



TRUCKEE GOES PINK FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

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In October 2017, something big happened at the Auto and Tire Doctor, a NAPA AutoCare Center in Truckee, California. The employees dressed the NAPA Tool & Equipment Truck in the world's largest tutu. In fact, at 265.5 feet the tutu was so big, it not only fit around that NAPA semi, but two smaller trucks had to be brought in to accommodate it.

That feat helped raise money and awareness for breast cancer through support of the Tutu Project™ and its Dare2Tutu Challenge. The Tutu Project is a non-profit organization whose mission is to raise funds for women, men, and their families to ease the financial burdens that come with breast cancer diagnoses. While insurance covers many of the medical costs, it's the extra expenses, such as wigs, prosthetics and, even travel costs for those who have to go long distances for treatment, that the Tutu Project strives to defray.

The Tutu Project was born in 2003 after a photographer, Bob Carey, put on a pink tutu to cheer for his wife Linda as she was undergoing chemotherapy. He created images of himself wearing a tutu in outrageous locations. The photographs not only made his wife laugh and were a welcome relief to all in the chemo room, the photos went viral and started a national

movement.

The Tutu Project Comes to Truckee

Four years ago, two women at the Auto and Tire Doctor—Cindy Lain, an 11-year survivor and advocate for those diagnosed with breast cancer, along with manager Jodi DeRuisse—brought the Tutu Project to Truckee, California.

“When I read the Dare2Tutu story, I was deeply touched by the love and sincere gift of laughter that Bob Carey wanted to share with his wife Linda and friends in the chemo room,” said Lain. “I have heard the sound of laughter there and it shines so bright that you momentarily forget the pain and just have to laugh along.”

DeRuisse explained her devotion to the cause by saying, “There is just something about giving back to others that is so rewarding.”

The shop issued this year’s Dare2Tutu challenge after another employee, Justin, suggested they make the world’s largest tutu. DeRuisse said, “I Googled it and decided it was doable. The previous record was set in England when an 87-foot tutu was wrapped around a double decker bus.”

Once the decision was made, plans got underway, yards and yards of pink tulle were purchased, and DeRuisse, her best friend, and her mother-in-law got to work sewing the world’s largest tutu. DeRuisse was also busy around town taking pictures of anyone willing to put on a tutu for the cause. “I carry around 30 tutus in my car,” she said. “You never know when there will be an opportunity. We have a lot of fun, but it also gets people talking.”

Truckee Turned Pink

In fact the whole town of Truckee was talking. As the sponsor of the event, it’s not surprising that the men at the Auto and Tire Doctor were willing to have their picture taken in pink tutus, but soon just about every group wanted in.





“It was unreal,” said DeRuisse. “I took tutu pictures of members of the police department, fire department, and the public works department. One day, I went over to the high school to take a picture of the football team in tutus. Then the cheerleaders wanted in. After that, the softball team, the wrestling team, even the bus drivers insisted on a picture. The town of Truckee was turning pink!”



While pictures were being snapped all over town, money was also being raised for the cause through collection jars at the Auto and Tire Doctor, NAPA stores, the bank, and other local businesses. “We also sold raffle tickets for a chance to win more than 70 great prizes including tickets to a Stanford Bears game, a gift basket from Hot August Nights filled with merchandise, restaurant gift cards, free oil changes, and lots more,” said DeRuisse. “NAPA was wonderful and raised \$2,250. In all, we donated \$5,500 this year.”

The Auto and Tire Doctor held the big event on October 28, National Make a Difference Day, one of the largest annual single days of service nationwide. DeRuisse hopes the Truckee Tutu Project will win the \$10,000 National Make a Difference Day grant so the Auto and Tire Doctor can add to its donation. And she is inviting all NAPA stores and AutoCare Centers to Dare2Tutu in 2018. She said, “Follow the Auto and Tire Doctor on Facebook to join us!”

Bob and Linda Carrey of the Tutu Project were so impressed with the Auto and Tire Doctor event they want to meet with DeRuisse and the Truckee team to discuss plans for next year. “This year was epic,” said DeRuisse. “It’s exciting to think about what next year might bring.”

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