

■ Kim Pace and her IronDames push themselves to raise funds for alternative cancer therapy.

by Sherry Smither

photography by Nikki Wesley

**Six** days a week Kim Pace rigorously trains for Ironman Canada, a 17-hour triathlon in British Columbia where she'll swim four kilometres in Lake Okanagan, cycle 180 kilometers up B.C.'s hilly roads and finish with a 42 kilometre run. That's a mighty challenge for someone who's never entered a triathlon before and even greater for Pace who was diagnosed with cervical cancer in December 2007.

But the Burlington resident isn't in this alone – the dynamic IronDames, a group of Pace's friends are training for the August 29 triathlon to reach Pace's goal of raising \$110,000 for Halton-Peel Wellspring Cancer Exercise Program, a complimentary treatment program for people going through traditional chemotherapy.

"I have a great support system. During my initial radiation and chemotherapy in January 2008, my girlfriends were cheering me on, walking my dog, bringing my husband food. They were amazing," says Pace before beginning her two-hour stationary bike workout.

IronDames has already raised a total of \$50,000 with the help of sponsors like PACEperformance, Canadian Tire, Lakeshore Chiropractic Clinic and Newworld Cycle & Runners, and from fundraising events like their kickoff barbeque, and MegaDay. Future fundraisers include a silent auction at IronDames Art Party, featuring one-of-a-kind »



Kim Pace (centre) and the IronDames participate in their Mega Event Day at Newworld Cycle in Burlington. Participants ran for half an hour, then took part in a spinning class for three hours followed by a core class. Cancer survivor Kim Pace founded IronDames, with a mission to raise funds for WellSpring's Cancer Exercise Program while training for and competing in Ironman Canada 2010.



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» art by artists like Mary Pat Fuchs; Friday, April 23 at Burlington Golf and Country Club at 7:30 p.m.

When Pace completed her initial therapy in 2008 and returned for her six-week check-up, she was optimistic, but doctors said her treatment was unsuccessful and she was palliative and would not likely survive until the fall. When the IronDames heard Pace's prognosis, they rallied around her.

"They took me away for a weekend at a Cambridge spa. I love going to spas and they planned an amazing time filled with things that I love. We stopped at every antique shop along the way and went to a great place for lunch – it was special," says Pace.

Once the Burlington speech language pathologist returned from their weekend, she had a difficult decision to make: have invasive surgery that would jeopardize her quality of life and likely not survive, or search for an alternative method. At 42, feeling she had nothing to lose, Pace attended a 12-day alternative program in Georgia that Kris Carr mentions in her book, *Crazy, Sexy Cancer Tips*.

"I was given a number of diets and detoxification, alternative treatments and lots of emotional work. They had me verbalize one thing I wanted to do: enter Ironman with my friend Marla [Ashmore], one of the girls that had taken me away," says Pace. "Then all seven of us decided to do Ironman and while we're at it raise money to make a difference in the lives of others having cancer experiences. That's how the IronDames evolved."

The IronDames chose to support Wellspring as they didn't want to fund a traditional cancer facility or traditional treatment program, because it was a non-traditional program that made a difference in Pace's life. Wellspring Cancer Exercise Program was developed by physiotherapist Jodi Steele, who created a manual outlining physical symptoms experienced by various forms of cancer and its treatment, and exercises with a range of motion to help ease pain.

"When I saw Jodi's manual, I immediately flipped to the section on cervical cancer and every symptom I had was outlined with exercises to ease the symptoms. When I asked my doctors what I could do for those, they said I had to get through my treatment – that's the way it is!" remarks Pace. "Wellspring is a great way to direct our funds and will make a difference in the quality of people's lives."

For more info: [irondames.ca](http://irondames.ca) 