BRA-BEDECKING CONTEST BOLSTERS SHOP’S REP, BATTLES CANCER

From over-the-shoulder boulder holder to a miracle, bras have been called many things. But now, thanks to a florist in New Jersey, you can add “works of art” and “fundraiser” to the list of more uplifting terms.

Adrienne’s Flower Garden kicked off its first bra-decorating contest in September to “show support for the Susan G. Komen Foundation” and show residents of Union, N.J., that this newcomer had a sense of style, humor and charity.

“I’m sure I’m going to be known as the bra florist — but I’m going to be known, so who cares, right?” says Adrienne Miller-Kubicz, who opened the shop two years ago. Looking for a way to stop traffic on her busy street, get new faces into the shop and raise money for a cause, the idea of filling her shop with 24 wildly and elaborately embellished bras seemed to be the perfect fit. And judging by the 24 entrants, 1,300 votes cast in person and a 33 percent increase in foot traffic during the month of voting, bra sculpture is an art that’s been in the closet too long.

Anyone who came into the shop could cast a vote, from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, in the four categories: Best Theme, Best Overall Design, Best Workmanship and Best Creative Use of Materials. The florist asked for a minimum donation of $1 per vote. At press time, and two weeks into the campaign, she’d raised $850 for the North Jersey affiliate of Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. The charity posted a link to her site on its Web page and the local paper ran an announcement about the fundraiser. Adrienne’s Flower Garden’s Facebook page also featured photos of the 24 entries.

Miller-Kubicz said she’s been overwhelmed by the creativity of the embellishers, the response from folks coming in to vote who can’t help but take a gander at the likes of “Chicken Breast,” a flirty little number covered in fuchsia and purple feathers with a chicken head and beak on the wire hanger; or the “When Pigs Fly … we’ll stop looking for a cure” getup with two snouts prominently featured and two wings on the side.

“I have been hugged by strangers. One of the bra decorators thanked me over and over for giving her the opportunity to speak to her 11- and 12-year-old granddaughters about breast cancer,” she said. “It seems breast cancer has touched the lives of so many, whether it be a mother, sister, relative, or friend, everyone seems to want to support this cause.”

The winner will get a free dozen roses a month for a year. Miller-Kubicz said that although sales spiked during October, next year she’ll be more diligent about turning that captivated crowd into customers by requiring an e-mail address on each ballot and offering coupons to voters. She did say she was thinking about challenging her designers to make arrangements to complement the winners in each category, to ensure her shop’s creative talents also would be on full display.