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University News

Best Medicine

Tammy Greyshock kneels in a sea of pink. Pink gift bags crowd the floor of her hotel room. Pink notecards dangle from the bags by curls of pink ribbon. Greyshock (CAS '93) stuffs each bag with pink mementos. She draws a deep breath and stands to stretch her legs. She takes a sip from a strawberry yogurt smoothie before bending down again to fill the remaining bags. Tonight, she'll be giving them away to a few people she considers heroes. Greyshock knows something about their battles.



Greyshock

Twenty years ago, when Greyshock was 15 years old, her mother Stephanie was diagnosed with breast cancer. The days since then amount to a long, sustained effort to stop the disease, including Greyshock's enduring support of the Susan G. Komen Foundation's mission to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease. She has run in the foundation's Race for the Cure every year since 1992; and she has persuaded many of her coworkers at Wachovia bank to join her, giving the bank the distinction as the race's largest corporate entry every year since 1997.

But that didn't satisfy Greyshock. For her most serious endeavor, she turned to comedy. Her best friend, Brian Heffron, owns the Comedy Zone network of comedy clubs. They combined their resources, and Laugh for the Cure®—a yearly comedy show with all proceeds benefiting the local affiliate of the Komen Foundation—was born four years ago in Greyshock's adopted hometown of Charlotte, N.C. By next year, Laugh for the Cure® (www.laughforthecure.com) will have expanded to four locations nationwide. Greyshock believes the event is successful because it is a unique fundraiser with universal appeal. "All you have to know how to do is laugh," she says, "and everyone knows how to do that."

In fact, it's Greyshock's "laughable" fundraising event that led her to the pink-laden hotel room in New York City. She was in the city this spring to be honored as one of 25 individuals from around the nation to be named a 2006 Yoplait Champion by Yoplait yogurt company, the Komen Foundation, and Self magazine.

Greyshock gave the pink gift bags to her fellow winners—her heroes—as a token of her own appreciation for their work. After all, without the help of people like them, she might not have been able to pin a pink survivor's corsage on her mother's lapel at the sold-out performance of Laugh for the Cure® in 2005. Her mother has been cancer-free for years.

—Katy Rank