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Paying it forward By Wendy Killeen

After she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008, **Holly Walton** of Wilmington received care and support from family, friends, coworkers, and the staff at Winchester Hospital.

She knows not everyone is as fortunate.

So Walton founded Heaps of Hope Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to easing the burden of women affected by cancer.

In the nine months following her diagnosis, Walton, an accountant at Matrix Financial in Wellesley, had two surgeries, 16 weeks of chemotherapy, and seven weeks of radiation. She also attended a support group at Winchester Hospital.

Walton says the compassionate and expert care she received from staff at Winchester Hospital, especially **Melinda Taranto-Garnis**, a social worker at the Breast Care Center, “was instrumental in my recovery.”

Her goal is for Heaps of Hope to provide inspiration, as well as financial support, to patients and their families during every stage of their journey with cancer.

Medical professionals can refer clients to the organization for receipt of gift certificates for food and vouchers for transportation to appointments and other medical expenses.

“Heaps of Hope is a wonderful resource because there is so much need out there,” said Taranto-Garnis, adding that the organization recently helped a patient with lapsed health insurance pay for medication.

“Holly deserves a lot of credit for turning her experience with cancer into an opportunity to help others,” she said.

For more information, or to make a donation, call Walton at 781-943-4100, ext. 312, or e-mail Holly@HeapsOfHope.org.



Holly Walton (left) of Wilmington, founder of Heaps of Hope Inc., presents gift cards to Melinda Taranto-Garnis, a social worker at the Breast Cancer Center at Wilmington Hospital, for distribution to cancer patients.