



For Members only

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AVON GLOBAL CONNECTION PINK RIBBON TOUR SENDAI, JAPAN - 13 OCTOBER 2007 by Tammy Tam

I had the honour and pleasure of being chosen by BCWA to receive the Avon Global Pink Ribbon on behalf of our country and to take it on the next leg of its global tour to Sendai City in Japan. I had never been to Japan and though the visit would be short and busy I looked forward to it.

I flew from Kuala Lumpur to Narita Airport (Tokyo) on 11th September and I was met by Ms Masako and Ms Naomi who were my guides, interpreters and companions for the whole of my visit. Both of them were from Avon, Tokyo.

We checked into the Sendai Excel Hotel Tokyu at noon on Friday and contrary to what I had heard about Japanese hotel rooms being small and cramped, this one was comfortable and spacious. I had a short rest, got into my "Malaysian costume" (baju kebaya) and was off to Sendai City Hall at 3.00 p.m. to meet Dr. Iwasaki, the Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor speaks English, was very pleasant and asked about cancer support activities in Malaysia. It was then back to the hotel, a short break, dinner and a well-earned rest. Dinner in Japan is at 5.00 p.m. and for us Malaysians who have tea at 4.00 p.m., dinner at 7.00 p.m. and supper at 10.00 pm, it was a cultural shock! The other thing I discovered about Japanese food is that it tastes better in Japan than in Malaysia.

Saturday (13/10/2007) - the big day - the Pink Ribbon Smile Walk at Kotodai Park. We arrived at the park at 9.30 a.m. and it was a beautiful sight. With the exception of the trees, everything else seemed to be in pink. T-shirts, pants, skirts, bags and pink balloons dancing in the

air. The Park was packed with men, women and children of all ages and I could sense the spirit of support for breast cancer survivors.

There were about 2,000 participants for the two sessions: the 10 km - walk for the sponsors and those who take their walking seriously, and the 5 km- walk for breast cancer survivors and their ardent supporters. The 10 km. walk commenced with Mr. Terence Moorhead (General Manager of Avon Japan) and other sponsors lighting candles in memory of those who had lost their lives to breast cancer. It was an emotional moment for it brought to mind friends that we have lost.

The 5 km. walk commenced with the handing-over of the Avon Global Pink Ribbon ceremony. After the opening speech, it was my turn to say a few words. I told them of my experience with cancer and my message to all women that "Breast cancer can be beaten. There is hope and one should never give up".

I then handed over the Avon Global Pink Ribbon to Ms Yoko Kameda who attended the Global Survivors Day in New York on 4-7 October. The 5 km. walkers were then flagged off, led by Mr. Moorhead, myself, Yoko and other breast cancer survivors. It was lovely walking through the city streets with people waving and wishing us and we, laughing and waving back. Sendai is a beautiful and friendly city and they made me feel that they cared about their breast cancer survivors. I ended the day by being interviewed by the Asahi newspaper and another 5.00 pm dinner!



"Pink Ribbon Smile Walk 2007, Kotodai Park, Sendai, Japan



Tammy handing over the Avon Global Pink Ribbon to Ms Yoko.

BCWA was invited by Meredith Campbell from Amazon Heart Adventure to send a breast cancer survivor to join them from 16-27 October 2007. Wong Mee Yee, Captain of the Pink Challengers Dragon Boat team was selected and below is her adventure in Australia.

Adventure Events for Breast Cancer Survivors

What if breast cancer is just the start of an incredible journey? Take up the challenge of Amazon Heart Adventure and develop lifelong friendships with other breast cancer survivors from across the globe. Celebrate life and change the world through advocacy, fundraising and local community projects.

This is what Amazon Heart Adventures is all about. They provide breast cancer survivors with a life changing experience, while creating wider social impact in local communities. For the women taking part, the events are an amazing opportunity to share their experiences with other survivors and further their own journey of emotional and psychological healing after breast cancer. Each event also has a unique social impact, either through direct community service as part of the event, or raising funds for community projects. Most importantly, they are about coming together, celebrating living life fully and having a fantastic time! Amazon Heart was founded by two young women diagnosed with breast cancer in their early thirties: Meredith Campbell and Megan Dwyer.

