

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23 2011

Media Contact: Gerri Gomez Howard

Cell: 303-748-3933

gerri@gomezhowardgroup.com

Jodi's Race for Awareness Provides Legacy of Hope

June 4 event in Denver's City Park will help to save others from the suffering that surrounds ovarian cancer

Legacy: something that someone has achieved that continues to exist after they stop working or die

In January 2008, Jodi Brammeier was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Had the disease been detected in stage I, the Denver-area wife and mother would have had a decent chance for survival. Unfortunately, it was not found until it had reached stage III. Jodi's prognosis was not good, but as the malady that would eventually take her life progressed, her determination to help others defeat ovarian cancer remained strong.

The apparently-healthy Jodi was only in her early 40s when she learned of her ovarian cancer. Both she and husband, John (Jody), were runners. They even participated in the Race for the Cure several of the previous years. Yet, like most people, the Brammeiers were not familiar with the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer. Additionally, detection is challenging since the symptoms of ovarian cancer are not specific to the disease and often mimic those of many other more-common conditions, including digestive and bladder problems. However, when ovarian cancer symptoms are present, they tend to be persistent and worsen with time.

"Ovarian cancer catches you off guard," says John. "We saw signs, but passed them off as other normal gynecologic conditions. Diagnosed in stage I, ovarian cancer is very survivable. Until there is a test to detect the disease, awareness of the symptoms is key to survival."

Signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer include abdominal pressure, fullness, swelling or bloating; pelvic discomfort or pain; persistent indigestion, gas or nausea; changes in bowel habits, such as constipation; changes in bladder habits, including a frequent need to urinate; loss of appetite or quickly feeling full; and low back pain.

Jodi was determined to create a race to promote awareness about ovarian cancer so that other women might find their cancer earlier and stand a better chance to win against the deadly disease. If found in an early stage, up to 90 percent of the women diagnosed will survive for more than five years; unfortunately, 75 percent of diagnosed cases present in stage III/IV, when the disease has already spread beyond the ovaries. Although ovarian cancer makes up only 28 percent of gynecologic cancers, it accounts for 54 percent of gynecologic cancer deaths.

"Jodi was the visionary," says John Brammeier. "When she was diagnosed, there was no race, there was nothing. Jodi set out the expectation that this race was going to be big, in spite of doubts expressed by many around her who wanted Jodi to think more realistically. She witnessed the success of her race from her wheelchair, cheering on the finishers in what is considered one of the most successful first year

races in Denver's history. In its inaugural year, Jodi's Race drew over 1700 runners and walkers and netted over \$140,000. ."

He credits the COCA board and friends Nana Zeligman-Sommers, herself a five-year ovarian cancer survivor, Jennifer Manta, the current race director and Creigh Kelley of BKB with helping to make the event a reality. Recalling how Jodi's condition worsened as the 2010 inaugural event drew near, John says, "Jennifer took the race and saw it through. It would not have happened without Jennifer's leadership and the many volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to make the race a success."

Jodi was at the finish line on June 5, 2010 to high-five the runners and walkers, including numerous ovarian cancer survivors, and to thank them for their participation. Following the 2010 race, Jodi received a framed rasheshirt with race bib #1. At this year's Jodi's Race for Awareness, bib #1 will be permanently retired; race bib #3 will be worn by Jodi and John's 8-year-old daughter, Meghan.

Jodi's personal battle with ovarian cancer ended August 3, 2010.

As the Saturday, June 4, 2011 Jodi's Race for Awareness draws near, hundreds of runners and walkers already have registered, teams have been formed and fundraising is well under way. Among the participants this year, some will be the families, friends and coworkers of ovarian cancer survivors; others will be taking part in remembrance of a loved one. All will be there because of Jodi's determination, and more than a half dozen teams will be there in her memory explicitly, including Meghan's cousins and members of her Brownie Troop, John's coworkers and clients, and Jodi's family and many friends.

"So much of this is for Jodi," says John. "She has left a mark in our community."

Jodi's Race for Awareness is scheduled for Saturday, June 4, 2011 in Denver's City Park, Colorado Boulevard and 23rd Street, and includes a 1-Mile Family Walk as well as the 5K Run/Walk. For more details, to register to participate, or to donate to the Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance, please visit <http://www.runningguru.com/EventInformation.asp?SourceCode=324&eID=676>

John Brammeier was named to the Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance board of directors in July 2010 and remains committed to COCA's mission of promoting awareness about ovarian cancer through advocacy, education and support. "COCA has so many great programs, such as Nicki's Circle and Survivors Teaching Students," he says. "I want to help COCA continue to push the race and use the funds effectively. We're taking the organization to the next level in terms of program development and are able to hire people to make this a full-time mission. We're also looking at grants and at expanding advocacy. It's a more vibrant organization because of the funds now available from the race."

To learn more about the Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance (COCA) and its programs visit <http://www.colo-ovariancancer.org>.