Sue Ann Reflects: A 20 Year Partnership to Fight Breast Cancer

The Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation (WWHF), Komen Wisconsin, and Breast Cancer Recovery have been working together since 1997 to support individuals in Wisconsin through all phases of the breast cancer journey. To commemorate 20 years, we took a stroll down memory lane with WWHF Founder and President, Sue Ann Thompson, to learn how this trifecta came about.

Q: You and Ann Haney, Founder of Breast Cancer Recovery, were both diagnosed with breast cancer around the same time. How did that play into the founding of your organizations?

A: Ann Haney and I were good friends, having worked together in administration for the State. When we were both diagnosed with breast cancer within a year of each other, we wanted to know how we could help other women. We hosted a roundtable discussion at the Governor’s Mansion with breast cancer groups from all over the state to get their perspective on what was needed for someone with a breast cancer diagnosis. From that discussion, we learned that women were searching for more education and for support groups. Since I was a teacher, I chose to focus on education with the founding of the Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation. Ann chose the support group route and started hosting retreats.

Q: At the same time you were founding the WWHF, and Ann Haney was founding Breast Cancer Recovery, Susan G. Komen South Central Wisconsin began with the first Madison “Race for the Cure.” Coincidence?

A: I knew of Komen’s Founder, Nancy Brinker, and the great work she was doing with the “Race for the Cure” Races, but I heard that she was having difficulty getting one to Madison. I couldn’t pass up the opportunity to join with so many people who share my dream of finding a cure for breast cancer, so with the help of talented people who worked countless hours, we were able to bring “Race for the Cure” to Madison. I actually was Honorary Race Chair for several years with Ann Haney.
1997 doesn’t seem that long ago and yet here we are looking at the end of celebrating our 20th Anniversary in 2017. Looking back, all I feel is gratitude. This year has been full of fond memories of the early days at the Foundation, reflecting on partnerships that have launched impactful programming and hearing more of the inspirational stories from participants who are making important health choices and changes in their lives. The central piece of all of these parts is the support we receive from you. Thanks to an amazing turnout at our Spring Gala, over $265,000 dollars were raised for women’s health, the most funds in the history of the event! Your generosity and community engagement continues to help WWHF reach over 5,000 women every year and support our mission to innovate, impact, and improve women’s health.

In this issue, you will find partner highlights, updates on our work, and invitations to our fall events. On October 18th we have a powerful speaker lineup who will present “Breakthroughs in Breast Cancer” at our 11th Annual Dialogue. We were also chosen as one of the event beneficiaries for the 3rd Annual Madison Area Police and Fire Charity Ball happening on November 4th. I hope to see you at one of these upcoming events and appreciate your continued support.

While our 20th anniversary is ending, we are looking forward to continuing to provide health education and free women’s health programs for the next 20 years, and beyond. Thank you for joining WWHF in supporting the health of Wisconsin women and their families.

Yours for a healthy Wisconsin,

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Visit our website wwhf.org

2016 Board of Directors
A full list of 2016 donors and gifts can be found in the 2016 Annual Report. An online version is provided at wwhf.org/annual-reports
The Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation (WWHF) is a nonprofit organization that provides health services and education for women and families. We have 6 statewide programs in all 72 Wisconsin counties, serving over 5,000 women each year. WWHF services and research initiatives are rooted in evidence-based prevention of the diseases and conditions that most affect Wisconsin women’s wellness. Our mission is to innovate, impact, and improve women’s health.

EveryWoman’s Journal teaches women to use journaling as a tool for stress reduction and self-care at workshops statewide. “The various techniques were interesting and many gave me a new perspective on my own thoughts, feeling, memories.” – EveryWoman’s Journal participant

First Breath helps pregnant women quit smoking by training healthcare providers to deliver tobacco counseling. “If it hadn’t been for this program I know I would still be smoking. Now my son is two months old and we live in a happy, healthy, smoke free home.” – First Breath participant

Komen Breast Fund provides financial assistance for men and women in need of breast health services. “Receiving these grants as a single woman with a limited support network and no financial resources to fall back on has helped me cover necessary expenses.” – Laurie

GrapeVine trains nurses to lead health education sessions in their communities. “It is necessary to care for self. Good to reinforce and to be reminded.” – GrapeVine participant

My Baby & Me helps women achieve alcohol-free pregnancies through screenings, education, phone counseling and text message support. “It encourages you to make better decisions while pregnant and even after.” – My Baby & Me participant
Behind a successful organization are dedicated employees and leaders. Julie Whitehorse is both to the Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation. She was WWHF’s first employee back in 1997, and today she continues to carry out the mission of the WWHF by serving as the Community Partnerships Director. “It’s been amazing to see the growth of the Foundation and to have been there for all the steps along the way,” says Julie. “We started with an idea, and now here we are with 20+ employees, 6 statewide programs, and thousands of women served.”

As WWHF’s Community Partnerships Director, Julie works hard to develop relationships and partnerships, and assists in the overall management of the Foundation. 20 years later, she is still enthusiastic about her work. “It’s been really rewarding to work with such phenomenal talent and people over the years. I love that no day is ever the same. There are always new partners to connect with and exciting challenges to tackle, where I can use my skills. It keeps me excited and wanting to go to work every day.”

The Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation is now accepting nominations for the 2018 Champions in Women’s Health Awards. The awards recognize individuals who have devoted their talents and careers to improving the lives of Wisconsin women and families.

Champions will be awarded at a special awards luncheon on Saturday, April 14, 2018 at the Park Hotel, Madison, WI.

Qualities of a Champion: An individual who has devoted their talents to improving the health of Wisconsin women. Demonstrate dedication to women’s health through exemplary achievement in their area of expertise.

For more information and to nominate a champion, visit: wwhf.org/champions
Q: 20 years later, all three organizations are still working together! What does that mean to you?

A: I am proud of the partnership our organizations have created. Sadly, Ann Haney lost her battle with breast cancer, but she would be very happy to know that our organizations are not only viable, but growing and still working together to provide complementary services and programs to combat breast cancer from all angles. As a survivor, breast cancer will always be personal to me, and I am grateful for the passion and commitment our partners have made to provide support for countless women and families across Wisconsin.

Partners in Health

fire fighters local 311

Madison firefighters have a long history of helping with many charitable causes. Thanks to Fire Fighters Local 311 and Local 311 Charities, in 2017, WWHF was chosen as one of the charities they support.

At our Spring Gala, members of Fire Fighters Local 311 helped sell raffle tickets and made the raffle the most profitable in event history. They continued their generosity by choosing the Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation, Komen Wisconsin and Breast Cancer Recovery as the joint event beneficiaries of their 3rd Annual Madison Area Police and Fire Charity Ball.

The Charity Ball is on Saturday, November 4th at the Monona Terrace in Madison. There is an auction, plated dinner and short presentation highlighting the charitable work being done by the police and fire unions. Members of the community are encouraged to buy tickets and attend. All event proceeds will be shared between the three beneficiaries.

For more information on the event, visit policeandfirecharityball.com
First Breath Expands Program with Funding from SSM Health

With the help of our generous partners from SSM Health, we’ve helped 98 women in South Central Wisconsin work towards a smoke-free lifestyle. SSM Health’s Helping to Improve the Health of Dane County grant program funded WWHF’s expanded First Breath program, pairing up one of our Tobacco Cessation Specialists, Caitlin, with recently postpartum women in Dane, Rock, and Sauk Counties. Caitlin works with our participants by providing in-home counseling visits and phone calls to help women quit smoking or stay quit. “It is so rewarding to see a new mom work towards her goals and make healthy changes for her whole family,” commented Caitlin. “We’re always working on new skills to cut-down on smoking or stay smoke-free by building upon the many strengths they already have.”

Since the beginning of our grant partnership with SSM Health in 2016, Caitlin has provided over a hundred personalized visits and even more phone calls to help. One Dane County participant, Samantha, who recently graduated from First Breath reflected on the program saying, “I’ve been talking with [Caitlin] for all these months I’ve been enrolled in the program and they become a part of your family—a part of your life.”

To learn more about the First Breath perinatal smoking cessation program and postpartum services supported by SSM Health in South Central Wisconsin, visit wwhf.org or contact Amanda Verbrick, Grants Coordinator at 608-251-1675 ext. 104 or averbrick@wwhf.org.
The theme for this year’s Gathering event at Marshfield Clinic was “Grandmas: A Key to Family Health”. Over 100 women attended to learn the important role grandparents have in keeping their families safe and healthy. Speaker topics included online safety, maternal and child health, and self-care.

Thank you to our sponsors:

![Marshfield Clinic](image)
![Adesys](image)
![Oak Bank](image)

upcoming events

**Annual Dialogue - October 18, 2017**
*Edgewater Hotel, Madison*

There’s a lot of information out there about breast cancer. What’s accurate? What’s current? Join us as leading breast health experts answer your questions about prevention, genetics, imaging, new technology, and MORE!

[Full event details and registration at wwhf.org/dialogue](mailto:wwhf.org/dialogue)

**Madison Area Police & Fire Charity Ball**
*November 4, 2017 - Monona Terrace, Madison*

Join Fire Fighters Local 311 and the Madison Professional Police Officers Association at this formal event. Enjoy dinner, drinks, and dancing to benefit the Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation, Komen Wisconsin, and Breast Cancer Recovery.

[For more information, visit policeandfirecharity.com](mailto:policeandfirecharity.com)

**Spring Gala - May 19, 2018**
*Wisconsin State Capitol, Madison*

**Save the date!** The Spring Gala is WWHF’s annual fundraiser at the Wisconsin State Capitol. Formal attire. Fine dining. Live music and dancing between the four arches in the rotunda. Don’t miss out on the most unique event in Madison!
Since 1997, the Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation has aimed to innovate, impact and improve Women’s Health. Found in all 72 counties of Wisconsin, WWHF hopes to help every woman achieve their healthiest potential through our six statewide women’s health programs, free health education events and administering funds to women’s health researchers. Together, we can make a healthier Wisconsin.

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Thank you!

Thanks to your generosity, the 2017 Spring Gala raised over $265,000. We hope to see you next year!

Save the Date

21st Annual Spring Gala
May 19, 2018