

# Catholic High student leads breast cancer cause

Breast cancer awareness is personal for Catholic High School junior Gabriella Polsinelli.

Her aunt, Maria Polsinelli, died of the disease four years ago after lengthy illness.

"I was really close with her," Gabriella said of her aunt, a 1985 Catholic High graduate. "She was so funny. Even when she had chemo treatments she made it funny. It really hit home when she got (cancer). All my family is just trying to keep her memory alive."

Three years prior to Maria's death, Gabriella began taking part in the Susan G. Komen Maryland 5K Race for the Cure, raising money for breast cancer research. The parishioner of St. Clement Mary Hofbauer parish in Rosedale has raised \$34,000 through friends, family and current and former teachers. She's been one of the race's biggest money raisers.

"I don't want to see anybody else go through what my aunt went through," Gabriella said.

This year, Gabriella got all-girls Catholic High involved, securing 97 entrants for the Oct. 2 race in Hunt Valley.

The school's team raised more than \$15,000, more than \$9,000 of which came from Gabriella's efforts. The total was the most of any new school team this year.

"With most of the girls who did it, that was their first time," Gabriella said. "They were really shocked how emotional they got over it."

Catholic High's president, Barbara Nazelrod, said she was proud of Gabriella for creating a school team.

"Breast cancer is very personal to my family and me because my mother is a survivor of almost 20 years. For so many of our students to be involved in this most

worthy cause means a great deal to me on many levels,” Nazelrod said. “Bringing this worthwhile effort home to Catholic High raised the bar for our school community, and it exceeded the challenge. And this is only the beginning, as students are already talking about next year’s event.”

Athletic director Kari McBride’s great-grandmother and grandmother were both treated for breast cancer. Gabriella’s spirit was inspirational to McBride.

“I know that she spent countless hours counting money and registrations, tallying shirt sizes, and encouraging her classmates and friends to join her effort,” McBride said. “I was thrilled with the amount of participants that walked with (and) for our school.”