

## Ackerman named a Hero of Hope

Written by Greg Viergutz

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Pam Ackerman of Lexington and other cancer survivors and caregivers were recognized at the American Cancer Society Relay For Life Leadership Summit in Dallas, TX, on Oct. 9.

The American Cancer Society High Plains Division's annual Heroes of Hope Awards recognized 28 cancer survivors and caregivers who have had exemplary involvement with Relay For Life, made significant contributions to cancer control, and made an impact in the lives of others.

The American Cancer Society selected Ackerman and others from across six states representing 14 regions. Ackerman, along with Geri From of Lincoln, will represent the American Cancer Society's Nebraska Region.

The honorees selected symbolize the courageous struggle against cancer as they and family members deal with the physical and emotional aspects of their experience. They represent courageous voices of hope and will be available to spread their message of hope at Relay For Life events and other community platforms throughout the state, cancer society officials said.

Ackerman was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2002 and went through a partial mastectomy with a sentinel node biopsy and six weeks of radiation therapy. She has been one of the strongest advocates for Relay For Life in the entire state of Nebraska and carries the message that was brought to her when she was diagnosed.

She still carries business cards with the ACS 800 number and website and gives them to those who are recently diagnosed with cancer. She speaks to them about how Relay For Life empowers people like them to fight back against cancer and have a whole world of people fighting for them through the American Cancer Society.

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“We have a whole world of people fighting for us through the American Cancer Society and the Relay For Life,” Ackerman said. “I’m proud to be a Hero of Hope and look forward to telling my personal message of survival.”

“The Heroes of Hope Award provides a highly visible symbol of one’s courageous fight against cancer as well as encourages support and participation in the programs of the society,” said Hero of Hope workgroup chair Thelma Suson of Coppell, TX.

Each hero had his or her individual photo and profile displayed and received an award at a special ceremony during the leadership summit.

“Meeting them and hearing their stories make a statement that progress is being made in cancer research and that there is hope for the future for people who are diagnosed,” says Suson. “We are proud of these 28 individuals who exemplify true heroes in their communities. They are indeed profiles of courage.”