

# CONCORDIA BLADE-EMPIRE

## **Brodie to speak at Relay for Life**

by Sharon Coy: Blade Staff Writer | August 8, 2014

Christina Brodie, volunteer director of Hands Across Our Community, will be the keynote speaker at Cloud County Relay for Life Saturday, at Harold M. Clark Stadium.

Brodie, a former ad executive in New York City, came to Concordia in October 2012. She was living in Florida when she answered an ad in the Catholic Volunteer Network placed by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Concordia for the Hands Across Our Community position.

Before seeing the ad, she had been feeling the need in her life to serve others and work for something other than money and possessions. She divested herself of all but her most basic possessions.

After a visit to Concordia with the Sisters of St. Joseph at Manna House, she decided this was the place where she needed to be volunteering.

She returned to Concordia in November to fill the Hands Across need for a director and has been living at Manna House carrying out her duties in spite of a few roadblocks.

Eight weeks after her move, following a mammogram and sonogram, she was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. The lump in her breast was right next to her chest wall.

While no cancer was found in her other breast, there were suspicious spots, so she opted for a double mastectomy saying she did not want to go through the same trauma twice. Her surgery was Dec. 26, 2013, followed by six months of intensive chemotherapy and 40 radiation treatments.

Brodie said, other than tiring easily, she didn't suffer too much discomfort with the treatments. She said she believes her treatments didn't make her sick because of her faith and God filled attitude.

Parallel to this time, she was busy building Hands Across the Community, which is finishing its second year of the program. Between the Sisters and working with families in need, she said she sort of put herself on auto pilot and put away the negative aspects of her journey.

Since Hands Across the Community began, it has helped 28 families build a better future and have a better life, Brodie said.

Brodie decided not to wear wigs when she was undergoing chemo, although occasionally she would wear the Reggae Jamaican wig her son sent her around town and laugh about it, knowing the importance of laughter and healing.

Brodie said her strong hope and faith and belonging to a community of positive support have helped with her healing. She also said she doesn't spend a lot of time with TMI (too much information) spending time on the Internet researching cures and medication.

"I'd rather read a good book or go outside and watch the butterflies," she said.

Her message to survivors or for that matter to anyone at Relay for Life is to live each day as best we can to share God's love, finding good in all we do.

Brodie was born in the Bronx, and worked more than 30 years in New York City. She said she wonders if she would have received so much support had her illness occurred when she was

there.

"God led me to Kansas," she said. "I feel interwoven in the town of Concordia because of the Sisters of St. Joseph and Hands Across Our Community.

Brodie will speak following the Survivor Lap at 7 p.m.

The Relay will begin at noon Saturday with the Presentation of Colors by the American Legion Post #76 and American Legion Riders. Riley Davis will sing the National Anthem and Bob Cook will give the opening prayer. Jamie Kagle will give the welcome and team introductions.

Emcee for the event will be Dan Haist. A barbecue, car show and team activities will be held during the afternoon.

Activities and their sponsoring teams include: Dunk Tank, Cancer Warriors; Barbecue and Ring Toss, Friend Who Care; Cotton Candy, Clyde; Stress Balls/Purple Toilet and Watermelon, E-Lemon-ate Cancer; Train Rides, Concordia Cancer Support Team; Pie Throwing Contest/fishing for a Cure, Cancers Kryptonite.

Entertainment will include performances by Max and Me, 1 p.m.; Dance and Gymnastics teams, 2 p.m.; Aaron Kadel, 3 p.m.; Curt Shoemaker, 4 p.m.; Wheatland Brass, 5 p.m.; Left of Center, 6 p.m.; Riley Davis, 8 p.m.; and Howard Reed, 10 p.m.

Deanna Metro will be in charge of the Luminary Ceremony at 9 p.m.; Char Love will head the Fight Back Ceremony at 9:45. Weather permitting, Haist will be in charge of fireworks at 10 p.m.

Team totals and awards will be announced at 10:45 p.m., followed by Closing Ceremonies at 11:30 p.m.

Relay for Life Committee members were Kent Applebee, Steve Davis, Dan Haist, Niki Henderson, Tari Kadel, Jamie Kadel, Alfreda Maley, Deanna Metro, Amanda Strait, Linda Stillabower and Tammy Kimminau (American Cancer Society).