



Close to the HEART

By
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WHEN LAURA LEARNED THAT SHE HAD BREAST CANCER, ONE of the first people she told was her hairdresser. Laura, then age 35, wanted to spare her 7-year-old daughter the shock of watching her mother go bald. So under the advice of Michel Blankenship, the owner of Spa Roma (www.sparoma.com) in Morgantown, West Virginia, she took her daughter to the facility to watch a professional cut her hair. "What would have been an emotional and terrible day turned out to be beautiful," Laura later told Blankenship. She left the spa in smiles instead of tears.

Blankenship's own young daughter witnessed the event. Afterward, she decided to cut off her treasured chestnut-brown hair and donate it to Locks of Love (www.locksoflove.org), an organization dedicated to converting human hair into wigs for cancer patients.

Acts of bravery inspire acts of compassion every day. Since day spas represent refuges for nurturing and healing, professionals should know how to help clients in need.

The first step is getting the word out. Every three minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer; in another 11, one will die from the disease. An estimated 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to occur among women in the United States during 2009, according to the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org). The good news is that there's a 97% five-year survival rate when localized breast cancer is detected early.

Education means prevention. Day spas can create awareness in a variety of ways—such as raising funds for breast cancer organizations; educating clients on the symptoms of and treatments for the disease; selling retail items that donate to worthy causes; and promoting services that benefit survivors.

This October, as the nation recognizes National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, consider some of the following methods for spreading the word and helping find a cure for this all-too-common disease.

Breast cancer affects thousands of women every year. Here's how several day spas raise awareness, and cater to clients' physical and emotional needs.



Pink is now known as more than just a **pretty color**.



The Personal Is Political

With so many lives affected by breast cancer, support for the issue has become a cultural phenomenon. Countless celebrities lend their images to the cause, year-round charity walks and fundraisers draw droves of supporters, and pink is now known as more than just a pretty color.

But some spa owners feel closer to the cause than others. Just six months after she founded her new business in the summer of 2005, Sherryl Ford was diagnosed with breast cancer. "Your priorities change instantly," says the owner of Facelogic Spa (www.facelogicspa.com) in Carlsbad, California. "During the first six months of growing Facelogic, I was a workaholic. I'd wake up at 2 a.m. to get in a few more hours of work. Now I know that there needs to be a balance. I believe stress is a huge contributor to breast cancer."

Four years after her grim diagnosis, Ford is cancer-free. She's also expanded Facelogic to 53 locations throughout the United States. Ford uses her network of spas and therapists to reach out to women living with the disease. She founded the Facelogic Healing Hearts Foundation, which sponsors events and raises funds for the American Cancer Society's Look Good...Feel Better program (www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org). In addition, Facelogic spas donate \$10 of membership fees to the charity every October during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. "This is a cause that's dear to my heart," Ford

says. "Going through this, I realized there were women who needed immediate help. I knew I had to get involved."

At Elayne James Salon Companies (www.elaynejamesalon.com) in Greenville and Middletown, Delaware, clients look forward to October. That's when the spa hosts its annual sale of pink hair extensions, a countrywide fundraising effort for the National Breast Cancer Foundation (www.nationalbreastcancer.org). "The client response is great," says esthetician Tina Scalici, who gained firsthand experience with breast cancer when she had a lump removed at age 19. "There's always someone in our clients' lives who has had breast cancer. They get involved for a family member or a friend. Everyone leaves the salon with pink hair extensions. In two years, we've raised \$6,000."

This year, Elayne James will sell its \$10 pink hair extensions at the first annual Cheer for the Cure. It's a local youth cheerleading competition that benefits the American Cancer Society. In addition, the spa donates a portion of October sales proceeds from pink hair dryers, flat irons, nail polishes and Scalici's own line of Face 2 Face pink lip glosses to Susan G. Komen for the Cure (www.komen.org). The Komen foundation was created by one woman who lost her sister to breast cancer; its mission is now a global phenomenon.

Even without a personal link to breast cancer, spa professionals are



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TINA SCALICI,
ESTHETICIAN
ELAYNE JAMES SALON

“Individual efforts make a big difference, but **teamwork can change lives**—including your own.”



moved to get involved when they witness a client's struggles—such as the woman who had to take the bus to receive treatment; or the client who traveled to Dallas from West Virginia to find care. In fact, after Betty Puskar, a client of Spa Roma, had no treatment facility to turn to in her local area, she founded the Betty Puskar Breast Care Center (www.hsc.wvu.edu/mbrcc/bpbcc). “Without her, a lot of women in West Virginia wouldn't be here today,” says Spa Roma's Blankenship. “I asked her what I could do to help.”

