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## CONFERENCES & WORKSHOP REPORTS

### Report: National Conference for Young Women

Nov 8, 2007

The National Conference for Young Women Living with Breast Cancer took place from November 2 to 4, 2007 in downtown Toronto and what a dynamic conference! This was a first for Canada and long overdue. Co-presented by The Canadian Breast Cancer Network ([www.cbcn.ca](http://www.cbcn.ca)) and Rethink Breast Cancer ([www.rethinkbreastcancer.ca](http://www.rethinkbreastcancer.ca)), the conference was a pleasing mix of education, entertainment, and inspiration.

Many of us who attended would say that the best part of the conference was the fashion show that was held on Friday night called, "The Fashion Journey . .

. Bringing Sexy Back." This wasn't your average fashion show. Young women living with breast cancer were the powerful models strutting their sexy selves on the runway, while synopsis of their personal stories scrolled down the large screens. The message was very clear - we may have lost breasts, had bald heads, and wear permanent scars, but we are still sexy and passionate young women.

The Girls Night in: South Beach Style the following night was equally fun. The ballroom was transformed into a South Beach bar with countless white leather sofas, stand-up glass tables with flickering candles, a bed (for photo taking), salsa dancers, a DJ, and lots of food and wine!

And no, we weren't there just for the parties, but these wonderful nights of entertainment were important for bringing fun and relaxation back into our lives and for making new friends.

During the days, there were terrific education sessions, exhibitors, and inspirational talks from our Canadian power ladies, Dr. Marla Shapiro, Libby Znaimer, and Beverly Thompson.

Many people were there from the Atlantic Region and we often found ourselves sharing a table for meals. It was wonderful to meet young survivors from our region and to share stories and contact information. Many were brought to the conference through the generosity of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation-Atlantic scholarships. And for many, it was the first time attending a conference.

The support, information, and hope that we received from the conference was invaluable. It strengthens us to know that we are not alone as young women whose lives have been interrupted by a breast cancer diagnosis. We share common concerns, but also common hope that more research will be conducted on breast cancer in young women, and that support mechanisms are coming into place across the country.

A big thank you to the organizers with The Canadian Breast Cancer Network and Rethink Breast Cancer!

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