



Media Release

LOCAL SUPERHEROES AND THEIR SIDEKICKS SHARE THEIR STORIES OF BATTLING BREAST CANCER

United to battle a fierce villain, breast cancer, Torontonians get ready to gather at the 2010 Rethink Romp

TORONTO – June 7th, 2010 – With a great rack comes great responsibility! This year the annual Rethink Romp will call upon all Torontonians to support the battle against Breast cancer; a villain that is estimated to affect 23,200 Canadian women in 2010. On Thursday, June 10th, Toronto partygoers, superheroes and their sidekicks will gather upon the beam of pink light (courtesy of the CN Tower) at Steam Whistle Brewing for the 2010 Rethink Romp – Superheroes.

“The Rethink Romp is designed to be sexy, stylish, fun, and empowering – just like the women we support – and this year is no exception,” said MJ DeCoteau, Founder and Executive Director of Rethink Breast cancer. “Young people tend to think they are invincible and might not learn what they should about breast cancer until it’s too late – this event is designed to change that mentality.”

All young women are heroines in their own way and yet the majority of them do not consider breast cancer a risk. However, in 2010 approximately 446 Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer each week. Each year, 5,000 women under the age of 50 are diagnosed and 1,100 of those are under the age of 40. Young women with breast cancer struggle with many issues that their post-menopausal counterparts don’t face; isolation, uncertainty about fertility, child care, employment, sexuality and more.

To avoid facing this villain, all women should take an oath to stay fit, eat right, consider their family history, educate themselves about breast cancer and know their bodies so they are able to detect any changes.

The following profiles showcase beautiful, wise, strong and powerful women that showed great courage in the face of breast cancer. Each one is available for interviews.

Superhero: Karyn Stowe

Age Diagnosed: 37

Superpower: Supermommy

Her Story: At the age of 37, Karyn was enjoying her life as a busy mom with three young kids. In 2008, her life changed when her friends took her to the Rethink Romp. Thanks to lessons she learned at the Romp, Karyn did a self breast check the next morning and discovered a lump. Shortly after, she was in fact diagnosed with breast cancer. With no prior breast cancer anywhere in her family history Karyn didn’t think it could happen to her.

A year after finishing her chemotherapy and radiation treatments, Karyn has beat cancer but still feels that you never “finish breast cancer.” The risk of recurrence is something she is conscious of every single day. Thanks to Rethink and their many support programs she made it through. Karyn also received Rethink's Booby Innovation Grant to write a children's book about a mom going through breast cancer to help children understand the disease and what it means for their parents.

Superhero: Ramona Lee

Age Diagnosed: 27

Superpower: Positivity and Strength

Her story: Just before her 28th birthday, Ramona discovered a lump in her breast. A few weeks later, she was diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer. Due to the size of the tumor she underwent six months of chemotherapy prior to surgery where doctors removed her breast and lymph nodes under her armpit. This was followed by six weeks of radiation. With the initial stage of her battle complete – beating cancer - Ramona still had to continue her fight to feel whole again, and spent the next three years on reconstructive surgery.

As someone who did not have cancer in her family history and had regular physicals, including one less than a year prior to her diagnosis, Ramona realized cancer could affect anyone, at any time, at any age. This year, Ramona is five years cancer free, has a beautiful daughter and a wonderful husband and knows there is life after cancer.

Ramona's Sidekick: Sandra Noto

Her story: From finding the lump, through all of her surgeries, to celebrating her victory, Sandra was Ramona's shoulder to cry on, person to confide in, and most importantly, her support along the way. Every sidekick has their own story and Sandra is no exception.

To Sandra, Ramona is an amazing woman who chose to be a survivor and always stay positive. Sandra helped Ramona every step of the way. Trying on wigs, shaving her head, getting through chemotherapy and mostly just “being there” for her. Sandra felt so many emotions going through this battle with Ramona – fear, frustration, helplessness and anger because ultimately she couldn't cure it. To get through the tough times Sandra also needed a support system and was lucky to have so many people help her. People that did not even know Ramona. They offered to buy groceries, drive them to the hospital, anything that was needed because even sidekicks need support.

Superhero: Inez Kim

Age Diagnosed: 37

Superpower: Laughter

Her Story: Inez was just 37 years old when she discovered a lump in her breast. She had just had her second child so she thought it might just be a calcified milk duct. Thankfully, she chose to play it safe and see her doctor for a check-up and that's when the cancer was discovered. Inez had a very large tumor and her cancer was Stage 3. Things moved so quickly she barely had time to process everything.

From diagnosis, to surgery, to treatment, she is doing whatever it takes to get by. With her husband and children by her side, and her sisters, mother and friends there for more love and support, she is pushing through. With six rounds of chemotherapy and five rounds of radiation complete, Inez isn't done yet, but she is hopeful and optimistic. In her words, “Rethink was the best thing that happened to me.” There she found her support group and the people are helping

her and her family make it through this trying time. Inez is involved in the program and still fighting the battle against cancer but she's keeping a positive attitude and as she likes to say, "it could always be worse!"

Superhero: Debbie James

Age Diagnosed: 41

Superpower: Fighter

Her Story: In 2009, Debbie was active, healthy, and loved the outdoors. She had a successful career as a veterinary neurosurgeon and was moving towards becoming a partner in her practice. Then the unthinkable happened; Debbie found a lump in her breast. The initial biopsy confirmed she had invasive breast cancer and moving quickly, her doctors scheduled her for surgery and chemotherapy. Making matters worse, she didn't have disability insurance so she needed to continue working part-time throughout her treatment.

Knowing chemotherapy would put her into early menopause, Debbie took matters into her own hands and had embryos frozen before beginning treatment to preserve her dream of having a family in the future. Today, Debbie is a survivor but her diagnosis puts her at a higher risk of relapse. As part of prevention, she must take medication for several years during which she is unable to get pregnant. Now, Debbie will need to look for a surrogate to have a family. Rethink has been there for Debbie every step of the way - from peer-groups to mentors - and Debbie hopes one day she too can give back and become a mentor to someone through Rethink.

About the Rethink Romp

At Rethink, we are thinking differently about how to beat breast cancer. By continually rethinking a problem, we believe we will succeed. We are committed to rethinking just about everything we do, and our annual Rethink 'Romp', which features a different theme each year, is no exception. Every June, we strive to bring you a romp like no other.

About Rethink Breast Cancer

Rethink Breast Cancer is a charity helping young people who are concerned about and affected by breast cancer through innovative breast cancer education, research and support programs. Rethink is a national volunteer-driven registered charity with a bold, enterprising and entrepreneurial approach. We are thinking differently about how to beat breast cancer.

By taking a groundbreaking approach to all aspects of breast cancer - awareness, medical research, support, and fundraising - Rethink is a new breed of breast cancer charity and plays an important role in expanding support for the cause.

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For more information, to set-up an interview or to RSVP contact Narrative Advocacy Media:

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