

## Severna Park Community Observes Breast Cancer Awareness Month



*The Severna Park High School varsity boys soccer team packed comfort kits for Pinked Perspective during October.*

**By Katie Melynn**

Observed every October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month brings attention to a disease that directly impacts around one in eight women during their lifetime according to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). While breast cancer does not focus on a single month of the year, October is a great time to show support and raise awareness around the fight so many women are facing each day.

In Anne Arundel County, community organizations rallied around current patients, survivors, families and others affected by the disease to connect them with resources.

"This past May, during a routine mammogram, I was diagnosed with breast cancer," said Kimberly LaBrier, founder and co-owner of Kimberly James Jewelry. "Since then, I've been deeply moved by the support and strength of other women in our community also touched by breast cancer."

After her personal experience with the disease, LaBrier wanted to make routine checkups part of the conversation of breast cancer awareness.

"This October, my business partner Jenn and I launched our pink campaign and have been sharing stories from some of these courageous women in the hopes of raising breast cancer awareness," she said. Her vision is that the campaign would act by "inspiring others to prioritize their health by scheduling annual mammograms."

Lisa Dickstein with Wish List Boutique partnered with Kimberly James Jewelry to host an event bringing the community together. "We wanted to give back in a meaningful way," Dickstein said. "We can help people right here in our community."

A portion of the sales of a curated pink collection, chosen for the beauty and energy of the gemstones, is donated to Pinked Perspective, a nonprofit with local and national reach. Designated a

501(c)(3) in 2014, Pinked Perspective celebrated 10 years of work under the leadership of founder and breast cancer survivor Kara Hamilton.

"I learned a lot through that, so when I finished up my treatment, I wanted to find a way to give that information out to others," Hamilton said. Pinked Perspective provides kits for women going through mastectomies or other treatments and procedures to battle breast cancer.

Each kit includes pajamas, a pillow and a blanket to provide physical comfort after surgery and during recovery. Books and letters address the need for spiritual support and connection. A journal and pen allow each patient to record their medical information, feelings and experience during their journey.

"I did not want another day to go by without thanking you for the wonderful 'package' you left me at my hospital bedside," said one recipient. "I have used

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the book 'Jesus Calling' every single day (and many times during the day). Your beautiful letter meant so much to me to hear your experiences, as well. I cannot thank you enough and feel like I know you already."

The Severna Park High School varsity boys soccer team packed comfort kits for Pinked Perspective during October. A group of Severna Park pink warriors, calling themselves "The Breasties," uses texts and get-togethers to support each other during their fight.

Partnering with Dr. Christy Asonglefac, Pinked Perspective hosts recurring Empower Hour workshops at The Edge Dance Complex to build a community of pink warriors in support of one another.

"The Empower Hours help educate and provide resources to ladies coming out of treatment so that they can start regaining function, regaining mobility," Hamilton said.

This October, Pinked Perspective also hosted Think Pink fundraisers in partnership with Chesepiooc Real Ale Brewery in Crofton and Oscar's Alehouse

East in Pasadena.

"We like to see people come, enjoy the food trucks and outdoor activities," Hamilton said. "We welcome breast cancer survivors that have been supported and we get to meet each other. It is one of our main fundraisers for the year."

One of the hallmarks of breast cancer awareness initiatives this year has been partnership. Whether at an in-person event or through behind-the-scenes work, the outpouring of support from the community has been tremendous.

"Our message to the community is to say thank you for standing with us and helping to make a difference," LaBrier said. "Let's continue to uplift, empower and support each other."

*Anyone interested in donating a mastectomy kit, joining a support group or event, or supporting Pinked Perspective in another way can visit [www.pinked-perspective.org](http://www.pinked-perspective.org) for more details. Follow Kimberly James Jewelry's Pink campaign on social media @kimberlyjamesjewelry and see coverage of the fundraising event @wishlistboutique\_md.*