The Australian ride started in Melbourne on 16th October and the journey along the beautiful Great Ocean Road took us to spots passing through beautiful countryside and finally riding into Adelaide on 27th October.

The first meeting was always formal as this was the first time that all of us met together as a group and after all the introductions and sharing of our own stories. We talked through our plans for the week. At the end of the session we were presented with brand new Harley Davidson jackets, including myself which was a very nice surprise and delight as well! The next day everyone was up early and headed straight to Calder Park Raceway to collect the bikes. After several rounds of practice with 2 Harley instructors, we were all ready to hit the road for the first time on the new Harleys. We made our way back to the hotel and were happy that everything went smoothly during the ride home. The third day started with a relaxing ride to the Werribee Open Range Zoo. After a quick freshen-up at the Hotel, we made our way to Harley Heaven in Dandenong where we were invited to a special reception. There, Meredith spoke about Amazon Heart, it's impact on breast cancer survivors and the adventure itself which will be taking off the next morning from Channel 10 (TV news channel) Como Building.

The big day came and a large crowd of family members and supporters were already waiting for us to watch the live telecast of the take off. After a 6 minute interview with Meredith and Megan, we were on the bikes and roaring off down the road with our horns blaring as we rode off towards Geelong Harley Davidson. There, a group of local women who had seen the Channel 10 story and had raced down to meet us, amongst them, a breast cancer survivor and her daughter. After being

interviewed and a group photo taken we continued our journey and came to the famous arched sign over the official start of the Great Ocean Road and stopped for more photos. The next section took us into the Otway mountains, and those who thought they would be disappointed to leave the ocean, found this road even better - beautiful sweeping curves, through mountain forests and then suddenly finding ourselves burst out into deep green hidden valleys with farmland and cute livestock! After breakfast, we continued on the last spectacular stretches of the Great Ocean Rd. We made a quick stop at London Bridge (which has fallen down), then the Bay of Martyrs - a vista of dozens of sandstone pillars like the Twelve Apostles. All this while those who were not riders but followed from behind the riders in 2 vans had their first experience of pillion riding today. We rode on the back as far as our next stop, Warnambool, along the last stretch of coastline and through open farmland. It was a fantastic experience indeed and I had the honor and privilege of being the pillion rider on the group leader's bike and this made me feel very special indeed! Oh how I wish I could have stayed longer on the bikes but we have to give the others a chance to be pillion riders as well. Throughout the ride we had quite nice weather except for day seven which was a wet, wet, day and we were sure glad to reach our destination the soonest. Wherever we went we were sure to meet one or two local breast survivors who will go all the way out to meet up with us. At gas stops whenever the locals heard that we are breast cancer survivors, they willingly donated to our cause - breast cancer awareness.

The last part of our route took us out the back of Adelaide through the hills, and an amazing twisty little road between Clarendon and Belair. After an hour or so we pulled up at a little town called Lenswood at the General Store for a stretch and a snack. We met the store's new owners - one of whom, Donna, turned out to be a breast cancer survivor as well! We shared stories over a coffee and Vili's pie and then it was back on the road again, heading down from the hills into the famous Barossa Valley. Once again we were given permission to park in a prime position in front of the cellar door, much to the envy of the other HOG riders on tour who had run into us several times over the last two days and always had to park with the other tourists. We had lunch and met with several local SA breast cancer survivors who had come out to see us, than it was back on the bikes and into the HOG rally.

As we neared Nuriootpa we began to see other groups of Harley riders, heading in to the big rally this weekend. We rolled straight into the rally headquarters to register. While we were waiting, a Harley rider came over and asked us, "Are you those cancer girls?" When we said yes, he peeled off \$300 out of his wallet and gave it to us as a donation. Unbelievable generosity and we were so touched by his support.

Our accommodations for the night were booked tents in Tent City in the heart of the rally. Not really hardcore camping though! The day was so hot and suddenly the night became quite cold. Tent City was the perfect location for the rally - just behind us a motorcross stunt team set up ramps and performed amazing aerial tricks just as we were checking in. The stage and bands were performing a short walk away, as were the test rides of the newest Harley-Davidson models, and street stalls with vendors of every kind of motorcycle merchandise. After soaking up the atmosphere, we had a fantastic gourmet dinner of beef Wellington in the big tent, and danced the night away to the Flaming Sambuccas. It was such a wonderful last night to this amazing journey.

