



Jo-Ann Pohl. In the 2007 calendar, Sheila Ragoonandan is featured for September.

*Mrs Jo-Ann Pohl features in the 2008 Moments In Time Calendar in September. Her hands on her heart demonstrate an openness and an attitude of surrender while her eyes look upwards to receive the guidance which she longs for.*

*"I am the student with an open heart. I glorify the present as my teacher, knowing that I need to learn today's lessons to inherit the bountiful richness of the future".*



*All the Moments In Time products are now available for sale and can be ordered online at [www.momentsintime.co.za](http://www.momentsintime.co.za), by emailing Rachel Kivedo@astrazeneca.com or by contacting Moments In Time on 0861 66 66 00.*

Edenvale resident, Mrs Jo-Ann Pohl, a breast cancer survivor, with Ms Samantha Galliet who is also a breast cancer survivor, at the Moments in Time 2008 Calendar launch held at the Hilton Hotel in Sandton on Thursday.



# Jo-Ann is Moments in Time calendar girl

BY DENISE MHLANGA

A calendar girl usually provokes images of model type girls in sexy lingerie.

However, times have changed and now they have a more defined role other than selling lingerie.

Edenvale resident, Mrs Jo-Ann Pohl, is the September 2008 Calendar Girl for the Moments in Time project.

Now in its sixth year of production, it is a multidimensional and multimedia artistic expression of the meaning in life. The project portrays South African cancer patients, each with different life experiences, telling their own stories.

Mrs Pohl's involvement with the project followed her breast cancer diagnosis in 2005. Mrs Pohl and her husband, Mark, live in Eastleigh Ridge. The NEWS met with her at the launch of the Moments in Time 2008 Calendar on Thursday at the Hilton Hotel in Sandton.

At the age of 28 Mrs Pohl was at the prime of her life. She was the then chief financial officer of Teba Bank in Johannesburg. The couple was also planning on starting a family when they were dealt a heavy blow.

Mrs Pohl's husband discovered a lump in her right breast. A visit to a gynaecologist confirmed that the lump was in the breast. This was unusual for someone as young as Mrs Pohl.

From there on it was downhill as sonar procedures followed and many other tests. Along the way, Mr and Mrs Pohl had to learn as much as they could

about cancer and Mrs Pohl's condition in particular.

The couple met with Johannesburg surgeon, Doctor Carol-Anne Benn. She explained to them what the situation was and what to expect from the treatment.

Mrs Pohl said that her oncologist, Doctor Devan Moodley, was honest and candid about her breast cancer and what to expect from the treatment. Dr Benn told Mrs Pohl that she would have to undergo chemotherapy.

She underwent chemotherapy, radiation and an operation to remove the cancerous tissue in her breast.

There was a lot to deal with at this point in her life. Her life had been altered and she had to learn to be dependent on other people.

During the first and second session of her chemotherapy, Mrs Pohl's hair began falling out. She said that this, and other things, taught her some valuable lessons and to appreciate the time she has with those she loves the most.

"I learned that you cannot be too tough because everyone wants to feel needed. I know that the wheel will turn and I will be given the opportunity to return the favour," said Mrs Pohl.

In her eighth chemotherapy cycle, Dr Moodley told Mrs Pohl that she might not be able to have children. This was followed by the final session of chemotherapy in March 2006.

In April 2006, a lumpectomy was conducted to remove the tissue around the marker from her breast. It was found

that the chemotherapy had shrunk the lump completely, it was cut off and replaced with muscle tissue from her back.

In July that same year, Mrs Pohl underwent daily sessions of radiation for seven weeks. Three months later, she was told that she no longer needed to undergo any further treatment as she was "in the clear".

In April 2007, Mrs Pohl fainted on the bathroom floor with severe period pains. She had a burst ovarian cyst that needed to be removed immediately.

Today, Mrs Pohl's cancer is in remission, meaning the cancer is gone. She said that she needs to be in remission for a number of years before she can be declared cured of the cancer. She has regular tests which also act as early detection tests.

Mrs Pohl said that she had to learn to accept help and support from friends and family.

When she talks about her reaction to the news that she had breast cancer, you can still sense her independent and strong character.

"Initially, it all felt surreal and although I usually mobilise in a crisis, my husband was the pillar of strength when we first found out," said Mrs Pohl.

Part of her recovery had to do with the support of those closest to her. Her husband had to read and find out as much as possible about cancer and treatments available.

Mrs Pohl was frank and honest when asked about plans to have a family. She said that things happen for a reason, and as such,

she and her husband had to find ways to deal with the issues at hand.

Mrs Pohl said that they had to rethink their goals as a family, what defines them and the legacy that they want to leave behind.

"This was not easy as I had to think about what defined me as a woman and wife. The package Mark had bought was different and I had to come to terms with this," she said.

The couple is currently exploring options as they would like to have children. However, their first commitment is to each other.

This is evident when you talk to Mrs Pohl about her journey to recovery. "Mark made me laugh when I wanted to cry and showed me in every way that I was loved and strong," said Mrs Pohl.

Mr Pohl currently speaks to, and counsels, spouses and partners whose loved ones have recently been diagnosed with cancer.

Mrs Pohl's maternal grandmother had breast cancer but there is no direct link to indicate that her cancer is genetic. Apart from her work, Mrs Pohl loves spending time with her family, travel-

ling and reading.

"Each day is a chance to collect more memories and my aim is to make enough memories with the people and places I love to last me a lifetime," said Mrs Pohl.

She said that with everything that has happened to her, she learns something new each day and literally has time to stop and smell the roses.

"Cancer has made me appreciate the things I probably took for granted," said Mrs Pohl.

Her advice to people who have just been diagnosed is "to hang in there."

"Dealing with cancer is all about attitude and the power of the mind. Never losing awe for life is what gets me going everyday," she said.

Clearly spirited with a strong desire to create many memories, Mrs Pohl responded naturally and casually to what I thought was a difficult personal question.

"If there was one thing I could do today and knew that I would not fail, I would fall pregnant as this would be a miracle. Which proves that miracles happen everyday and as long as you believe, anything is possible," said Mrs Pohl.

