

**Speech by FELICIA MARIE KNAUL in event on  
THE WEEKEND TO END BREAST CANCER  
September 12, 2009. Toronto, Canada.**

I have 4 thank-you's to share and they are almost all about M's.

- **Mexico, Mamá, mama, Mariana, Margaret (for PMH) and Mary.**

Thank you # 1 is a personal thank you.

- I have lived with breast cancer since Nov of 2007. I had a radical mastectomy, 16 rounds of chemo and a year of herceptin.
- Most of my care took place in Mexico where I have lived for the past 15 years.
- I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of this phenomenal event. From the moment Mary invited me, this opportunity has inspired me to feel healthier and to finish a book about my experience. So, the Princess Margaret Survivorship program has helped me.

Thank you 2: from a women living with cancer IN a developing country:

- Start w an anecdote-I have learned so much from my 5-year old, Maha – through 22 months of living my cancer together.

Recently she gave me new insight. I share this anecdote with you bc I think it speaks to what is at the heart of this weekend.

- A few weeks ago, in the play area of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Maha drew a breast cancer ribbon made into a heart. She gave me the drawing as a gift and said in Spanish – this is mummy-cancer. In Spanish, breast and mother are almost the same word – but separated by an important accent – Mamá/mama.
- Maha referred to my cancer not as cancer of my breast, but rather ´of her mother´. Since that moment she says there is father-cancer, sister-cancer, friend-cancer, teacher-cancer ...
- Maha reminded me that cancer is not about ´a part of the body´.
- Cancer is about the person and those who surround them – their community: People who all share the cancer of their loved one in some way.

- Thus, my second thank you is for the example you are setting, here today, for the global community.
  - This weekend, you are facing and embracing cancer as a community and celebrating what can be done together – patients, advocates, friends, family, health care professionals.
  - This is a very important message that may seem obvious in 2009-Toronto, but as Mary has so often reminded me, was not always the case.
  - Only a few decades ago, Canadians with cancer - and I think particularly women – were afraid and embarrassed to speak of the disease.
  - In many parts of the developing world this is still the case. Stigma and discrimination against cancer patients – especially women - are the norm not the exception.

Thank you 2: from an advocate based in the developing world, for setting an example and teaching lessons that I and others can share far beyond Canada's borders:

- Put an end to stigma and discrimination.
  - Cancer, requires that we all act – as a community.

Thank you 3: on behalf of the many programs throughout the globe now benefiting from Princess Margaret, this walk and each of you. I thank you as a representative – a founder of one of these programs. *Tómatelo a Pecho* - Latin-America-wide program on breast cancer, based in Mexico. The name means 'take it to heart' and 'take it to breast'.

- Thank you, for making possible, through the funds from this walk, so many Princess Margaret initiatives – especially the survivorship program. From my base in Mexico and Harvard University, I can say that these programs are having true global impact.
- And this impact is crucial because today 45% of breast cancer cases and 55% of deaths occur in the developing world.
- Early on in starting *Tómatelo a Pecho*, I turned to my roots in Toronto – where I was born and grew up and where my mother still lives – looking for collaboration for our programs in Mexico.
- I found it.

- At Princess Margaret.
- Through the survivorship program.
- I am pleased and proud to share that there is high-impact, joint learning underway – Canada-Mexico and Mexico-Canada. In ways that do not involve additional spending outside of Canada, we are bringing many projects together.
- 2 examples.
  - The Survivorship program participated in an international conference in Mexico City in 2008.
  - This year, Princess Margaret is a leader in a global meeting that will take place in November at Harvard University including participants from more than 30 developing countries.

Finally, I want to personally thank Paul and all of those who make possible this weekend. This is a tremendous accomplishment of the Foundation.

To my dear friend and colleague – Mary:

- I can only wish we had many many more Mary’s all over the developing world.  
Physicians like yourself;
- hospitals like Princess Margaret;
- institutions like this weekend and the Foundation behind it;
- but especially courageous women –...

These are the building blocks of survivorship.

The survivorship we celebrate today – as a community.

**FELICIDADES – CONGRATULATIONS!!!**