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Newburyport

NEIGHBOORS



*Community
for life*

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Cover photo by Amanda Ambrose Photography

Community for life

By Nicole Ananian | Photos by Amanda Ambrose Photography

For Olivia Achtmeyer Bogert, founding the nonprofit, Runway for Recovery, in 2007 was not just about providing financial assistance for families dealing with breast cancer, it was about creating a 'community for life.'

Her mother, Cande, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1991 when Olivia was 10 years old. Having kept her diagnosis a secret, she fought the disease for 10 years, while creating a community of support who stepped in to help her family upon her passing in 2001.

"Because of that circle of people and opportunities, my siblings and I had a runway to heal," says Olivia, an experience that led her to create Runway for Recovery in honor of her mother.

"It was in her memory that I wanted to make sure that all children who lost their caregiver to breast cancer could also 'recover' and hopefully, at some point, dance in that person's honor," she explains.

Runway for Recovery provides families with a continuum of support along their journey with breast cancer. It is not a nonprofit oriented toward a cure, but something altogether different.

"We seek to improve the lives of those who are currently affected by breast cancer by serving as a platform for them to access the resources, knowledge, and support they need," says Olivia.

In October, Runway for Recovery will host its 15th Anniversary Runway Show at The Westin Seaport Hotel in Boston. This year's show will feature 135 models who are either brave survivors of breast cancer, or walking in memory or celebration of a loved one who has battled this disease.

This is also the first year that they are targeting a revenue of \$1 million. Compared to the first runway show with 10 models and \$20,000 raised, Olivia notes, "We couldn't be more proud of the work we've done so far."

Runway for Recovery funds between \$10,000-\$30,000 to families in need.

"If someone has been impacted by breast cancer and needs to be part of a community, we always encourage them to reach out to Runway," she says.

When not working on her non-profit, Olivia dedicates her time as a member of the Board of Directors of both the Merrimack Nature School and The Women's Fund of Essex County. Additionally, she is on the Board of Visitors of the Nashoba Brooks School and is a volunteer for The Philanthropy Connection.

You can also find Olivia at the beach, surfing, running, working out

at Fuel and Motivate, or pushing her red, triple-stroller throughout downtown Newburyport or on the Rail Trail.

She and her husband, Andy, have three young boys, Stuart, Jackson and George, and a chocolate lab puppy named Harry Potter. As parents who focus on "kindness and independence," their boys are very involved in many of the programs and opportunities that are available in Newburyport, including Newburyport Youth Soccer and Lacrosse, Theatre in the Open, Zach Fields Drums and Music, and more.

Olivia describes the downtown as their "backyard," noting that, "Our boys have learned to walk and now run on the Waterfront Park."

They first moved to their home in the South End of Newburyport in 2012 after being drawn to the historic look of the town, proximity to the water, and its walkability.

Olivia and Andy "love" the safety of their neighborhood.

"This wonderful bubble has allowed our children to grow up feeling very protected and safe, and that has given us a chance to slowly give them independence which we love," says Olivia.

And now, after almost a decade in Newburyport, they have no plans to move anywhere else.

"We stay because of the people we've met and the nonstop feeling of support that we all have from those who live here," she says.

To learn more about *Runway for Recovery*, visit runwayforrecovery.org.

