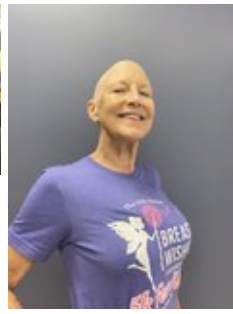


Cancer diagnosis not slowing down entrepreneur fueled by need to give back



Image: Tim Carrico, Premier Health



Jan Hillman



By **Hannah Poturalski** – Managing Editor, Dayton Business Journal
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Jan Hillman lives life in full color.

She flits about from an impressive flower garden in bloom, to picking goodness from her vegetable garden, all with rock tunes wafting in the air.

And even larger than her gardens is Hillman’s heart for philanthropy and giving back.

She founded Hillman Associates in 1983 and provided fundraising and advancement services for over 35 years. She’s had a hand in helping to raise over \$1 billion since her fundraising career first began in 1978 at University of Toledo. Her passion areas include health care, the medically underserved, higher education and K-12 education.

Hillman, 70, is also on her own health care journey. She’s facing stage four metastatic breast cancer in her stomach. Her cancer journey first began in 1986 and again in 1997 when she beat breast cancer diagnoses.

“I’m not done and my medical team knows it,” Hillman said.

Hillman is the new board chair of the Breast Wishes Foundation, a local nonprofit that grants wishes to patients going through breast cancer.

“My wish is to grant wishes,” Hillman said. “I want to help grant 99 wishes.”

The organization has a goal to grant 500 wishes by December 2025. The nonprofit has granted over 250 wishes as of now. The average cost of a wish is \$1,500.

“I want to do as much as possible,” Hillman said.



Jan Hillman with fiancé Barry Coleman at the 5K for Kelly Walk this year.

JAN HILLMAN

In November, Hillman will be awarded the Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser award by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Dayton Chapter.

“It really drives me and I look at it as part of my healing to raise money to make wishes,” Hillman said.

The Breast Wishes board is at seven members now, which Hillman said she will be growing.

Hillman said she’s “laser focused” on fundraising for Breast Wishes. The organization had its most successful 5K for Kelly fundraiser this year, which is the nonprofit’s largest source of funding.

“Jan wants to make sure that anyone going through this journey, gets an opportunity to have some joy and some time away from thinking about breast cancer,” said Bonnie Baker-Tattershall, a Breast Wishes board member and director of diversity, equity and inclusion for Kettering Health.

Elesha Snyder, co-founder of Breast Wishes, said she first met Hillman during Jan’s capacity as president of Good Samaritan Foundation. The Breast Health Center at Good Samaritan Hospital was the recipient of funds from the 5K for Kelly fundraiser that year.

“This was before Breast Wishes was even created,” Snyder said, which Hillman assisted in developing the board for. “Having Jan on the board is icing on the cake.”

Since joining the board in January, Snyder said Hillman already has been instrumental in growing the organization into the future.

“She knows how to organize a strategic plan, marketing plan and get us to where we see Breast Wishes,” Snyder said.

Breast Wishes now has a physical office in Vandalia where donors and wish recipients can come. It features an event space downstairs for hosting free monthly workshops for wish recipients.

“We need more donors, more gifts, more wish recipients, and to go into underserved areas,” Snyder said.

And if that's not keeping Hillman busy enough, her social calendar is filled with everything from an upcoming vision quest in Sedona, Arizona; a sound bath in California; being in a fashion show in November; a concert in Phoenix, Arizona; speaking engagements and fundraising events.

"I need a social secretary," she said.

Hillman calls herself an "equal opportunity healer," and says she'll try anything. She gets her energy from doing activities like Chinese meditation, yoga, reiki, gardening, prayer and seeing a chiropractor.

"I have a desire to be outside and commune in nature," Hillman said.

She's also a new proponent of afternoon naps.

And of course, spending time with family and friends. She has four grandchildren, ages 10, 6, 5 and 3. She's been putting messages in envelopes for her family members.

Jan's words of wisdom for life:

"Think of things bigger than yourself."

"Love each other."

"Live for something bigger than yourself."

"Show the people you love that you love them."

"I don't see the glass as half full or half empty, I see it as overflowing."

"Worry causes wrinkles and creates stress. Horses and dogs can sense it and I think cancer can too."

Jan's specific advice for entrepreneurs:

"Don't grow too fast; you can't be all things to all people."

"I learn by making mistakes."

"Hire people smarter than you and have a strategic plan."

“Not every client or customer is for you.”

“Under promise and over deliver.”

T H E L I S T

Dayton-Area Woman-Owned Companies

2022 revenue

Rank	Prior Rank	Company
1	1	Kingsgate Logistics, Inc.
2	2	Bob Ross Auto Group
3	3	Sawdey Solution Services Inc.

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