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Samuels founded the Breast Cancer Can Stick It! Foundation.

courtesy April Samuels

Breast Cancer Can Stick It! is Calling On All Percussionists to Help Drum Out Cancer

HOLAS BOSTICK | SEPTEMBER 4, 2018 | 4:00AM

A cancer diagnosis is one of the most profound experiences one can go through. Whether faced with courage or fear, it's a moment that changes lives, both for those diagnosed and the ones who hold them dear. But change is inevitable and sometimes for the best. And the darkest moments can sometimes spark the best ideas.

Two weeks after local musician April Samuels was diagnosed with an aggressive and rare form of cancer in 2010, one such idea popped in her head: "Breast cancer can stick it."

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"It's just a different take on it, you know? It's music based and it's drums. Drums are loud and so we're loud." - April Samuels

Samuels turned that idea into a war cry and rallied those around her to help raise money for the cause. Motivated rather than discouraged, she says she wanted to find a way to use her passion for music and the drums in the fight against breast cancer. And in 2013, "Breast cancer can stick it" became the Breast Cancer Can Stick It! Foundation, a volunteer-led and fully fledged nonprofit organization, which Samuels says has raised nearly \$200,000 since the movement began. That same year, Samuels' cancer went into remission.

"When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I blew through a bunch of money on treatment," Samuels says. "When I finished treatment I wanted to spend money on something cool. I kind of wanted to give myself something fun. So I actually spent about the same that I spent on treatment going to Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp out in California and it was really cool 'cause you get to jam with celebrities, and so that kind of stuck in my head."

With aims toward creating music-focused events to raise awareness and with years of experience as both a professional musician and a booking agent, Samuels says when a friend told her about a "drummathon" fundraiser that took place in Plano, circa 1980, the final piece of the puzzle fell into place. Less than 10 months later, the inaugural Breast Cancer Can Stick It! Drummathon kicked off in Fairview, Texas. And now their flagship event is set to take place from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sept. 30 at Klyde Warren Park.

"It's just unique. it's different." she says. "There [are] a lot of



drums. Drums are loud and so we're loud."

The event will feature live music, food trucks, raffles, a silent auction and more. Additionally, throughout the event, the top 35 individuals or teams that raise at least \$250 will get a chance to play a one-minute drum solo onstage. The top band will get to play the opening slot for the event's live music. They'll also all get a discounted rate to play the drums with one of six celebrity drummers who will also be joining the event.

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Mark Schulman (P!nk), Sandy Gennaro (The Monkees and Joan Jett), as well as Chip Ritter, **the juggling drummer**, are a few of the names

attendees will get the chance to bang skins with. The celebrity drummers will also be present for autograph sessions and will be brought on stage to play with the Breast Cancer Can Stick It! Band, in which Samuels herself plays the drums. Proceeds from the event will go to Parkland Hospital to provide financial assistance and mammograms for uninsured patients, as well as the Baylor Charles A. Sammons Cancer Center to help fund research.

"It's really cool to have the local community just banding together," Samuels says. "Not just in putting the event on, but in where we're taking the money too."

Individuals, bands and even whole drumlines can register at drummathon.org to be part of the event. So far 42 registered individuals and teams have raised nearly \$20,000 of the event's \$50,000 goal. If reached, that would make this year's Drummathon the biggest yet, though Samuels clearly envisions an even bigger future for the event.

"There's a dream one day of maybe branching out and holding this event in different cities," she says. "I would love to do Nashville next and maybe L.A., but it's really cool to hold the event in Dallas and have it go to Dallas."



Nicholas Bostick is a national award-winning writer and former student journalist. He's written for the Dallas Observer since 2014, when he started as an intern, and has been published on Pegasus News, dallasnews.com and Relieved, among other publications. Nick enjoys writing about everything from concerts to cobblers and learns a little more with every article.

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