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By Karen Janigan

Christina Fisher of Hubbards was sitting at the computer one night when she heard an ad for Titz'n Glitz on the television.

"I turned around and thought 'can you say that on television? What is this?'" recalled Fisher. "I always thought I'd do something with breast cancer. This looked fun and interesting, so I immediately volunteered."

Titz'n Glitz is the gala fundraising event for Halifax On the Front Line

Society that raises about \$100,000 annually for the essentials of life and health for women and men receiving treatment for breast cancer. The event is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 1.

In its 12th year, the women-only event encourages attendees to dress up in outrageous costumes emphasizing breasts to bring humour to the life-and-death struggle with breast cancer that strikes one out of eight Nova Scotian women each year.

The event includes a costume competition, silent auction and "press a breast" where women pay to coat a breast with paint and press it against a canvas in the privacy of the men's bathroom on the top floor of the Halifax Marriott. The two large canvasses are then raffled off.

"Women feel free to express who they are without men there," said Fisher. "It's suitable for women from 19 to grandmothers. It's like a big house party and always been thought of as a powerful event."

While living in New Brunswick, Fisher watched her mother struggle to get through the physical and financial effects of breast cancer and surgery



Janet Kimber photo
BREAST FRIENDS. These saucy sailors, called Nauti Bits, participated in last year's gala fundraiser Titz'n Glitz and made it to the calendar. The 12-year-old charity invites a cheeky celebration of breasts in all their sizes and shapes. The event raises about \$100,000 a year to support people struggling with breast cancer.

while trying to work as an aide in a correctional institute. She had had a mastectomy and was suffering with a swollen arm; she couldn't afford the \$300 for a special sleeve that would compress her arm and control the swelling.

Fisher said her mother could barely afford groceries and rent, because the ongoing pain and chemotherapy meant she missed work. Fisher helped whenever she could, but admitted that she didn't realize the full extent as she was busy with daughters of her own.

"I know she always scraped by," Fisher recalled of her mother's two-year battle before she died nine years ago. "At the time, I didn't realize the severity of it. Her arm bothered her tremendously and she struggled a lot. She would have had a lot less trauma and pain if she had had the garments."

It was enough to propel her to volunteer for Titz'n Glitz in 2005. Little did she know that she would step up and take over as the event chair, almost immediately. This is her third event.

Fisher said the financial pain that goes with a breast cancer diagnosis is something that few understand unless they've lived it or watched a family member or friend go through. "There are women who won't undergo treatment because they can't afford child care," said Fisher. "Women will put their family first."

The society parcels out a minimum of \$10,000 to each of the nine district health authorities in the province, as the health care and social workers have direct contact with the breast cancer patients and know who needs help getting by.

She said help in the more rural areas usually take the form of paying for cancer drugs that are not covered by the province's health plan, but the fund will also pay for rent, groceries, gas, child care, drugs and medical garments not covered by the province's health insurance or some private insurers, and other incidentals.

The Capital District health authorities in Halifax and Sydney usually get a larger share as the demands are greater in those areas, but Fisher said, they still exhaust the money.

"I'm really proud to be part of it," said Fisher. "There is so much negativity and dreariness about breast cancer on a day-to-day basis. It's nice to go to Titz'n Glitz because it's incredible."

Fisher said 31 committees work to make the evening a success.

Fisher was in a group of Hubbards women who entered the category Rock Star Supertitty last year as Rockstar 'n Excess, this year they'll be Nippleback.

This year the event is being billed as a FanTITZy evening: "Come let your bosoms blossom in our enchanted forest." Comedian Cathy Jones will emcee and Doris Mason providing the music. The categories for costumed competition are Breast Friends, Merry 'Tit'mas, Jiggly Jugs, Hurray for Hooters, Perky Pixies, Golden Globes, Nautical Knockers, Ditzzy Titzy's.

Fisher said that the prizes for the categories are very small, but the bragging rights and the fun are what drive women to be wildly creative.

There are still tickets available for this year's gala. Check out www.titznglitz.com for details of the gala, or to reserve tickets. .