

# Taking comfort in the community

## Newton and Sharon host breast cancer support sessions

**BY LOGAN C. RITCHIE**

ADVOCATE STAFF

A national campaign to comfort Jewish women facing breast cancer arrived in Boston this week.

Events in Newton and Sharon welcomed Sharsheret, an organization founded by Executive Director Rochelle Shoretz after her own battle with breast cancer.

Shoretz, diagnosed with breast cancer at 28, said she "simply couldn't find many young women who had experienced the same 'lifestyle changes.'" Seeking support from other Jewish women, Shoretz started the organization in 2001.

Sharsheret runs national programs out of its New Jersey office, featuring a toll-free phone number for women across the country. Shoretz said: "We've received over 3,500 phone calls in three years from as far as Seattle, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Hawaii. There is a real need for culturally sensitive breast cancer support for Jewish women."

Outreach in Boston was successful, according to Dr. Tzipora Wolff of Brighton. A high school friend of Shoretz, Dr. Wolff was the organizer of Sharsheret's Newton event.

Dr. Wolff said: "I would do anything I could to spread the word and bring her vision to fruition. Anything that can ease the emotional pain of a new di-

agnosis is positive. We want to get the word out in Boston."

More than 60 health care professionals, survivors, families of survivors, and concerned community members gathered in Greater Boston hear Shoretz explain what Sharsheret offers.

Programs include The Link, a peer-support program that connects women across the country in telephone conversations that are free and confidential; medical symposiums transcribed and cast on the group's website; and Quality of Life, small, tailored programs that address specific needs of younger women such as a busy box that contains toys to keep kids busy while mom is resting.

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**Rochelle Shoretz**

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Shoretz said: "Boston was one of the number-one cities we wanted to reach. It is a community known for medical research, community involvement, and unfortunately it has been hard hit by breast cancer."

*Sharsheret will broadcast "Surviving Young Life After Breast Cancer" on April 12 on their website, [www.sharsheret.org](http://www.sharsheret.org). For more information, call 1-866-474-2774.*