

"The Unsung Heroes" & Highlights of Their Stories

Radiology Malaysia-Meditel MyStory: CeritaKu Contest 2005

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Rene'e Aziz Ahmad, 44 years old – relates her brush with breast cancer and conquering Mount Kilimanjaro – the Roof of Africa!

"As amazing as it may sound, I feel that I have been given a gift – the opportunity to contribute to society by giving hope to other women who have been told that they too have breast cancer. To me, death is part of the cycle of life. Fighting breast cancer has not been about defeating death. It has been about living life."

Roy Norman Botley, 72 years old – relates his routine centred about his wife with ovarian cancer

"Towards the end of her life, I would sit by her bed. She would be sleeping. She would rouse – open her eyes, see me sitting there. She would smile, her hand would reach over to hold mine. Then she would close her eyes and return to sleep with a smile on her face."

Mrs Sooria Kumari Singovan, 53 years old – a nurse who goes back to University to earn a degree and even opens a pharmacy amongst other achievements, all after surviving breast cancer.

"The doctor's words hit me so forcefully that I could not breathe. My head spun, my face emotionless... The very one thing I learnt during the journey of my treatment – you can buy anything with money but never your life, it's never in your hands!!!"

Sharon Toh Shu Ren, 25 years old – shares her mother's 2 year battle with colon cancer

"She died peacefully at home. Even so, I believe she won the battle against cancer. She died surrounded by people who loved her. Cancer may have destroyed her body, and numerous medical procedures weakened it but the experience of those 2 years only strengthened her spirit.... Cancer may have shortened her life, but it cannot diminish its influence over those who knew her and who hear her story. That was and is my mother's victory."

Munirah Aminullah, 21 years old – a medical student details her mother's fight with breast cancer

"Last night, Mother had her last breath at about 8.30pm, with the rest of the family beside her. Tears streamed down my cheeks but I had to accept the fact that Allah loves her more than us. Goodbye, Mother."

Gan Poy Kim, 52 years old – who hopes that her story as a cancer survivor will serve to benefit others

"In retrospect, I still shudder at all that took place in terms of investigations, surgery, cycles of treatment for my breast and colorectal cancers. Those were very trying, painful and difficult days... Now, with my illness under remission, I am ever happy to help and encourage other cancer patients the same way I had received encouragement and emotional support."

Keh Chooi Yiang, 27 years old – relates the story of her mother, her heroine who was diagnosed with breast cancer 16 years ago but had to battle recurrence in the last 5 years.

"We were not allowed either to feel sorry for her or do things differently. She continued to be the chief executive officer and managing director of our home!"

Keh Chooi Lan, 32 years old – elder sister to Keh Chooi Yiang. She also relates her version of her mother's 16- year fight with breast cancer

".... Cancer patients and their family members should trust and listen to their oncologist. ...some drugs need 3 months to work before any results can be seen. There were also instances when the hormone drug only worked for 9 months before she had to change drugs again. Mom survived breast cancer for 16 years by eating a balanced diet. She did not believe in any fad diets or direct selling claims that their products could cure cancer.... Towards the end, being a united and caring family allowed Mom to leave us peacefully. We have been able to let her go with sadness but without guilt. We love you Mom."

Susan Marquez, 44 years old – relates her thoughts and observations on breast cancer

"...of course prevention is the best way but sometimes, we just can't avoid anything that comes along our way all of a sudden.... And this is where mental strength, support and encouragement come in handy to go through the difficult stages of breast cancer."

Jamilah Samian, 43 years old – tells the story of her cousin with breast cancer

"Based on my progress so far, the doctors believe I have a good chance of surviving. I do, too. I'm determined to win this battle and get my life back on track. Looking back, I'm just glad my cancer, was discovered before it was too late."

Siti Marlina Zainal, 29 years old – breast cancer survivor, who got married after completing treatment for breast cancer.

"Refused to be engulfed in constant frustration and discontentment, I spent a few minutes every day bidding farewell to my breast... two days after I was discharged from the hospital, I was busy making cookies and cakes for Hari Raya."

Wong Mei Lee, 44 years old – health writer for over a decade gives her views on cancer

"But one crucial area that needs to be addressed, and hopefully in a more systematic manner: is that of proper counseling and emotional support for all those affected by cancer.Perhaps, it is time to reassess and refocus for a more successful national cancer management system; by understanding that ultimately, it is really the human factor that matters most"

Cynthia Chok Fui Man, 31 years old – recalls her feelings and thoughts about her aunty with cancer and Cynthia's own attitude towards cancer.

*".... Eleven years has gone by and more and more people that I know have 'left'. Suddenly I feel extremely angry, angry with the fact that there is no cure yet for cancer.... A wild thought came across my mind. I, from this day onward will not spell cancer as cancer. I shall spell it as **CanSurvive!** ... The only way to win this 'war' is through early diagnosis and getting early treatment. Awareness is the key prevention. With that more **CanSurvive!**"*