

## Honouree Biography - Gillian



photo - Gillian (left) with  
her friend Jill in April 2003

**Birthday:** April 18, 1964

**Family:** Husband - Gord, Children - Lindsay, Audrey and Jay

**Favourite colours:** green

**Favourite sports:** tennis, extreme frisbee

**Favourite book:** *The Poinsonwood Bible*

**Favourite food:** Indian

**Occupation:** Mother, T.V. journalist

Gill, an active and energetic mother of three children aged three to nine, had been feeling poorly since January 2002 but visits to several doctors over the course of several months did not tell her what was wrong. Finally, In November 2002 Gill was diagnosed

with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma\* after an ultrasound test showed tumours in her abdomen. Gill's cancer was already at stage 3 (out of 4 stages of severity). She immediately started chemotherapy on an outpatient basis at Princess Margaret Hospital.

Over the following months, the illness and the chemotherapy drained Gill of her energy and stamina. She was forced to give up her work. Gord, her husband of 15 years, took on extra responsibilities in the care of their home and children. The emotional stress was great as her three children had to deal with the ultimate fear - would their mom live?

One of things that helped buoy Gill's spirits during this period was her friend Jill's participation in Team in Training. Jill was training for the June 2003 San Diego marathon and raising money in Gill's honour. Gill drew strength from Jill's efforts and the outpouring of financial and emotional support from all the people who supported their cause.

Gill finished her chemotherapy in April 2003 and received the wonderful news that she had attained remission. In June, she was able to accompany her friend Jill to San Diego to be at the race finish line to celebrate their victories together.

Although Gill is in remission, it does not mean that she is "cured". She will go for regular check-ups over the next number of years. If she goes out of remission she will need to start another course of treatment which will be a stem cell transplant.

\* non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is a cancer that originates in the lymphatic system and is the fifth most common cancer for both men and women, the incidence rates having doubled since 1973. The Increased incidence trend is most pronounced among young adults aged 20-44