



The *Pink Ribbon* Press

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My early mammogram saved my life

Call it a sixth sense, or as Rose Wharepapa puts it, "a feeling in her waters." But the moment the radiographer told her there was an abnormality in her right breast, she knew she had cancer.

A personal trainer at Les Mills, New Lynn, Auckland, Rose was living a healthy life. She never smoked; exercised five times a week and only enjoyed the odd tipple.

"It's crazy. The more women I speak to about my experience, the more they say the same thing," Rose says.

The mother of five had just turned 43, and therefore did not qualify for public funding for her mammogram. New Zealand's free breast screening programme is only for women aged 45 to 69, but like many women around the country, Rose had no idea that breast cancer represents nearly half of all cancers in women aged between 40-44.

Thankfully her "gut feeling" to get her breasts checked overcame the cost of paying for a mammogram, which can range from \$130 - \$200.

"Yes, I had to pay \$180, but it's a small price to save your life. Finding it as early as I did only increased my chances of survival," Rose, now 49, says.

Rose's mother had died of cervical cancer at 48, making her more aware of the devastating



Rose Wharepapa

effects of battling the disease, and her grandmother also had breast cancer. At her request, Rose's doctor made a referral for a mammogram, but perhaps out of dread, Rose stalled on making the booking.

It was only when one of her clients talked about her upcoming mammogram, that Rose felt compelled to make her appointment in early 2006.

The scan showed a number of cysts in her right breast.

"I was told not to worry, that it could just be a little bit of hardening. They did an ultrasound, and recommended a biopsy.

"I said, 'I know I've got cancer'," Rose recalls.

It's important for women not to be worried if a radiologist finds something suspicious in a mammogram, as nine out of ten lumps or bumps aren't breast cancer. Further

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investigation, including an ultrasound or biopsies usually finds the breast tissue to be benign. But it is better to be safe than sorry, as Rose discovered when she was told she had ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), a type of breast cancer that starts in the breast duct cells.

Doctors explained that Rose had a 50 per cent chance of the cancer recurring in her left breast, so she underwent a bilateral mastectomy and reconstructive surgery.

"I thought, 'I'm not going through this again.' I never had chemotherapy as the cancer hadn't travelled into my lymph nodes," Rose says.

Six years on, Rose knows she was spared further treatment by her choice to have a mammogram and subsequent surgery.

"Mine is not a fast-spreading cancer, but I feel like if I hadn't gone for a mammogram, would it have been too late? You can live a very healthy life, exercise regularly and not be overweight, but you can still get cancer. Go and have a mammogram," urges Rose.

If you're facing treatment for breast cancer, ask what all your options are. If unsure, seek a second medical option.

Benefits outweigh risk of overdiagnosis

Mammograms can't prevent breast cancer, but they can save lives by detecting it early.

However mammograms aren't perfect. At times suspicious spots can turn out to be nothing leading to unnecessary biopsies or surgeries, pain and anxiety. This has led to fierce debate about the benefits of mammograms versus the risk of overdiagnosis.

A major review of breast cancer screening services in Europe has concluded that the

benefits of screening in terms of lives saved far outweigh the down-sides caused by overdiagnosis. The research was conducted by the European Screening Network (EUROSCREEN) working group and the European Network for Indicators on Cancer (EUNICE).

The groups analysed data from 12 million women in 18 countries and found that for every 1000 women who undergo screening every two years from the age of 50 to around 69,

seven to nine lives would be saved and four women would be overdiagnosed.

"This comprehensive analysis provides significant supporting evidence for the benefits of having a mammogram," the Foundation's CEO, Evangelia Henderson says. "Women who have had breast cancer, often say it was the mammogram that saved their life. We recommend women get screened annually from the age of 40."



Karin Horen: "Don't sit on your own symptoms. Get them checked out."

New Year, New Hope

It wasn't the best start to the new year, when I received a call from Karin Horen (above) with the news that her breast cancer had returned. A busy mother of three young children, Karin was first diagnosed at the age of 26 years with breast cancer. Since then, she has been a force for good in the area of breast cancer awareness both in Australia and here through her successful Paddle for Hope event. Karin is hopeful about beating breast cancer again, alongside the thousands of other New Zealand women who will be diagnosed this year. Most will survive, but in this issue we pay tribute to my friend Miffy who also helped the Foundation but sadly died last year from an aggressive form of breast cancer. It's the pain of loss and the determination of women like Karin and Miffy, which fuels the work that we do.

I'm excited about some new education and support initiatives the team here are working on, made possible by donations from kind and generous people like you. Please help us reach our women in 2013 with the life-saving information they need to stay healthy and here with their families.

Everyone needs to know the risk factors, signs and symptoms of breast cancer and the importance of mammograms. Every woman must have access to the best care and support during treatment. Every child deserves a mum like Karin or Miffy to care for them.

Your support gives us hope. Thank you.

Evangelia Henderson (CEO)

Frightening findings

Some startling results were revealed about New Zealand women's knowledge of breast cancer and mammograms, following research commissioned by the Foundation and undertaken by leading research company Colmar Brunton.

It found that:

- Two-thirds of women aged 20-39 didn't know breast cancer is the most common cancer for women at any age.
- Around one-third of women check their breasts for changes less than once a year, including 12% who never do.
- Young women have low awareness of breast cancer symptoms beyond the obvious symptom of a lump.
- One-third had never asked about their family history of breast cancer.
- 70% of women aged 40-44 had never had a mammogram, with half the respondents considering themselves "too young".
- 60% of those who had a mammogram did so because they'd found a lump or other problem, rather than proactively screening for breast cancer.

Results among women aged 40-44 also revealed:

"If your breast cancer is detected by a screening mammogram, you have a 95% chance of surviving five years or longer," explains the Foundation's CEO, Evangelia Henderson. "But if your first clue that you have cancer is finding a lump, your five-year survival chance drops to 73%. By not getting a mammogram, you could be putting your life at risk."

Spotlight on treatment drugs

Here are some advances that will make a difference for New Zealanders with breast cancer.

• 10-year Tamoxifen treatment lowers breast cancer recurrence and mortality

Results of the ATLAS study announced in December 2012 show that patients who continued Tamoxifen for 10 years had a 25% lower recurrence rate and a 29% lower breast cancer mortality rate in their second decade after diagnosis, compared with those who stopped after five years (the current standard treatment). This data will be of interest to premenopausal women taking Tamoxifen with few side-effects – women taking Tamoxifen should discuss this study with their oncologist.

• Perjeta extends survival; some NZ women may use on a self-funded basis

International CLEOPATRA trial results show that a new drug, Perjeta, significantly extends survival in people with HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer. The risk of death was reduced by 34% for patients

who received Perjeta, Herceptin and chemotherapy, compared to those who received Herceptin and chemotherapy. While Perjeta is not yet Medsafe-registered, a prerequisite for Pharmac funding, women can talk with their oncologists about accessing it on a self-funded basis under sections of the Medicines Act governing the prescription of unapproved medicines.

• More treatment options for metastatic breast cancer

As of December 2012, Gemcitabine can be prescribed for metastatic breast cancer. "Studies show Gemcitabine can delay disease progression and improve quality of life for some breast cancer patients whose disease has progressed following other chemotherapy treatments," said medical oncologist Anna Bashford, a NZBCF medical advisor. "It's a really good string to our bow."

Story of the century

It's almost 66 years ago that Lower Hutt's Ruth Scimgeour was wheeled into theatre to undergo a unilateral mastectomy after being diagnosed with breast cancer. It was 1947. Mammograms were unavailable; she'd simply felt a lump in her breast. There was also no chemotherapy, radiotherapy or breast reconstruction.

Ruth's chances of survival after five years was 49%, today it's 86%. This year, Ruth will turn 101 in October, and is thought to be

New Zealand's longest living breast cancer survivor.

"She's marvellous; she's always had a good take on life and has still got a nice sense of humour," her daughter, Margaret Bisdee, says.

Soon after her operation, Ruth conceived her fifth child, Morris, born in 1948.

Today Ruth is the proud grandmother to 17 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren!



Ruth at her 100th birthday

October lasts all year round

Breast Cancer Action Month in October is the most important month on the Foundation's annual calendar. The issue of breast cancer is widely promoted through the media, and TV advertising. People everywhere show their support by holding community events and getting involved with the Pink Ribbon Street Appeal.

The Foundation relies on funds raised during October to provide year round awareness and education programmes, research grants, advocacy and support for women with breast cancer. This year through the generosity and energy of supporters and partners all around New Zealand, around \$1.1million was raised to support the Foundation's programmes.

The first ever two-day street appeal was a great success, with a record 7500 volunteers stepping out on October 12 and 13.

The brave Pink Ribbon calendar girls, featuring amongst others Helena McAlpine and Jools Topp, bared all for their stunning 2013 Calendar. Their target to raise \$100,000 is on track.

Bridgestone, a corporate partner of the Foundation raised over \$72,000 through sales of its Pink Cap tyre valve drive, and

head office staff in Auckland went one step further, going Pink For A Day to support breast cancer awareness.

Community events were held the length and breadth of the country – an astounding 173 in total!

Auckland gym Specforce ran a 40-hour circuit-athon, linking to the Foundation's message about the importance of having a yearly mammogram from age 40. Originally wanting to raise \$10,000, they achieved an incredible result of around \$40,000.

Avid cyclist Ciaran Corrigan, along with three other cycling enthusiasts, rode from

Cape Reinga to Bluff in just under three weeks and raised \$2,000.

The Foundation is so grateful to the New Zealand public and its partners for getting behind Breast Cancer Action Month. The gift of giving inspires and energises the work that we do.

Congratulating SpecForce's efforts



Cyclist Ciaran Corrigan and team



Bridgestone go Pink For A Day

We Heart Helena!

Helena McAlpine, a young mother, was diagnosed with breast cancer at 31. At 33, her cancer came back as a secondary tumour, which is incurable. Beautiful girl that she is, Helena (pictured) came to the Foundation with just one wish: would we help her get a message out to young women?

The message was that women must be breast aware, be vigilant. They must know what to look for, and know what to do if they suspect a problem.

Together with Helena, the Foundation put out her message during October 2012 in the hard-hitting 'Our Women' TV commercial and online campaign, sharing her story in the knowledge it would inspire people to take action. And it did – 'Our Women' has been viewed nearly 800,000 times influencing thousands of women to take action and reduce their risk of breast cancer.

We've heard from many women telling us how Helena's story moved them, informed them, and prodded them to pay attention to their breast health.

The Foundation is truly grateful for Helena's willingness to collaborate. We marvelled at her honesty about her own predicament, her passion to make a difference, and her authenticity. Helena is



View Helena's message at www.ourwomen.co.nz

at all times her own person – her cancer has not defined her. Her exuberance for life remains unabated, as she goes after the goals on her long bucket list.

More than anything, we have been moved by Helena's pure loveliness, her unselfishness, her beautiful personality, her ready smile, no matter how she might be feeling inside. Through October and beyond, she was always happy to go with the flow, to be interviewed or filmed, and to rattle a bucket or three during our street appeal.

Helena, like a brilliant star, you blaze bright and continue to inspire us here at the Foundation. This is a tribute to you – **thank you, Helena!**

E-Guide proving popular

The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation has developed an interactive e-guide for women of all ages to graphically explain the signs and symptoms of breast cancer and show how they can reduce their risk of dying from the disease.

"We wanted to develop an informative and interactive resource that could be accessed at home or from mobile devices by busy women and men anywhere, any time," said national educator, Pat Field.

The e-guide is believed to be the first of its kind in Australasia and is proving popular. Importantly, 81% of users rate it as "very useful".

"I have three daughters and now feel much more comfortable to talk to them about their breast health. Thank you" wrote one woman.

The breast cancer e-guide is accessed on the Foundation's website at www.nzbcf.org.nz



Check out the fantastic new interactive E-guide on www.nzbcf.org.nz

New e-guide online

A delicious way to help

Kirsty Jessop is still stunned when she thinks back to the hundreds of friends and family who arrived from all over the country to join her Pink Ribbon Breakfast.

"Diagnosed with invasive carcinoma breast cancer in May 2011, I wanted to give something back to other women and also raise awareness," Kirsty, 35, says.

Raising an impressive \$7500 for the Foundation by holding an auction at her event, the Northland mother of two is now encouraging others to gather their nearest and dearest to host a Pink Ribbon Breakfast in May.

"It's a liberating feeling knowing someone with breast cancer has benefited from me and my Pink Ribbon Breakfast," Kirsty says.

Kirsty (pictured) is now in remission but her on-going appointments and MRIs are a reminder of how serious the disease is and the risk she has of the cancer returning.

"I never want sympathy but know it's OK to ask for help," says Kirsty, who has found gardening hugely

therapeutic since she was first diagnosed.

"My advice to other women facing this disease is to surround yourself with positive people, and feel informed and comfortable with your medical professionals."

Since 2008, thousands of New Zealanders have enjoyed hosting and taking part in a Pink Ribbon Breakfast.

Host A Pink Ribbon Breakfast this May
www.pinkribbonbreakfast.co.nz



An educator for breakfast?

Over the next few months, our national educators will be busy sharing lifesaving information around the country at venues in Dunedin, Wellington, Rotorua and Northland. In May, they're available to support Pink Ribbon Breakfast fundraising events around the country.

Their role, made possible through the support of donors and business partners, is to educate the general public and health professionals on the signs and symptoms of breast cancer and the importance of early detection.

"Our posters and resources are popping up in doctors' waiting rooms around New Zealand and BreastScreen Aotearoa's screening units", says national educator, Pat Field. "We're always looking for new ways to reach women."

Book an educator to present to your organisation or community group in May – email breasthealth@nzbcf.org.nz or Freephone 0800 902 732



New resources targeting at risk women



Join us online

We're at www.facebook.com/NZBreastCancerFoundation or @nzbcf if you're on Twitter

Contact us.....

for information and support

We welcome all enquiries from women with breast cancer and those wanting information and help.

... to tell us your story

Our work would be meaningless without the stories of the women, their friends, families and colleagues, who are touched

by breast cancer. In this way we hope to raise awareness and promote early detection of the disease.

You can share your story at www.nzbcf.org.nz or e-mail us at info@nzbcf.org.nz or by post to: **New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation, PO Box 99650, Newmarket, Auckland.**

Get up and do some good in May

Yes our fun and popular Pink Ribbon Breakfast campaign will be running again this May.

Hold a Pink Ribbon Breakfast and fundraise for our community outreach programmes this year, to support women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Name _____

Contact Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Name of Workplace/Group _____

Anticipated No. of Attendees _____

Location _____

Town/City _____

Call 0800 902 732 or email info@nzbcf.org.nz for more information

Yes!

I would like to host a Pink Ribbon Breakfast.

Yes!

I would like to hear from The NZBCF via email.

Yes!

I would like to become a NZBCF bequestor.

Sweet Louise supports life

Sweet Louise is a charitable trust that relies on community support to help improve the lives of women and men with secondary breast cancer. The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation has supported Sweet Louise for the past four years providing \$800,000 towards funding. Here, the CEO for Sweet Louise, Sue Brewster (pictured), tells us about the importance of their work.



our members' well-being. They include services such as cleaning, gardening, baking, counselling, exercise programmes, therapies (reiki, reflexology), haircuts, massage, facials and aromatherapy.

"I'm continually inspired by the courage and commitment our Sweet Louise members have to make the most of every moment. Our aim is to provide support and assistance that help members live as well as possible for as long as possible."

Sweet Louise:

- Has 375 members as of January 31.
- Operates a full service in Auckland, Northland, the Mid-Central region (New Plymouth through to Palmerston North and out to Gisborne/Napier) and Wellington. Outside these areas, members can access support through its 0800 number, online forums and its journals.
- Has plans to launch in the Waikato in mid-2013 and in future years, the South Island.

If you want to find out more how Sweet Louise helps visit: www.sweetlouise.co.nz or phone 0800 11 22 77.

"People often ask me how I do my job when I know all of our members are terminal? My answer is that you actually get to see the difference you are making to people's lives.

At Sweet Louise, we see the immense emotional, physical and financial challenges that a secondary breast cancer diagnosis brings.

We try to ease these burdens with our unique voucher system, which accesses more than 160 contracted service providers to enhance

Remembering Miffy

It is with great sadness that the Foundation pays tribute to Miffy Jones who died on September 14th last year. Miffy aged 42, had triple negative breast cancer, an aggressive form of the disease. Even though she was very sick, Miffy wanted to support the work of the Foundation. A talented marketer, she helped the team here by working on the "Save Seven" awareness TV commercial in October 2011 and also shared her story in a fundraising appeal letter. Miffy was passionate about funding research into triple negative breast cancer and about New Zealand women having access to clinical trials.



Miffy leaves behind two young children, Gwylm and Guinevere and her loving husband, Paul. The last word belongs to her and sums up how she chose to live her life.

"Do one selfless thing a week for someone less fortunate than yourself".
Rest in peace, Miffy.

Self-care during breast cancer

Phil Kerslake, author of "Life, Happiness....& Cancer" shares some insights into how to practice self-care when dealing with the stress and anxieties that often accompany cancer. These are suggested as a complementary therapy to medical treatments.

- Meditation and visualisation can enable you to relax and remain positive and focused on your recovery. They can also help lessen your treatment side-effects, such as nausea and pain.
- Music and writing can help you express your emotions, replace depressed feelings with positivity and overcome fears that could otherwise impede your ability to communicate and make decisions.

- Humour is everyone's best friend, especially at times like this. Building your own 'humour library' and stimulating laughter can raise your spirits, help you face procedures, and enable you to access and express your emotions if they are stifled.
- Social support networks such as peer networking, or spending time with your good friends between treatments, can help you feel 'normal' again, provide some respite from the rigours of hospital stays and help with problem-solving and decision-making.

For more tips, visit Phil Kerslake's website at www.lifepaths.co.nz

Susie was treated for HER2 positive breast cancer and writes

"I was interested in trying to do something for myself, instead of relying solely on the medical profession. I still listen to my meditation CD and stick generally to an organic, low meat, low dairy, low sugar diet. All of the dietary and meditation ideas are to get your body in the best possible state, so that your own immune system can fight against and destroy any further cancer cells."



THE NEW ZEALAND
BREAST CANCER
FOUNDATION

Yes! I would like to make a donation to The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation

Here's my donation of \$35 \$75 \$250 Other Amount \$.....

Please make cheques payable to "The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation" or donate by Visa Amex MasterCard

Card No.

Name on Card _____

Signature _____ Expiry Date ____/____/____

All gifts over \$5 are tax deductible

Please make cheques payable to: The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation, Private Bag 99650, Newmarket, Auckland 1149

Please help us continue to provide our lifesaving programmes - free nationwide community education, research, public seminars, medical grants and scholarships, breast cancer patient registers, advocacy and community outreach programmes.

Mr Mrs Miss Ms Other

Name _____

Date of Birth ____/____/____

Address _____

Tel _____

Mob _____

Email _____

A run for the money

It was one of Amy West's biggest life accomplishments - running last year's Auckland Half Marathon. But it wasn't just crossing the finish line that felt amazing for the Rotorua mammographer; it was raising an impressive \$900 for the Foundation.

Amy, 28, is one of many motivated individuals across the country who are Pink Ribbon Active Fundraisers. These go-getters take on all sorts of fitness challenges to help raise awareness and funds to beat breast cancer.

"My elderly grandmother was diagnosed at 83 with breast cancer - resulting in a full mastectomy," says Amy, who wanted to do something for her health and for the Foundation.

"I have been a radiographer for eight years, but trained to be a mammographer last year. It has been an emotional experience, especially meeting 'previous cancer' ladies who are utterly terrified at their yearly check ups. It's great when they get the all clear," says Amy.



Encore for exercise

If you're keen to get back into some exercise following treatment for breast cancer, then check out the YWCA Encore programme. Tell any friends with breast cancer about this too, as YWCA Encore is a free eight-week course of specifically designed hydrotherapy and land-based exercises, healthy lifestyle information, relaxation and peer support. Donations to the Foundation help fund this very effective programme.

Call 0800 ENCORE (0800 362 673) to find a programme near you.

Inspired by Amy's achievement?

Research shows that the risk of developing breast cancer can be reduced by 15-20% with regular physical activity. Set your own goal and sign up to be a Pink Ribbon Active Fundraiser to help yourself and the Foundation. For a list of events around the country, visit www.nzbcf.org.nz/active



Amy's Auckland Half Marathon

Kellogg's Special K on board

The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation is delighted to welcome Kellogg's Special K as the new principal sponsor of this May's Pink Ribbon Breakfast campaign.

Kellogg's Special K Brand Manager Abbie Malakai says "Our goal with Special K is to help women feel confident, motivated and inspired to be their best through our food and lifestyle advice. We're very excited to

partner with the Foundation's Pink Ribbon Breakfast campaign."

Look out for specially marked packs of Special K across April and May as they help New Zealand women take the first step at breakfast in maintaining a healthy weight. The Foundation recommends a healthy body weight especially after menopause, to reduce a woman's risk of breast cancer.



Business Partner Recognition

The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation is grateful for the support of the following business partners.

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Pink Ribbon Gold Partners:



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- Soar Printing
- Colenso BBDO
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