

# MOMENTS TO LIVE AT LINKPINK 2010

From witnessing her mother's triumph to meeting one of her heroes, the last ten years have been about inspiration and accomplishment for Dawn Payne.

**"We're going to kill you, without killing you."**

It was the simplest way to explain the radiation treatment Dawn Payne's mother was to undergo, but it didn't make the news any easier to bear. Her doctor was describing how, in order to destroy the rare form of breast cancer she had (angiosarcoma of the breast), they were going to use the highest levels of radiation possible, which would damage her only slightly less than the cancer itself. He meant it.

"She was wasting away," Dawn said. "When she started losing her hair, she decided to shave her head, but it was still a shock when even the stubble fell out."

From re-admissions between chemo treatments, to time spent in an isolation ward from infection, there were dark days in a Winnipeg hospital.

"I would fly out for her week of chemo, and just read to her, and keep her company, even when she was sleeping. It was all I could do."

Physically, Dawn's mother was in the hands of her doctor and the cancer-fighting technology. Mentally, she was more than ready for what lay ahead.

"Overall, it was my mom's attitude that got her through. Even when things got really bad, she stayed positive. She decided to make a goal for herself every day. Some days, it was just to walk to the bathroom. Other days, it was to make it to the family room at the end of the hospital hallway."

A walk down a hospital hall may sound like nothing compared to a 100 kilometre bike ride in the mountains, but her mother's battle was very much in mind when Dawn raised \$56,000 to take part in the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation's LINKPINK 2010 bicycle ride with cancer survivor and seven time Tour de France champion Lance

Armstrong, co-presented by the Canada Safeway Foundation and the Edmonton Journal.

As a fundraiser and awareness driver for the Foundation, the event depended on the support of the community to be successful. One of the Foundation's strongest partners in LINKPINK was Incite Marketing and Principal, Jared Smith. As it turned out, having the Foundation contact him to get involved was the easy part.

"Getting that call was a thrill, to say the least," said Jared. "But after the initial excitement, the hard work began. We do in-kind work with a charity each year, but never on this scale. Getting people to fundraise a minimum of \$25,000 each was a daunting task."

Using flyers and emails, promotional displays in bike shops and cafés, and partnering with local media, Incite Marketing helped successfully spread the word. After that, it was up to the fundraisers to make LINKPINK 2010 happen.

"It really was the Dawns of the world," Jared said. "My job was helping get the information out to attract riders, but they had to raise the money. The most impressive thing to me was how everyone – from the fundraisers, to United Cycle, to the Foundation worked so tirelessly. It was inspiring to see how much Edmontonians are willing to step up for a good cause."

The event itself was equally inspiring. Forty-four riders headed to Jasper the day after a sold out luncheon featuring Armstrong and the legendary voice of the Tour de France, Phil Liggett at the Shaw Conference Centre. When they arrived the next morning in Jasper, the scenic mountains matched the blissful feeling in the air.

"It was surreal," said Dawn. "We were all just waiting around with our bikes and our gear, and there was such a buzz among the riders, wondering when Lance



would arrive. Then all of a sudden he pulls up on his bike, and is just like, 'Hey guys! Who wants to go for a ride?'"

The ride went on, back dropped by the Rocky Mountains, with each fundraiser, and even a few locals, getting time with the iconic athlete.

"He was always surrounded," said Dawn, who's followed his career since it began. "But he had time for everyone. When I spoke with him, it didn't feel like I was talking to someone I've been inspired by all these years; it felt like anyone else on the trip. He said Jasper was beautiful, one of the nicest areas he's been to for a fundraiser ride."

Although her mother's treatments and the bike ride were nearly a decade apart, in many ways, meeting Lance at LINKPINK 2010 was eight years in the making. Since before her mother fell ill, Dawn's had a Lance Armstrong Nike ad posted on her bulletin board. The picture focuses on the brain surgery scar on the side of his shaved head. Seeing the ad, and hearing Lance's story, inspired Dawn's mother as well.

"She said if Lance could crawl out of the hospital to ride, she could make it another day. I didn't have that picture up because I thought I would meet him, it was just so inspiring. Now I've got one of Lance and me together to go with it." 🌸

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***“Go confidently in the  
direction of your dreams.”  
– Henry David Thoreau***