

Inspiration

Women who make their lives count

all
about
you



Lella's story

In her final diary extract, breast-cancer survivor Lella Cullingworth reflects on how she has used her illness to turn her life around

'Having cancer has, paradoxically, opened new doors for me. I've met incredible people and made special friends for life. I have left behind a legacy for my children in the form of a book, I've been a guest speaker at a number of prestigious events, and my family and I have been overseas, courtesy of British Airways, which we wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise. And let's not forget that I've got a fine pair of 34B boobs, too.'

More than ever, I have a reason to live. I believe I've been given this disease to help others. There's a "sisterhood" out there and my mission is to encourage sufferers to adopt a more positive outlook. If I can help even one woman, then I've done what I set out to do. My message to readers? Take ten minutes every month to examine your breasts – if something feels strange, have it checked out. Early detection can save your life – it's prolonged mine.'



CRYSTAL-CLEAR STYLE

Sparkling sandals are cute, but crystal home decor is where it's at this summer. Swarovski, the world leader in cut crystal, hasn't missed a beat: we love the 'Smilla' mobile, R2 630, available from Spilhaus stores nationwide. 011-447-6947; 021-425-4042; www.spilhaus.co.za.

WONDER WOMAN



VANESSA LYNCH

When her father was murdered and no suspects arrested, lawyer Vanessa Lynch, 36, focused on DNA profiling
Vanessa's story 'A year ago, my dad was shot in my parents' home. He made it to hospital but died shortly after he was operated on.'
The scene of the crime 'There were no suspects and no arrests. I contacted a forensic pathologist in Germany, Professor Brinkman. I sent him police reports, photos and drawings of the scene. He asked for anything from which he could obtain DNA profiles, but there was nothing. We were too traumatised at the time to preserve the crime scene. Friends washed the blood off the walls, the hospital burnt my dad's clothes and the police discarded vital evidence.'

The Leigh Matthews link 'At around the same time, Leigh Matthews was kidnapped and murdered. I wrote to the Matthews family suggesting we use the publicity generated to alleviate crime in SA. They wanted to help.'
The importance of DNA 'It's near-impossible not to leave DNA at the crime scene. Samples are routinely taken from every person arrested in SA, and a national DNA Criminal Intelligence Database matches DNA from the crime scene with that of suspects. While SA does have a DNA database, there is a backlog of collecting samples and processing them.'
Getting the machinery 'We decided to focus on SA's Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL). Two new sets of DNA profiling systems are

needed to address the backlog of samples. The Leigh Matthews Trust will donate the machinery.'
Educating the public 'Neither low-ranking police nor the public know enough about preserving a crime scene so DNA evidence can be collected. Our project will involve the basics of containing a scene and ensuring evidence is collected in a certain way.'
A long-term solution 'It's not a quick fix and I'm not doing this to solve my father's case. It is a way of assisting with the alleviation of crime in SA. A developed database is a powerful deterrent to criminals – and it exonerates the innocent, too. And in rape cases, a match precludes the victims from having to go through the trauma of court appearances.'