The spa established the Betty Puskar Breast Care Center Fashion Show—featuring pink apparel and lingerie, a diamond raffle and cocktails—which has helped raise \$50,000 a year for the past decade. “Some of my staff members are students who haven't yet experienced what it's like to give back to the community. Before the fashion show, they'd been skeptical of volunteering. We go nonstop with the hair and makeup for 12 hours; it's a long day,” Blankenship says. “But afterward, everyone is energized and feeling good about themselves and the difference that they made.”

Business Bonding

Individual efforts make a big difference. But when day spa owners partner with bigger companies devoted to eliminating breast cancer, they can make an even greater impact. While most manufacturers may be willing to lend a helping hand, creating a system

that works well requires a business plan. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

Appoint a project leader. Designating someone to manage communication flow will help keep your efforts organized and on target. Every year, Blankenship assigns one staff member to solicit products for the facility's pink-ribbon baskets, which she fills with T-shirts, and skincare and haircare products. The spa sells them in October and gives proceeds to breast cancer research. Donated items also help fill the goodie bags placed on every seat at Spa Roma's annual fashion show. Blankenship sends a written letter to potential companies explaining the event and which charities will benefit from contributions. Then she follows up with phone calls—and doesn't take no for an answer. “Not one company has denied us,” she says.

Brand with pink. Find out whether manufacturers offer breast cancer products, and ask them for donations or reduced prices. Otherwise, organize your own “paint it pink” promotion by discounting products pertaining to breast cancer charities. For example, Moodz spa (www.moodz.com) in Acton and Wayland, Massachusetts, donates 1% from all sales of pink-branded hair tools and accessories, makeup and polish to Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

Think locally. Neighboring merchants can also make great partners in raising funds and awareness during October—and year-round. The Spa (www.thespallc.com) in Orlando,



“After a charity event, everyone is energized and feeling good about themselves and the difference that they made.”

MICHEL BLANKENSHIP,
OWNER,
SPA ROMA

There's likely a
breast cancer
charity in your town
that could use your
help.



Florida, joins the community to host monthly happy hours, during which neighborhood shops open their doors to evening customers. Proceeds benefit breast cancer charities.

Moodz partners with businesses for fundraising efforts, including a wine tasting catered by a local restaurant and a silent auction of donated materials. "We raised nearly \$5,000 in one night," says owner Karen LaRoche.

Designate a beneficiary. The national research and educational charities have community outlets in most major U.S. cities. However, there's likely a breast cancer treatment center or charity in your town that could use the help of a concerned, neighborhood business. By designating a local organization as the beneficiary of your fundraiser, everyone reaps greater public exposure for your efforts.

One such example is Oasis Day Spa (www.oasisdayspanyc.com) in New York City, which works closely with its community chapter of the American Cancer Society. It sponsors events such as the annual Jubilee Gala and Taste of Hope fundraiser.

Hospitals also make good sources for referrals and fundraising activities. Los Angeles-based Le Petite Retreat Day Spa (www.lprdayspa.com) networks with nearby Kaiser Permanente and Cedars-Sinai medical centers.

Facelogic posts notices about its free facials to breast cancer patients

at local oncology and surgical offices.

Special Treatment

A spa's wellness services can play an important role in a woman's recovery from breast cancer and—sometimes—even slow the onslaught of the disease. However, patients' fragile health conditions require that day spas take care in the types of treatments they offer

Think Pink

Add some activism to your retail area this month. A portion of proceeds from the following products will benefit breast cancer charities.



"Just spending a few hours being pampered by caring professionals can help make anyone—including cancer survivors—feel beautiful and special."

RALLIE McALLISTER, M.D.

April Rain Skin Science Day Rainew offers 16 free radical-fighting antioxidants that defend against the sun. Peptides and neuropeptides boost collagen and heal wounds. BCA beneficiary: The American Cancer Society. **800.932.9873**, www.aprilrainskiscience.com

Aveda Hand Relief softens dry hands with vitamins and hydrating plant-based ingredients. BCA beneficiary: Breast Cancer Research Foundation. **800.644.4831**, www.aveda.com

B. Kamins Chemist Essentials for Healthy Skin kit contains travel sizes of Vegetable Skin Cleanser, Nutrient Replacement Cream, Day Cream SPF 15 and Lip Balm SPF 20. BCA beneficiary: National Breast Cancer Foundation. **888.252.6467**, www.bkamins.com

Bath by Bettijo Fenomenole Breast Self Exam Oil eases the ritual of monthly breast self-exams with an all-natural blend of ylang ylang, and pink grapefruit, sunflower seed and soybean oils. BCA beneficiary: Breast Cancer Research Fund. **877.528.1584**, www.bathbybettijo.com

these clients.

