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News Release

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Media Contact –Danielle Rush

Communications Specialist
2300 S. Washington Street
Kokomo, IN 46904-9003
(765) 455-9414
darush@iuk.edu

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Ribbon Warriors set to join fight against breast cancer

KOKOMO, Ind. — Ribbon Warriors are ready for the fight.

The 60-member strong, newly formed student organization, at Indiana University Kokomo wants to “educate, advocate, and eradicate” regarding all types of cancer – with this year’s focus on breast cancer.

“We want to provide education, not just do the pink fad,” said Ribbon Warrior Jaina Hattabaugh, 21. “It’s important for all young women to know it can happen to them. You don’t get mammograms at our age, so it is crucial to know how to do self-exams, and to actually do them.

“That’s how you learn what is normal for you, and when you need to have something checked by your doctor. It could save your life.”

Inspired by an internship at the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Tissue Bank in Indianapolis, senior health sciences major Pam Plain founded the organization this semester. Her admiration for their faculty advisor, Jessica Henderson, also was a reason, as Henderson is a breast cancer survivor.

As an older student, Plain also is passionate about teaching her younger classmates, both men and women, about the importance of taking care of themselves.

“You have to know your body, and know your breasts,” Plain, 50, said. “We have to reach out to the men, too, because they can also get breast cancer. A lot of people don’t know that.”

Her plan is that each year, the organization’s president will chose a type of cancer or health issue, and focus on providing education about it for the entire school year, fulfilling the motto, “Educate. Advocate. Eradicate.”

The Ribbon Warriors will sponsor several activities to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness month through October. They will hand out educational materials on self-breast exams at IU Kokomo's women's volleyball "Pink Out" game on Tuesday, October 22. In addition, they are encouraging the campus community to support another "Pink Out" day on October 31.

The group has two fundraisers slated for spring semester, including "Cupcakes for a Cure" on February 1 at A Summer Place near Sharpsville; and a "Truffle Shuffle Walk" on March 30 in the Cole Fitness Center.

Next April, the Ribbon Warriors will take to the streets in downtown Indianapolis to support the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure to raise money for breast cancer research.

All students are welcome to join Ribbon Warriors. The group has a Facebook page, Ribbon Warriors at Indiana University Kokomo, with more information.

"We need to learn how to be advocates, to be a voice for those who don't have a voice," Plain said. "I want the young people at IU Kokomo to know what it means to be an advocate, and what it means to help others."

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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