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NONPROFIT

Building support for breast cancer awareness by setting a world record

By Richard Asinof
Contributing Writer

WOONSOCKET – Looking to promote greater awareness of breast cancer, a local business has launched Athena's Cup, a nationwide campaign that seeks to collect more than 169,000 bras and connect them into a bra-chain, breaking the Guinness World Record. To date, more than 41,633 have been donated.

Athena's Home Novelties of Woonsocket, which is conducting the bra-chain campaign, plans a public display of Athena's Cup in October 2011 at the city's annual Autumnfest.

The donated bras often come with messages of support, telling personal stories about battling breast cancer, said Julie Sellaw, an account executive with Matter Communications and a spokesperson for Athena's Home Novelties.

"People in a nursing department lost a colleague, and as part of the grieving process, they collected bras and decorated them in her honor," she said. Stretched out in full, the bra-chain would be more than 100 miles long, according to Sellaw.

With each bra, Athena's Cup asks that a \$5 donation be included to support breast cancer awareness and research. Jennifer Jolicoeur, president of Athena's Home Novelties, recently presented a \$20,000 check to Gemma Foundation Executive Director Maria Gemma from the money raised from donations through the bra-chain campaign.

Jolicoeur praised the Gemma Foundation's efforts in "helping women and families affected by breast cancer."

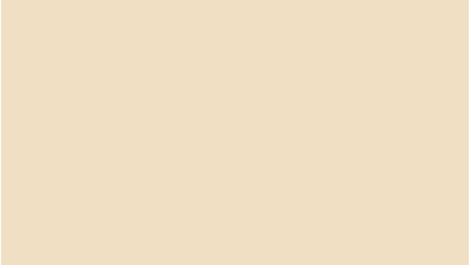
While [October], the breast cancer awareness month, has officially come to an end, Jolicoeur continued, "we plan to continue on in an effort to reach new milestones and make additional donations to deserving charities. Athena's Cup set out to make a difference, and thanks to everyone who donated and collected bras, we know we've done just that."

In turn, Gemma praised Jolicoeur's involvement and her business network and its ability to reach out to women. The Gemma Foundation expects to be a working partner with Athena's Cup for a long time, she said. "Hope is a powerful emotion, and breast cancer is everyone's battle. Working together we truly have hope that we will win the battle," Gemma said.

Businesses or individuals that wish to donate may send one or more bras, with a \$5 donation, to Athena's Home Novelties, 640 Winter St., Woonsocket, RI, 02895. For more information, visit www.athenascup.org



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