



Photos by Eric Schultz/Huntsville Times

Intergraph honors three cancer survivors Tuesday with a Garden of Hope dedication at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. The software company holds the event twice a year.

Gardens reflect survival, love

Intergraph honors 3 cancer survivors with planting beds

By **PATRICIA C. McCARTER**
Times Staff Writer
patricia.mccarter@htimes.com

When Chris Russell contemplates his cancer diagnosis/treatment/recovery, he doesn't associate the disease with surgery or discomfort or baldness.

Instead, he thinks about the support of the people who love him and, now, red geraniums.

Russell, 41, was one of three local cancer survivors recognized at Intergraph's spring Garden of Hope at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. Twice a year, the software company honors three people who have recently battled the illness by planting flowerbeds with their favorite flowers.

Other honorees were Glynnis Cory and Nancy Hampton, both Intergraph employees.

"If you look to your left and look to your right, you will see someone who has been impacted by cancer," said Intergraph CEO Halsey Wise at the



Flower beds were planted to honor cancer survivors, from left, Chris Russell, Glynnis Cory and Nancy Hampton.

Relay for Life

The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life is Friday beginning at 7 p.m. at John Hunt Park. Go to www.events.cancer.org/rfl-huntsville for more information.

dedication Tuesday morning.

He said doctors and theologians agree that planting flow-

ers is a therapeutic way to deal with the anxiety and fear that comes along with being sick, and planting them in a place where the public can enjoy them not only raises awareness of the disease but highlights the courage of those who fight it.

Russell, a vice president of private banking at Wachovia

Bank, had only a 3 percent chance of his cancer returning in 2006 after doctors removed a mass from his body. But it did return, and he then endured months of aggressive chemotherapy.

"I'm in a good place right

Please see **GARDEN** on B6

Garden

Continued from page 81

now," Russell said. "I feel great."

For his garden, he chose bougainvillea, which represent a sense of balance he feels his wife and two sons provide him with. He also picked red geraniums because they were a favorite of his mother, who died 14 years ago after a long battle with cancer.

"I've learned that red geraniums represent comfort," he said. "She always planted them in front of our house because she said it made people feel welcome."

Cory, 36, selected all white flowers for her garden. The Intergraph marketing manager said the white petunias, salvia and verbena signify the clean slate she views her life as being since the hysterectomy, radiation and chemotherapy she underwent in 2007.

"I've been blown away, truly, by all of the love and support I've been shown by my family, my friends and my company," she said. "It wasn't easy, of course, but everyone in my world made it as painless as

something like this could possibly be.

"I am unbelievably fortunate."

Hampton, 61, also said she views her post-cancer era as a second chance at life. Even though her breast cancer diagnosis was made early — thanks to regular mammograms which she encourages all women to have done — she opted for a double mastectomy last year rather than radiation or chemotherapy.

She said before the illness, she was always a "go to work, go home, go to work, go home," kind of person. Now she is — literally — taking time to smell the roses.

She had her flower bed planted with little roses in memory of her mother, sweet-smelling herbs and purple blooms. Also in her garden are several small statues of dachshunds.

"They wouldn't want me to bring my real dachshund to the garden," said Hampton, who works in Intergraph's print shop.

"She's just 18 months old, and she is so playful. My garden wouldn't stay pretty for long if she was here."