

In Touch

TEXAS HEALTH PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION

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On the Wings of Hope
Dallas Nurse is on a
Mission to Help Breast
Cancer Patients



On Butterflies Wings

Dallas Nurse Spreads Message of Hope to Breast Cancer Patients One Butterfly at a Time

By **Barbara Zepeda**
Communications Manager,
Texas Health Presbyterian Foundation

Lisa Young stands on the porch of her Prosper home with her teenage daughter Madison. A cool fall breeze brushes her face, but feels refreshing after a long day at work. ✿ Inside her cupped hands rests a brilliantly colored monarch butterfly, which has recently become a personal symbol of her battle with Stage II breast cancer. ✿ As she gazes at the peaceful butterfly, a gift from a special friend, Lisa reflects on the past few days that she and her family have waited in anticipation for the butterfly to emerge from its intricately wound chrysalis. ✿ With a little encouragement from her daughter, Lisa realizes she is ready to let go - not only of the butterfly, but of the feelings of fear, anxiety and disbelief built up in the months since she received her cancer diagnosis. ✿ "The butterfly is ready to spread its wings," she tells herself. "And so am I."

When Lisa first found a lump in her left breast, she immediately consulted with **Dr. Eugene Hunt, III**, an OB/GYN on the medical staff of Texas Health Dallas, and her employer for more than 20 years. Dr. Hunt referred Lisa to the **Peggy A. Bell Women's Diagnostic and Breast Center** for a diagnostic mammogram, sonogram and breast biopsy.

At the Breast Center, Lisa crossed paths with **Erin Prendergast**, a part-time registered nurse, who had also been a professional and personal acquaintance of hers for many years. Lisa found comfort in the conversations she had with Erin during her appointments about what to expect with her diagnosis, and more importantly, how to keep hope alive in the midst of such despair.

"Erin really listened to me and she cared," Lisa explained. "She was so encouraging. I really needed someone to lift me up when I felt like everything was crumbling around me."

One day while at work, Lisa received a message that a gift had been left at the reception desk for her. Much to Lisa's surprise, Erin had brought her a pink basket with encouraging poems and sayings and a tiny butterfly chrysalis with instructions on how to create her own butterfly garden.

"I was so touched by her kindness. I took the basket home and showed it to my husband and daughter," Lisa said. "We all thought it was so beautiful and creative. Caring for the butterfly really made me stop and think about how I can't dwell on what could be. I have to do whatever I can to have a normal life."



Erin Prendergast (left) and Lisa Young

“Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly.”

Author Unknown

On a Mission of Hope

Through her work at the Breast Center, Erin noticed a pattern of distress in patients waiting for diagnostic test results.

“Most of my patients say to me, ‘If I have cancer, I can deal with it. If I don’t, I want to move past this. I just need to know what it is, one way or another,’” Erin explains. “Waiting is the hardest part for them. They begin playing out all of the possible scenarios. There are so many uncertainties at that point.”

Erin wanted to find a way to bring hope and encouragement to breast cancer patients and the survivors she has met in the four years she has worked at the Breast Center. In 2010, Erin, a certified Dallas County Master Gardener, merged two of her passions: helping breast cancer patients and butterfly gardening. She founded On Butterflies Wings, a “down-to-earth” organization on a mission of hope.

“To me, the lifecycle of a butterfly is very similar to what our breast cancer patients face when they receive that initial phone call regarding an issue with their mammograms,” Erin explained. “In the beginning, the journey is uncertain.



Erin Prendergast’s organization On Butterflies Wings has taken flight thanks to the help of her sister Maureen Conway. “Only a sister would have done this for me,” Erin says with a grin.



Erin gives a lesson about gardening to students at Good Shepherd Episcopal School in Dallas.

Through their own metamorphoses, I think our patients come out of their experiences better, stronger and more beautiful people than before.”

Through On Butterflies Wings, Erin sells several garden-related products, including: live butterfly chrysalis baskets, organic seed balls, and personalized note cards featuring her own photography collection and words of encouragement. Erin is working with local artisans to develop other product lines.

A portion of the proceeds from the sales of the On Butterflies Wings products will benefit the breast care program fund at Texas Health Dallas held by **Texas Health Presbyterian Foundation**. The products are sold at local retailers (list on page 5) and on her website, www.onbutterflieswings.org. Erin markets her products as inspirational gifts for: friends, loved ones, teachers, birthdays, those grieving the loss of a loved one and even as a teaching tool for children.

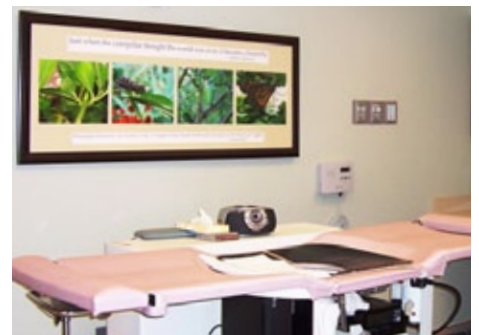
Sowing Seeds in the Community

Erin is also spreading her mission of hope to youngsters at local schools and churches. Recently, she taught classes at **Good Shepherd Episcopal School, St. Patrick Catholic Church** and **Greenhill School** in Dallas and **Daffron Elementary School** in Plano to show students how they can use their talents and interests for the good of others. As part of the lesson, students make organic seed balls using native seeds, compost and water.