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As we woke to our last day on the road as one big family we packed up in the morning, and made a stop at Harley-Davidson's HQ at the rally to say a special thank you to Kim Williams, who had handled all the logistics of our ride at their end. Then it was one last group hug, and back on the bikes and into the vans for the run into Adelaide. Once again the weather held for us, with threatening clouds but no more rain, and we made it into the city dry and warm. As we pulled up to our destination, Harley Heaven in the city, we saw towers of pink and black and orange (for Harley-Davidson) balloons, and a pack of friends and family who cheered as we pulled in. It was an emotional ending and reunion,

and tears and smiles were shared all around. Everyone had found it a fantastic experience and it was a ride of a lifetime indeed!

Excerpts taken from the Blog : www.amazonheartthunder.org

Can Malaysian Breast Cancer Survivors do a similar bike adventure and breast cancer awareness from Selangor to another State? Contact Mee Yee (019-6938952) if you are interested or have some fantastic ideas for our Malaysian adventure.



Mee Yee trying out the Harley Davidson bike.



Mee Yee with the Amazon Heart Adventure team.

CHARITY BAZAAR TO RAISE FUNDS

During the months of November and December members were busy at various charity bazaars selling knick-knacks, handicrafts, pink items etc to raise funds for the Pink Challengers activities next year. Prior to the bazaar sales, members were at BCWA office every week to make ear-rings, fold gift boxes and sort out items to sell at the bazaar.

- 04 November 2007 British Women' s Charity Bazaar, Nikko Hotel
- 10-11 November 2007 Subang Parade Shopping Mall
- 16-18 November 2007 Amcorp Shopping Mall
- 29 November 2007 Malaysian Australian New Zealand Association (MANZA) Charity Christmas Bazaar, The Prince Hotel

We plan to meet every 2nd Saturday to continue with our handcraft classes, to prepare items for sale in next year's charity bazaar. All are welcome to join the handcraft session and if you have any new and innovative ideas, please come and share your talent with us.

1st Session Handcraft class on 12 January 2008 from 10.30 am - 12.00noon at BCWA office. Come and share your ideas how to make a clown.



Felicity at Subang Parade.



Mee Yee at the British Women's Charity Bazaar.



The children loved decorating their own cup cakes.



Margaret Lee and Siew Lan trying to persuade a customer to buy some items from our bazaar.

SUMMARY FOR HELPING YOUR CHILDREN

1. Be sure your children have adequate opportunities to discuss your cancer and express their feelings. You may or may not be the person they feel most comfortable talking to. They may prefer expressing their thoughts and feelings to a close friend, your spouse, a teacher, or a relative. Don't isolate them by not letting them talk to the person they feel most comfortable with, even if it is a peer. If you don't feel comfortable with too many people knowing about your cancer, help them select which friend (s) they may want to tell.
2. Be honest with them; provide them with the amount of information that they seek. Keep it at their level of education and understanding. Be sure someone answers their questions, even if you have to write them down and ask your doctor.
3. Don't be afraid to show your emotions in their presence. This will demonstrate to them that it is okay for everyone to have and show emotions.
4. Provide more family time. Do things together. Talk about activities and ideas. Discuss your cancer and your feelings as a family.
5. If they respond with anger, try not to be punitive or withdraw from them.
6. Be sure that children of all ages understand that they did not cause your cancer, that cancer is not contagious, cancer can be cured, and it is normal for them to be frightened, angry and sad.
7. Try to change their daily routine as little as possible. Encourage them to play with their friends, participate in their usual activities. If possible don't put extra work demands on them at home. But, if they volunteer to do things to help you or make you more comfortable, accept them gratefully.
8. Have your spouse or another significant person spend more time with them.
9. Once your daughter is past puberty or in high school, be sure she learns breast self examination.

Extract from "Breast Cancer: Common Reactions of Children and How to Help". By Jane Brazy, MD and Mary Ircink, RN (<http://www2.medsch.wise.edu/childrenshosp/childrens.html>)