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# How they won the breast cancer battle

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**PETALING JAYA:** When Norziana Hassan's hair started falling after chemotherapy treatment for breast cancer two years ago, her husband and two young children decided that she needed more than comforting words.

Zunaidi Wahap, 32, his son and daughter shaved their heads to show that the housewife was not alone in the battle against the disease.

"Her hair keeps on falling until she became totally bald. So we shaved our heads to raise her spirits."

The event meant a lot to Norziana, who used family support and medical treatment to fight back and recover.

Her touching story is shared in a book entitled *His and Her Story*, launched by Deputy Women, Family and Commu-

nity Development Minister Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun yesterday.

The book, available in Malay, Tamil and Chinese, aims to encourage men to support their women relatives by encouraging them to screen for breast cancer.

It is a compilation of testimonies from participants of the Mencare project, a programme aimed to increase men's awareness of supporting their wives, mothers or sisters in the fight against breast cancer.

The programme and the book are result of a collaboration between Pfizer (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO).

Another heart-rending story in the book is that of Angel Edward, a two-year cancer survivor, who fought the disease with the support of her husband and three sons.

"My sons helped to clean the house and washed the clothes when I was sick and my husband told me that I looked beautiful even with my bald head."

Chew said the book would help women with breast cancer know that male family members were supporting them while they underwent treatment.

"The greatest fear a woman has is that her husband will neglect her when she is diagnosed with breast cancer," she added.

A survey by NCWO in 2006 found that 65 per cent of men agreed that fear of being neglected by their husbands was one of the primary reasons behind the reluctance of women to go for screening.

Those interested in obtaining the free book can call 03-79433008 or email ncwohq@yahoo.com.

Meanwhile, Chew said the

RM50 subsidy for the mammogram programme introduced two years ago had encouraged 10,500 women nationwide to undergo breast cancer screening.

Of the number, 46 breast cancer cases had been detected, with 877 women referred for further check-ups.

"Until July this year, 33 private mammogram centres have worked with us by providing discounts for referred mammogram examinations," she said.

The subsidy, offered by the ministry's National Population and Family Development Board, is for women above 40 years old and earning less than RM5,000 a month.

The ministry has spent RM18 million so far on the programme.

Chew said the board had also organised 209 health talks on breast cancer awareness for 27,000 women.