events, our Sisters for the Cure, Latinas United for the Cure and Asian-American Women's Breast Health Day celebrate individual customs and traditions, address specific ethnic barriers and genetic risks, and, "speak the language" of women in attendance in order to make a lasting impact on the way they think about breast cancer, live their lives, and nurture their daughters.

In the early years of the 21st century – when society was only beginning to be comfortable talking about breast cancer, effective education was scarce, and women in need were not gaining access to the services that would save their lives – these events with their specified education were revolutionary. Tens-of-thousands of women – including young survivors embraced through our recently added Big Pink Footprint initiative – have been empowered by Komen Philadelphia with basic breast health knowledge as well as tools to address more advanced needs early-detection, treatment and support. Now, as the population of women served by Komen Philadelphia approaches the mindset of wondering "how much more is there to know," it is time for another revolution – one that unifies the stories, understanding and journeys of the individual groups… and harnesses the power of these groups in one extraordinary effort.

The Vision

"Music is the universal language of mankind." Nearly two centuries later, the words spoken by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow rang inspirational to Komen Philadelphia as we looked to elevate our educational series to its next, necessary level of unifying individual ethnic and demographical groups of women into one extraordinary empowerment celebration allowing each group to draw on the experience.

Thus, with the enthusiasm of the Philly POPS and Strength & Survival: The Universal Language was born. Recognizing that now that many ethnic barriers to breast health care and breast cancer survival have been taken down it is time to build more bridges among these groups for shared resources and support, Strength & Survival: The Universal Language leverages the power of music as a form of celebration, motivation and unification across languages, generations and culture.

Strength & Survival: The Universal Language as a Komen Philadelphia original program promises to have the breast cancer community sitting up and taking notice as a truly unique, insightful and powerful innovation in the fight against breast cancer. A very unique, carefully thought through initiative, pillars of Strength & Survival: The Universal Language include:

- Integration of musical celebration and empowerment with breast health education
- Opening of doors among ethnic groups

Presented by

With Support From

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• Reinforcing the message that everyone has a role to play in ending breast cancer, and these individual roles work together to make 'beautiful music of survival' for the present and future
• Celebration of the progress made, as well as the realization that finishing the fight is within site

Key Objectives

Through the integration of breast health education, peer interaction and the performing arts to help fortify Komen Philadelphia’s core messaging and breast health fundamentals, Strength & Survival: The Universal Language aims to:

• Embrace at least 2,300 medically underserved participants
• Bring together a diversity of ethnicities, generations, survivors and women never diagnosed with breast cancer
• Provide programming that is culturally competent and valuable
• Educate women about breast cancer risk reduction strategies
• Increase mammography utilization among women by educating participants about available health insurance coverage options and breast cancer screening services
• Connect participants onsite to various Komen Philadelphia Community Grant Program hospital grantees and community partners, for continued education and assurance of follow-up for mammogram screening and other breast health services as needed
• Increase awareness of screening, treatment, education and support options, services and resources in their communities

Quick Facts

• A free event
• When: February 13, 2016
• Time: Saturday morning (Continental-type breakfast provided)
• Where: The Kimmel Center, Verizon Hall & foyer
• Audience: Approximately 2,300 guests representing a diversity of ethnicities, generations, survivors and women never diagnosed with breast cancer
• Continental Breakfast: event will open with catering by Jose Garces on all three floors
• Transportation: Bus transportation provided for select neighborhoods to expand geographic reach
• Format
  o Approximately 45 minutes of educational vignettes:
    ▪ Professional "impact messages"
    ▪ Survivor inspiration
    ▪ Call to action – everyone has a role to play in ending breast cancer
    ▪ How to: initiate access to vital resources
  o 90 minutes of Philly POPS performance: performance will be custom-built to address universality among ethnic groups as well as to parallel Komen Philadelphia messages of empowerment, strength of women, etc.
    ▪ Programming parallels Komen Philadelphia messages of empowerment, courage, the strength of women the universality of the fight to end breast cancer
• Take away/Program Book
  o Complimentary to all guests
  o Multiple language translation of the event program as well as educational messages
  o Additional education and list of resources for education
  o Directory of Komen Philadelphia Community Grant Program partners (access to services for women in need including free mammograms, support groups, etc.)
  o Tear-out mammogram card allowing women in need to sign up for free services
    ▪ Will be collected at the event and distributed to hospitals for follow-up
  o Tear-out event evaluation form
Role of the Philly POPS

The Philly POPS is custom-creating a ninety-minute performance bringing to life through music Komen Philadelphia's message of hope, empowerment, courage and the historic strength of all women, while also emphasizing universality among ethnic groups in the quest for survival. As with the educational components of the program, the musical presentations of hope Strength & Survival: The Universal Language – which will be woven together with healthcare professional presentations – will empower women of all races and ethnic backgrounds to take the steps that can save their lives today, and help established health practices to increase the power generations have over the disease for years to come.

