

# SHARE

## PINK POODLES PROMOTE A GREAT CAUSE

→ In October 2012, instead of putting the usual fall colors in my Poodles' ears, I decided to add some flare to my grooming talents, turning my Poodles "pink" for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I asked my mother if she'd like me to "pink out" her Poodles' ears as well. My mother was more than happy to take me up on my offer. Our Poodles looked fantastic.

That's when I thought it would be a nice surprise to "pink out" the Poodles in honor of my sister Heidi, a breast cancer survivor, and then surprise her with the unveiling; hence, the idea of The Breast Cancer Awareness Poodles was born.

So my Mom and I picked a day and told my sister to come by my home, we had a surprise for her. We sat my sister in a chair on my deck, and Mom and I gathered up Heidi's three Poodles, along with Mom's four and my two, and we took them all to my grooming room. It was there I finished "pinking out" all nine Poodles with feathers and personalized bandannas that acknowledged my sister's battle with breast cancer.

The impact our Poodles made on my sister was incredible, and it was then I realized our Poodles' potential to make a difference in the lives of others who had



COURTESY JIM ROLLINS

From left, Joan G. Brenneke and daughters Laurie J. Rollins and Heidi Brenneke-Nunes. The dogs are, from left: Malachi O'Mailley, Sceolan O'Day, Oisín Mulcahy, Sean Patrick Rafferty, Ghillie MacCreedy, Gertrude Tynan, Gretel Donegal, Rosie O'Gradie, Rob Roy, and Teddy Bear.

faced the same life-threatening challenges as my sister.

Throughout the weekends of that October all nine Poodles, accompanied by me, my husband, my Mom, and my sister, visited heavily populated areas such as Provincetown, Mass., Boston, and Newport, R.I. We walked our Poodles among the tourists where they socialized, posed for pictures, and tugged at the heartstrings of so many people whose lives had been touched by breast cancer. In exchange, people donated to "the cause."

We had decided that any money our Poodles raised would be donated in the name of The BCAPs to the Women and Infants Breast Health Center in Providence, R.I., which is where Heidi had been treated after her diagnosis.

Our Poodles worked hard and made us

proud. By the end of October, they had raised \$1,141.35.

Since that first fundraiser, The BCAPs have participated in a number of additional fundraisers, including the Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Resource Foundation's Flames of Hope Celebration in Providence.

The power of pink is not limited to the month of October, so The BCAPs will continue to don their pink feathers and bandannas to offer inspiration, and raise awareness and funds whenever the need arises. Their message is meaningful: They remind us to remember those who lost their battle despite their brave fight; to encourage those who fight the battle today; and to honor those who've won the battle, for those are the ones that inspire and remind us all that there is always hope.

— Laurie J. Rollins, ACUSHNET, MASS.

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