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Ironmanlife: Kim Pace and the IronDames

Kevin Mackinnon reports on a great Ironman finish from Penticton. (Photo by Kat Clewley)

Published Friday, September 3, 2010



What would you do if you were given this choice by your doctor: undergo dramatic "salvage" surgery (including a hysterectomy along with removal of your lymph nodes and colon) or die in a year. How many of you would choose neither and, instead, start training for an Ironman?

That's what Kim Pace did. Diagnosed with cervical cancer on December 17, 2007 (Merry Christmas!), Pace was initially given an optimistic prognosis. Hers was a cancer that usually responded to treatment.

Pace's last chemotherapy treatment came on Valentines Day, 2008. For almost two months she'd been balancing work and her treatments. She'd thrown up in her best friend's car on the way back

from the hospital. Her body felt like a "toxic waste dump." All that didn't matter, though. She'd made it through.

There was just one problem. The treatment hadn't worked. Six weeks after that last treatment, Pace learned that she had "persistent cervical cancer." That's when the doctor gave her those two wonderful options. Salvage surgery, or die in a year. Oh, and just to make the salvage surgery even more appealing, he pointed out that even with that there was little chance that she'd be around after five years.

"That's when I began what I call my real journey," Pace says. "How could I come to terms with what I had? I was terrified of the pain and suffering ahead for me and my friends."

Possibly five years of life? Without most of her insides? What sort of choice was that? In June, 2008, Pace went to Atlanta, Georgia for 10-days at a clinic that "promotes holistic healing of the body, mind and spirit with enzyme-rich organic Living Foods."

"I went there to learn how to die well," Pace says. "To find the strength to tell everyone that I was not going to have the surgery."

Pace came back with a lot of strength. She came back on a diet that would kill most mortal beings. Enzymeh-rich? Sure. Each day now begins with a concoction affectionately referred to by her friends as "Romulan Ale" – some sort of a green, gooey mass of blended vegetables that even Pace could only take a sip of at first. It took her 12 days to be able to drink a cup. As if watching her drink that every morning wasn't enough, Pace had two messages for her friends on her return: 1) she wasn't going to have the surgery and 2) she was going to do Ironman Canada in 2010.

Another small problem. Pace had never done a triathlon. In fact, Pace wasn't exactly what you'd call an athlete.

Instead of organizing an intervention to try and get her to see reason ("ummm ... Kim, according to the doctors you'll be in a grave before the 2009 Ironman Canada race"), her friends rallied around her. They formed an organization called the IronDames and began to raise money for Wellspring, a cancer program that promotes physical activity. In August, 2009, Pace and 11 of her friends began training for Ironman Canada, determined to raise \$110,000, enough to support the Wellspring program in their region for two years.

On August 8th, 2010, Kim Pace wasn't dead. In fact, that was the day she did her first triathlon. Three weeks later she finished Subaru Ironman Canada, along with Marla Ashmore, Andrea Buzzza, JoAnn Daxner, Margaret Dorio, Marlene Line, Nancy Macelli, Julia Rodgerson, Kim Schizas, and Shirley Speakman. All 10 IronDames who competed in the race finished. (Barb Piggott suffered a broken ankle earlier this year, so only did the swim.) Seven of the 11 were first time Ironman finishers.

The \$110,000 goal for Wellspring? Blown away. To date the group has raised \$146,000.

I'm not sure I could do what Kim Pace chose to do with her options. I'm not sure most people would. Rather

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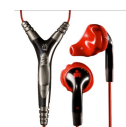
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Ironman Gift Suggestion: Yurbuds Ironman Inspire



During our coverage of the Ironman World Championship we offered up a quick review of the new Yurbuds Ironman Inspire Pro headphones, with a promise of a more in depth look at this innovative product. As we

man simply give up, Face chose to take control of her life. The result? well, she's not dead, she's helped raise money for a great cause and she's proved that when you take control, you can do pretty much anything.

To find out more about the IronDames, go to www.irondames.ca

You can reach Kevin Mackinnon at kevin@ironman.com



Normal 0 false false false EN-US X-NONE X-NONE The IronDames before Subaru Ironman Canada:
Foreground Margaret Dorio and Julia Rodgerson.
Middle: Nancy Macelli, Kim Schizas, JoAnn Daxner, Andea Buzza, Shirley Speakman, Marlene Line.
Last Row: Barb Pigott (swim only), Kim Pace, Marla Ashmore

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Barbsujansky

How incredibly inspiring!

1 year ago 6 Likes Like Reply

Dubbers

Words fail me. What an incredible strength of character.

1 year ago in reply to Barbsujansky Like Reply

Shane

It was an honor to meet and race with you at Ironman Canada.

Rest in Peace Kim.. Honorary Iron Dame"John" Shane Busch

6 months ago Like Reply

Linda Burden

You are an amazing woman and I am inspired beyond imagination by you, Kim and all of the IronDames. Thank you for this exceptional example of personal power. We all have it in us, but few are able to access it!

1 year ago Like Reply

Jude

OMG! Totally amazing...Congratulations Kim!
Thanks Kim...you've motivated me to try to conquer some goals I talk about, but do nothing about!
Jude

1 year ago Like Reply

Nancy Macelli

Kim, thanks for getting this great ride off and running (literally...). Thanks for your friendship, enthusiasm and tenacity. You have been the cornerstone of developing friendships between all of

head into the holiday season, these might be just what your Ironman is looking for.

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us "dames" that will last a lifetime. Love you kiddo!

1 year ago

Like Reply



Julie Cole

Atotal inspiration! All of you women are amazing.....and Kim, you are just outta this world!!

1 year ago

Like Reply



Janmhawkins

You truly are an inspiration. When the going gets tough the tough get going. Girl Power. Girlfriends are the best.

Love ya

1 year ago

Like Reply



Joemcallister60

Having known Kim for many years I am so happy for her journey and her accomplishments. Truly an inspiration to so many people. Please share this story around.

1 year ago

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LisaLynam

Kim Pace you are a vision of health in mind-body-spirit! Congrats on your great finish!

1 year ago

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