Hattitude – the Breast Cancer Awareness Brunch, considered a celebration of life by the Medical Mutual family, is designed to provide support, fellowship, and information to Breast Cancer survivors in addition to others touched by the disease.

By RHONDA CROWDER

Staff Reporter

For many years now, Medical Mutual of Ohio has been celebrating the lives of Breast Cancer survivors with an annual Breast Cancer Awareness Brunch.

Douglas Bennett, Medical Mutual of Ohio Director of Community Service, explained that his predecessor Debra Green – a Breast Cancer survivor herself – initiated the program with 20 to 30 employees in the cafeteria, getting together to discuss the issues and support one another.

And, as time passed, the event expanded to include the greater community.

“It didn’t make sense to keep the information and support internal,” said Traci Haynes, Medical Mutual Community Outreach Specialist. “We looked at it as an issue that affects not only employees but the community we serve. We like to reach out and help the community we serve.”

“We recognize the impact Breast Cancer has on the community. [And], we want to make sure people are aware and know they have a company that supports the community,” Bennett added.

Last year, more than 300 attended the event. This year, they are expecting about 250. But, Bennett looks forward to reaching more people. “We really do envision a day when we have 400 to 500 people attending the event,” he said.

At the same time, the event has been so well received over the years that they have expanded it to Toledo. “We hope to take it to other parts of the Medical Mutual footprint as well,” he continued.

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Cleveland Clinic’s Dr. Vincent K. Tuohy is the featured guest speaker. He will provide information in current Breast Cancer research including a vaccine he’s working on.

It is also important for Medical Mutual to recognize people in the community who vigilantly works to bring about Breast Cancer awareness. With that, the first presentation of the Debra A. Green Community Award will be given to WKYC TV-3’s Monica Robbins for her role as an advocate for Breast Cancer awareness in the community.

Additionally, a fashion show sponsored by Cache of Beachwood will feature Breast Cancer survivors and family members while a prize will be given for the best hat.

A vendor fair, with products and services that may be of interest to Breast Cancer survivors, will start at 9 a.m. Vendors will include Hattitude, the Gathering Place, American Cancer Society, American Heart Society and others.

Definitely a signature event for Medical Mutual, Hattitude - the Breast Cancer Awareness Brunch is scheduled for Saturday, October 22, at the Marriott East on Harvard Road.

The event is free but pre-registration is required.

For Haynes, celebrating the lives of survivors is such an inspirational piece and that's the message they are trying to spread. She wants survivors to know they can continue on.

Bennett said, being new to Medical Mutual, he's always fascinated by what the community does in the community. "It's nice to support Breast Cancer survivors."

For more information (216) 687-7852 or www.medmutal.com