



NEWS



FIERCE SURVIVORS DAZZLE IN PINK WITH FALCONS

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On Tuesday, the Atlanta Falcons hosted their sixth annual Dazzle and Dine event, honoring five breast cancer survivors who are dedicated to supporting the breast cancer community.

Tuesday proved to be a joyous day for five Atlanta breast cancer survivors, who were celebrated by the Atlanta Falcons in the organization's sixth annual Dazzle and Dine event, part of October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month, with a day full of pampering and an evening dining with players.

Rose Clark, TeMaya Eatmon, Deborah Hayes, Debra Sharker and Cati Diamond Stone were nominated for the event, each chosen based on their dedication to supporting the breast cancer community, as well as their story. The event, however, won't truly end until Sunday, when the quintet will be recognized on the field prior to gametime against the Chicago Bears.

The afternoon began with three hours of pampering at DASS Salon, the official salon of the Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders, including manicures, hair highlights and coloring, hair styling, and professionally-done makeup. It was a time of total relaxation and a chance to get highlights, the very first time for few in the group, in what is now deemed their second hair.

"You learn to love your new self as much as you loved your old self," said Eatmon, who is considered a young survivor, having been diagnosed at 36, making her a big advocate for early detection and education in young women, while

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volunteering her time between [Living Beyond Breast Cancer](#) and the [National Breast Cancer Coalition](#).

After changing into their best outfits and oohing and ahing their new 'dos, the women posed together for their personal paparazzi. The indulgences continued as the group rode in a limousine to Ray's On the River, receiving a 'red carpet' entrance as they walked through a tunnel of cheering family, friends, Falcons players and staff members, all decked out in pink.

"It's amazing the way the Falcons honor these wonderful women who do so much in their community," said Falcons punter **Matt Boshers**, whose mom is a 22-year breast cancer survivor. "Even though they've gone through such a great struggle in their life, they take all of the things they've learned through their struggle and take it out into the world and help other people with it."

Strong, courageous and beautiful doesn't even begin to describe these five extraordinary women and their journeys; each one similar, yet medically different than the one before, including the moment they each heard the news. Standing out from all other memories, right down to the exact minute of the day, the dark moment continues to propel them forward in the fight.

Life comes to a screeching halt when a breast cancer diagnosis is uttered; worlds crash down in a flurry of chaos. Positive thoughts are initially vacant, while fear and anxiety scream to be let out.

Positivity, the women say, quickly becomes the biggest influence in a woman's most-trying journey.

With family, girlfriends, the sisterhood, and a team of doctors by their sides, they endured lumpectomies, mastectomies, chemotherapy, radiation and hair loss, never wavering from the strength and compassion they found within.

The pieces of their lives slowly got picked up and put back together. Their hair began growing back. They woke up with more energy as their bodies rebounded from treatments and surgeries. Their femininity was put back into place and a second chance at life welcomed them as they emerged from the battle.

"You shouldn't have to wait for some kind of difficult diagnosis or a hard time in your life to make decisions to make yourself happy," said Stone, previously a trial lawyer who gave up arguing for a living after being diagnosed at 35 with an aggressive form of breast cancer, ultimately leading her to join the fight against breast cancer as the executive director for **Komen Atlanta**.

Each one of the survivors, armed with a smile, a determination, a positive attitude and a newly-colored second hair, continue to set out and educate women, young and old, about this cruel disease that has been turning October pink for almost 30 years.

"You do all this volunteer work," said 53-year-old Sharker, who joined **Northside Hospital's Network of Hope** after she received a visit from one of the members early on in her journey four years ago. "I don't do it for recognition. I do it because it's a purpose and a part of my heart now. It's a part of my journey."

For more information about other organizations these women support or to get more involved in the fight against breast cancer, please visit [Hadassah Check It Out Program](#) and [Sisters By Choice](#).



Falcons Dazzle and Dine Breast Cancer Survivors



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