

Hi. My name is Michele Paladino and here with me is my husband, Tom and sons Brian and Michael. We are here today because a member of our family, whom we love so much can not be here as she so hoped to be.

Sadly, to our dismay and shock, our beautiful daughter, Breanna, died just after the new year began this year. We never dreamed we'd live this nightmare or that melanoma would strike someone so young. But it can happen at any age and it has left our family with a heartbreak that will never be repaired. Bre was just 26 years old with so much to live for and to offer to others when she was diagnosed after she by chance uncovered a growth on her scalp!

Breanna was a fighter, and as such, she was determined to beat the disease and be a melanoma survivor. She was also set on changing her career path so that she could be a patient advocate for others inflicted with this terrible cancer. In fact, she had made the decision early in her diagnosis to use her own experience, and her skills in advertising and public relations towards spreading melanoma awareness because she so wanted to ensure no others would suffer the pain and fear that she herself experienced...that's the kind of person she was....always worried about others!

Unfortunately, her battle with the disease often left her too sick or disabled after multiple surgeries to accomplish that once the cancer spread to other organs and her brain, so her mission was not carried out as she hoped because she died just 18 months after her diagnosis!

So while we are here to honor our daughter Bre's memory by helping to carry on her mission to spread awareness about the dangers and horrors of melanoma and to help raise funds to fight it.....*We know that this event wouldn't have been possible without the love and hard work of Jack's wonderful wife, Sharon, (who I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with after our niece's finance, Jamie, out in California told us about Jack's Fund shortly after Bre was diagnosed.* Fortunately for us, Jamie was previously a Glen Ellyn resident, and his mom, Sandy, was on the board for Jack's Fund, so both she and Sharon so kindly reached out to offer us support. So we are thankful to them for their organization but also to Jack's family, their friends, the board of directors, and of course Jack's doctor ..Doctor Jon Richards and the other doctors from Lutheran General who are so very

devoted to melanoma research and to their patients and who so generously donate their time to this cause..

Ironically, my Breanna was also blessed to have Doctor Richards as her doctor. So I want to personally thank him publicly because we believe he so deserves a shout out. Breanna was so very fond of him and we are so grateful because he treated her with the utmost care and tenderness...like she was a member of his own family... never rushing her off and always making himself available whenever she had complications or even if she was just needing to talk through her concerns....which happened quite frequently after the cancer spread to her brain. So we thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his incredible knowledge and care. and we also thank the others for giving us all an event where we can come together not only in our solace but also to rally together to provide hope for the future and to make sure that Jack, Breanna and none of your love ones deaths are in vain. And we thank all of our friends and family for being here for us and all the other people who came her to support those of you who have also lost loved ones.... Together we can make a difference

We must work hard to continue this plight to raise awareness and funds for a cure because ...I know now that Even with the best of doctors....like Dr. Richards... Melanoma works double time to find ways to outsmart us. Sadly, there is no cure for melanoma and from what I've learned... it is nearly impossible to stop once it spreads, So we must use all our available resources to make raising awareness our first line of defense..... so we can stop melanoma in its tracks and others won't bear the pain that we have all had to bear of losing someone we love so much.

Again, we appreciate the honor to kick-off such a special event in our only daughter's name! We are inspired by all of your efforts And We wish you all the very best going forward. Thank you so much for allowing us to share a little about our Bre's story! We know you all have your own stories, so our hearts go out to you as well. God bless you and let's have a great race and raise lots of money going forward!