

Perkins Does PMC to Raise Money in Memory of Longtime Employee

A Taunton-based company is remembering a long-time employee by setting a goal of raising \$50,000 this year for cancer research and treatment.

When we lost longtime, beloved employee Lori Toomey to cancer, the company and its employees decided to keep her memory alive by raising money to fight cancer.

Toomey, the company's executive secretary, died in 2005 from breast cancer. Known for her dedicated work ethic and impeccable skills, she was recognized often for work and her great personality; she was the recipient of the Perkins MYP, annual award given to a deserving employee. Toomey, married with three children, was a 20-year employee at Perkins who battled breast cancer and lung cancer for six years. She had a double mastectomy and surgery to remove part of her lung. Despite surgery and intense chemotherapy treatment, Toomey wanted to be back at work as much as she could.

"She was mentally tough. She never showed any pain. Even after the surgery, she came back to work fulltime," said Bob Crawford, Perkins chief operating officer.

Today, the company's fundraising efforts support the Pan-Massachusetts Challenge and its effort to raise money for cancer research and treatment at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute through its Jimmy Fund in Lori's memory. Toomey was treated at DFCI.

This August, Perkins will have a team of nine cyclists and 30 volunteers at the 30th annual Pan-Massachusetts Challenge bike-a-thon, the largest single athletic fundraiser in the country.

Even in this economic climate, the company with 625 employees is encouraging volunteer work and backing fundraising efforts. The Perkins team aims to raise \$50,000 this year for the PMC, where 100 percent of every ride raised dollar goes to the Jimmy Fund. Riders in the PMC commit to fundraise between \$1,000 and \$4,000 a year, depending on the route they ride.

As one of its many events to raise money to support the cause, Perkins hosted a flea market to sell off discontinued items from its warehouse, donating all the proceeds to its PMC team's fundraising efforts. The company made it possible for employees to elect to make a weekly payroll deduction to support the company's PMC team.

"The culture here at Perkins is one that encourages a balanced life of family, community and work," said Dave Donnelly, a four-time PMC rider and Perkins Paper team captain. "You have to get involved and give back and the company supports you 100 percent."