

Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., honors member with breast cancer research gift



The battle against cancer is being supported by the Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., whose members include: (seated, left to right) Committee members Tamara Lingos-Utley; Tania Lingos Webb, MD; Stacey Tsairis Kacoyanis; Demetra Fund Chair Stephanie Andrews; Demetra Fund Founder Helen O'Leary, DMD; Club President Pamela Lazares; Christa Ayoub; Joan Aliapoulos; Eva Markos; and Carolyn DelGizzi (standing, left to right) Jennifer Trakas-Accerra; Allies Spiliou; Mary Gomatos; Louise Damascus; Renee Argyris; Kay Karagianis; Jean Canellos; Mary Papastavros; Janis Otis Semine; Mary Philopoulos; Kathleen Hamilton; Alexis Hasiotis Wintersteen; Dorothy Sophocles; Olga Bassett; and Mary Lynn Pergantis. The following are not pictured: Crystal Condakes; Crystal Stella Condakes; Carol Drake; Patti Dukakis; Sandra Gomatos; Linda Hasiotis; Christine Kondoleon; Elaine Pantazopoulos; Connie Papageorge; Athena Papas, DMD; Florence Patterson; Heidi Tourkistas; Diane Speare Triant; Zacharie Haseotes Viniou; and Cynthia Zervas.

In 2001, Helen P. O'Leary, DMD, a member of the Hellenic Women's Club, Inc.,—a greater Boston organization of 40 women of Greek ancestry—established a fund at the club in memory of Demetra “Toulie” Samellas, her sister and fellow member who had died of breast cancer. Multiple fundraisers later, the fund had grown to the point where the club was ready to make its first gift.

“We want to enhance the quality of life for women across the world and for generations to come by eradicating breast cancer,” explained Stephanie Andrews, chair of the

fund committee. “We chose Dana-Farber as the recipient because we want our money to have maximum impact.”

The Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., EOK Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research, created with a \$100,000 gift, will be managed by Judy Garber, MD, MPH, director of the Friends of Dana-Farber Cancer Risk and Prevention Clinic.

Garber will use the funds for studies of women with known genetic mutations who choose to have prophylactic surgery to reduce their higher-than-normal risk of breast and ovarian cancers. Working in collaboration with molecular biologist Katia Karalis, PhD, at Hygeia Hospital in Athens, Greece, Garber will compare the degree to which this surgery reduces risk in American versus Greek women. In addition, Garber will investigate the impact bone-strengthening medications, such as Zometa®, have in further reducing breast cancer risk.

“It is absolutely inspirational to see what a group of dedicated women can do,” said Garber. “Cross-cultural collaborations have the potential to further our understanding of factors that contribute to increased breast cancer risk.” ■