

Volunteers serve up awareness for World Ovarian Cancer Day

By Brock Weir

After losing her mother at the very young age of 48 to ovarian cancer in January 2005, Aurora native Lisa Salmon was not intent simply to move on and move past her mother's battle with the disease, which lasted just over two years.

She and her family wanted to do something about it ? and in her memory.

?It had a significant impact on us,? she said of the journey she shared with her mother. ?I think at the time, had we known about ovarian cancer and what it was, we could have caught the symptoms, maybe it would have been caught early and she would have had a better chance of beating it.?

Her mother's symptoms included bloating and frequent urination and doctors often chalked it up to other things, such as irritable bowel syndrome. Eventually, when they got it right, it was too late.

Building awareness so people can spot the signs early has been a driving force in her work, and Ms. Salmon, along with fellow members of the Aurora Walk of Hope Committee, are coming out in force this week to build that awareness on the inaugural World Ovarian Cancer Day.

The committee, which spearheads the annual Aurora walk in September will be special ?Celebrity Servers? at Boston Pizza next Wednesday, May 8, from 5.30 p.m. to 9 p.m., not just to serve up some of their signature fare, but also distribute information about the cause and what they can do about it.

During the dinner hours, 10 per cent of all proceeds sold will be donated by the restaurant back to Ovarian Cancer Canada.

On May 8, over 26 ovarian cancer organizations from nearly 20 countries around the world will do various things in their respective communities to build awareness of the disease and its symptoms, and also foster a sense of ?solidarity?, according to the Aurora committee.

Ms. Salmon says over the years she has seen an increasing awareness in this community of ovarian cancer among women and their families, and she says Ovarian Cancer Canada has come a long way in spreading the word compared to when her mother received her fateful diagnosis in December 2002.

?More and more women who are diagnosed become aware, they join OCC and they help us do these events within the community,? she says. ?When I first stepped up to ovarian cancer as a volunteer, it was in 2005 after I lost my mom. At the time, there weren't a whole lot of volunteers or awareness, but it just keeps growing and growing. With the help of the Aurora community and helping us raise awareness and assisting us in awareness about our walk, there have been great opportunities.?

If people can't make it to the May 8 event, Ms. Salmon encourages people to put on their running shoes and join them at Town Park for the Walk of Hope on Saturday, September 18, an event featuring entertainment, guest speakers, and lots of information. Their numbers grow each year.

?I do this in memory of my mom and so the memory of my mom can live on in my children, as her dream was to be a grandma one day. I also do this so my daughter will be aware when she is older as she is at a genetic risk for it, as am I.?