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Montcalm Breast Health Project receives Michigan Cancer Consortium Spirit of Collaboration award

STANTON~ The Michigan Cancer Consortium recently presented its *Spirit of Collaboration Award* to Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD), Montcalm Community College Nursing Program, Spectrum Health and United Lifestyles and for their efforts to reduce breast and cervical cancer in Montcalm County.

The group formed the Montcalm Breast Health Project (for which the award was received) in 2006 in response to an increase in the number of uninsured and low-income women in the community.

“We sought and obtained funding by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation (Grand Rapids Affiliate),” said Connie Smith, MMDHD Health Promotion/Chronic Disease Supervisor. “This enabled us to host ten clinics and offer education and free breast screenings for uninsured or underinsured women, ages 40 to 64.”

Spectrum Health generously donated 40 mammograms to the project as well as the radiological interpretation while United Lifestyles organized a support group and provided referrals and information to the 45 patients served.

The group then received continuation funding in 2007, which enabled the project to expand from ten to twelve clinics. Spectrum Health increased their mammogram donation to 50 and, with the additional funding, the project was able to purchase another 50 mammograms.

“We really want to encourage women who qualify to take advantage of our remaining clinics,” said Smith. “We are very excited about the award but what’s even more exciting is that we are contributing to the control of cancer.”

Beth Mowatt, MCC Nursing/Allied Health Coordinator is equally excited about the success of the project. “This has been such a great learning experience for our students,” she said. “It gave our students an opportunity to interact with patients in a non-educational, real world setting.”

In addition to providing their services, MCC nursing students also disseminated flyers and held informational sessions on campus and at area churches to raise breast and cervical cancer awareness.

Jodie Faber, Director of United Lifestyles spoke of the involvement of both Spectrum Health and United Lifestyles. “Offering services to a population that wouldn’t ordinarily receive those services is critical to the health of the county,” she said.

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Smith accepted the award on behalf of the group at the Annual Michigan Cancer Consortium meeting in Lansing.

For more information on the Montcalm County Breast Health Project please contact the Mid-Michigan District Health Department at 989-831-5237 or visit www.mmdhd.org.

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Pictured from left to right: Connie Smith, Mid-Michigan District Health Department Health Promotion/Chronic Disease Supervisor; Jodi Faber, United Lifestyles Executive Director; Beth Mowatt, Montcalm Community College Nursing/Allied Health Coordinator; Cheryl Thelen, Mid-Michigan District Health Department Health Educator

