

Gifts Do Double Duty

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Only those closest to Meredith Peterson knew that when she co-chaired a major breast cancer fundraiser in October, 2005, she herself was at the end-stage of the disease. The black-tie gala raised \$300,000 for the Breast Health Center at the University Medical Center at Princeton. In October 2006, Peterson, 36, died after a four-year battle with the disease, leaving behind her husband and two children under age seven.

“She carried on with such elegance, knowing that her time was limited,” says close friend Jennifer Shue. “We all stood by her and did everything we could, but to watch her take this lead was an inspiration we would never forget.”

After Peterson died, the holiday season seemed joyless to Shue, who “dreaded the whole idea of shopping and giving back in a way that felt shallow.” She recruited a group of Peterson’s friends to create Shop with Inspiration, a one-day fundraiser in which 80 local vendors contribute 20 percent or more of their sales. Last year, the group raised \$20,000 for the Young Survival Coalition, an international nonprofit organization that supports women with breast cancer.

This year, on December 8, Shop with Inspiration will raise money to build a memorial garden at the Princeton headquarters of the D&R Greenway Land Trust, a land preservation group for which Peterson raised funds. The garden will showcase Peterson’s favorites: peonies and lilacs, as well as lavender, which is said to soothe stressed chemotherapy patients.

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