

# Support group will offer help to new breast cancer patients

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Many breast cancer survivors know what it's like to sit in a doctor's office and be given devastating news — and then be told they must make critical decisions within just two weeks.

Now they can get help in making those decisions from the Ithaca Breast Cancer Alliance. The newly formed group is one of many grass-roots breast cancer advocacy groups popping up around the country. The goal is to provide an information network where newly diagnosed women can call and be put in touch with other women who have been through similar cancers.



**Gladstone**

Organizer Andi Gladstone got the idea for the group after her own experience with breast cancer. She was in New York City at the time of her diagnosis, and stayed in the city for her treatment. When she returned to Ithaca, and a friend was diagnosed with breast cancer, she realized the need for a support system in Ithaca.

"There are so many groups in New York City, such a great network of support that is just not available in Ithaca," Gladstone said.

"It was hard to find others to communicate with about the decisions involved in choosing treatment and coping with breast cancer. We want to bring that information together. And we want to be supportive of all women — we do not advocate one treatment over another".

The group held a fundraiser in December and the 12 core-members began meeting weekly in January. They don't have the money for an office yet, but they will have a phone and answering machine available to offer services. Moosewood Restaurant is holding a benefit brunch for the group on May 22. That's when it will start offering phone services.

Gladstone said statistics from the Ithaca Breast Cancer Tumor Registry at Tompkins Community Hospital indicated that 38 percent of newly diagnosed cancers in the county during 1992 were breast cancers, a figure she said exceeds the national average by 6 percent.