

NELSON MANDELA BRIDGE GOES PINK FOR BREAST CANCER DRIVE

Programme Director

Distinguished Guests

Representatives of Estee Lauder Company

ED: Health, Dr Refik Bismilla

City of Johannesburg officials

Councillors

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Evening

We are meeting tonight on the 20th Anniversary of the Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign. It is almost a year to this day since the champion of Breast Cancer Research, Evelyn Lauder passed on at the age of 75. She had lived with the disease for 22 years until her death. Oh! What a loss to mankind I must add.

This larger than life lady philanthropist who, in her young days, was a refugee of Nazi – occupied Europe gave the world the Pink Ribbon Campaign as a symbol of breast cancer. The Philanthropist Evelyn Lauder founded the

Breast Cancer Research Foundation which has raised more than \$350 million for the cause she believed in.

Tonight throughout the globe, certain identified landmarks will be lit Pink and I am convinced that that will make Evelyn smile knowing that her good work is continuing despite the fact that she is in the heavenly world.

I deliberately decided to start my talk by paying tribute to this selfless visionary, because tonight as we are gathered here, we intend to take forward a cause that was her passion. That ladies and gentlemen is the Pink Ribbon to highlight the challenge regarding Breast Cancer.

The City of Johannesburg, through one of the GDS outcomes which is, “*eradicating poverty*”, the city intends to address the ravages of poverty so that the health of our people can be improved. This is because of the realisation that there is a direct correlation between poor health and/or access to quality healthcare and poverty.

That is why we are annually building and extending our clinics so that there can be easy access to quality health care and encouraging these clinics to have food gardens where space permits – and in most cases it does.

It would be amiss if I do not share with you the story of Rebecca Musi who is a breast cancer survivor and she has participated in some of our breast cancer campaigns. She is a living example that if detected early and well-managed, breast cancer can be beaten.

Her resolve and resilience against breast cancer has motivated sceptics among us that those already in her situation can live normally while taking the prescribed treatment.

As communities, it is important to spread the message that cancer can be beaten and managed to the extent that patients can live active lives. Early detection and treatment is key to winning this battle.

If breast cancer is detected early, there are more treatment options and a better chance for survival. Even if you feel healthy now, just being a woman and getting older puts you at risk for breast cancer.

Remember too that, women can reduce their risk of breast cancer by maintaining a healthy weight, drinking less alcohol, being physically active and breastfeeding their children. Furthermore, I encourage women to go for breast

cancer screening and importantly, this testing through screening on otherwise healthy women for breast cancer is aimed at achieving an earlier diagnosis.

A number of screening tests have been employed including: clinical and self-breast examinations, mammography, genetic screening and ultrasound. Above all, breast self-examination should be done once a month during ovulation – preferably at the same time of day.

Essentially, the message is “know how your breasts normally look and feel”, as many women have a pattern of lumpiness in their breasts, which is normal. In short ladies and gentlemen, let us heed the adage “***prevention is better than cure***”.

Let us use the energy that we put to beat Apartheid and collectively pull our country from a brink of an avoidable catastrophe. Let us use the energy that gave us the resilience to organise the most successful Soccer World Cup and channel it towards this fight.

Yes we can.

We can tap into that energy to turn the tight against Breast Cancer.

When we confront this challenge, we indeed will talk like Olivia Newton John, one of the many women who overcame Breast Cancer. She confidently declared to the world that “ I feel so fortunate and grateful to be a survivor of breast cancer. I see it as a gift”.

Breast cancer Program Director, is the second most common cancer affecting South African women. While the overwhelming majority of human cases occur in women, male breast cancer can also occur.

Worldwide, breast cancer comprises 22.9% of all cancers in women. In 2008, breast cancer caused 13,7% of cancer deaths in women worldwide. Breast cancer is more than 100 times more common in women than in men, although men tend to have poorer outcomes due to delays in diagnosis.

Prognosis and survival rates for breast cancer vary greatly depending on the cancer type, stage, treatment, and geographical location of the patient. Survival rates in the Western world are high; for example, more than 8 out of 10 women (84%) in England diagnosed with breast cancer survive for at least 5 years. In developing countries, however, survival rates are much poorer.

I want to conclude by quoting one of the survivors of breast cancer, Sheryl Crow, who said ***“People go through challenging moments of losing people and of having their life threatened from illness and real grief. But they get through it. And that’s the testament to the human spirit and it’s...we are fragile, but we also are divine”***.

I am convinced that as people drive and/or walk over the Mandela Bridge which will be lit Pink, they will reflect on the strategies of confronting breast cancer. I reiterate that Yes We Can beat breast cancer.

Let us take a cue from the Former World Boxing Champion, Muhammad Ali who said: “Don’t count the days, make the days count”.

THANK YOU