

Hearts and Health in February



by Meg
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If I asked you what the number one cause of death for all women in America is, what would you answer?

I'm betting a large number of you answered "breast cancer." Am I right? October glows pink with ribbons, coffee cups, and (strangely) football gear to raise awareness for breast cancer research and education. I'm also betting that very few of you out there answered "heart disease." Gold stars to those of you who answered correctly.

Picture the women in your life. A quarter of them are at risk of dying of heart disease.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists heart disease as the number one cause of death for all women of all ages. Twenty-five percent of women in America die of heart disease every year. The heart disease spectrum is broad, but dangerous: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart attack, and stroke all contribute to the deaths of twenty five percent of women. Since women often experience different symptoms of heart disease than men do, they are less likely to seek treatment and more likely to suffer the negative consequences of heart disease. Many women don't even *know* what the symptoms of heart disease are. The American Heart Association (AHA) wants to change that.

February has been designated American Heart Month by a number of governmental agencies in an attempt to raise awareness of

the dangers heart disease poses. The American Heart Association's Go Red for Women campaign works specifically to inform women of the risks of heart disease through outreach, events, and Wear Red Day, this year February 3rd. The goal of Go Red for Women is to encourage awareness and education amongst women and to save lives.

Here in Greater New Bedford, Pauline Pavao has spearheaded the effort to raise awareness about heart disease and women. A longtime Dartmouth resident, Mrs. Pavao was inspired by her parents' deaths of heart disease to do something to educate others before they lost loved ones like she did, completely unaware that heart disease was slowly killing the people she held dearest.



For the past two years, Mrs. Pavao has organized The Red Dress Ball, a formal dinner dance to raise money for the American Heart Association's education and awareness efforts. The Red Dress Ball has raised nearly \$24,000 in those two years alone for the AHA. Mrs. Pavao hopes this year to raise \$15,000 through ticket sales and donations.

This year, the Red Dress Ball will be held Saturday, February 4th at 6:30 pm at White's of Westport. There will be a cocktail hour, dinner, fashion show, dancing, and silent auction. Tickets are \$50 and are available until Friday, January 27th. For tickets, donations, or more information, contact Mrs. Pauline Pavao by email at redressball@yahoo.com or phone (508-997-7124). Additional information and photos visit the Red Dress Ball's official website at thereddressball.com.

Want still more information about heart disease? Talk to your doctor or check out these websites:

- Go Red For Women
- The Center for Disease Control

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