

Horse event helps fight cancer

Carroll residents hope to raise \$100,000 at eighth annual fundraiser

By ALISHA GEORGE
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The weeks leading up to the 2011 Potomac Valley Dressage Association Ride for Life can be stressful. Many of the nearly 200 volunteers worry that everything won't come together for the event, but Jeannette Bair said all the anxiety ends up being worth it.

"As soon as we get there Friday, it's a hell of a party," she said.

The eighth annual ride to benefit the Johns Hopkins Avon Foundation Breast Center will take place June 25-26 at the Prince George's Equestrian Center.

The two-day event is free to the public and will feature an all-day horse show each day, children's activities, musical entertainment, demo rides at noon each day and food from the equestrian center.

The horse show will feature riders of all ages and all skill levels, including juniors, adult amateurs and professionals.

The demo rides Saturday will feature a dancing horse show teaser performance and quarter horses will be shown Sunday.

"It's very much a family-oriented event," said Bair, of Woodbine.

A silent auction featuring more than 300 items will be Saturday and it runs until 9 p.m.

"We get a lot of really unique things," she said.

From 6-8:30 p.m. Saturday evening,

IF YOU GO

What: 2011 PVDA Ride for Life

When: 8 a.m.-11:30 p.m. June and 8 a.m.-5 p.m. June 26

Where: Prince George's Equestrian Center, 14900 Pennsylvania Ave., Upper Marlboro

Contact: Jeannette Bair at jeannettebair@hotmail.com

Website: www.pvdarideforlife.org

there will be a dancing horse challenge available to watch for a \$20 donation, which will feature top riders and exceptional horses, Bair said.

The dancing horse challenge is a blend of dance, music, lights and equestrian art woven into a theatrical performance. During the challenge, the audience can vote for their favorite performance by making donations, said Michele Wellman, of Union Bridge. After the challenge, audience members can dance down in the show area to music by the Unruly Blues and meet some of the participants, she said.

The event has grown in size each year and has donated a total of about \$320,000 to the Breast Center, Bair said, but they are hoping to bring in more than \$100,000 this year. Last year, more than \$70,000 was donated.

Lillie Shockney, director of the

Breast Center, will give a talk to the audience after the dancing horse show and at a black-tie gala Saturday night to talk about the center's initiatives and the possible sponsorship of a new fellow.

The center often sponsors fellows, or doctors who are taught different techniques and procedures and so they can work in low income and underserved communities, Bair said.

The black-tie gala dinner begins at 5 p.m. Saturday. Bair, chairwoman of the event, can be contacted concerning ticket availability.

Wellman, chairwoman of the dancing horse show, said Shockney's speech will be moving.

"It makes you want to do more and help more," Wellman said.

Karen Jacob, of Sykesville, said a lot of behind the scenes work goes in to hosting the event, but it's worth it.

"If this makes it easier for one person, then it's worth it to me," she said.

Most people know someone who has had breast cancer, so this is a special event, Jacob said.

Shari Glickman, of Mount Airy, chairwoman of the silent auction, said the event is especially exciting for children.

"It's a very moving experience," she said. "It's something special to be part of."

Reach staff writer Alisha George at 410-857-7876 or alisha.george@carrollcountytimes.com.