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## Ride for a Cure: St. Anthony LPN starts an incredible journey

by Mike Lee  
Staff Writer

What if breast cancer is just the start of an incredible journey?

It's been that way for St. Anthony's nurse Michele Baker, LPN, who nearly three years after being diagnosed with breast cancer is now cancer free.

But free from cancer is something Baker says she will never, ever truly be. The disease has changed her and opened her eyes and her heart to the millions of men and women going the struggle of a lifetime.

"It probably led me where I'm at now," Baker said of the fear she experienced finding out she had breast cancer. "Right now I'm in the

**St. Anthony nurse Michele Baker, LPN, will take part in a fundraising ride for cancer this fall. Baker was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005 and is now cancer free.**



See Ride, Page 3

## Mominator

by Elizabeth Bussey Sowdal

I would like to be able to write to you this week dears, but I don't know if I am physically capable of it. At the moment I have a pencil clamped between my teeth and I am typing by gently bobbing my head over the key board. Odd, I know, but every muscle in my body is screaming in protest. Did you know that you use butt muscles to type? Oh, ow, yeah. Especially on the letters "y" and "h." Who'dve thunk?

We started working out again this week after a brief (ten month) hiatus. We did really great last summer, going to the health club two or three times every single week. Then school started and . . . well, you know how it goes.

Last summer Andy worked with the staff at our health club. They were so great with him and he loved it. David

liked the free weights and the girls and I worked together. We each got on a

tread mill and would stroll along flipping

through Cosmo and chatting. We used the

weight machines, swam, and spent lots of time in the

whirlpool and the steam room. But this summer I'm working out with

the boys.

The first day they started me off

See Elizabeth , Page 2



## Visiting Angels take personalized approach to care

by Lea Terry  
Staff Writer

With over 340 franchises across the United States, Visiting Angels is known as one of the largest home care

agencies in the country. But what really sets the company apart from other private duty home care agencies is its personalized approach, says Sarah Rebold, administrator of the Yukon office.

"The clients and their family members are



Photo by Lea Terry

Visiting Angels owner Mark Rubes (back row) and administrator Sarah Rebold (back row, right) and their staff of caregivers strive to provide personalized care for all the agency's clients.

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## Ride

Continued from Page 1

giveback stage. I'm trying to help other people going through cancer or finding out they have cancer. I really have a passion to educate. It's really indescribable."

She also has a passion to raise money for breast cancer awareness and research. That's why she's participating in a motorcycle adventure sponsored by Amazon Heart. Amazon Heart was founded in 2004 by two young breast cancer survivors, Megan Dwyer and Meredith Campbell.

Adventure events were created to provide a unique and inspiring peer support opportunity for under-served groups of breast cancer survivors, particularly the young.

These events themselves create a broader social impact for women with breast cancer by funding projects that fill other needs, creating advocacy and awareness around breast cancer issues, and also provide volunteers and funding for local community social action projects. By 2010 Amazon Heart will provide adventure programs and social impact initiatives for women living with breast cancer in the U.S., Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Baker is on a mission. For starters, she has to raise \$1,500 to help breast cancer survivors. In September, she will join a group of survivors for a motorcycle ride up the California coastline from Los Angeles to San Francisco. The ride will have the goal of changing lives and dates back four years.

In 2004, 20 young breast cancer survivors challenged themselves to a 1,000-mile ride on donated Harley-Davidson motorcycles from San Diego to San Francisco, California. Along the way they formed life long friendships, gained support and strength in dealing with their breast cancer experience, and raised vital funds for and awareness of breast cancer issues.

The first ride, called "Changing Gears," expanded in 2005 to become a Global Relay with 1,000 mile rides in the United Kingdom, United States and Australia, involving 48 young breast cancer survivors from around the world.

In 2006, the event name changed to Amazon Heart Thunder and rides

were held in the US and Australia as part of Amazon Heart's range of adventures for breast cancer survivors.

Harley-Davidson generously sponsors the rides around the world by giving each participant leather riding jackets and loaning brand new motorcycles for each rider. Participants pay for their travel to the event and a minimal accommodation and registration fee, and commit to raising at least \$1,500 in donations for breast cancer causes.

All riders must be breast cancer survivors, and riders of all experience levels are welcome to take part. Each year several women learn to ride in order to participate. That's exactly what Baker has done, admitting that she doesn't have a bike yet but is looking.

Through the end of 2007, Amazon Heart has organized nine motorcycle adventures for breast cancer survivors with 96 women from around the world. Twenty-one women have traveled outside their home country to participate, 18 have learned to ride and 43 have returned for a second (or more) Amazon Heart Thunder ride.

Since being diagnosed, Baker has devoted much of her time to breast cancer causes. She began volunteering with the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure almost immediately. Online she found Tulsa-based Breast Impressions, a nonprofit organization with the mission of increasing breast cancer awareness through art and raising funds to support breast cancer education, prevention and treatment.

She was in the 2008 survivor's calendar, with proceeds going to fund

Project Woman. Baker found a whole new world of breast cancer support online. Through MySpace.com she found Amazon Heart. School responsibilities kept her from riding last year but this year she's ready to go.

Baker was diagnosed in June 2005 with breast cancer. She had her lumpectomy in July and started LPN school that August. The second week of school she began seven weeks of radiation treatment. She went through several rounds of drugs and now is off medication. She said being a nurse helped her get through her disease.

"Oh, my gosh, it's a big bonus," she said. "As far as helping other patients, if someone comes in and they're a cancer patient there's a connection you have. It's an understanding that they know I know what they're going through. It's a comfort for them I think me being a nurse and being a survivor also."

Baker has committed to fundraising, which can be done online at www.amazonheartthunder.org. She says the statistics are scary. There are currently more than 2.4 million women in this country who are living with breast cancer, and more than 240,000 women will be diagnosed this year alone.

One in seven American women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetimes. But as Baker found out, sometimes you just have to hang on for the ride.



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