

A group of women either living with or touched by breast cancer met in the fall of 1997. From our experiences with breast cancer, a wish list of what is needed after diagnosis was created. An Iowa Breast Cancer Resource Guide seemed like the first step in attaining our wish list. We wrote and published the first "Iowa Breast Cancer Resource Guide" in 1999. It was updated in 2000. In 2003, and again in 2007, we partnered with the Black Hawk County Health Department and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, Inc. (formerly Covenant Health System) to revise and update the Guide.

After the success of the first Iowa Breast Cancer Resource Guide we became concerned about the many Bosnian immigrant women who were new to our community. After finding no breast cancer treatment information resources anywhere in the U.S.A. for Bosnians, we had the American Cancer Society booklet "For Women Facing Breast Cancer" translated into Serbo-Croatian. The translation is offered free to Iowa Bosnian women and can be downloaded free from our website.

Since our founding, IBCE has advocated for the priorities of the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC). IBCE has been represented at the NBCC Annual Advocacy Conference since 1997. IBCE founded the Iowa Breast Cancer Advocacy Network and with the help of the breast cancer advocates of Iowa, has successfully lobbied Iowa's Senators and Representatives for the NBCC priorities.

More recently IBCE has expanded advocacy efforts toward prevention and quality health care for all. IBCE works toward prevention through our support of "Yards for Kids" and reduction of pesticide use in the Cedar Valley. Our quality care for all efforts have focused on encouraging the local hospitals to offer support group services for young women with cancer and access to social work services for all treated at the Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare's Covenant Cancer Treatment Center.

If you are living with or touched by breast cancer, we urge you to join our TEAM to Take action, Educate, Advocate, and Make a difference!