

A daughter's gift

Book that honors mother's fight with breast cancer featured at luncheon

By GRAHAM S. PARKER

Bryande Murray's mother's typical comment upon receiving store-bought birthday or Mother's Day cards was that her daughter could have written or drawn it better.

It wasn't until years later, browsing the book selection at a Barnes and Noble Bookstore, when the 23-year-old decided to prove her mother right. Looking for the perfect book for a gift, the then 21-year-old set out to write a better one and give it to her mother as a gift.

It was Mother's Day 2004.

Murray drew upon her memory as an 8-year-old child watching her mother battle breast cancer.

She took to the pen, and 20 minutes later her mother's battle, and ultimate victory over cancer, became the plot of a children's story.

"When I was small, a monster came with a very dangerous threat," reads the opener to Murray's self-published work, "Mommy vs. The Monster."

The book will be featured at the 2006 Susan G. Komen Survivor Celebration Luncheon. The luncheon is the yearly precursor to the foundation's Race for the Cure held each year in Albany.

This year will be the foundation's 12th annual race.

Survivors and contributors to the cause typically gather to share their stories at the luncheon before they set out on the 5K run through the streets of Albany days later. Murray has announced that 20 percent of the proceeds from her book sales will go toward cancer support and research organizations.

"I never really sat down and decided that I was going to write a book," said Murray, a graduate of St. Rose College. "After realizing more about the disease. I realized how brave she was."

It was a typical mother's reaction, said Murray. There was some crying, and her mother would later share the tale with co-workers, some of whom have been touched by cancer in various forms themselves.

It wasn't long before the story set its hooks. As the heartstrings pulled taut, people began asking for Murray's book. At that time there wasn't one, just a first draft adorned with illustrations



Bryande Murray's book, "Mommy vs. The Monster," will be featured at the 2006 Susan G. Komen Survivor Celebration Luncheon Wednesday, Oct. 4, at Wolfert's Roost Country Club in Loudonville.

Graham Parker/Spotlight

that had been given to her mother as a gift.

Murray's book was soon sent to print. The first copies were completed in August, and the phone calls haven't stopped coming in, said Murray.

"When we found out about the work and read it, we thought this is perfect," said Carol Breen, spokeswoman for this year's Race for the Cure.

Each year, the foundation picks a person to feature at the luncheon in addition to a group of survivors. Murray will be signing copies of her book at the luncheon Wednesday, Oct. 4, at Wolfert's Roost Country Club in Loudonville.

The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure is the Northeastern

turnout of 4,125 participants. The event raised an estimated \$150,000 for local breast cancer programs. This year, the goal is to beat last year's totals, donating more than \$150,000 to local breast cancer programs, said Breen.

All profits go to the northeastern New York Komen chapter. Since 1995, the local chapter has granted nearly \$1 million to breast cancer screening, treatment and education programs within 11 northern New York counties, including Saratoga, Albany, Schenectady and Rensselaer.

In all, 75 percent of the affiliate's net profit remains in local communities to assist the underserved in their fight against breast cancer. The remaining 25