“Chemotherapy, surgery and radiation can dampen the immune system and make individuals with cancer more susceptible to injury and infection, and prolong healing time,” says Rallie McAllister, M.D., a physician and spa industry health consultant.

For example, you shouldn’t clip cuticles or do anything else that could result in bleeding. Plus, you must take extra care when performing extractions on these clients because they’re more vulnerable to infections. Keep in mind that clients going through radiation or chemotherapy may not be the best candidates for massage. “Cancer treatments can also change the sensory responses of individuals—in terms of smell, skin sensitivity to various products and to physical touch. In particular, radiation therapy can make treated skin fragile and susceptible to injury,” McAllister says. “It’s more important than ever for the spa professional to ask the client about sensitivities and avoid treatments that require an optimally functioning immune system to produce the desired results.”

Understanding the unique challenges affecting

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Bio Jouvance Age-Defying Milk Protein Masque with chamomile, elderflower and hydrolyzed milk proteins diminishes signs of aging and promotes a firmer appearance. BCA beneficiary: Multiple charities. **800.272.1716**, www.biojouvance.com

Brush Up With Barbara/Mineral Mine will provide pink ribbon labels on all packaging free of charge for every order of 24 items or more to promote charity sales. BCA beneficiary: At spa’s discretion. **800.338.1423**, www.brushup.com

China Glaze One in Three polish trio from American International Industries aims to educate clients with facts—such as only one in three women perform regular self breast exams, and breast cancer accounts for one in three newly diagnosed cases of cancer in women. BCA beneficiary: Multiple charities. **800.635.8966**, www.aiibeauty.com

Cina Nail Creations Pink Ribbon Nail Decals from Star Nail allows clients to add a visual sign of support to their manicures. BCA beneficiary: Multiple charities. **800.407.7797**, www.starnail.com

Clarisonic Skin Care System by Pacific Bioscience Laboratories will sell pink-ribbon editions of its popular motorized brush. BCA beneficiary: National Breast Cancer Foundation. **888.525.2747**, www.clarisonic.com

Color Club Colors for the Cure is a special-edition package of nail lacquers developed to support breast cancer research and education. Colors include Bashful, In Bloom, Translucent and Angels N’ Pink. BCA beneficiary: Breast cancer research and education.

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spa-goers with breast cancer will help you better serve them. You can accomplish this by educating your staff on proper procedures and what to expect when treating these clients. Sometimes, it's best to let medical professionals help establish the guidelines. Facelogic and Oasis Day Spa make it a policy to require a doctor's note before providing massage to breast cancer survivors. It's a move McAllister says isn't medically necessary, but each spa owner should use her best judgment.

Other services, such as hairstyling and wig fittings, don't require a doctor's note and are always welcomed by a client who faces losing her hair to chemotherapy. "Such services give these women a lift. They feel better about their appearance, which boosts their morale," says Facelogic's Ford, who regularly donates wigs and hair services to breast cancer patients. "The most devastating part of treatment for women can be losing their hair, eyelashes and eyebrows. We're able to help them recapture some of their dignity and femininity."

Spa Roma works with a local company that

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DermaQuest Skin Therapy Glyco Hand and Body is a paraben-free cream that reduces the signs of aging while keeping skin soft. BCA beneficiary: Breast Cancer Research Foundation. **800.213.8100**, www.dermaquestinc.com

Elemis Essential Beauty Secrets Kit includes four top-rated products, including the new Limited Edition Pro-Collagen Boob Tube, a lifting neck and bust treatment. It also contains a five-step breast exam guide. BCA beneficiary: Breast Cancer Care. **800.423.5293**, www.elemis.com

Éminence Organic Skin Care Pink Ribbon Sweet Red Rose Whip Moisturizer is packed with antioxidants to fight free radicals and rose petals to soothe skin. BCA beneficiary: Breast Cancer Foundations of Canada and America. **888.747.6342**, www.eminenceorganics.com

Essie Cosmetics Yes We Can, Pink! is inspired by the soft, pale pink color associated with breast cancer awareness. BCA beneficiary: Living Beyond Breast Cancer. **800.232.1155**, www.essie.com

Jane Iredale PureMoist LipColour SPF 18 in Christina is a medium-pink color named after breast-cancer survivor Christina Applegate. BCA beneficiary: Living Beyond Breast Cancer. **800.762.1132**, www.janeiredale.com

M'lis Moisturize offers an ultra-penetrating facial hydrator with vitamins, minerals, amino acids and collagen. BCA beneficiary: Susan G. Komen for the Cure. **800.548.0569**. www.mliscompany.com

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donates wigs to the spa staff. Employees then customize the hairpieces to their individual clients.

