

in recognition

Elizabeth Naumovski: Making the Most of Giving Back

by Judith Chen

Leave it to Elizabeth Naumovski to turn donating blood into a competition / social gathering between friends and colleagues, or to create a fundraising page to raise money for a local charity run. For Elizabeth, everything - even charity work - should be enjoyed to its fullest: "I do things that interest me because if I'm interested, I'll be passionate, and life is too short not to be passionate. So I just live trying to enjoy every aspect of my life."

Elizabeth remembers being quite young when she was first introduced to the concept of giving back: "What really brought that awareness was those little orange UNICEF boxes that I would see around Halloween. I realized that people could put their pennies in that box and it

would be used to help others. This had a huge impact on me."

As Vice President of Marketing for Caldwell Securities Ltd., Elizabeth is no stranger to getting involved in charitable causes, particularly in high profile events, including the Pink Bedroom Gala, a fundraiser that she's co-chaired a few times.

But her call to action took on an entirely different meaning when troubles hit close to home. It began several years ago, when Elizabeth was hospitalized and had to have major surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital.

Fast forward one year later, and it was now Elizabeth's mother who was undergoing her own health battles. She was diagnosed with stomach cancer and had to have immediate surgery. Elizabeth recalls that, at that point, everything in her changed emotionally:

"When I spoke with the surgeon, she told me that my mother might need a blood transfusion. I volunteered to give blood, but she told me that it would have to come from a blood bank. However, she suggested that I give blood myself. As deathly afraid as I was of needles, I knew that, from that point on, this is something I would do."

And Elizabeth took her promise to heart. She told her friends the story, and they decided - as a group - to go to the blood bank to donate. Then someone added an element of friendly competition - the first person to fill the pint would win bragging rights. Afterwards, the group would go out for a bite to eat.

The outing soon grew into a regular tradition: "A few people from Caldwell began to donate, and then I recruited some girlfriends of mine to join Team Caldwell. We'd donate, and then go out for burgers afterwards. We've made





it into a social thing that we like to call 'Blood & Lunch.'"

Off-putting nickname aside, Elizabeth remains committed to the promise she made many years ago, and adheres to a regular donation schedule of every fifty-six days (which is how long it takes for the body to replenish its blood stores). In fact, Elizabeth is so dedicated to donating blood that she's even careful about where she travels, knowing that certain destinations are off-limits.

Things for Elizabeth really came full circle this past summer when she decided to participate in the Bang & Olufsen Yorkville Run. She noticed that one of the fundraising recipients of the run was Mount Sinai, the hospital where Elizabeth had undergone surgery so many years ago. She knew that this run was the perfect way to thank the hospital staff for its excellent care. So she started

a fundraising page, and e-mailed it to all of her friends. In the end, Elizabeth was able to raise over five thousand dollars. Even today, she marvels at the quick and generous response: "No corporations were involved, just friends. All of the people who sponsored me had some sort of connection to Mount Sinai – a son who was born there or a family member who had surgery there - and we were all grateful."

Elizabeth doesn't so much choose the charitable causes she wants to support - it's almost as if they choose her. But she approaches philanthropy the same way she approaches the rest of her life – with openness, a fierce sense of commitment and, above all, with compassion: "I think it's important to open yourself to different possibilities. But mostly, it's important to be kind. It's easy, it's free, it makes you feel good, and sometimes, it means the world to the other person."

Rest assured that when the next cause comes knocking on her door, Elizabeth will be sure to answer, armed - as always - with her unique sense of humour, a "go get 'em attitude", and an indisputable *joie de vivre*.

If you would like to donate blood on behalf of Team Caldwell Securities Ltd., and help double its pledge of 20 donations this year:

Step 1:

Book your appointment on-line at www.blood.ca

Step 2:

Go to www.blood.ca/partnersforlife

Step 3:

Select "Team Up" and "register as a member on-line".

Step 4: Use the

Team Caldwell code, #CALD011672.