“I want to show these little ones that they can use the hands God gave them to help others they may never meet, but will touch in a special way,” Erin said.

Good Shepherd Episcopal School even adopted a community service project to help On Butterflies Wings’ cause. Called “Seeds of Hope,” the program encourages students to collect terracotta pots and seeds for breast cancer patients. In return, Erin has helped the school create a butterfly garden.

“The project was a huge lesson for me and for the students,” Erin said. “I saw how a community can work together to make something small seem really, really big. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with these students and for their support of On Butterflies Wings.”



Erin’s garden photography is featured in the stereotactic biopsy room in the **Peggy A. Bell Women’s Diagnostic and Breast Center**, where she is a part-time registered nurse.



Taking Flight

In just under a year since she launched On Butterflies Wings, with the help of her sister Maureen Conway, Erin has already sold dozens of baskets, note cards and seed balls in the Dallas community. She says she is overwhelmed by how people have embraced her products and the mission of the organization.

“I hear from so many women who are going through breast cancer treatment and survivors who are inspired by the mission of On Butterflies Wings,” she said. “Hearing that feedback really touches me, because that is what I’m here to do – give people hope.”

Erin has also received local recognition for her work. She was one of a handful of finalists nominated for a Community Service Award at Texas Health Dallas. Her work was also featured at a Magnet Award meeting led by **Cole Edmonson**, MS, RN, FACHE, NEA-BC, vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer at Texas Health Dallas.

“Erin is a powerful and positive role model for all of us in the nursing profession,” Cole said. “She is the finest example I have seen in professional nurses, who truly blends the art and science of such a noble profession. I am honored to practice with such a great colleague.”

Lisa could not agree more.

“I am so thankful that I know Erin,” she said. “I still have a ways to go on my journey, but she gave me two of the greatest gifts to help me through – our continued friendship and hope.”



About Texas Health Presbyterian Foundation

Since its charter in 1986, Texas Health Presbyterian Foundation has raised more than \$210 million to support key fundraising initiatives of its five nonprofit hospitals: Texas Health Allen, Dallas, Denton, Kaufman and Plano. Funds have supported a variety of hospital programs and services, including research, education, community outreach, capital needs and patient care programs.

8440 Walnut Hill Lane, Suite 800, LB6
Dallas, Texas 75231
214-345-8442 | TexasHealth.org/PresbyFoundation



On Butterflies Wings products are available online at www.onbutterflieswings.org or at the following retail locations:

Apples to Zinnias
4024 Villanova
Dallas, Texas 75225
214-361-2200
www.applestozinnias.com

Breast Cancer Alliance of North Texas
(Medical Offices of Drs. W. Lee Bourland and Archana Ganaraj)
8160 Walnut Hill Lane, Suite 113
Dallas, Texas 75231
214-345-7374
www.bcaddallas.com

Brumley Gardens
10540 Church Road
Dallas, Texas 75238
214-343-4900
www.brumleygardens.com

North Haven Gardens
7700 Northaven Road
Dallas, Texas 75230
214-363-5316
www.nhg.com

Texas Discovery Gardens – Fair Park
3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Dallas, Texas 75210
214-428-7476 x 341
<http://texasdiscoverygardens.org>

Trinity River Audubon Center
6500 Great Trinity Forest Way
Dallas, Texas 75217
214-309-5891
<http://trinityriveraudubon.org>

Twist Power Yoga
11722 Marsh Lane, Suite 302
Dallas, Texas 75229
214-353-9939
www.twistpower yoga.com

Women's Health Boutique
8499 Greenville Ave., Suite 99
Dallas, Texas 75231
214-373-1045
info@whbdallas.com

On Butterflies Wings Upcoming Events:

Sunday, May 22:

Learn more about starting your own butterfly garden with great tips and a fabulous plant selection at Brumley Gardens on Sunday, May 22, 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. Join Erin as she gives you step-by-step instructions and takes you on a tour of Brumley Gardens to select the best plants to be successful. All On Butterflies Wings products will be available in support of the breast care program at Texas Health Dallas. Don't miss the Monarch chrysalis baskets.

Saturday, June 4:

Join Erin Prendergast and On Butterflies Wings on Saturday, June 4 from 6-9 p.m. at the North Haven Gardens' Susan G. Komen Go Pink event. Erin will have a booth and On Butterflies Wings products will be available for sale to benefit the breast care program at Texas Health Dallas.

More Information: www.onbutterflieswings.org

Click on "Contact Erin" to add your name to On Butterflies Wings' mailing list to keep you informed of upcoming events and special deals.