

## Hope in Bloom Even in Winter

by John Budris

O ctogenarian Dorothy Underwood is in love with her flowers and her garden.

Her happiest moments are spent working in her Oak Bluffs' garden with her husband. Her flowers are so dear to her that when breast cancer zapped her energy last summer, she worried more about their well being than her own.

"I am a perfectionist and am constantly moving things around for maximum impact. Over the years I have worked out the perfect system. My husband, Dave, digs the holes, and I place the plants," notes Dorothy.

But Dorothy still has a vibrant garden to admire, thanks to *Donaroma's* teaming up with *Hope in Bloom*, a Dedham-based non-profit that plants indoor and outdoor gardens free of charge at the homes of breast cancer patients.



colors and plants and put the wheels in motion. She also donated the labor and materials for Dorothy's garden. This was Janice's personal way to honor friends currently receiving treatment for breast cancer and others she has lost to the disease.

One bright summer morning, three trucks, many flats of dazzling flowers, fresh compost and soil, plus five men, from the *Donaroma's* crew lead by Almir Lages, appeared to work on a large circular bed. The next morning *Hope in Bloom* founder Hershon joined Caryl Friedman and Vineyard volunteers Lee Aven and Susan Bromberg, all reporting for duty. *Donaroma's* employees Kesia Oliveira, Maria Angelica DaSilva, Laura Hackerk Durbin and Kate Devane arrived with shovels, trowels and more plants.

They spent the day planting, mulching and watering the new spot, which Underwood named "her Janice garden."

"The view of 'My Janice Garden,' warms my heart every time I look at it. Through *Hope in Bloom*, I was introduced to new friends who I adore and will always treasure," remarks Dorothy. "Having breast cancer was a dreadful experience, but I can look forward to enjoying my garden for many years to come."

Hope does bloom eternal, even in the winter.

**Dorothy Underwood (top left) and landscape designer Janice Donaroma (top right) became fast friends on this special project. *Hope in Bloom's* founder Roberta Dehman Hershon**

**and Dorothy (middle left) enjoying the fruits of their labor. The *Donaroma's* crew (above) taking pride in a job well done.**

"I tried to be stoic for my family, but I was pretty scared. One bleak winter day Dave picked up a postcard that explained the *Hope in Bloom* program. I called immediately to see if I was eligible. When I found out I was, it kept my spirits up during the rest of my treatments."

*Hope in Bloom's* founder, Roberta Dehman Hershon, contacted Janice Donaroma, landscape designer and co-owner of *Donaroma's*, to assess the Underwood yard.



From the first hello, Dorothy and Janice became fast friends as they surveyed the backyard. They agreed the ideal spot for a garden was just a few steps from the back door. Janice drew up a design, consulted Dorothy on

