

Spotlight: Local Entrepreneur

Local Breast Cancer Survivor invents the Shower Shirt™ and Appears on Lifetime Television

Lisa Crites, Brevard County resident and breast cancer survivor, will appear on "The Balancing Act," a Lifetime Television Network morning show that focuses on inspiring and empowering women to achieve success.

Scheduled to air on Wednesday, October 20, the show will spotlight Crites and her experience as a breast cancer survivor, which led to her creation of her new mastectomy product, The Shower Shirt™.

After being diagnosed with breast cancer in May 2009, Crites underwent a bi-lateral mastectomy. She quickly realized there was a lack of products designed for mastectomy patients, specifically water resistant products to assist in bathing to protect and support patients before and after surgical drains were removed. She began researching water resistant garments used post-mastectomy for showering and bathing. To her surprise, no garment existed, so her first prototype of The Shower Shirt™ was created from a beauty salon cape.

"I utilized the initial prototype as a waterproof shower barrier until my drains were removed and then when able, I focused on creating a product that could be used by breast cancer patients for years to come," said Crites.

"This project is my contribution to the more than 100,000 women in the U.S. alone who undergo mastectomies each year."

Rolling the mastectomy product out in October for Breast Cancer Awareness month, Crites has worked for more than a year to bring the medical device to fruition.

"I've spent more than a year on patent applications, regulatory docu-



ments, design patterns, prototypes being shipped back and forth to the overseas manufacturer, along with the 'red tape' which comes with creating a medical device," said Crites.

"The breast cancer patient is unfortunately dealing with the emotional aspect of breast cancer and the physical trauma of having their breasts amputated. If I could create a garment to assist patients in taking a shower, to ultimately make them feel better both physically and emotionally, then it was my responsibility as a breast cancer survivor to do so."

The Shower Shirt™ is a post-surgical, anti-microbial, water-resistant garment which gives protection to the mastectomy patient by keeping water away from the surgical incisions, surgical drains and tubes while taking a shower or bath.

"Bathing or showering without this type of protection could increase the chance of post surgical infections as surgical drain tubes can be a direct portal into the surgery site," added Crites. "The Shower Shirt™ helps prevent water from coming into contact with the surgical sites, thus reducing the opportunity for infection."

The product is a Class 1 Medical Device registered with the FDA. The company is working with both Medicare and various insurance companies for reimbursement for all breast cancer and mastectomy patients.

In addition, Crites is working with Ohio-based international medical distributor Invacare to bring the product to market around the world.

In Brevard, The Shower Shirt™ will be available at Wuesthoff Home Medical Equipment, 185 Barton Blvd., Rockledge and 401 N. Wickham Road, Suite K, Melbourne, and at the Crane Creek Health First Medical Equipment location 2222 South Harbor City Blvd., Suite 630, also in Melbourne. 🍓

For information on the Shower Shirt™, visit www.showershirt.com or call (321) 298-2988.