

# ThisWeek WESTERVILLE

March 24, 2005 Also serving the Columbus and Delaware County portions of the Westerville school district



By Joy Parker/ThisWeek

**Nurse Kathy Boston (front) founded Kathy's Care Cards, a line of greeting cards for people experiencing life-altering events. With her are friend and cancer survivor Tish Neuhardt (left, at rear) and Kelly Howe, marketing director for the cards.**

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in various parts of the country are already sold on Kathy's Care Cards.

In the Westerville area, the cards are available at the Hallmark store in Northgate Plaza and at Jan's Place, a cancer support center at Mount Carmel St. Ann's.

They're also sold at a National Institutes of Health gift shop in Bethesda, Md., and at a Johns Hopkins Howard County General Hospital gift shop in Columbia, Md., among others.

Kathy's Care Cards has several employees — an operations manager, a business manager, a marketing director, a designer, an accounting specialist and three sales representatives.

Only the sales representatives, two in the Columbus area and one on the East Coast, are paid at the moment.

"Everyone else is giving from their heart and time," Boston said, later adding, "I would not be here without the support of my friends."

A foundation called "Heart of Nursing" is being set up for the company. A portion of the proceeds from the card sales will go to the foundation, which will offer scholarships and grants to current and future nurses.

"No matter what our disease or disorder or life-altering event, we will all be touched by a nurse at some point," said Boston, a 23-year nurse, a mother of three and a grandmother of two. "The public doesn't always think about that."

Earlier this month, Otterbein College students presented Boston with a business and marketing plan and Web strategies for Kathy's Care Cards.

Otterbein assistant professor Jiten Ruparel said the students in his undergraduate business policy class this past quarter took the business on as a project.

"She's in a very unique business," Ruparel said of Boston. "She's helping people express their emotions through artwork and through words ... She wants to touch people who send a card as well as those who receive them."

Ruparel said Kathy's Care Cards could be the next Cheryl's Cookies.

It's what Boston is aiming for. She said she wants the company to be "as big as Cheryl's, a household name."

"I want it to be available for people who are going through life-altering events," she said.

Boston's inspiration for the company came about two years ago, during a training run in Sharon Woods for the local Race for the Cure.

Several of her friends were battling cancer, and she had been searching for appropriate cards to send them.

"I wanted to mention their strength," she said. "I wanted something that showed how much I cared for them. There was nothing I could find. Right then, I knew I was just inspired, in Sharon Woods in Westerville. I had to listen to that inspiration and had to follow through for them."

With the help of friends, future acquaintances and strangers, Kathy's Care Cards developed into what it is today.

Boston said card ideas are presented to survivor friends for their approval.

"My biggest fear ... I don't want to ever offend anybody," she said. "I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings."

Boston's friend, Tish Neuhardt, was one of the inspirations for Kathy's Care Cards. She said a handwritten card Boston gave her when she was battling breast cancer a few years ago meant a great deal. In the card, Boston told Neuhardt that she was her hero.

"I did not feel like a hero," Neuhardt said. "I was petrified."

She added that the card made her be stronger.

"I knew I could talk to her," Neuhardt said. "I knew I could call her. I knew she meant, 'I'll be there for you.'"

## Cards say 'what needs to be said' in tough times

By LIZ PECEK  
ThisWeek Staff Writer

Kathy's Care Cards are anything but generic get-well messages.

Started a year ago by registered nurse Kathy Boston, the company addresses, through greeting cards, cancer and other life-altering events such as hospice care and the recurrence of diseases.

"Nobody's really touched on the avenue of disease and life-altering event cards that say what needs to be said," said Boston, who works full-time as a physician referral coordinator and educator for Riverside Radiology Associates in Columbus. "A lot of times, you don't know what to say. The worst thing you can say is nothing."

One of the company's most popular cards features a photograph of a dog and puppies, lying on a beach. The verse inside states, "Don't think you're going to have to

go through this alone. I am here for you."

A card for caregivers features a photograph of an angel statue. Its message: "Angels may have halos and wings, but my angels come with washcloths and ice chips. Thank you for all that you do for me."

Forty-five card designs are currently offered by Kathy's Care Cards, which has a patent pending. They're printed and assembled locally.

For the time being, the card inventory is housed neatly on shelves that line the basement of Boston's Westerville home.

Each card includes an artist biography that details life-altering events the artists or their loved ones have experienced. The cards also list the company's Web site, [www.kathyscarecards.com](http://www.kathyscarecards.com), as a resource for additional information and educational links for diseases and disorders.

The company logo is a nurse's hat atop a bandaged

heart.

Genoa Township resident Janet Waggoner donated the use of six images for Kathy's Care Cards, and plans to give more.

Waggoner said she's glad when her artwork is used to help others.

"She's not afraid to use a word like 'cancer,'" said Waggoner, whose father battled prostate cancer. "She's trying to fulfill a need, so that other people can express their compassion and caring for (others)."

Many of the card verses are composed by Boston and Kelly Howe, a friend who serves as the marketing director for Kathy's Care Cards.

"We cry a lot in this company," Howe said. "We know we got it right when we both well up with tears."

At least 12 hospitals, medical centers and retail outlets