



Allen Ryan  
Covelli Enterprises  
Cell: 330-501-2380

[Allen.Ryan @covelli.com](mailto:Allen.Ryan@covelli.com)

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## **THE MAHONING VALLEY GATHERS IN CELEBRATION OF PANERATHON'S 10 YEARS OF CHANGING, SAVING LIVES**

*Youngstown's largest community event surpasses \$3 million raised for local breast care center*

**Warren, OH** —The Panerathon 10K/2 Mile Walk/Run celebrated its 10th year as the Valley's largest fundraising event, gathering 11,000 community members Sunday at the Covelli Centre in downtown Youngstown in support of its cause. This year's Panerathon raised more than \$525,000, and the mass-participation over the past decade has generated more than \$3 million for the Mercy Health Foundation and the Joanie Abdu Comprehensive Breast Care Center (JACBCC), the first and only of its kind in the area.

The center became the vision of Dr. Rashid Abdu after losing his wife, Joanie, to an aggressive form of breast cancer in 1994. Many years later, with the help of Panerathon, Dr. Abdu's dream of a comprehensive breast care facility in Youngstown was brought to fruition when the JACBCC opened its doors in 2011. Since then, it has performed more than 83,000 exams along with an additional 4,000 through its mobile mammography unit, the only in eastern Ohio with 3D mammography technology, which dramatically improves breast cancer detection. These breakthroughs have changed the quality of breast care for women in the region – allowing more women access to the early detection, rapid treatment, and interdisciplinary care proven to decline breast cancer mortality rates. Covelli Enterprises and Mercy Health Foundation underwrite the costs of hosting Panerathon, so 100% of community sponsorships and registration fees may be donated directly to the cause.

“This is a special year as we come together to celebrate where our Valley began – with one of the highest breast cancer mortality rates in the nation – to where we are today,” said Sam Covelli, Owner/Operator of Covelli Enterprises. “Over the last 10 years, the quality of life for the people in our community has been improved through Panerathon and its mission to support the JACBCC, and we are so grateful to the participants, sponsors, volunteers, and supporters who have made this all possible. Year after year, we continue to show the world the strength, resolve, and unity of the people of our Mahoning Valley.”

“For ten years, tens of thousands of our neighbors have collectively contributed over \$3 million to the JACBCC through Panerathon. We are grateful to the community, to Sam and Caryn Covelli and to Covelli Enterprises – but we are all humbled by the generous and caring Mahoning Valley community who come together to make certain that we have the best possible care available right here, close to home,” said Paul Homick Jr., President of Mercy Health Foundation Mahoning Valley. “Panerathon is the largest fundraising event in the Valley and because of Panerathon, lives are saved and anyone who needs care gets it regardless of ability to pay.”

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Panerathon was promoted by spotlighting 10 survivors and patients of the JACBCC. Each of the featured women was showcased on a mile marker of the Panerathon event course to serve as a reminder to the community of the impact its participation has had on the lives of real women. **Their incredible stories and additional event information may be found in a Digital Media Kit at [Panerathon.org/media-kit](http://Panerathon.org/media-kit).**

This year, the event hosted more than 300 teams encompassing 5,000 of its participants, and had a record-breaking 110 sponsors. The 8th Annual Kids Run presented by PNC hosted 1,500 kids, and the fun continued with a post-race celebration including PNC's Grow Up Great Mobile Learning Adventure, Youngstown Phantoms Slap Slot, face painting, exhibits from OH WOW! Science Center, a variety of other local vendors, and O'Charley's food being sold to raise additional funds for the cause.

### **About Covelli Enterprises**

Covelli Enterprises, the largest franchisee of Panera Bread, LLC operates more than 300 Panera Bread bakery-cafes in eight states. In 2018, Covelli Enterprises donated \$32 million to non-profit organizations. [www.panerathon.org](http://www.panerathon.org), [www.covelli.com](http://www.covelli.com).

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