



Making a Difference ...

Dr. Shenin Sachedina D.O.

by Cindy Heroux RD

HOW DO YOU TELL YOUR CHILDREN that you have been diagnosed with a life-threatening disease? A disease in which the treatment may change the way you look, the way you feel and even your ability to care for them for a while. Where do you find the words to help them understand all that is happening to you and to help them cope with all that is to come?

You find them in the heart of a doctor whose care for her patients goes far beyond the medical treatment she provides. You find them in a wonderful book that is destined to make a difference for thousands of mothers, children and families facing breast cancer.

For the past 10 years, Dr. Shenin Sachedina, a renowned local breast surgeon, has been helping her patients recover from a disease that will affect one in every eight women. In addition to providing the best medical care possible, she has held their hands, calmed their fears and born witness to the struggles they face. Struggles such as what to say to their children and how to say it. Struggles such as making ends meet when income is compromised and medical expenses are mounting.

"The face of breast cancer is changing," Dr. Shenin said. "It is no longer a disease of older women, but one that affects women in the prime of their lives; women who are already trying to juggle motherhood and careers. Add to that the diagnosis of breast cancer, and the challenges for the woman and the entire family multiply several fold."

Never one to simply stand by in the face of a crisis, Dr. Shenin has found a way to meet some of these challenges head-on. She has written a wonderful children's book titled *Metu and Lee Learn about Breast Cancer*, designed to help parents guide and support their children through a difficult time.

Metu and Lee is filled with friendly and empowering characters such as Chemo Commando and K.I.P — a talking PDA-like character whose name is an acronym for Knowledge Is Power. Through these characters, "Dr. S" lessens the confusion many young children experience when a parent is ill. She also helps them overcome feelings of helplessness by offering simple ways they can join in the battle against the *bad cells*. Understanding what is happening and knowing what they can do to help can go a long way toward easing the fears and anxieties of breast cancer's youngest victims.

Dr. Shenin wants to help families affected by cancer in other ways as well. That's why the majority of the profits from her book will go to charity. The profits will be used to fund ongoing medical research, to partner with organizations such as Kids Beating Cancer and to assist families of children facing a life-threatening illness.

"While their children are undergoing treatment, many parents are unable to continue working," Dr. Shenin explained.

This unexpected and sudden drop in income adds to the additional burden of dwindling finances as well as to the physical and emotional challenges cancer families are already coping with. "Funding is also needed for sibling tissue-typing when bone marrow transplants are needed," she said. The remainder of the profits will be used to facilitate development of future books in the series that will address diabetes and leukemia.

