

Cancer activists painting the town teal

By Terri Yablonsky Stat
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Growing up, Elizabeth Isham Cory remembers hearing about several of her mother's friends who had ovarian cancer, but that it was never really talked about.

As an adult, she had friends diagnosed with ovarian cancer who "seemed to disappear."

"Ovarian cancer is a disease that whispers," said Cory, 52, spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration in Chicago and a five-year ovarian cancer survivor. "Women need to be aware of the early warning signs for treatment to be successful."

To help raise awareness, the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition's local chapter will hold a fundraiser Friday as part of the 2010 Light the Town Teal Ovarian Cancer Campaign. Since Sept. 10, more than 20 downtown buildings — including Willis Tower, Trump Tower and the Chicago Board of Trade — have been aglow in teal to help shine a spotlight on one of the deadliest cancers in women.

Ovarian cancer claims the lives of nearly 15,000 American women each year, according to the American Cancer Society. It mainly affects post-menopausal women but can strike at any age. Often called the "silent disease" because its symptoms are so vague, ovarian cancer is diagnosed at advanced stages in three out of four women, and most patients die within five years. But when diagnosed and treated early, the five-year survival rate is greater than 90 percent, according to the cancer society.

Early warning signs include bloating, indigestion, pelvic or abdominal pain, weight gain around the waist, back pain, fatigue and the need to urinate often. Because these symptoms mimic other conditions, many women don't see medical help until the disease has spread. Early detection is key to improving the survival rate and quality of life for women.

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Patty Rioux, right, and fellow volunteers Christine Riordan, from left, Tera Baker, Dale Clarke, Julie Spencer and Alison Soltau pose by teal lighting on the Blue Cross-Blue Shield Tower. Rioux came up with the idea to light the skyline in teal "to bring ovarian cancer out of the dark." **ANDREW A. NELLES/PHOTO FOR THE TRIBUNE**

Isham Cory, who is also a National Ovarian Cancer Coalition board member, was diagnosed at 46. She went through six rounds of chemotherapy and says today her prognosis is very good. Isham Cory and other ovarian cancer survivors and supporters will gather Friday night at the Metropolitan Club in Willis Tower to view the teal-lit Chicago skyline.

Patty Rioux, co-president of the coalition's local advisory board, came up with the idea of lighting

the Chicago skyline; teal is the color of ovarian cancer awareness. Rioux's mother died of ovarian cancer in February 2009.

"We wanted to light the town teal to bring ovarian cancer out of the dark," said Rioux, who owns a Chicago-based consulting firm.

"Women think they're covered with an annual Pap smear and mammogram," she said. "We're helping them recognize that these tools don't screen for ovari-

an cancer. If your symptoms persist after seeing a doctor, see a gynecologic oncologist. You must advocate for your own health."

The fundraiser, which includes hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and a silent auction, is 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Friday at Willis Tower, 233 S. Wacker Drive. Tickets are \$75 and must be purchased in advance. For more information go to nocc.kintera.org/IL. All proceeds benefit the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition.

NOTES

DEPRESSION TALK

Rush University Medical Center Health and Aging program hosts "Making Sense of Stress and the Blues." Focusing on depression and anxiety in older adults and ways of coping with these emotions. 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Searle Conference Center, 1725 W. Harrison St. Registration required. Call 888-352-7874.

OLIVE OIL TASTING

Learn the health benefits of olive oil and the Mediterranean diet. Maryam Naziri, a registered dietitian from the Galter LifeCenter, will speak. 7 p.m. Wednesday, City Olive, 5408 N. Clark St. Registration required. Free. Call 773-878-5408 or visit cityolive.com.

VISION PROGRAM

Ophthalmologist John Bello will discuss alternatives to traditional eyeglasses, including the latest advancement in lens technology and vision correction options. 6 p.m. Thursday, Resurrection Medical Center, 7435 W. Talcott Ave. Free. To register, call 877-737-4636.

HEALTH FAIR

The Asian American Family and Senior Health Fair will offer free screenings, dental care and pneumonia shots. 10 a.m. Saturday, Thorek Memorial Hospital, 850 W. Irving Park Road. Call 773-975-1119.

MAYA WALK

The Stop for Maya Foundation will hold the fourth annual 1-mile walk through the gardens of Lincoln Park in honor of Maya Hirsch, a 4-year-old who was killed when a motorist ran a stop sign. All proceeds will benefit Children's Memorial Hospital Heartlight bereavement program. 9 a.m. registration, 10 a.m. walk on Sunday. Participants will meet at Belden Avenue and Lincoln Park West. Visit stopformaya.org.

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