Role of the Healthcare Professional

The educational component of Strength & Survival: The Universal Language will essentially serve as a tour of everything participants need to know about breast health and breast cancer. Twenty Healthcare professionals will create 90-second vignettes that touch on the key messages, the topic of each being determined by Komen Philadelphia to assure, once all messages are integrated, they present the comprehensive awareness and education desired. As part of each vignette, the doctor will be paired with one breast cancer survivor who received life-saving support from the Komen Philadelphia Community Grants Program. This survivor will make a brief statement in celebration of her survival and the power of all women united in the Komen Philadelphia community. Each healthcare professional will also provide an 'expanded' one-page exploration of his/her topic which will be available in all languages via a handout or user-friendly website.

Program Medical Co-Directors:

Curtis T. Miyamoto, MD                      Richard J. Bleicher, MD, FACS
Interim-Chairperson                        Breast Clinical Service Line Leader
Department of Radiology                     Director, Breast Fellowship Program
Professor and Chairperson                   Associate Professor
Department of Radiation Oncology            Department of Surgical Oncology
Temple University Hospital

Participating hospitals will include:

- Abington Hospital - Jefferson Health
- Beebe Healthcare's Tunnell Cancer Center
- Christiana Care - Helen F. Graham Cancer Center
- Crozer-Chester Medical Center
- Delaware County Memorial Hospital
- Drexel University College of Medicine
- Einstein Healthcare Network
- Fox Chase Cancer Center - Temple Health
- Garces Dental Group
- Lancaster General Hospital
- Lourdes Health System
- Main Line Hospitals
- MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
- Philadelphia Department of Public Health
- Sacred Heart Hospital
- Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University
- St. Joseph Medical Center
- Temple University School of Medicine
- University of Pennsylvania Health System
- Virtua Health System
The Journey to Strength and Survival: The Universal Language

Although Strength & Survival: The Universal Language is a first-time event, its concept of successfully uniting the performing arts and education has roots dating back more than a decade ago when Komen Philadelphia introduced Latinas United for the Cure, Sisters for the Cure and Asian-American Women's Breast Health Event. The inclusion of culture-specific, celebratory, song and dance in these events proved quickly to be an empowering element, as well as vital one that breaks barriers of language and culture. Pre- and post-tests administered to program participants through the years and have continuously shown an increase in breast health and breast cancer knowledge as well as an increase in resource awareness. Moreover, evaluation assessment has shown in increasing numbers over the years that participants sign up onsite for free mammogram screenings and attend their appointment within three months. Whether participants attend an event for the first time or are "repeat participants," they leave the events learning and knowing more about breast health, awareness, and care.

Komen Philadelphia’s pioneering of such barrier-breaking education has established quality entry-points into the breast cancer continuum of care for tens-of-thousands of women. Throughout the process of developing these events and undertaking regional breast health needs assessment, Komen Philadelphia found that, while very successful, women in our communities – too many women – are still unaware of the breast health resources available. The every dynamic, very memorable and interactive experiences of Strength & Survival: The Universal Language will take education and access to resources to the next level… inspiring women to share their learning and experiences with their families and other women in their communities.


Susan G. Komen Philadelphia® is part of Susan G. Komen, the world’s largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the cures. Marking its 25th Celebration Year in 2015, Komen Philadelphia looks back on a quarter-century of progress driven by the distribution of approximately $55.5 million in grants to local organizations, funding of more than 155,000 mammograms for women in need in its service area, and contribution of approximately $23 million to breast cancer research. Through grants and Komen Philadelphia outreach initiatives targeting a diversity of communities, the organization empowers people in the breast cancer movement in a 15-county service area embracing: Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Philadelphia and York counties in Pa.; Kent, New Castle and Sussex counties in Del.; Camden County, N.J. Outreach ranges from mammograms, clinical exams, diagnostic services and treatment for women in need, to education, counseling and other forms of support, to programs for breast cancer survivors.

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