MESSAGE FROM MEG RUSSELL, BCA PRESIDENT

In preparation for writing this letter, wrapping up my two years as President of Breast Cancer Alliance, I revisited the letter I wrote at the start of my tenure. Looking ahead with excitement in January of 2020 felt very different than looking back with today’s lens. No one could have predicted at that time what the next few years would hold and no one would have believed it anyway.

I had hoped that my years at the helm of this wonderful organization would be full of growth and exciting developments. While we had a slower build than hoped, I feel confident that we were able to meet those goals in spite of the challenges brought on by the pandemic. At first, it seemed that fundraising for our grantees would take a back seat to the more immediate needs of COVID. As time went on, however, it began to seem appropriate to host events again, although virtual, and remind our donors that breast cancer did not take a pause for COVID and therefore, neither could we.

Here we are, two years later, and I’m proud to say that BCA is in excellent health. Our Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show in October, held both in person at Westchester Country Club and via live-stream, was an indicator of how much our donors had missed celebrating together. Thankfully held at a unique moment when it felt safe to gather in larger groups and with strict adherence to safety guidelines, we were once again able to be together to hear motivating speeches, see beautiful fashions and honor our inspiring Models of Inspiration. This year’s co-chairs, Jen Dreilinger, Lori Kron, Sarah Meindl and Paige Siek did an incredible job pulling this event together, all the while unsure if we would be able to host in person. I am so grateful for their energy, hard work, senses of humor and perseverance, all of which were necessary in making this event such a success.

We also held many other productive events this past year, including our annual golf outing, a virtual poker tournament, wine tastings and a family game night, just to name a few. We turned our Get Fit For Hope challenge into a month-long wellness event, with online fitness classes, seminars and cooking demonstrations; we truly had something for everyone on our calendar. In moving our site visits with our grantees online, we were able to invite a wide-spread audience to see how our dollars were being spent and the innovative programs we support. While it may not have been the year we planned, it certainly was a year we can look back on with satisfaction and continued gratitude for you, our loyal supporters.

I must begin my thanks with singling out Mary Jeffery, my immediate predecessor. The strength, intelligence and care with which she oversaw BCA was a model for me and I thank her for her availability and support these past two years. I have no doubt that our incoming President, Courtney Olsen, would have carried that same spirit forward.

We can look back on this year with satisfaction knowing that we are one step closer to finding the cure. With your continued support, a cure is achievable. I am grateful to be a part of this mission.

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