Integrating eyelash services into your menu is another easy way to offer a helpful service. Le Petite Retreat provides eyelash extensions with a strong adhesive that's custom-made for the spa. "With just a little lash left, you can completely cover the eye," says spa owner Lysa Kustek.

Alternative services also help heal a wounded spirit, and ease the pain of cancer and its treatments. For example, The Spa offers acupuncture. "Acupuncture for breast cancer patients treats depression, hot flashes and dry mouth which can be side effects of the drugs. Those symptoms are treatable with Chinese medicine," says Arturo Diaz, M.D., an acupuncture physician at The Spa. "Many people are scared or have different perspectives about alternative therapies, but breast cancer patients are willing to try anything. They're more open," Diaz says.

Indeed, holistic treatments are gaining wider acceptance as the media tracks clients' results. Le Petite Retreat became the focus of a Lifetime

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OPI Pink of Hearts 2009 Nail Lacquer, an empowering light pink shade, was made specifically for the cause.

BCA beneficiary: Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Rethink Breast Cancer in Canada. **800.341.9999**, www.opi.com

Phytomer Décolleté Parfait neck and bust cream and **Rosée Visage** cleansing toner are packaged together for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. BCA beneficiary: Multiple charities.

800.227.8051, www.phytomerusa.com

Repêchage Mist for a Cure Hydrating Seaweed Facial Spray gives tired, thirsty skin a burst of vitamins and hydrating marine extracts. BCA beneficiary: Multiple charities.

800.248.SKIN, www.repechage.com

RevitaLash Breast Cancer Promotional Kit includes RevitaLash and RevitaLash Volumizing Mascara in a commemorative pink ribbon cosmetics bag. BCA beneficiary: Multiple charities. **877.909.LASH**, www.revitalash.com

SAIAN Strawberry Cleanser removes surface impurities and all traces of makeup in a paraben-free, vegetarian formula. Natural pink strawberry oil feeds skin with the antioxidant lycopene. BCA beneficiary: Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

800.291.1130, www.saian.net

Sanitas Skincare PeptiDerm Eye Treatment targets delicate skin with vitamins and peptides, reducing the appearance of fine lines. BCA beneficiary: Multiple charities. **888.855.8425**,

www.sanitas-skincare.com

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Spilo's Mehaz Professional Depil-a-Tweeze Slanted Tweezer is made of premium quality stainless steel crafted in Solingen, Germany. BCA beneficiary: Expedition Inspiration. **800.347.7456**, www.mehaz.com
Tweezerman Precision in Pink Slant

Tweezer will donate \$1 of every sale. BCA beneficiary: Cancer Cares. **800.645.3340**, www.tweezerman.com
Universal Companies Lightly Powdered Pink Vinyl Gloves will inform clients of your commitment to fighting breast cancer. BCA beneficiary:

City of Hope. **800.558.5571**, www.universalcompanies.com

VB Cosmetics Dazzle Dry Quick-Dry Nail Polish System contains four new pink polishes—Alluring Charm, Soft Caress and Warm Affection. BCA beneficiary: Multiple charities. **866.398.9357**,

TV special, "Speaking of Women's Health," featuring a breast cancer survivor in remission and seeking holistic treatment at the spa. The client received the Circles of Life facial with vibratory color therapy and ionic baths, in which a frequency module opens the pores and pulls toxins out of the body. Other spa favorites include a Jade Stone massage with rocks drawn from the core of the earth and the bottom of the ocean. "It's all about balancing the body," Kustek says.

In the end, the best treatment spas can provide for women is in the area of prevention. At Oasis Day Spa, it's all about education. "We're not just a spa," says owner Bruce Schoenberg. "We're a wellness facility. We offer more than just massage; we work for total health by making women aware of the importance of getting tested to catch this disease early."

Oasis posts breast cancer information on its website and on fliers in the locker rooms, and reception and relaxation areas. With every retail purchase, guests receive a pamphlet from the American Cancer Society that cautions: "Early detection is the key to early treatment."

Day spas are in a unique position to educate and help heal. "Just spending a few hours being pampered by caring professionals can help make anyone—including cancer survivors—feel beautiful and special," McAllister says.

This October, reach out to the women you serve with a cause that's close to everyone's heart. ●

Andrea Moret is a Northern California