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Hope is blooming for Rockland breast cancer patient

By Allison Manning

ROCKLAND — When Teresa Kimball was diagnosed with breast cancer just after Christmas, the news ripped through her entire family.

The Rockland mother of three boys, one of eight siblings, had a support network: people who took her to medical appointments, cooked dinners and left get-well cards. But those people thought it wasn't enough.

"You can't take her treatments for her," sister Ann Marie Feinstein said. "You want to do everything you can to make her life easy.

"You're so devastated. She's just this young, healthy 40-year-old woman."

When Feinstein saw advertisements for Hope in Bloom while at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, she realized that there was something that could be done.

The Hope in Bloom organization, founded by Roberta Dehman Hershon in 2007, plants gardens in the yards of breast cancer patients.

Hershon started Hope in Bloom after losing a close friend to the disease in 2005.

About two dozen gardens will be planted this year, Hershon said. Since 2007, 60 have been planted across Massachusetts.

The gardens are usually paid for with donated money, but the Kimball case was different. With 100 people on the Hope in Bloom waiting list, Kimball's family raised the money to pay for creation of a garden in the backyard of Kimball's Concord Street home.

Hershon said a large garden can cost from \$1,500 to \$3,000.

Kimball's garden will be planted Saturday, as she finishes her first round of chemotherapy. After a two-week break, she will receive radiation therapy.

"When you look outside and your yard is pretty, it makes you feel better," Hershon said. "It helps you put some color back in your life."

Ten of Kimball's family members and friends will be at her home Saturday to plant the hydrangeas and other plants she asked for. Feinstein said the timing is perfect.

"There is hope in bloom," she said. "This is coming to the end of Teresa's treatment. She's almost there."