

DEB KRETSCHMER - 2006 HONORARY SURVIVOR CHAIR

A Quad-City school teacher is determined to educate local women about breast cancer and the importance of early detection. Deb Kretschmer, 45, of Davenport, a three-time breast cancer survivor, is the Honorary Survivor Chair for the Komen Quad Cities 2006 Race for the Cure®.

Kretschmer's journey with breast cancer began in 1987, when her mother was diagnosed at the age of 50, and died two years later. Deb's first case of breast cancer was found in her left breast in 1999. After a biopsy, it was determined to be an unusual type of breast cancer that does not metastasize, she says. Shortly after the diagnosis, Kretschmer found out that she was pregnant with her third child, and her doctor thought he had removed enough of the lump for her to have a safe and successful pregnancy.

"We decided there were enough risks with the pregnancy since I was already 40. We didn't want to do anything to jeopardize the pregnancy," Kretschmer said.

In 2001, Deb had yet another confrontation with the life-threatening disease, leading to a mastectomy of her left breast and radiation, followed by breast reconstruction surgery in 2002.

Just a year later, Deb found a lump on her right side. Her third case of breast cancer was treated with chemotherapy and radiation.

"I've learned how lucky I am to have all the support I have. It's not an experience that a woman can go through alone. I've learned to let all of the little things go and just live each day," said Kretschmer, who's currently considered cancer-free.

Through her role as Honorary Survivor Chair for the 2006 Komen Quad Cities Race for the Cure®, Kretschmer hopes to promote the importance of early detection.

"The diagnosis of breast cancer really isn't a life-ending sentence. If it's found early, it's treatable, and you can move on with life. I'm on my friends, asking them if they've had their mammogram this year and if they've done their breast check this month. It's so critical," she said.