

## wellness

### Still A Battler

Thanks to a survivor, new state tax form checkoff supports women's cancer fight.

**E**llyn Davidson of Huntington Woods has always been very active. She has been a room mom at her kids' school and has an endless calendar.

She's a partner at Brogan & Partner's Convergence Marketing in Birmingham where she's been developing marketing strategy for healthcare and social marketing clients for 15 years. She skis, likes to hike and is an avid photographer.

But in August 2007, Davidson became an active member of a group that she never wanted to join when she was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer at age 36. Her activity list changed suddenly and drastically for the next year as she underwent a mastectomy, chemotherapy and reconstructive surgery.

Besides actively battling cancer, she continued with activities that revolved around her family life with husband Jon, daughter Lacey, 8, and sons Brett, 6, and Seth, 2.

Today, she's still battling cancer as an active player on the Survivor team. Back to work at Brogan and feeling great, Davidson recently found that her breast cancer world and her professional world were colliding in a very meaningful way.

Davidson enlisted the team at Brogan & Partners and its sister company, Ignite Social Media, to launch the Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer Tax Check-Off Initiative for her longtime client, the Michigan Department of Community Health.

To generate enthusiasm about the initiative and spread the word, Davidson's team developed a social media campaign at [michigancancer.org/taxcheck-off.cfm](http://michigancancer.org/taxcheck-off.cfm). Visitors can sign a pledge, grab a badge for a Facebook/MySpace page, Web site or blog and share with friends, and become a fan on Facebook.

The program adds the two new funds to the Voluntary Contributions Schedule (Form 4642) associated with 2008 State



Ellyn Davidson and her husband, Jon

of Michigan tax forms. Dollars collected for the Breast Cancer Prevention and Treatment Initiative, called Amanda's Fund, go directly to the Michigan Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program, which provides free breast and cervical cancer screening services to low-income women in our state.

Donations designated for the Prostate Cancer Research Fund will be used to support prostate cancer research in Michigan.

"I consider myself incredibly lucky that I found my cancer early and had access

to the best treatment," Davidson said. "I want to do everything I can to make sure that all women have access to early detection and excellent care."

Davidson has piled her plate full with activities again as a local outreach coordinator for Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE), and fundraising with her breast cancer 3-Day team.

She's also on the host committee for Camp Kids All Together and the Bear Hug Foundation's Hibernation Celebration. □

## alternatives

### Manage Stress, Tough Times

**M**any people in our life and in our community are facing difficult times. Bracing for a new year in an uncertain economy with several winter months still ahead can be a source of great stress for many people.

Studies have shown that stress can have a direct impact on many areas of our health and well-being. Please take a deep breath, relax and read the following suggestions for stress reduction.

- Mindfulness Meditation. It helps the heart rate and breath slow down. It can help reduce strain on the adrenal system and enhance immune function. John Kabat-Zinn, M.D., author of *Full Catastrophic Living*, writes about using the mind to heal the body:

"Mindfulness is a way of living your life and holding all of your experience," he says. "These kind of practices — mindful yoga and meditation — actually

have effects on the body that are in the direction of greater health and well-being."

Mindful breathing is the core of his brand of mind-body medicine. Meditation is a simple technique that can be practiced with little preparation. Simply sit in a comfortable, seated position and, with the eyes closed, focus on the breath. Practicing as little as five minutes a day can help reduce stress and increase relaxation.

- Yoga. It provides the combined benefits of breathing exercises, stretching and fitness programs, meditation and guided imagery, all combined in one practice. Through a series of gentle stretches and movements, yoga can help reduce stress, improve sleep, lower blood pressure and reduce cortisol levels. There are many qualified yoga centers in the Detroit area that teach beginning yoga

for all ages and physical abilities.

- B complex vitamins. These represent a group of 12 related water-soluble substances that are needed for metabolic processing. B vitamins help support a healthy immune system and adrenal function in the body. Adequate amounts of B vitamins are needed on a daily basis to insure the proper function of many systems in the body. Stress, whether mental or physical, can cause vitamin B deficiency.

- Acupuncture. It effectively treats stress and many stress-related health disorders. When we are under stress, the free flowing of our life force energy (known as qi), becomes obstructed. Stagnant qi in our bodies is similar to the effects of a pressure cooker — the more "stuck" our energy becomes, the more our body is unable to manage the stress related symptoms.

Symptoms such as becoming short fused and irritable, suffering from pain and tension, difficulty sleeping and con-



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centrating and anxiety are common stress-related conditions that acupuncture can help minimize.

- Compassion. Now more than ever, we need to tap into our own sense of community and open our heart to others. How many times do we recognize suffering in others and, despite our own situation, are grateful for what we do have.

Opening up our hearts to others can have a profound effect on our community.

Forgiveness and gratitude are important actions that heal the body and reduce stress. In addition, there are many volunteer opportunities within the Jewish community for us to help those not as fortunate as us. □

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