

Tahoans dress in pink to walk for breast cancer



Denise Sloan Smart, (l-r)
Pamela Stoddart,
Sharon Bishop
and Mona McNinch.

By Denise Sloan Smart

RENO – Frigid weather didn't keep thousands of women and men from showing up early Sunday morning at UNR for the annual Race for the Cure 5K race, hosted by the Susan G. Komen Northern Nevada Affiliate.

Most of us just walked or ran faster to keep warm.

Official numbers aren't in yet for attendance, but a sea of pink-garbed folks streamed through the three-plus mile course around the university campus helped raise money and awareness in the fight against breast cancer.

Runners and walkers wore official registration numbers as well as pink signs proclaiming "In Memory of" or "In Celebration of."

I wore a pink sign that read "In Celebration of Jan," my

friend who is currently waging a severe battle with breast cancer that has spread to her brain.

A man in front of me wore a pink sign that read "In Memory Of Mom, I Miss You."

Thousands of breast cancer survivors each carried a pink balloon with the amount of time they have been a survivor. The numbers ranged from many years to one month.

Representing the Barton Health team, known as the Barton Beauties, were Sharon Bishop and Pam Stoddart, both from the Barton Community Clinic; Mona McNinch from Tahoe Family Medicine; Marla Handsaker, RN at Barton Memorial Hospital and a five-year survivor; and Karen Tucker, RN for LTUSD and a four-year survivor; and this reporter who is Barton's communications specialist.

As the six of us covered the gently sloping course, chatting and shedding layers as the sun came out to warm us, our friendships grew. And we raised money to boot for a great cause.

In the last three years, the Northern Nevada Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen For the Cure Foundation has granted more than \$87,000 in funds to Barton Health to pay for free mammograms to anyone who qualifies. There are no age limits, they are available to men and women and financial need is the only qualifier.

Call (530) 543.5632 for a one-page application, or stop by the Barton Community Clinic for an application.

Denise Sloan Smart works for Barton and has been a journalist in South Lake Tahoe for more than 20 years.