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An Edgerton area daughter, wife and mother turned the loss of her own mother to breast cancer — and her desire to help other women who had shared her experiences — into a fund-raising effort for breast cancer initiatives this spring with the publication of her first book.

In April, Lisa Burton, who lives on a farm between Gardner and Edgerton with her husband and two small daughters, saw her book, "Around My Mother's Table: Stories and Recipes Celebrating Lives Lost to Breast Cancer," released by Leathers Publishing of Overland Park. Burton's husband is Robin Burton, and their daughters are 5-year old Lily and 4-year-old Grace.

The book — with 39 entries including her own — features recipes, memories and a collection of short poems, quotes and inspirational selections about motherhood.

In the introduction to "Around My Mother's Table," Burton said, "As you read this book, I hope that you will find a recipe to share with your family, one that will nourish them and be cherished throughout the years. I hope your hearts are touched and you are inspired to pick up the phone and call your own mom. If that isn't possible, maybe you will pull out one of her special recipes and make it tonight as a celebration of her life!"

Burton, a Blue Valley High School and Johnson County Community College graduate who was formerly employed as a hairstylist and occupational therapist, said her mother, Carol Durbin, was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 51. Durbin had a small tumor removed and later underwent a bilateral mastectomy, but doctors said she did not require chemotherapy or radiation treatment.

Just one day before she would celebrate being cancer-free for five years, Burton said her mother learned that not only had her cancer returned, but it had spread throughout her whole body. After a 10-month journey — which this time did include chemotherapy — Durbin died in April 2003.

While her mother was going through chemotherapy, Burton said, she made pink beaded bracelets for herself, her mother and her sister, Michelle Campbell, to help them cope with Durbin's illness. When friends and others wanted bracelets like them for themselves, Burton started a web-based business, Pink Ribbon Connection, which specializes in jewelry, stained glass and other gift items that promote breast cancer awareness.

As she developed her business, Burton said she began "looking for something unique" to add to her Web site, [www.pinkribbonconnection.com](http://www.pinkribbonconnection.com). "I just thought it would be a really nice tribute to pay to mothers who had passed away (from breast cancer) for their daughters to send in an heirloom recipe, a story and a photo." When she shared her idea for the book with Robin and with her father, Bob Durbin, Burton said, "My husband thought it would be a very nice tribute for me to pay to my mom, and my dad felt the same way." With her father's offer to back her financially on the project, she said, "I was able to move forward with it quickly." To find contributors for "Around My Mother's Table," Burton said, "I got on every Web site that I could that had to do with breast cancer." She said she also placed an advertisement in The Torch, the monthly publication of Beta Sigma Phi, an international women's friendship network.

Although Burton said she had originally hoped to get "hundreds of responses" to her requests for recipes and stories, she said the submissions she chose for the book "turned out to be perfect.

"I'm really pleased with the way that it turned out," she said. "It's perfect for gift-giving, and it's in a (good) price range." She said she hopes that readers will understand that her book is not about mourning, but about celebrating the lives of the women it features.

"The book is about the memories of moms and the times they spent in the kitchen.

"It talks about happy times and happy memories," she said.

Burton, who donates a portion of the proceeds from the book and the other items she sells to further breast cancer support and research, said "Around My Mother's Table" is available at Kansas City area Borders bookstores, Serendipity Accents in Olathe, and Something Special Flowers and Specialties and Finishing Touches in Gardner. Copies can also be ordered through [www.pinkribbonconnection.com](http://www.pinkribbonconnection.com). Burton will also appear from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday and Oct. 28 at Pryde's Old Westport at 115 Westport Road in Kansas City, Mo.

"Even though these women are gone," Burton said of the mothers in her book, "they are still alive in our hearts and memories, and that will go on forever."