

North Andover resident is Woman of the Year

Story



Bridget Cook

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NORTH ANDOVER — Bridget Cook has been a Boston Marathon runner and a cancer survivor. Now, she has a new title: Woman of the Year.

Cook, a North Andover resident, was named the Massachusetts Woman of the Year by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society at a ceremony at the Sheraton Boston Hotel on May 21. She was honored for her extensive fundraising efforts as part of a nationwide campaign benefiting blood cancer research.

Over the course of 10 weeks, Cook raised more than \$84,000, shattering the previous women's fundraising record. Heading into the event May 21, she had raised \$58,000, then received about \$26,000 through live and silent auctions at the Boston event.

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The award was part of the society's Man and Woman of the Year campaign, which has raised hundreds of millions of dollars for blood cancer research over the last 25 years. The man and woman who raise the most money over a 10-week period are named the winners in their respective states.

Cook, 32, was not shy during her fundraising campaign, reaching out to hundreds of family members and friends for donations. But, she said, she was truly at a loss for words when she received her award.

"I'm very rarely speechless and publicly emotionally, but I was both that night," Cook said recently. "I was absolutely overwhelmed. I couldn't even get any words out."

Cook's recognition marks her full circle journey with cancer. She was diagnosed with Stage IIB Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2008, caused by abnormalities in the lymphatic system. She received treatment at Massachusetts General Hospital. By January 2009, her cancer was in remission.

Since then, Cook has dedicated much of her time to helping others battling cancer. She has been volunteering with LLS since 2009. Her passion and work ethic caught the attention of the organization, which nominated her for the Woman of the Year competition.

Cook, along with her team of seven family members and friends, sent more than 200 letters asking for donations. The team also organized several fundraising events, including a yard sale in Cook's yard and "Give Cancer the Boot," a country-themed event with music and raffle prizes at the Lanam Club in Andover. Those events raised \$1,000 and \$3,000, respectively, according to Cook.