



KEYCONTACTS

Nancy McMillan Event Chair



Nancy McMillan is a retired banking professional who spent 33 years in branch and private banking. She is also a breast cancer survivor who has participated in every BRIGHT Run since the first event in 2008. Her team, McMillan's Madcaps, is consistently among the top fundraising teams each year.

As the BRIGHT Run's event chair for the past 12 years, Nancy has worked hard to strengthen the event year over year. She actively seeks out new volunteers, community partners and participants.

In 2013, Nancy was named a Hamilton Woman of Distinction in recognition of her volunteer contributions to the BRIGHT Run. This year, she received a Paul Harris Fellowship Award from the Rotary Club of Hamilton AM honouring her outstanding community contributions.

In July 2024, the Governor General of Canada, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, awarded Nancy a Meritorious Service Decoration (MSM) in recognition of her outstanding achievement and service to the nation.

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Carissa Smith 2024 Survivor Spokesperson



Carissa Smith, a married mom of three-year-old twin boys, was BRIGHT Run's 2024 survivor spokesperson. She was diagnosed with Stage 3B triple negative breast cancer in February 2023.

Carissa completed eight rounds of chemotherapy followed by a double mastectomy and sentinel node biopsy, a month of radiation and a year of immunotherapy.

That experience changed Carissa's view of the BRIGHT Run. Since 2015, as the superintendent of Dundas Valley Conservation

Area, BRIGHT's home until last year, Carissa was the first person to arrive at the venue on event day. She was responsible for behind-the-scenes event prep onsite, starting at 6 a.m.

She wore a pink survivor T-shirt at the BRIGHT Run last year, her first time at the event as a participant.

"It wasn't just 'the event that's really pink,' but about so much more," she said. "I was really happy to be a participant last year and I plan to come back every year in the future!" carissa.bishop@gmail.com

Lee Prokaska, Advertising, Marketing and Communications Committee



Lee Prokaska retired from The Hamilton Spectator in 2015, after 35 years as a reporter, editor and editorial writer.

She is also a breast cancer survivor who participated in the first BRIGHT Run in 2008. A long-time BRIGHT volunteer, Lee oversees a four-member committee of volunteers, produces the content for BRIGHT Run's year-round monthly eNewsletter, and co-ordinates the event-day silent auction.

She also writes about BRIGHT Run and its people for area media outlets and helps BRIGHT Run members write speeches, stories and letters. She is a member of BRIGHT team McMillan's Madcaps.

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Sandra Turner Co-ordinator Juravinski Cancer Centre PYNK Program



Sandra Turner was an oncology nurse for more than 30 years before her retirement from fulltime work in 2022. Her extensive experience with breast cancer patients equips her well for her role as co-ordinator of the cancer centre's new program for breast cancer patients under age 40.

The program, jointly funded by the BRIGHT Run and the Toronto-based Jesin-Neuberger Charitable Foundation, addresses the unique issues faced by those under age 40 who are diagnosed with breast cancer. The Juravinski Cancer Centre program is only the third of its kind in Ontario; the other two in Toronto.

A breast cancer diagnosis at any age is very difficult, but for people under 40, there are unique concerns including, but not limited to, body image issues, sexual dysfunction, accessing fertility counselling and support, and accessing genetic counselling and education in a timely way.

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Dr. Ashirbani Saha First holder of the BRIGHT Run Breast Cancer Learning Health System Chair



Dr. Ashirbani Saha is the first holder of this permanent endowed research position at McMaster University, funded jointly by the BRIGHT Run and the university.

She is a computer engineer and data scientist with particular expertise in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Her role as chair focusses on advanced analytics in breast cancer to help health-care providers in their work improving patient care and outcomes.

Dr. Saha completed her undergraduate engineering studies in India, where she was born. She earned her Master of Science degree and her PhD in electrical and computer engineering at the University of Windsor. She worked in radiology at Duke University in the US, expanding her data analytics research into healthcare. Before her appointment at McMaster, she was a staff scientist at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto.

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