

She's jumping into life with both feet!

Updated from an article written for the MK Web site in 2004

As a military wife, Independent Senior National Sales Director Pat Danforth moved 12 times in the first 15 years of her Mary Kay life. Each time, she restarted her business because, "moving wasn't a reason to stop, it was the reason for continuing." Challenges don't derail her goals. They galvanize her actions.

So when cancer came knocking at her door in 1996, she didn't waste time wondering, "Why me, why now?" She did what she always does. She got busy fixing the problem and kept her focus on her future, resisting temptation to slow down or stop.

As women turn their attention to greater well-being during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Pat is a reminder that keeping a can-do state of mind benefits us in every life situation. As soon as she was pronounced healthy again, she welcomed the chance to prove her courage and stretch her faith. Pat Danforth began heli-skiing! Helicoptering into remote areas of soaring snow-capped mountains in the middle of Canadian avalanche country, she experienced the exhilaration of, as she puts it, "just doing it"!

Her adventure began in the spring of 2002 when her husband, Tim, found himself without his heli-skiing partner. For several years, he and his high school buddy, a fellow skiing enthusiast, had been stepping from helicopters in the Canadian Rockies, donning their skis, and schussing the powdery slopes from a dizzying 7,000 feet all the way to 1,500 feet at the base. When Tim's friend became ill and couldn't make the trip, Pat, a self-described "good-but-not-great skier," volunteered for the ride of her life.

"The area where we go is very remote, only accessible by helicopter," she explains. "It's a six-hour bus trip just to get to the point where the helicopter picks us up to take us to the lodge for the week." After full days in the crisp air, the couple looks forward to fine meals and a comforting fire. She describes the lodge accommodations as rustic elegance. "Big feather beds you can sink into reminded us of European inns," she says. "The dining is five star. Every day we eat great food ... it's a good thing we ski off the extra calories!"

In heli-skiing, groups of 8 to 10 people are ferried to the top of the mountain, usually accompanied by two guides. From there, they ski to the bottom, where they're retrieved and flown to a different part of the mountain for another run. Heli-skiers can expect about eight runs a day. Avalanches are always a danger, and each skier must sign a safety waiver and attend a comprehensive safety class.

Stepping out on the mountain from a helicopter and descending through a serious drop, the snow changing from, as Pat describes it, "electrified crystals to powdered sugar to whipped sugar frosting and finally to 'mashed potatoes,'" is incredible, she says. "Sometimes you're in powdered snow up to your hips. You can't see your skis or hear them. The snow is so white, so perfect, it's absolutely surreal, and absolutely beautiful."

Just as skiers don't ski straight down from the top of the mountain, but maneuver gradually from goal to goal, Pat says her Mary Kay business has taught her to tackle big jobs one bite at a time. "You can't look down and expect to reach the bottom all at once," she says. "In skiing, you move side to side, not straight down from top to bottom. The same thing is true in Mary Kay. Women shouldn't expect to go from Independent Beauty Consultant directly to Independent National Sales Director. *Attitude is everything* in reaching our goals."

Before heli-skiing, Pat took another plunge. She's an advanced certified scuba diver who's dived waters the world over, ranging from Hawaii to the Caribbean, from Tahiti to New Zealand. "Tim and I have had the privilege of taking those trips all because of Mary Kay," she says. "But this career opportunity is not just about the trips and the money. It's about developing an attitude for life."

She says she never would have scuba dived if it hadn't been for Mary Kay. "I would have been afraid of going that deep under water. On my second Top Sales Director trip, in 1986, to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, I hung out at the top of the water, and it made me mad that I wasn't enjoying the fun I was seeing Tim and the others have. The next thing I knew, through determination and persistence, I was night diving in Hawaii to 88 feet – in pitch-black darkness! – for my advance certification."

Pat has passed on Mary Kay's principles to their daughters. Jessica is a medical doctor and an attorney. She and her husband, John, an emergency medicine physician, are parents to Pat's grandchildren, Madison (12-12-00) and Trace (12-15-05). Daughter Regan, an Independent Senior Sales Director who debuted in June 2003, achieved On the Write Track, Fabulous 50s, and Honor Society in her first year of Directorship. Regan has earned the use of her third Mary Kay car, a luxurious pink Cadillac. She has two offspring Independent Sales Directors and her immediate goal is to continue along the career path to Elite Executive Senior Sales Director, with an eye later to becoming an NSD. Pat and the girls enjoy a close relationship today, in large part because Pat had the freedom to balance work with motherhood when they were growing up. Pat acknowledges the difference Mary Kay has made in her family's life. "Watching Jessica and Regan move into career opportunities that are so perfect for them in every way is enormously gratifying. They are excellent examples of children reared in the Mary Kay positive environment."

Believing she's alive today because of Mary Kay and the life-coping skills she's learned, Pat says, "Without Mary Kay, I wouldn't have paid attention to the things that matter, even to the point of monitoring my health. I found the cancer as a result of using the shower cards we received from the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation. My ob/gyn doctor felt I didn't need to pursue treatment. But because Mary Kay taught us to follow through and be assertive, I insisted on further tests and beat an aggressive form of the disease."

Though she was in and out of the hospital over the course of a year for surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation treatments, Pat continued her Mary Kay business with the support of her family, friends, the Company, and her NSD area. "My mission is to

spread information about taking charge of our lives, about assertiveness, about developing communication skills that might literally save our lives or the lives of loved ones. In the four stages of reaction following diagnosis, I skipped shock, denial and anger and went right to dealing with the problem. Which goes back to my favorite saying, 'Always be a glad I did, instead of a wish I had!'"

Pat's philosophy: Through more than 30 years of being an independent sales force member, Pat has developed an unswerving, get-it-done philosophy that guides all her decisions and actions. She faces life and its challenges head on, with no regrets or second-guessing, and gives no place for fear. Pat has limited patience for excuses, whether from herself or others. For every Mary Kay businesswoman facing an obstacle, from personal illness to business setback, whatever life holds at the moment, Pat's advice is simple. "Work when you can, and when you can't, know that your business can continue. **Just keep passing it on!**"



July 1990 - Mary Kay made a positive, lasting impression on Regan, left, and Jessica, right.



February 1994 - How cold is cold? The Danforths were glad they had wet suits in New Zealand's nippy waters!



May 2002 - The Mary Kay lifestyle has helped pave the way for exciting trips, such as this one to the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey.



April 2002 - Pat & Tim get ready to "take the mountain" as the helicopter approaches.

Just keep passing it on!"