

- [Farmingdale Observer](#)
- [Floral Park Dispatch](#)
- [Garden City Life](#)
- [Glen Cove Record Pilot](#)
- [Great Neck Record](#)
- [Hicksville Illustrated News](#)
- [Levittown Tribune](#)
- [Manhasset Press](#)
- [Massapequan Observer](#)
- [Mineola American](#)
- [New Hyde Park Illustrated](#)
- [Oyster Bay Enterprise Pilot](#)
- [Plainview-Old Bethpage](#)
- [Port Washington News](#)
- [Roslyn News](#)
- [Syosset-Jericho Tribune](#)
- [Three Village Times](#)
- [Westbury Times](#)

- [Boulevard Magazine](#) ★
- [Features & Columns](#) ★
- [LI Calendar of Events](#) ★
- [Add Your Event](#) ★
- [Classified Ads](#) ★
- [Contacting Us](#) ★

ONLINE EDITION FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 2000

ELMONT  
FRANKLIN SQUARE  
WEST HEMPSTEAD

THREE VILLAGE  
**TIMES**

Serving the communities of Elmont, Franklin Square, North Valley Stream, South Floral Park and West Hempstead.

- [Current Edition](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)
- [Archive](#)

- [News](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Contents](#)

# News

## Three Strong Women ... One Big Fight

By Joe Rizza

The Strohm sisters are a lot like other siblings. They live in close proximity to each other. They have formed a close bond so that they are there for each other to lean on in trying times. Another thing they have in common that in the early 1990s they found their lives would change forever.

That's because the youngest of the three sisters, Lucille Montrony of Elmont, was diagnosed with breast cancer in July of 1991. Just over two years later, the disease would strike the middle sister, Kathy Sarna of Valley Stream. Six weeks after Kathy's diagnosis, the oldest sister, Jane Stanczuk, had her worst fear confirmed on Jan. 15, 1994, as she too was found with breast cancer.



The Three Strohm sisters - (l-r) Lucille Montrony, Kathleen Sarna and Jane Stanczuk have formed their own foundation to fund cancer research.

"The girl [at the doctor's office] said to me when was the last time you went to a doctor and I knew then that something was there," she said.

Three sisters - all with the same disease and with each of them trying to formulate a theory on why it happened. Yet as each of the sisters pondered why it happened and what would happen next, fear and depression set in. Jane even felt she wasn't going to survive the ordeal.

"I was in the hospital and I'm actually sitting there, feeling sorry for myself. I didn't think I could die," she recalled. "God wasn't going to let me die. I still had my children and my grandchildren. I couldn't die."

In February 1994, Stanczuk had her left breast removed. She remembers sulking and reading books in the hospital. But then, an image popped up on the television screen that changed her disposition.

It was footage of Kevin McCarthy, the son of Congresswoman Caroline McCarthy who was badly wounded in a shooting incident on the Long Island Rail Road, leaving the hospital. From then on, Stanczuk, a resident of Franklin Square who worked at EAB Bank in Mineola, stopped feeling sorry for herself. "I already had my life. Here was a boy who was just starting out and he has a lot to bear," she said.

Montrony, Sarna and Stanczuk - the Strohm sisters by their maiden names - acted as a support group for each other, facing their fears together. The Strohm sisters have had to face their share of tragedy throughout their lives. When Lucille was 6 years old, their mother died of tuberculosis. Four years later, their father, a sanitation driver for the city of New York, was killed in an accident in which his truck tipped over as he was emptying a load onto a barge. He and the truck fell backwards into Newtown Creek, killing him instantly. In 1994, the same year she was diagnosed with cancer, Stanczuk's home endured a fire, causing her to have to live in a trailer parked outside for a year. Also, in 1994, one of her brothers died of Alzheimer's disease. But fighting cancer for the Strohm sisters was perhaps the ultimate tribulation. It is something that takes a total effort of courage and hope.

Now, having each personally faced the most difficult battles of their lives - the fight to survive breast cancer - and having endured the emotions that come with the diagnosis, the Strohm sisters are fighting back against the disease.

Early this year, the three sisters formed their own foundation, called the Three Strohm Sisters Family Foundation, dedicated to raising money to fund research that will go into finding a cure for, not only breast cancer, but all forms of cancer.

The sisters, said Stanczuk, are on a crusade to help those who have cancer. "There has to be a cure somewhere. There's got to be," she said. "It's unfair that women have to worry about having their breasts removed."

Stanczuk said the foundation has become a major part of her life. "It's got to work. I pray every day that this is going to be a success," she said.

The thought of helping to find a cure for a deadly disease has given Stanczuk a purpose and a will to fight back. While recently waiting for results of a test that will tell whether the cancer spread to her right breast, Stanczuk remained upbeat. "I have to," she said. "I can't die. I have too much. This foundation is my pride," she said. "You can't sit back and cry anymore. It's all in God's hands now."

Although it may be in God's hands, the Strohm sisters are trying to do their part. They introduced their foundation on Sunday, July 16 at Ziegeld's on Herricks Road and Jericho Turnpike in Mineola. They announced their first fund raiser, the Three Strohm Sister's Family Foundation 1st Annual Dinner Dance complete with a seven-piece band, on Oct. 20 at the New Hyde Park Inn. The sisters will raise money through selling tickets to the dance, which cost \$60 each, raffle chances and advertisements for a journal that will be comprised for the dance. The sisters have also come up with a pin depicting an angel and a pink ribbon, which they are selling for \$1 each through the help of dedicated volunteers such as Josie's Sweet Nut-N-things, located at 5 New Hyde Park Road in Franklin Square. Money is also raised by selling items at flea markets.

The Strohm sisters haven't been strangers to fund raisers. They have supported the Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation, which has supported research at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York and the Rui-Jin Hospital in Shanghai, China. However, with their own foundation, they will know exactly what the money raised will be used for. "I don't mind giving but I want to make sure it's going for research," said Kathy Sarna.

After money is collected, the Strohm sisters will decide where it will go. This year, money collected will probably go to the Samuel Waxman Foundation. So far, they have donated \$1,000 to the Adelphi Breast Cancer Support Group but the primary function of the foundation will be to support research.

Although for the three sisters the cancer is in remission, they are continually monitored by doctors, as battling cancer is a lifelong commitment. But, they have gathered some knowledge they would like to pass to others. Stanczuk wants to stress to women that they have to go for regular mammograms. "They have to go. I was dumb. At the time, I said 'I take all my vitamins. I self-examine. Nothing is wrong with me.' I didn't go and neither did my sister Kathy," she said.

If anyone would like information about The Three Strohm Sisters Family Foundation or about their Oct. 20 dinner dance fund raiser, call 561-3512.