

[← Return to Article](#)

[Click to Print](#)

Thousands in O.C. race for breast-cancer cure

By [DOUG IRVING](#)

2010-09-26 12:40:45



NEWPORT BEACH – Amanda Firestone let a tear slide down her cheek Sunday as she looked out at a sea of pink shirts and pink roses, pink ribbons and pink balloons.

It was only the second time she had cried since January, when she first felt the lump in her left breast.

She was surrounded by survivors – "warriors in pink," one event organizer called them – who were fighting breast cancer by running or walking or just showing up. The 19th annual Susan G. Komen Orange County Race for the Cure – the largest in Southern California – was expected to rally

30,000 people to the cause and raise more than \$3 million.

Firestone, 33, a nurse from Mission Viejo, walked a mile for the cure but spent most of her time keeping up with her 2-year-old twins, Joe and Ari. Her last chemo treatment is Tuesday.

"I don't know how to thank people for all this," she said as 'We Are Family' played over loud speakers. "Just seeing all these people, all these really strong people. ... I feel fortunate, grateful and fortunate."

The racers who crowded the starting line early Sunday morning wore their messages on the front of their t-shirts: "Dump the Lumps." "Stop the War in Our Racks." "Yes, Mine Are Fake. My Other Ones Tried to Kill Me."

And they wore their tributes on their backs, hand-written in black marker on pink paper. "Auntie Debra." "Abuela Juana." "My Mom." "ME!"

Eileen Schafer of Brea had trained for eight weeks for the race. She's 84 years old, diagnosed with cancer more than six years ago when a routine mammogram spotted a lump deep inside her right breast.

"This year, I was determined I was going to make it," she said as she set out on her one-mile walk, keeping her own pace. "It's to know I can do it. I have survived that, and I'm still able to get out and show support."

One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime, according to Susan G. Komen for the Cure. By the organization's estimates, nearly 1,900 Orange County women will get that diagnosis this year.

"We are strong," Komen founder Nancy Brinker, who named the organization in honor of her late sister, told the Orange County crowd on Sunday. "We are an army of survivors and people who want to make sure that we have the back of every breast-cancer patient in the United States."

Michelle England was sitting in a doctor's office just three months ago, texting the same three words to her friends and family: "I have cancer."

She used to bike 50 miles through Newport Beach on her weekends; on Sunday, she rolled along the race course in a wheelchair, pushed by a team of supporters who called themselves Michelle's Miracles.

"It's amazing," England, 45, a dental assistant from Irvine, said along the way.

"It's good to know that you're not alone," said dentist Rodger Uchizono, who works with her.

"Yeah, that is true," England said. "That is true."

Contact the writer: 714-704-3777 or dirving@ocregister.com





 Carter Thai, 9, center, gets his mom back for squirting water on him earlier, as she and other members of Team Tiffany line up for a group photo. His mom Linh Guan is second from right. They took part in the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure at Fashion Island.

 MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER





 Breast cancer survivors parade into a ceremony to recognize their fight during the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure. //ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: 9/26/10 - MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER - : Story Contents: The 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure beginning with a Wellness Expo, and breast cancer survivors will be recognized for their triumph over the disease at a special tribute in their honor.

 MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER





 Hedy Donahue of Anaheim, blows kisses to her friend and breast cancer survivor Sue Brienza of Orange. Brienza was being recognized with other survivors at the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure.

 MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER





 A runner victoriously crosses the 5k finish line at the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure in Newport Beach.

 MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Orange County Register Publisher Terry Horne spoke to a group of breast cancer survivors at the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure. "The Register will always be here watching over Orange County", Horne said.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Beck man High School students Jason Sleiman, left, and Travis Shirley join hands as they finish the Race for the Cure in Newport Beach.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Breast cancer survivors hold signs with words of support including, Understanding, Faith, Acceptance, Dignity and Laughter.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



About 30,000 breast cancer survivors and advocates pound the pavement to raise money for research during the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



A runner decks his legs in hot pink during the 2010 Race for the Cure.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Judy Jones, left and her friend Marilyn Jensen, both from Newport Beach, take a picture together as they are recognized as breast cancer survivors at the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure. Jones is a 25-year survivor and Jensen is an 8-year survivor.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Wearing flush pink checks and pink shorts and shirt, Melia Vargas, 3, finishes the Race for the Cure in honor of her grandma Debi Vargas who is a breast cancer survivor.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



A hand-holding group wearing "It's All About the Girls" tee shirts, finish the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Fleet feet finish the Race for the cure in pink heels at Fashion Island Sunday.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Brooke Thomas, 29, of Costa Mesa, is the lady's 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure champion in the second 5k race of the day.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Amanda Firestone of Ladera Ranch holds her twins, Joe, left and Ari, 2, during the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure survivors recognition ceremony. Firestone was diagnosed six months ago and will receive her last chemo treatment next week.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



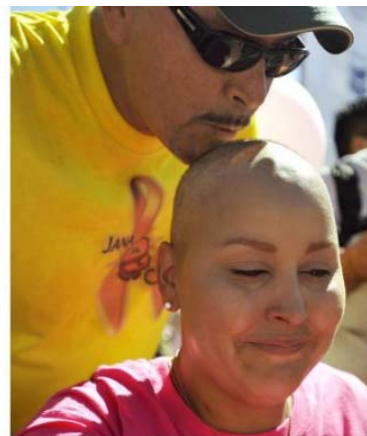
Komen for the Cure CEO and founder Nancy Brinker gets a standing ovation from breast cancer survivors before the start of the 2010 Race for the Cure. She made a promise to her dying sister, Susan Komen, to make a difference in the lives of other women battling breast cancer.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Lisa Anderson of Newport Beach is decked out in pink during the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure survivors recognition ceremony. She was diagnosed 15 years ago with stage four cancer and says she is now cured.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Leanna Velasco gets a tender kiss from dad, Angel Guillen, after he pushes her wheelchair through the finish line Sunday at the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure. Velasco was diagnosed in 2008 and again in July.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Regular runner and Korean War Veteran Bob Kohler, 79, of Irvine carries two flags as he finishes the Race for the Cure. One is to honor 9/11 victims and the other is to honor veterans, he said.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



A pooch wears a pink do at the 2010 Race for the Cure.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Sinan Kanatsiz of San Clemente and Domstal, walk in honor of Kanatsiz's mother-in-law Janet Gavreans during the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Participants in the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure are invited to eat a serving of fruit after Sunday's race.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



Rachel Chamberlin, turns the fan on herself between spraying runners at the Race for the Cure. She is a volunteer with Girl Scout Troop 498 in Lake Forest.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



About 30,000 participants take part in the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure at Fashion Island. The organization's goal is to raise \$3 million.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER



A breast cancer survivor is moved to tears as birds are released during a special tribute honoring survivors at the 2010 Komen Orange County Race for the Cure in Newport Beach.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER