

bloom

Issue

12

May
2012

Reach to Recovery International - RRI

Reach to Recovery International is committed to improving the quality of life for women with breast cancer and their families.

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Message from Ann Steyn

President of Reach to Recovery

Greetings to you all!

This issue of Bloom with its theme of 'Going Public- Initiatives in which organizations and individuals involve the community to spread the message of breast cancer awareness and survivorship' is a bumper issue! We received articles from eight countries America, Australia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa and Zambia showing us the global interest there is on this topic.

All the articles are well worth reading and show the strength and initiative that caring women have.

The Bright Pink programme started as a website for breast and ovarian cancer awareness where women could connect with each other. It has developed into a nonprofit organization focusing on early detection and support for women at high risk. It runs innovative programmes. Read more about these on page eight.

Another programme that also includes Ovarian cancer is run by the Cancer Support Network of Zambia. They run outreach programmes to help educate communities about the disease and at the same time endeavour to remove the stigma attached to breast cancer (see page six).

The Think Pink Foundation's Living Centre has supported 1500 people since July 2010! (See page 15.) They offer emotional, practical and physical support to both women and men and their focus is on wellness not illness. They provide a safe nurturing environment which is so important in the work we do.

We have an article from Australia encouraging healthy lifestyle and exercise. The YWCA Encore programme encourages gentle land and pool based exercises that are targeted for breast cancer patients and help to increase mobility and flexibility. It also helps to minimize the effects of lymphoedema (page three).

From the Philippines we have Kara's story, which as well as speaking of a small miracle tells how breast cancer led her to become a patient advocate and she gives us seven guidelines that she believes in (page four).

I am so encouraged by all these articles and I am sure you will be as well. Women throughout the world are working to empower other women to take responsibility for their bodies and their health.

Email annsteyn@reachtorecoveryinternational.org



Ann Steyn

This means being involved in all aspects of breast cancer: education, support and advocacy.

If any or all of those aspects interest you please attend the 17th RRI Breast Cancer Support Conference and share your expertise with other delegates (see page 10).

Warm Reach to Recovery Greetings to you all!

Ann Steyn



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Email your submissions!

The theme of the next edition will be 'Issues around sexual intimacy and survivorship'. Submissions close on July 18, 2012. Please send submissions should in Microsoft Word format with any pictures.

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Issue 12 May 2012
Bloom is published by Reach to Recovery International. Contributions to Bloom are welcome, please email info@reachtorecoveryinternational.org. For more information about RRI, go to www.reachtorecoveryinternational.org.



We respectfully acknowledge the Indigenous women of our global community, the traditional custodians of our environment.

Reach to Recovery International is supported by the UICC and Cancer Council Queensland



Reaching to Recovery with Exercise!



Pool exercises are held in a heated hydrotherapy pool

YWCA Encore is an eight week program of gentle land and pool-based exercises for women who have experienced breast cancer at any time in their lives.

An increasing body of recent worldwide research shows that physical activity is of both biological and psychological benefit for breast cancer women during and after their various treatments. Three hours exercise per week is reported to reduce the risk of recurrence by 50%.

YWCA Encore is a specifically designed eight week program of gentle land and pool-based exercises for women who have experienced breast cancer at any time in their lives. In the past 25 years, thousands of women around Australia have benefitted from the YWCA Encore program.

YWCA Encore aims to improve mobility and flexibility in arms and shoulders, reduce the potential risk of lymphoedema, relieve any discomfort experienced as a result of surgery, renew self esteem and self image; and create a positive attitude to life and health.

The exercises are specially designed to target areas that have been affected by breast cancer surgery – designed to increase mobility and flexibility and increase the flow of lymphatics, minimising the effects of lymphoedema.

The pool exercises are held in a heated hydrotherapy pool. The classes are also an opportunity for women to share their experiences in a safe and understanding environment.

In addition to the exercises, guest speakers present topics of interest such as aromatherapy and nutrition.

ENCORE in Australia is a National YWCA program. There is an Advisory Group of leading medical specialists who oversee the program.

“The YWCA Encore program has given me strength and optimism to go on after breast cancer”

Dr. Sandi Hayes, Senior Research Fellow at the School of Public Health, Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, Queensland University of Technology is on the Advisory Board .

“YWCA ENCORE is a service that complements the mainstream treatment of breast cancer. It helps meet the exercise and support needs of women in a nurturing and supportive environment”.

The program complements other support services but is unique in its approach and design, designed specifically by women for women and away from the hospital system.

The program is safe, fun and therapeutic and is offered to participants by enrolment only and medical approval is required.

YWCA ENCORE is more than an exercise program, it also plays a vital role in the recovery process such as sharing common experiences, concerns and feelings.

Participant, Mairi, says:

After having a radical mastectomy I attended Encore. The information and exercises helped me recover full movement in my left arm, understand my lymphatic system, and institute a simple daily exercise regime. I found the shared knowledge and support of other women invaluable during the efficiently run program and because it is specifically for those who have experienced breast cancer there was camaraderie and less embarrassment in the gym and pool as we exercised.

The program also has strong support from leading Australian breast cancer physicians. Dr Fran Boyle, Royal North Shore Hospital says:

“I actively encourage my patients to consider participation in Encore. There is increasing evidence that recovery from breast cancer treatment is facilitated by exercise, and this programme is ideal. Women also value the support they derive from the leaders and one another.”

ICANSERVE Foundation



‘Seven things I learned about running a foundation’

ICANSERVE Foundation is an advocacy group of breast cancer survivors based in the Philippines promoting early breast cancer detection through high impact media campaigns and community-based breast cancer screening programs. Founded in 1999, **ICANSERVE** also provides counseling, an on-line support group and educational forums. In this edition of Bloom, the founder of **ICANSERVE**, Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala shares her learnings...

I was a breast cancer patient in 1997. Stage 2B lobular carcinoma. I was clueless about cancer's killer instincts. So cancer didn't bother me. I'm a journalist so I saw it as another opportunity for storytelling. But when told I wouldn't be able to have children after chemotherapy, this wasn't a story I wanted to own. My family and friends rallied around me and told me prayers were more powerful than the doctor's wisdom.

When you have no choice but to believe and to be strong, you take it and you become it. I had a lumpectomy, radiation and reluctantly, chemotherapy. I got engaged. And without trying too hard, I had my miracle. My life's dream. Didn't know it was my life's dream till the chance to have it seemed to have been taken away. My beautiful miracle is a baby girl named Ariana. She turned 11 today.

Being blessed with the honor of being a mother, made me think long and hard of those who didn't realize their life's dream. And of those who didn't

survive cancer. All of these mothers and daughters who died of breast cancer left a trail of broken hearted children, spouses and parents. I had no right to go on living without creating meaning out of my battle scars and that of other women who have become my sisters of the heart.

I started a breast cancer foundation because I needed help from other breast cancer survivors and victors in meeting the increasing number of women who wanted their stories heard. Women who wanted to know how we lived through the cancer experience and continue to deal with the idea that all cancer survivors have death threats for breakfast.

Through the years, my cancer survivor friends and I grew frustrated over cancer patients not knowing any better, not knowing the right doctors, not having a circle of support, and not having access to affordable or free treatments. So we went to town via media spreading knowledge on early breast cancer detection. We wanted hope to go viral.

Then we grew impatient because there was no public support to speak of. We cannot in conscience promote early detection without helping those patients diagnosed with breast cancer afford the next steps. We cannot promote early detection if the communities don't have medical professionals and facilities.

We decided to go direct to the communities of the underserved and uninsured where we were most needed. We became a full fledged advocacy group when we started the program "Ating Dibdibin," or Take your breast care to heart. It is a partnership with cities to institutionalize a community-based early breast cancer detection program. It's the first of its kind in the Philippines where the incidence of breast cancer is one of the highest in Asia.

The comprehensive program includes training of a city's medical health team all the way to providing access to free or discounted diagnostics and treatments.

After close to 13 years of being a cancer survivor, victor, patient advocate, these are the things I learned I hope other advocates will find useful...

1. Every woman's story of healing is important and unique. Sometimes when you've been doing advocacy for so long, you tend to think you've seen and heard it all. But there is a unique gem of wisdom in everyone's story. As someone retells her story, it's as if your own story is being retold. And each time it is, you find a new insight you never knew was there—in your own story, not just hers.

2. Go to the ends of the earth to make time for cancer patients who want to talk to you. It's like when your child experiences an aha or awesome moment and says, "Mom, come look at this!" You just go run to look and not say, "later, am busy." You lose the magic of the moment. In a patient's case, you could've lost a life saving moment. I noticed, when newly diagnosed patients ask to see or talk to me, it usually took them a lot of effort and "courage" to do it even though they made it sound so casual. They tend to feel guilty for what they think is a bother to us. Honor that effort, respond to their needs. Remember what it was like when you were a patient and had those desperate moments. Not to mention, they are the reasons you do this advocacy.

3. No matter how many volunteers you recruit, there will always be a small core that spends more time than others in foundation work. For those dedicated volunteers, never take for granted that just because they give hope to others, they never need it for themselves. Don't forget they are the exact same people as the ones you are trying to help—they too have problems financially, physically and emotional. And in our foundation's

case, the volunteers are breast cancer survivors. Never take that for granted. Have nurturing activities for them. It can be as simple as having lunch with them without having to talk about foundation work. Ask about their health. We had a board members who didn't tell us she was dealing with a recurrence. She skipped doctor visits, and treatments because of fear.

4. Money doesn't solve all the problems. You can give an underserved, uninsured patient free diagnostics and chemo medicines, but it doesn't mean she will do everything the doctor tells her to do. She needs someone to make the whole process friendlier. Many term it patient navigation. A lot of paperwork is confusing. The high tech hospital equipment can feel cold. Being surrounded by men and women in white lab coats can feel like being in heaven prematurely. For others, they still carry many myths and real life situations that are barriers to their healing. For example, in many poor settings, the man beats up the wife once he finds out the wife acknowledges she has cancer. She is rendered useless in the bedroom and the kitchen. Tasks a macho man is unwilling to do himself!

5. Don't forget your own family. You are strong. You are inspired. You give strength. You give inspiration. You are a walking advertisement of hope. You are a sum of your efforts plus your home environment. Don't neglect those who first loved you. Secretly they are always worried about your health. The least you can do is show them you are doing your

best to stay well. This goes without saying make sure they too are healthy.

6. You cannot do it alone. Sometimes publicity and victory, small or big, can make you proud and blind. It does take a village to make big things happen. Collaborate with groups that share your goals. There will always be common ground. There will always be something new to be learned from others. You will be stronger and more effective especially if you meet groups that are experts on certain things you are not. Believe me you cannot be excellent in all fields. We need each other.

7. When you make plans for the foundation, make sure the quantity and quality of your volunteer pool can match those plans. The volunteers are the lifeline of any NGO. You cannot let them do a task they cannot tackle and sustain. Don't force it. The last thing you want are volunteers who dread working with you. The patients they help will imbibe that vibe and their cancer experience will be made doubly heavy. Keep the joy of volunteering burning bright!

There are many other things I wish to share but I will leave you with this magnificent seven guidelines which I sometimes forget! And there's the eighth one. Learning old wisdom as in learning new things never ends.

Keep the faith. Keep believing even when there are other options. In my life, making it the first option has saved my life and given me many opportunities to love and serve.



ICANSERVE President Meanne Solomon and founder Kara Alikpala (far right) with officials from the Taguig City Health Office and PGH Cancer Institute

Raising cancer awareness in strides!



Cancer Support Network of Zambia was incorporated in June, 2011 on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. It is the first and only registered cancer support organization in that province. Due to the high and increasing statistics of cancer incidents in Zambia, we hit the ground running with outreach programs which are designed to empower and involve the community in bringing awareness about cancer where it is needed the most

EDUCATION

In the past one year, we have reached out to schools, community centers, places of worship, local clinics and the largest hospital in the city of Kitwe. In the past one year we have held several educational and interactive workshops on breast and cervical cancer. Participants learn the breast self-examination, how to recognize signs and symptoms and the myths and misconceptions about cancer in the community. Survivors share the stories of survival to de-stigmatize the disease.



MEDIA AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Our awareness programs on public radio and television engage listeners on several awareness topics. On some of the programs, listeners call in to ask our volunteer Doctors medical questions.!

PEER EDUCATION

We held our first survivors' workshop in collaboration with Cancer Diseases Hospital (the only facility that offers comprehensive cancer treatment in Zambia) in July, 2011- Over 30 cancer survivors participated, both male and

female. We discussed advocacy in the community, being your own patient advocate, life beyond the cancer experience, and participation in awareness programs.

Through our peer education program members and survivors get information on the latest scientific updates and breakthroughs. Newly diagnosed patients get the chance to meet and share their experiences with other survivors in a compassionate environment.



YOUTH PROGRAM

Our Youth program provides age-appropriate information to young girls on breast and cervical health, HPV, HIV and the long term effects contracting

sexually transmitted viruses. We also provide them with information on the HPV vaccine, which will be provided in Zambia by the Ministry of Health the near future.

INAUGURAL GALA NIGHT & 2011 BREAST CANCER AWARENESS WALK



Gala2011 was a spectacular and memorable event. The sold-out event held at Edinburgh Hotel, was officiated by the First Lady of the Republic of Zambia, Dr. Christine Kaseba-Sata and attended by the Cabinet Minister of the Copperbelt Province, 3 Mayors, CEO's of prominent corporations on the Copperbelt province and a large number of members of the medical community.

The next day, the First Lady graciously flagged off our Breast Cancer Awareness Walk at City Square in Kitwe.



WORLD CANCER DAY

We held a Health Fair in the sunken gardens at Kitwe Central Hospital and also held a screening of the film "Life Before Death" provided to us by Moonshine Movies, Australia in partnership with UICC. The film was thought-provoking for the nursing students and allowed them to engage in a conversation on the quality of palliative care for cancer patients in Zambia. As a result of this screening, the administration of Kitwe Central Hospital partnered with us to open the first ever Tumor Clinic at a public hospital on the Copperbelt province. The hospital provides us with Doctors and other medical personnel to perform clinical breast, cervical and prostate exams once every week. We hope that this clinic will develop into full

cancer diagnostic center, which can be replicated at other public hospitals. At this clinic, we also offer post mastectomy prosthesis and post-surgical bras as needed.

CROWNING AN AMBASSADOR

Miss Southern Africa International 2011, Nelly Kamwela was appointed our first celebrity Ambassador. She was given a pink sash by a cancer survivor from our organization, which she wears at her public appearances to spread our breast cancer awareness message!

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

We partnered with the "Save Our Mothers" cervical cancer program to screen over 56 women for breast and cervical cancer. We distributed informational brochures to hundreds of women from our booth at City Square. Our survivors/members marched with other women to commemorate International Women's Day!

Cancer Support Network of Zambia has experienced tremendous growth since its inception. We are working to double the impact this year by mobilizing and increasing participation from the public. This year we will increase our peer education and advocacy training programs so that we can get out into rural communities where information is needed the most. We are encouraging and inviting more partnerships from organizations with similar missions and hope this will drive the message quicker and more effectively.

We are very proud of the work we have accomplished in the past year and give credit to our sponsors and supporters for allowing us to reach and continue reaching out to so many people on the Copperbelt Province.



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST BREAST CANCER

You can detect breast cancer early, beat the disease before it is too late.

A simple once-a-month self examination can help you detect breast cancer early. Consult your doctor at once if you notice any changes in your breasts

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Supported by:
Cancer Support Network of Zambia
Spotlight Zambia

Bright Pink: Turning Awareness into Action!



Supporters of Bright Pink Vermont

Be Brilliant. Be Bold. Be Bright Pink.

More than just a mission statement, this is Bright Pink's mantra—a growing national movement and words for all young women to live by. Being Bright Pink is a lifestyle choice. It's about being smart, healthy, and proactive. It's about living up to your fullest potential, taking care of your body, and being empowered to take charge of your breast and ovarian health.

What started as simply a website where young women at high risk for breast or ovarian cancer could connect with one another and find a common place to discuss their high-risk status has blossomed into a vibrant national non-profit organization focusing on the prevention and early detection of breast and ovarian cancer in young women while providing support for high-risk individuals. With nine local chapters across the United States and a network of more than 50,000 committed members, supporters, and volunteers, Bright Pink is a powerful community of young women breathing life into the Bright Pink mantra and giving meaning to the phrase knowledge is power.

Through our innovative, upbeat programs, we seek to educate, enlighten, and support young women, empowering them to become proactive advocates for their health, not victims of a disease. We help spark potentially life-saving conversations with both medical professionals and young women, teaching them how to determine their

lifetime risk for developing breast and ovarian cancer and create personalized strategies to prevent or detect cancer early. Our educational workshops and literature arm women with the information and tools necessary to make informed decisions about their breast and ovarian health. For those young women facing an elevated risk for breast cancer, Bright Pink provides support to help them manage the unique and difficult challenges they face, including genetic testing, losing a loved one to cancer, or undergoing risk-reducing surgery. Our support programs help high-risk women navigate the complex medical, social, and emotional issues that come with being at high risk for breast or ovarian cancer so that no young woman faces her journey alone.

Over the past five years, Bright Pink has built a growing, enlightened community of female thought leaders and health advocates around the nation who are working to turn breast and ovarian cancer awareness into action. Our mission comes to life as our Chapters, led by volunteer Ambassadors, and our volunteer Allies activate our programs within their communities year-round.

Bright Pink recruits, selects, and trains volunteer leaders who engage their local communities in Bright Pink's mission by:

- Hosting Experiential Outreach Groups that provide support and a sense of community to young women who are at high risk for breast and ovarian cancer

- Organizing Breast/Ovarian Health 101 Educational Workshops to arm young women with the knowledge and resources they need to prevent breast and ovarian cancer or detect these diseases early
- Representing Bright Pink at community health fairs and other outreach initiatives
- Serving as Bright Pink Storytellers and helping to grow our network by sharing their personal story and enlisting the involvement and support of others
- Distributing educational literature to medical professionals in an effort to spark conversations between doctors and patients about breast and ovarian cancer risk and strategies for prevention and early detection
- Hosting fundraising events, which raise awareness and vital funds for the continued development and expansion of Bright Pink's educational and outreach programs nationwide
- Recruiting and developing other volunteers who can help build a strong community of Bright Pink supporters in their city

To learn more about Bright Pink or to get involved with our brilliant community of volunteers working to ensure that all young women become proactive advocates for their breast and ovarian health, visit BrightPink.org.

Impact Through Translation: Cancer Research Informing Practice

IPOS
INTERNATIONAL
PSYCHO-ONCOLOGY
SOCIETY



**Clinical
Oncological
Society of
Australia**

JOINT MEETING OF
IPOS 14th World Congress and
COSA's 39th Annual Scientific Meeting

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

11th - 12th November 2012 – IPOS Psychosocial Academy

Full and half day workshops will be offered on a broad range of topics. Presented by prominent experts in their field these workshops are designed to provide participants with practical hands on learning and experience.

13th - 15th November 2012 – IPOS 14th World Congress

With a large number of world's leading psycho-oncologists, clinicians and researchers confirmed as invited speakers, the Congress program of plenary, symposia, oral abstracts and posters will ensure all delegates gain new understandings of the future opportunities for psycho-oncology on the international stage.

Registration is now open

Early bird registration closes – 7 September

For full details of the IPOS Psychosocial Academy and Congress Program please visit:

www.ipos-cosa.org

The 2012 IPOS 14th World Congress of Psycho-Oncology and Psychosocial Academy will be held in Brisbane, Australia's new world city, in conjunction with the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) 39th Annual Scientific Meeting. The Congress and Academy are initiatives of the International Psycho-Oncology Society (IPOS), and will be hosted by Cancer Council Queensland, in partnership with the Psycho-Oncology Cooperative Research Group and the Australian Psychosocial Oncology Society.





**17th REACH TO RECOVERY INTERNATIONAL
BREAST CANCER SUPPORT CONFERENCE
20 – 22 MARCH 2013
CAPE TOWN
SOUTH AFRICA**

Together We Reach for South Africa in 2013!

**Mark your diary to be in Cape Town, South Africa, for
The 17th Reach to Recovery International Conference
from March 20 to 22 in 2013.**

Together We Reach

The 17th Reach to Recovery International Breast Cancer Support Conference will be held in Africa for the first time from 20-22 March 2013 in Cape Town. Enjoy stimulating conference sessions, with pre-conference workshops on March 19, a great social programme and the chance to visit Cape Town, South Africa.

The theme of the conference is Together We Reach and we will be looking at breast cancer from the perspectives of the patient (both the newly diagnosed and those with metastatic spread), the survivor, the partner, the family, the community, the breast cancer activist and the health professional. We will reach together to improve the quality of life for women and men with breast cancer.

Call for Abstracts

Preparations are underway for Reach to Recovery International 2013 and this is your chance to help shape the programme.

We are looking for abstracts that will evolve into thought-provoking presentations and posters and are open to a wide range of proposals.

All abstracts will be considered, but use the provisional programme as a guide.

Oral Presentations & Posters

Oral presentations will be 20 minutes long with an additional 10 minutes for questions and answers at the end of the session.

Posters will be on display for the duration of the conference and presenters will be expected to attend their posters during breaks. Please take these logistics into consideration when preparing your abstract.

Registration Fees and Information

Registration for the 17th RRI opens in August 2012, with discounts for early registration, African delegates and South African Reach For Recovery volunteers.

Click here to view the 17th RRI Registration Fees and Information or click here to be added to our mailing list in order to be notified when registration opens.

17th RRI is on Facebook and Twitter

Join the Facebook and Twitter groups to keep up with conference developments and see which of your colleagues and acquaintances from around the world are planning to attend.

**Find out more about
ABSTRACTS**

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2012
August 27-30
Montréal, Canada



**CONNECTING
 FOR
 GLOBAL
 IMPACT**



worldcancercongress.org

HOSTED BY



Global Kitchen

This edition, Global Kitchen brings you a dish from South Africa



Welcome to Global Kitchen, where we feature exotic recipes and home cooking from cultures around the world.

Melktert

Melktert is a traditional Afrikaanse tart usually enjoyed with a cup of tea or coffee. It can also be served as dessert.

Ingredients

- 2 cups of milk
- 1 heaped tablespoon of cornflour
- 1 heaped tablespoon of flour
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 3 or more eggs (separated)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon almond essence
- Pinch of salt



Method

1. Boil the milk.
2. Mix the flour, cornflour, sugar and salt with a little milk and add to the boiling milk.
3. Add beaten egg yolks, butter and flavouring, folding in beaten egg whites.
4. Pour mixture into prepared pastry crust and bake in oven for 20 minutes.

If you have a recipe to share, please email info@reachtorecoveryinternational.org

Pink Ribbon Pakistan: Promoting awareness and survivorship

Pink Ribbon Pakistan is on track to reach 500,000 youth to promote breast cancer awareness in 2012, involving the community in a nationwide campaign.

Pakistan has the highest rate of Breast Cancer in Asia. One in nine women in Pakistan are at risk of being diagnosed in their lifetime and the highest prevalence of all female cancers in Pakistan, at a rate of 38.5 per cent.

The Pink Ribbon Pakistan campaign is working to end the tragedy of 40,000 female deaths of breast cancer each year.

The focus of the campaign is on prevention, recognising that the survival rate increases to more than 90 per cent if detected early.

The campaign is promoting awareness by distribution of information and material nationwide, holding various events and activities that engage women.

The campaign also co-ordinates clinical checks and medical advice, with a free national screening program in collaboration with partner hospitals.

Alarming, recent trends have found

breast cancer incidence is increasing in younger women in Pakistan. The campaign is therefore targetting younger women, who also have a positive influence on older generations, motivating mothers to do regular self-examinations, attend medical checkups and screening.

The campaign is being supported by Pakistan's Higher Education Commission and PAEC Cancer Hospitals have named 2012 'Pink Ribbon Youth Year'.

The campaign's target is to reach out to 500,000 youth through 500 Colleges and Universities in 12 months.



Breast Cancer Network Australia: Fields of Women connect the community

Breast cancer network Australia (BCNA) encourages communities to hold mini-fields of women to show support and pay tribute to women, their families and friends throughout October – breast cancer awareness month.

Pink lady silhouettes are planted and communities are invited to put personal messages on the silhouettes. BCNA information and merchandise is also available.

Each year one of the BCNA's local support groups, Breast Intentions, holds an event combined with a local festival.

The event promotes the BCNA mini-field to an audience of hundreds of locals and visitors to the region.

People enquire about BCNA and the local support group, and each year it is likely that a newly diagnosed woman or her family will establish a new connection with BCNA, further promoting breast cancer awareness.

BCNA's local dragons abreast team also take their boat to the festival, stimulating conversation and often encouraging new members!

BCNA members use a roster during the

event, allowing members and volunteers to enjoy the food and entertainment during the day.

Family and friends also provide support.

Each year beautiful messages are left on the pink ladies, some in support of women who are undergoing treatment, who have been successful with treatment and also in memory of women who have died.

Fields of Women have become a special event around Australia, giving all members of the community a chance to openly express their support.



The Think Pink Foundation Living Centre



Since opening its doors in July 2010, the Think Pink Foundation's Living Centre in Melbourne, Australia, has assisted over 1,500 people affected by breast cancer.

The Living Centre is a state of the art

facility dedicated to providing emotional, practical and physical support to women and men diagnosed with breast cancer, their families and carers.

The Living Centre focus is wellness, not illness, with a goal to support and empower.

The Centre's staff listen and offer support by providing a safe, nurturing environment that provides quality supportive care.

The Centre has full time Breast Care Nurses who provide support and information and facilitate programs and events at the centre.

Peer support volunteers are available to share their experiences with others and

regular support groups for both women and male partners of women diagnosed with breast cancer are held at the Living Centre.

Additionally, there are other services and programmes including meditation, art therapy, reflexology, reiki and massage.

The Centre's fully equipped salon also has a wig library enabling women to borrow a wig for the duration of their treatment.

Emergency accommodation is another service available in our fully appointed two bedroom apartment for regional families travelling to Melbourne for treatment.

Contact us via www.thinkpink.org.au/



Raising hope through community support



Left to right seated: Renee Goedhals, Josey Nonkonyane, Beulah Jankelowitz and Elizabeth Greeff of Reach for Recovery. Left to right standing: Greta Treisman, Stephne Jacobs and Mr Ross Richardson, Chairman of SAMFA.

Reach for Recovery South Africa received a boost recently with the donation of R380,620 (more than US\$45,000) following a fundraising initiative between the South African Mushroom Farmer's Association (SAMFA) Pick'n'Pay and Yucca Packaging.

Spokesperson, Beulah Jankelowitz, said community support was critical to the work of Reach for Recovery.

"As a group of volunteers, this kind of financial support is what allows us to continue making a difference in the lives of breast cancer patients.

"The funds raised this year will be used to purchase silicone prostheses for women unable to afford them, allowing us to extend our work further into needy communities throughout South Africa."

The Chairman of SAMFA presented Reach for Recovery with the donation.

Reach to Recovery International: Celebrating the power of shared experience!

Each year around 1.4 million women worldwide are newly diagnosed with breast cancer, with estimates that by 2050 the incidence of breast cancer will be 3.2 million new cases annually.

Reach to Recovery International has a vital role to play in providing women with support through their cancer experience.

As many readers of Bloom will know, Reach to Recovery International is proudly auspiced by Cancer Council Queensland (CCQ). A recent paper by CCQ's researchers highlights the fact that while we face many challenges in addressing the global burden of breast cancer, the good news is that prospects for ongoing improvements in survival are tremendous.

Our researchers found that incidence rates may increase in less developed countries, due largely to increasing

life expectancy, higher alcohol consumption, less physical activity and delay of childbearing.

Their research shows that the global burden is likely to be characterised by increasing incidence in the Asian region.

Encouragingly, there are a range of strategies which have helped to improve outcomes for women in less developed countries.

These strategies include public awareness campaigns such as those supported and led by RRI, demonstrating the importance of 'going public' and involving communities in our advocacy.

The uniqueness of the RRI movement is that it has been driven by women who have been affected, who understand the challenges and appreciate the importance of appropriate supportive care following a diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer.



The Reach to Recovery International movement plays a special role; a role which acknowledges and celebrates the power of shared personal experience.

It is a great honour to be a part of this movement.

Professor Jeff Dunn
Chair, RRI Board of Management
CEO, Cancer Council Queensland

In Memory: Mary Onyango

A Eulogy for Mary by Ann Steyn

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the death of Mary.

I was sad because I would no longer see her - that gracious beautiful lady.

I was sad because I would no longer hear her - with that distinctive laughter.

I was sad because I would no longer be able to touch her - and feel that warmth and compassion that radiated from her.

But I was glad that I had known her.

Mary Onyango came into my life a decade ago when she travelled to Cape Town to undertake a Reach to Recovery training.

I at once knew I had met a remarkable woman.

Despite having been diagnosed and treated for breast cancer Mary was determined to use her diagnosis as a springboard to work for the improvement of conditions for other women with breast cancer.

We met again twice in Kenya and at various breast cancer conferences around the world where Mary passionately fought for an improvement in the quality of life for women with breast cancer - particularly for those women less fortunate than her.

She always knew her facts and presented them with clarity and conviction.

Watching her handle politicians and the medical profession was an eye opener to me!

She was direct, didn't mince her words but tempered it all with a delightful smile and sense of humour. They couldn't ignore her.

Mary was a highly intelligent woman who as they say "didn't suffer fools gladly"! Yet she was prepared to spend many hours listening to the worries and concerns of her fellow sisters.

Her wisdom and commitment to fighting for breast cancer support, education and suitable breast health policies in Kenya was unparalleled. She was your leading light and all the ladies of Reach to Recovery Kenya will miss her guidance.

Reach to Recovery International will also miss Mary. Her role there was only just beginning.



We will remember her as having all the criteria for a perfect Reach for Recovery volunteer.

Loyalty, commitment, sensitivity, humility, perseverance, compassion, to mention only a few.

She was a wonderful mother, daughter, family member and friend, and I know will be missed greatly by them.

She meant so much to all the ladies of Reach for Recovery Kenya and the Kenya Breast Health Foundation.

Despite her far too short time with us Mary made a difference. And we will remember her for that.

We know that our sister is now at peace and with her Maker.

Go well my dear friend. Hamba Kahle.

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EVENTS

MONTREAL, CANADA August 2012:

UICC World Cancer Congress
August 27 - 30, 2012

Go to www.worldcancercongress.org/

VIENNA, AUSTRIA October 2012:

The Global Summit on International Breast Health
October 3 - 5, 2012

Go to www.bhgi.info

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA November 2012:

IPOS 14th World Congress of Psycho-Oncology
November 11 - 15, 2012

Go to www.ipos-society.org/ipos2012/

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA March 2013:

The 17th RRI Breast Cancer Support Conference
March 20 - 22, 2013

Go to <http://www.reachtorecovery2013.org>

Our mission

Reach to Recovery International is built on a simple yet universal principle: a woman who has lived through breast cancer and gives of her time and experience to help another woman confronting the same experience is a valuable source of support. Reach to Recovery International is committed to working to improve the quality of life for women with breast cancer and their families through a wide range of services offered worldwide.

To contact RRI please email info@reachtorecoveryinternational.org or visit the website. The material published in Bloom does not necessarily express the views of RRI but is provided for the information of readers.

