

One volunteer holds nothing back in her inspiring full-time commitment to Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.



Victoria Carlson (left) and Stacy Matseas

# Be the CHANGE

BY SUSAN NEWELL | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER BERG

Sometimes your view of the world is determined by the role you play in shaping it. “People sometimes lose hope in other people, and they’ll say to me, ‘What kind of a world do we live in?’ Well, I’m here to tell you, ‘A pretty darned good one!’” says Stacy Matseas, the nation’s top fundraiser for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer®, the American Cancer Society’s premier event to raise awareness and funds to fight breast cancer.

Stacy says her positive outlook comes from the joy of working with others to “be the change you want to see in this world.” And she’s speaking from personal experience. Four years ago, after making some prudent investments, Stacy gave up her 15-year career at Qualcomm in San Diego, California, to pursue “making a difference” full time.

“I figured that if I could stop working and sustain myself in a good quality of life, then I should try to do that,” says Stacy. “So many of us get caught up in the things we think we need. I believe one of my missions is to help people think about what is really important.”

Corporate America’s loss is philanthropic America’s gain. Stacy’s passion lies with finding a cure for breast cancer and working to support those battling the disease. Since 2000, she’s raised more than \$600,000 through her Making Strides team, Stacy’s Circle of Friends. Last year alone, Stacy recruited 262 donors to help her raise \$102,897.

“It’s not my job to fundraise,” says Stacy. “It’s my adventure. This is the richest opportunity I’ve had in my life.”

Stacy started this journey when her childhood friend, Victoria Carlson, was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 33. News of the diagnosis, coupled with living on the other side of the country, made Stacy feel helpless. But a mutual friend suggested that Stacy walk in

her local Making Strides event. So she “grabbed two friends” and raised \$5,000, all before Victoria had her surgery.

Simultaneously, another friend was critically injured in a car accident and Stacy began to re-think her life goals.

She participated in the 2001 and 2002 Making Strides events, raising an amazing \$19,000 and \$23,000, respectively. As she came across friends and new acquaintances, she added their names to her list of prospective donors. Then, in 2003, she took a leap of faith and started this newest chapter of her life.

Stacy has found the best of both worlds—making a difference while utilizing her business savvy and charismatic personality to inspire others to do the same. She is a member of the exclusive Making Strides Pacesetters Club and meets year-round to strategize ideas for inspiring Making Strides participants and increasing the Society’s fundraising yield.

The strong relationships that Stacy has built with her Society staff partners keep her motivated, active and able to inspire others to do more, to raise more, to give more. Last year, she helped host a 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Victoria, suggesting guests donate to Victoria’s own Making Strides team in lieu of gifts.

“Just when my motivation starts to wane, she gets me pumped up again,” says Victoria, who credits Stacy for spurring her to use garage sale proceeds as fundraising for her team. “If Stacy has any say in it, breast cancer will be a horror of the past.”

Stacy says she views her volunteering—which also includes the Society’s California Division Board of Directors, Road to Recovery®, Daffodil Days and Relay For Life, as well as other service organizations—as a privilege. “I want to make sure that people at least get invited to participate—so that they won’t

one day look back and realize they’ve missed out on the opportunity to experience the same joy I have.”

## Stride Right

Since 1993, nearly four million people have walked in Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, raising more than \$250 million to fund the American Cancer Society’s breast cancer education and awareness initiatives, research grants and patient services.

### Walking Together

Making Strides is a non-competitive walk of three to five miles. Participants enjoy exercise, camaraderie, entertainment and, most importantly, the opportunity to celebrate and remember people affected by breast cancer.

To find out more about Making Strides events near you or to make a donation, call 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit [www.cancer.org/stridesonline](http://www.cancer.org/stridesonline).

### Are you a Pacesetter?

Take Stacy Matseas’ Making Strides challenge and become a member of the exclusive Pacesetters Club, which recognizes Making Strides participants who achieve extraordinary fundraising results. Pacesetters Club members work together to enhance Making Strides events and fundraising. Contact the Society for details.

