



The Schube Women: Maxx, Rochelle and Alana

This year's honorees for Breast Strokes – The Big Reveal are Maxx Schube and her daughters, Rochelle and Alana. All three have tested positive for the BRCA1 gene mutation. The BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations greatly increase the lifetime risk of both breast and ovarian cancer, but those with BRCA1 have a higher percentage chance of developing breast cancer by age 70. Maxx's older sister, Beverly z"l, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer at age 33. There was no other cancer in the family at the time, and no one thought to test Beverly for a BRCA gene mutation. Though the mutation is rare among the general population, it is much higher among Ashkenazi Jews. Both men and women can be carriers of the mutation.

The Schube women are proud to be Hadassah's Breast Strokes honorees and to tell their stories. It is their hope that in doing so, they will inspire funding for breast cancer and genetic research programs at Hadassah Hospital, and for breast cancer education, advocacy and prevention in the United States – in hopes of saving lives.

Maxx



Little did I know 20 years ago, in 1996, my story would begin when my sister Beverly developed ovarian cancer at the age of 33. At the time, there had been no female cancers in the family and BRCA testing was in its juvenile stage. My sister passed away after a 5-year battle, and we tried to resume our lives.

Six years later, I was waiting in The Davis Academy carpool line when I felt two lumps. One was on my décolletage, the other in my breast. I was 41 at the time. After being told that it was nothing, I insisted on a biopsy and was diagnosed with

breast cancer. One lump felt like a pea and the other, like a grape, softer ... as though it had layers. That is why I want every woman to know she may experience lumps in different ways and not to be dismissive of them. Thinking about my sister Beverly, I decided to find out if there was a reason for our cancers at such young ages. That's when I had genetic testing and found I have the BRCA gene mutation.

When my children reached their 20s, we decided to have them tested. My son tested negative but not my girls. (Men can test positive and be carriers, too.) When I learned that Rochelle and Alana are also BRCA-positive, all I could think was, "The thing that I've been running from all my life keeps following me." My ultimate goal now is to educate all women to know their bodies, and if they feel something that isn't normal, to please have it checked out. My own gut instinct and Alana's ultimately saved both our lives.

Today I am a 13-year survivor involved in Hadassah's Breast Stroke event to share our story so we can crack the genetic code. My goal is to eradicate these genetic mutations to spare our future generations.

Rochelle



Cancer has always been a part of my vocabulary as far as I can remember. A cancer diagnosis targets an individual but when that cancer is genetic it affects whole families. After my mom tested positive for the BRCA gene mutation, I knew that I had a 50 percent chance of inheriting it. I also knew that I had to be ready to receive the information and be proactive about it. I always knew I would test positive for the BRCA1 mutation but actually hearing it, at 23, was devastating.

Because I was young, I decided to do surveillance, which means bi-yearly MRIs, mammograms and pelvic ultrasounds. I felt very alone, but then I was introduced to an organization called Bright Pink. This national non-profit organization targets young women ages 18-45. It teaches them to be proactive and practice prevention and early detection strategies. Bright Pink also provides support to women who are high risk for breast or ovarian cancer, both individually and through support groups. I am proud to be a Bright Pink support ambassador in Atlanta.

I had planned to wait until I was 30 to consider a prophylactic double mastectomy to drastically reduce my risk, but when Alana was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 23, all measures of time and age disappeared. I had an appointment for my regularly scheduled MRI, and when I got a call the next day that there were

irregularities and I needed to come back in, I was so upset to have to tell my family.

After intense discussion with my team of doctors, I decided to move forward immediately with surgery. This was such a personal decision and not an easy one at that. Unfortunately, three days before my scheduled surgery, I received a phone call from my insurance company that they were denying my claim. They argued that preventative surgeries were not covered in my policy. This infuriated me! I fought them and won. My surgery was rescheduled for June 2015. I consider myself a “previvor” – someone like Angelina Jolie who lowers her risk of breast cancer by having risk reducing surgery. The recovery hasn’t been easy, but I am so proud of my decision, proud of my new body, and so relieved that I don’t have to worry about my risk of breast cancer anymore.

Alana



Watching my mom’s breast cancer journey inspired me to take action. For my bat mitzvah project, I partnered with the JCC, to start the “Punch Out Breast Cancer” program. This one-day event turned into a non-profit organization that was dedicated to providing education on prevention, screening, diagnostic and treatment techniques. We had pink “Punch Out” bracelets made and contributed the proceeds from their sale to breast cancer research. These bracelets are still sold at “A Women’s Place” at Northside Hospital.

When I was 21, I decided it was my time to get tested for the BRCA mutation. Given my family history, I insisted on testing immediately and tested positive for BRCA1. Although I knew my status at 21, I was advised to wait until 25 to begin surveillance. I continued to do breast self-exams and felt a lump last year. Because I knew about my increased risk, I went to have it checked and was diagnosed with breast cancer at 23. No one wants to have a genetic mutation, but knowing this information saved my life. I immediately went into action, had a double mastectomy, and began chemo treatments. This was profoundly difficult for me and my family but I met so many wonderful and supportive people along the way.

After having a clean PET scan in April (2015), I was told it was safe to start my life again. Little did I know that this was not the end of my journey. I will always be vigilant about my body. In October (2015), I felt a lump in my armpit. Again I went to have it checked, and I was diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time, at 24. I have started chemo again and will have another surgery and radiation. I’m

sharing my story so that other young women will learn to “know their bodies,” feel empowered to stand their ground with health providers, and know that breast cancer is not our mother’s disease but something that we should all be concerned and educated about.

Hadassah Connection

The Schube’s are a proud four-generation Hadassah family. Maxx’s grandmother, Rose Sandler z”l, and her great aunt Esther Forman z”l, were both major donors. A rose garden at Hadassah Medical Center Ein Kerem was named for Rose.

Judy and Paul Finkel, Maxx’s parents, are also major donors as well as Platinum Sponsors of Breast Strokes – The Big Reveal. Judy made Maxx a Life Member and also gave the gift of Hadassah Life Membership on the occasion of each granddaughter’s Bat Mitzvah.

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For information about Breast Strokes, please visit www.hadassah.org/atlantabreaststrokes.

To purchase tickets for Breast Strokes – The Big Reveal, please visit www.hadassah.org/events/breaststrokes.