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A ribbon of hope for cancer patients

Grand opening to celebrate Bay Shore Wellness Center

By JENNIFER ACOSTA

BAY SHORE — To celebrate the new home of the Long Island Cancer Help and Wellness Center, Breast Cancer Help, Inc. is slated to host a grand opening event at North Shore Long Island Jewish (LJ) Southside Hospital's Health Institute Building on Main Street Friday, July 7 at noon.

As a not-for-profit organization founded in 1994 by West Islip resident Lorraine Pace, a breast cancer survivor, the group offers an array of free programs to cancer patients. After recently closing its Lindenhurst loca-

tion, they are now located within LJ's Southside campus.

The organization conducts business from a separate building on the hospital grounds in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Center. "I think the center will only get bigger and better now through LJ," said client Peggy Chambers.

Chambers said the Lindenhurst center only had one room and she enjoys the atmosphere and roominess of the new Bay Shore location. "It's therapeutic to sit and talk about your circumstances, but when you go to classes like yoga and art you talk about posi-

tive things. It's almost healing to talk about life and it's a really good support system," Chambers said.

Lynda Distler, executive director for Breast Cancer Help Inc., operates the center by designing and implementing programs, and writing and administering grants. Distler is the only full time employee of the organization. "We have about 100 clients that take part to some extent in our programs," she said.

With a four-pronged mission, the Wellness Center hosts many programs to support their objectives. "Our mantra is 'early detection is our best

protection,'" said Distler.

The first of the four prongs is the West Islip breast cancer mapping project initiated by Pace, which mobilized patients and pinpointed breast cancer clusters. A book written by author Joan Swirsky, called *Map of Destiny*, tells the story of Pace's innovative mapping project to address cancer clusters.

"Her mapping project—the first of its kind in the world—remained her priority in spite of problems and setbacks," Swirsky said in a summary of her book. "Lorraine's 'better mousetrap' of an

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