

Ironman Louisville  
by Mike DeCinti

I'm doing an Ironman!

Whew! There, I said it. Good thing to, because I was about to burst. I've been holding that little secret in for nearly five months.

As a lot of you know, this has been a goal of mine for about five years now, and back in August of last year I officially registered for the Ironman Louisville in Kentucky, and I couldn't be more excited...and nervous.

In case you don't know, an Ironman is a triathlon that consists of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and a 26.2-mile run and is considered by many to be the hardest one-day endurance event.

The race is scheduled for August 31<sup>st</sup> so as you may guess, I have a long road ahead of me filled with physical, mental and emotional training. But I also hope to use this event to do one more thing...raise money and awareness for breast cancer screening.

As Marketing Director for Lumberton Radiological Associates I've become very familiar with the importance for women to get screened for breast cancer through mammography. I've learned that most people believe women should begin their annual mammograms at age 40, however breast cancer is being detected and affecting younger women as well. I've learned that although white women are diagnosed more often with breast cancer because of early detection, black women have a higher mortality rate. And I've also learned that a large percentage of women in Robeson County are not getting their mammograms because they cannot afford one. Plus with our county recently being identified as the poorest county in the state, all of these combine to create a serious problem that I hope we can all do something to help solve.

Back in October of 2007 I began working with Mrs. Irene Stuart, a breast cancer survivor and president of the local chapter of Sisters Network, a National African American Breast Cancer Survivorship Organization, to set up a fund that will pay for mammograms for women in our county that need them but cannot afford them, especially African American women, younger women, and those that slip through the cracks.

We were able to raise some money during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which was a good start, but it was not enough to make a significant impact. So we have decided to team up again and use my training for the Ironman as a catalyst to raise more money and awareness and help make a difference and possibly save women's lives here in Robeson County. Here's a brief explanation about why this is so important.

- One in every 229 women between the ages of 30 and 39 will be diagnosed with breast cancer within the next 10 years.
- Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in young women ages 15-54.

- More than 11,100 women under age 40 will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, and more than 1,100 will die.
- Young women's cancers are generally more aggressive and result in lower survival rates.

But, despite the facts

- Many younger women and their doctors are unaware that they are at risk for breast cancer.
- Younger women are often diagnosed at a later stage than their older counterparts.
- There is very little research or educational material focused on issues unique to this younger population, such as fertility, pregnancy, genetic predisposition, long-term survivorship issues, and higher mortality rates for African-Americans.
- Young women diagnosed with breast cancer often feel isolated and have little contact with peers who can relate to what they are experiencing.

I have set up a website with all the information and more and I encourage all of you to visit, take your time and look around and seriously consider helping out by becoming a sponsor. You can find it at [www.lraxray.com/ironmike](http://www.lraxray.com/ironmike).

As a sponsor, your tax-deductible donation will go toward this fund and help pay for screening mammograms (and perhaps even more) for those women who need it the most. Plus, depending on your level of sponsorship, you will receive some very nice gifts, be recognized on the website, be mentioned in future articles and even have the opportunity to have you or your business' name appear on my Ironman racing and training apparel.

If you have any questions or would like more information, or if you would like me to come out and speak with your church or civic group, please do not hesitate to contact me at [www.lraxray.com/ironmike](http://www.lraxray.com/ironmike) or [mdecinti@lraxray.com](mailto:mdecinti@lraxray.com) or 738-8222 ext. 258.

This is an opportunity for all of us to make a profound impact in our own community. It is my hope that you consider joining me for this journey and become a sponsor.