



# THINK PINK

TVCC faculty  
& students take  
to the fields to  
battle cancer

By Jennifer Hannigan

*When* former Lady Cardinals head basketball coach Michael Landers asked Jane Black about raising money for breast cancer research, saying “no” was not an option.

“I knew I wanted to help other people who have gone through this,” said Black.

At that time four years ago, Black was in her 10th year of remission from breast cancer.

“It’s just something a lot of women don’t discuss,” said Black, who recently retired from her position as executive assistant to the college president. “We may not talk about it, but once you’re stricken with it, you never forget about it.”

With the help of Black, other members of the college staff, and campus student groups, Landers led Trinity Valley Community College in the effort to build the school’s first “Think Pink” basketball game.

“He came back from a convention that year and said the Lady Cardinals

should help in the fight against breast cancer,” said TVCC Athletic Department Coordinator Lucy Strom. “We all thought it was a great idea.”

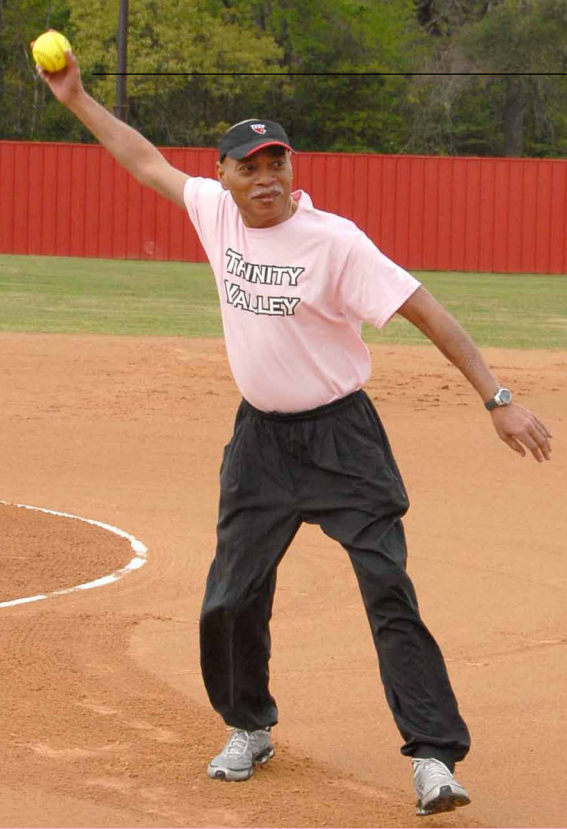
Think Pink, now known as Play 4Kay, is a nationwide Womens Basketball Coaches Association initiative named for the late Kay Yow, the former North Carolina State University head women’s basketball coach who died of breast cancer in 2009. Play 4Kay events have raised nearly \$3.3 million in the past four years.

TVCC’s first game to support the cause was a success. The college acknowledged cancer survivors from the community who were in the stands. The Lady Cardinals dressed out in pink shirts. The Cardettes – TVCC’s dance team – and the Cardinal Cheerleaders also changed their regular uniforms in honor of the day.

What began as a single fundraiser in February 2008 has become a Cardinal tradition. TVCC holds annual Lady Cardinal basketball games to support



*Lady Cardinal Ajanay Domena of Lancaster warms up during last fall’s Dig Pink fundraising event.*



*The late TVCC Vice President Dr. W.P. "Rip" Drumgoole throws out the first pitch during the 2011 Strikeout Cancer event.*

"We started raising money weeks before the game in different ways, such as walking around selling shirts and collecting gift certificates from businesses in the community," said sophomore volleyball player Sarah Calame of Mexia.

"Then, the day of the (Dig Pink) game, they asked all the survivors to stand. My grandfather was one of those survivors. It really went to my heart and touched me to see him standing there."

Calame and her team also aided the softball players during the Strikeout Cancer event, manning a booth in the hot spring sun.


And this year at that game, there was a missing face to remind those gathered that the fight is personal. At the Strikeout Cancer game in 2010 and 2011, Dr. W.P. "Rip" Drumgoole, the college's vice president of student services, threw out the first pitch. Drumgoole died of cancer in October 2011. So last spring his daughter, Carmen, stood in his place to throw that pitch while his son, Rahsaan, caught.

This year, the three pink games raised more than \$6,000.

"The community supports us so much in all kinds of ways," said Strom. "It is really nice to be able to give back."

For Black, the pink games are about providing hope.

"I feel blessed to have every day," she said. "I see all the new breast cancer survivors who have come through the Play 4Kay, and I know what they're going through."

"When you tell them it's been 12 or 13 years since you have gone through that, they get this brightness in their eyes. It gives them hope." 

the Kay Yow Cancer Fund, and the effort to support cancer research has expanded to a series of annual events.

The Lady Cardinal softball players began hosting the Strikeout Cancer softball games in 2010. Then the Dig Pink volleyball game was added.

Coaches and players for the three sports have each taken on a different segment of the fight against cancer. The volleyball team supports the American Cancer Society directly, while funds raised by softball's Strikeout Cancer go to the Henderson County Indigent Health Program.

According to Strom, the Cardinal football and basketball teams are also in the early stages of planning events this year. Those will likely be targeted to raise funds for prostate cancer and heart disease.

The pink games include raffles, silent auctions, special T-shirt sales, recognition of cancer survivors, bake sales and other special events. The games are largely organized with the help of Strom, Black and Judith McGilvray, another TVCC employee with a long history of supporting causes such as cancer research.

At each game, the students play big roles. The Cardinal Cheerleaders and other students man tables and help organize events. Cardettes sell snacks in the stands. Athletes sign balls and jerseys for silent auctions and visit with survivors. Players deck out in pink for the events as do many other students to show support.

