

# The Weekly

## CANCER AWARENESS MONTH KICKS INTO GEAR

August 17, 2012



Light it up ... The month of August not only commemorates women but also cancer survivors

At least one-in-six men and one-in-seven South African women will get cancer during their lives.

This is according to Melitha Seliocoe from the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) who was addressing a cancer awareness campaign in Bronville recently.

Seliocoe, who is also the CANSA coordinator at the Ernest Oppenheimer Hospital in Welkom, said communities must be informed about risky behaviour that can lead to cancer.

She also called on community members to test regularly for cancer. According to Seliocoe, this will assist with early detection.

“We can help provide information on healthy eating and encourage a holistic lifestyle that includes regular exercise, no smoking, staying safe in the sun, performing self-examinations and undergoing regular medical check-ups.

“CANSA totally depends on the support of the community to render services to our cancer patients. CANSA is all about providing a quality service to cancer patients and their families and are proactive in promoting good health, research and care,” said Seliocoe.

The campaign consisted of a short presentation on men and woman’s health where after the community were given the opportunity to get an HIV/AIDS test.

Seliocoe said the cancers prevalent among most South African women include breast cancer, cervical cancer, colo-rectal cancer, lung cancer and oesophageal cancer.

Men are mostly affected by prostate cancer, lung cancer, oesophageal cancer, liver cancer and cancer of the Larynx.

“At CANSA, we believe one of the best ways to learn about all that we offer, and what truly makes our cancer care different, is to listen to the experiences of our patients.”

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Ashley Heyns (45) was one of the cancer survivors who shared her story with the community. The 45-year-old was diagnosed with breast cancer more than 21 years ago.

“At diagnoses, to accept the disease as part of my life was the most difficult, but I believe that God does not put more on you than you can bear,” said Heyns.

She said living with cancer has made her a stronger person and she believes it has changed her life for the better.

“I have found compassion and grace for my neighbour in my journey with cancer. I have learned to accept myself and believe therefore I am able to help others who struggle in this same journey.”

She said her message to the women in the community is that they should stand up and support one another.

Some of the signs and symptoms people can look out for are change in a wart or mole, sore that does not heal, unusual bleeding, thickening or lump, indigestion or difficulty in swallowing, on-going cough or hoarseness and or notable change in bowel or bladder movement.

The next cancer awareness campaign will be held on August 29 from 09:00 at the Thabong Clinic.

[Source: [www.theweekly.co.za](http://www.theweekly.co.za)]