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Angela Banning shows the goal she and other walkers want to reach in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Over three days, each walker goes 20 miles per day raising at least \$2,300 per person for breast cancer research.

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Leader & Times

It is often said that cancer does not care what age a person is and that it can strike at any time in one's life.

At age 41, Lisha Banning was stricken with breast cancer. At the time, her daughter, Angela, was 17 and still a student at Tyrone High School.

Angela said her mother went through chemo and radiation treatments and would eventually go through a mastectomy. After about a year and a half, doctors believed the cancer had left Lisha's system.

Angela said despite all the treatments, her mother still managed to attend all of Angela's softball and basketball games.



Angela said, however, when she was attending college at Oklahoma State, Lisha's cancer had come back, this time striking her liver.

"It was inoperable and incurable," she said. "They still did chemo. It kept shrinking and shrinking until she went into remission. They gave her six months to five years."

In December 2011, Lisha caught a case of pneumonia, and because of the chemo treatments she had received, she could not fight the illness. At the age of 50, she died at Wichita's Wesley Medical Center.

Angela said her mother was heavily involved with the Tyrone community, as well as the outlying towns in the area.

"She was the mayor," she said. "She did booster club. She was always really involved doing the

pink stuff for the hospital in Liberal. She gave speeches and walked in all the Relay For Lives."

Last year, in honor of her mother, Angela began participating in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. In 2012, she walked in Dallas, and on Sept. 22, she went to Seattle.

"It was three days and 60 miles," she said. "You walk 20 miles a day. You have to raise \$2,300 for every walk that you do. I signed up for Seattle and Dallas."

Each night, Angela said the walkers stay in pink tents before hitting the trails the next morning.

"It's called Tent City," she said. "Every three miles, there's a cheering station or water refills and the port-a-potties. We shower in an 18-wheeler at night. There's medical care for your blisters. There's a dance on Saturday night after you walk 40 miles."

Angela will be walking again in two weeks in Dallas, this time with a woman from Copeland, and in addition to Dallas, next year, she wants to walk in San Diego.

Angela said she found many means to raise the money for the Komen walk.

"We did a hamburger feed," she said. "Last night, we made 15 dozen burritos. With people giving just giving extra, that made us all of \$300. I am now \$125 from my Dallas goal. Last year, I barely made goal. I did T-shirts, and businesses sponsored me to be on the back for \$100, \$75 or \$50 or \$25. My teammates, we do raffles for football, and we sell pasta. Fashion Tree Boutique, when they do their pink sale in August, 40 percent goes to Susan G. Komen. That goes to my walk."

Angela said three generations of women in her family have now had breast cancer.

“My grandma had breast cancer too, and her mother had it also,” she said. “It’s in my family, but I’ve tested negative for the gene. That makes me a normal chance of having it I guess.”

Angela said locals have been very supportive of her mission.

“They really like to help for something like that,” she said. “They all knew my mom. Everyone could come to her if they needed something. She always wanted to help. If they wanted to talk about cancer, she would sit down and talk with them. Most of them know me and her.”

To walk 20 miles a day would seem to be a task only for the physically fit by itself, but Angela said training likewise requires preparation for the terrain and weather of the walking trail.

“Seattle, they tell you to train for hills, and I’m in the Oklahoma Panhandle,” she said. “They said to do the stairs. I did stairs and lunges and all kinds of cross training stuff. I walked between five and 18 miles, usually three to five miles a couple times a week and then a longer week. It was a lot of training and a lot of hills. We got rained on. It was 90 degrees in Dallas last year. We got rain in Seattle. We were just soaking the whole time, but it was still a lot of fun.”

In Seattle, Angela also walked over a floating bridge and some forest, while Dallas featured primarily neighborhoods and sidewalks.

“It’s a lot flatter and easier,” she said. “If you want to go easy, you go to Dallas. If you want to go hard, you go to Seattle. There’s seven different cities, and I want to go to them all eventually.”

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