

Latina Women Empowered by Knowledge

BY SUSIE BUCHANAN

Special to The Pilot

Breast cancer continues to be an active killer in our communities, but thanks to a Susan G. Komen grant partnership with the Moore Free Care Clinic, the Moore and Lee County Health Departments, Loving Life/Amando La Vida and St. Joseph of the Pines, Latina women in Moore and Lee counties are learning about the disease and how to do self-breast exams as part of prevention education.

On May 18, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the First Bank parking lot in downtown Robbins at 180 North Middleton St., an event will be held to educate women.

"Breast cancer does not have any bias; it affects all races and ethnic minorities without considering medical insurance, or lack thereof, or socioeconomic status," says a spokesman. "We can advance health equity and reduce health disparities by engaging community leaders in the process."

The task force has formally trained Breast Health Community Ambassadors who will raise awareness and educate local communities about breast health and breast cancer. The ambassadors are a key piece in the health continuum of care and will act as liaisons between the community and the medical resources in Moore and Lee coun-

ties.

"These women came forward because they are the leaders in their communities and they want others to be pro-active about their health," says Eli Arroyo, founder of Loving Life/Amando La Vida and a breast cancer survivor herself. "It is an important grass-roots effort to arm an entire community with knowledge."

The core roles of the Loving Life/Amando La Vida Ambassadors are:

- Bridging cultural mediation between communities, health and social service systems;
- Providing culturally appropriate health education and information;

■ Assuring people get services they need;

■ Providing informal counseling and social support;

■ Advocating for individual and community needs; and

■ Building individual and community capacity that is culturally and linguistically appropriate in communities and for populations that have been historically underserved and uninsured.

Resources will be available during the event from local nonprofit organizations, basic health screenings will be conducted, and women will learn to do self-breast exams.

There will be activities for the children; the event is free to the public.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS



COURTESY OF SUSIE BUCHANAN

A task force of local health organizations is using a grant from the Susan G. Komen Foundation to educate Latina women in Moore and Lee counties about breast cancer and preventive care. The Latina women above in their pink jackets have graduated as Breast Health Community Ambassadors who will raise awareness and education in their communities. **See Page C2 for the full story.**