

EASTON JOURNAL

FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2009



Hope In Bloom recently created a special garden for Easton resident Linda Charron, a breast cancer survivor. Back row left to right: volunteers with Hope in Bloom, Inc. (hopeinbloom.org) Erica Greenberg (Sharon), Joyce Westerman (Easton), Linda Charron and Roberta Hershon the founder of Hope In Bloom, Becca Shuman (Needham), Lori Waldman (Natick) and Gerrie Greenberg (Sharon). Front row from Gardens With Spirit, a professional landscape garden design company located in Walpole (gardenswithspirit.com) Nathan Matthews, Christopher Adams and owner of Gardens With Spirit Brenda Cooke.

Local cancer survivor receives gift of garden

Nonprofit donates to breast cancer patients

By Paula Vogler
CORRESPONDENT

Linda (Bosse) Charron is getting a reminder of how she won her fight against breast cancer right outside her home.

In 2007, the lifelong Easton resident was enjoying her young daughter Jillian, now 2½ years old, along with her husband, Joseph, and their son, Jared, now 7.

But a routine annual exam four months after her daughter was born showed she had

malignant invasive ductal carcinoma, a form of breast cancer.

Charron, who graduated from Oliver Ames High School in 1987, faced surgery, five months of chemotherapy and more reconstructive surgery.

While she was going through treatment, Charron's friend submitted her name to Hope in Bloom, a nonprofit organization that plants gardens for breast-cancer patients.

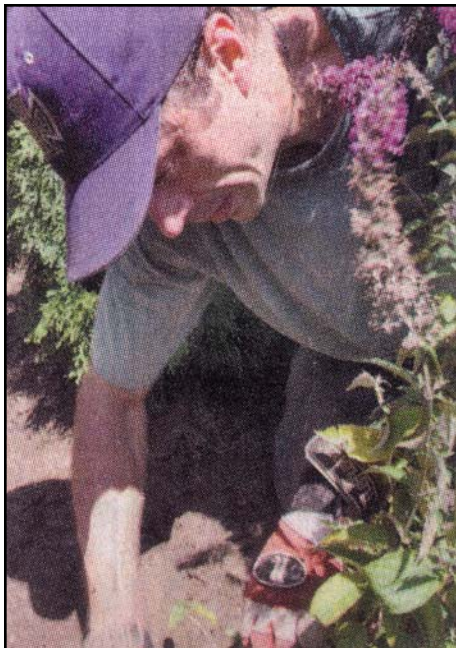
"I am constantly reminded of (the cancer),"

Charron said. "Now I'm going to look outside my window and think how beautiful the garden is and how good it makes me feel. I'll be reminded I triumphed over cancer."

Hope in Bloom founder Roberta Hershon said the gardens reduce stress and anxiety, lower blood pressure, and increase serotonin levels in the body.

"The combination makes people more receptive to medical intervention," Hershon said.

A landscape architect consulted with



Nathan Matthews from Gardens With Spirit in Walpole (gardenswithspirit.com) plants a butterfly bush.

Charron and designed the garden consisting of arborvitae, butterfly bushes, and perennial and annual flowers. It is being built free of charge.

Gardens typically cost \$1,500 to design and build and are all privately funded, according to Hershon.

Charron's garden was built with the help of Baker's Landscaping Inc. of Norton. Workers will remove the grass and dig the larger holes for some of the trees.

"We're going to go in and do the gorilla work for them," said Aaron Donnelly of the landscape company. "It speeds their day up."

Donnelly said owner Chris Baker is a cancer survivor, so the prospect of doing the work for another survivor appealed to him.

The remaining digging, planting, and fertilizing will be done with a crew of volunteers from many different towns.

While Charron enjoys gardening and working in her yard, her garden from Hope in Bloom took two years to be built because the organization does not have the funds to build gardens for all requests that come in.

Hershon said those deemed most sick get gardens first and then the organization works down the list of requests even if someone has finished treatment since they first applied like Charron. While 60 gardens have been built since Hope in Bloom formed in 2007, there are still 100 names on a waiting list.

Because she has completed most of her treatment Charron said she almost felt not worthy to receive the donated garden.

"My husband said, 'you did go through it,'" Charron said. "My friend knew this was something that would make me happy. This is a really neat thing."

To apply for a garden online visit hopeinbloom.org or call 781-381-3597.



Linda Charron and her children — Jared, 7, and Jillian, 2 ½, sit on the bench that sits in the center of her new garden created by Hope In Bloom.