

Being A Broad

April 2008 #31

The monthly magazine for international women living in Japan

**our cover girl:
Legal Futures,
Amber Clinton**

**SUPPORT for
women with
breast cancer**

**dealing with
DIFFICULT
CO-WORKERS**

PLUS!

**making a meal of
KEDGEREE**

**a broad in the boonies:
HACHIJO-JIMA**

**a foreign female
FILM-MAKER**

rebuilding THAILAND

**bilingual toddler
TANTRUMS**

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WRITER WITHIN**

**s.z. cairney on
KEEPING UP
APPEARANCES**

**broads who
DIVE DEEP**

www.being-a-broad.com

WOMEN'S GROUP FOCUS

Featured Community Group—**Bosom Buddies Tokyo**, by Ulrica Marshall

Being diagnosed with breast cancer is a harrowing experience, wherever you live. Living in Japan as a breast cancer patient or survivor is arguably considerably worse than doing so in any other developed country in the world; both care and emotional support trail that offered in the Western world. "Living here immediately following my treatment, I felt a terrible void of not having any peers that I knew of, with whom I could speak," says Karen DiVito, an American expat and survivor who recently established Bosom Buddies Tokyo (BBT), the first breast cancer support group in this country aimed at English-speaking women.

Karen was diagnosed with breast cancer in April 2006 at the age of 39 and although she completed most of her treatment in the States, she received some care in Tokyo, where she has been based for three years. But living several time-zones and continents away from most of her friends and extended family meant that she was restricted with whom she could talk to. "Calling back to the US obviously had its limitations," Karen reflects, "just as I was able to begin to talk about my experience, there was no one to listen..."

BBT aims to fill that gap. The support group, which meets in Roppongi on a monthly basis, is

open to English-speaking women of all ages and in all stages of their breast cancer. Some are still undergoing treatment, while others are slowly picking up the pieces and trying to re-start their lives following the upheaval that cancer left in its wake.

"It is a group with a simple mission, but a critical one," explains Karen. The group offers a two-way flow of giving and receiving; with the long-term survivors offering encouragement to those more recently diagnosed. "[They] are so empowering, their success just says: 'Yes, it can be beaten!'" comments Karen, who points out that she, in turn, now has the strength to support those more recently diagnosed; "It is a healthy dynamic and a necessary part of the healing. Having regular meetings enables us to establish and build relationships and trust. Once you are aware that you have this network available to you, if you are having a moment of doubt or need someone to talk with you can reach out to any one of those peers, who...would welcome your call, day or night. BBT is there to give us the support and encouragement we need."

It was fellow survivor and founder of Run for the Cure, Vickie Paradise Green, who originally suggested to Karen that a support group would be an invaluable service for English-speaking women living with breast cancer in Tokyo. Run for the Cure is a Japan-focused breast cancer charity, which organises not only the eponymous

Bosom Buddies founder Karen DiVito.



five and ten km race around the Imperial Palace each October, but also hosts the legendary Pink Ball and an annual golf tournament at the Atsugi air base near Yokohama.

Vickie, who recently celebrated the important five-year clear milestone, explains: "Even though I had my surgery in my home country, surrounded by family and friends, I still felt very alone in my experience...an experience that can only really be shared with another survivor. Under the banner of the Run for the Cure Foundation, Bosom Buddies Tokyo wants breast cancer survivors who left their home country to live in Japan to know that they are not alone."

For further details about Bosom Buddies Tokyo or to join the group, please contact Karen DiVito by email at karen.divito@gmail.com. Information about the Run for the Cure foundation can be viewed at www.runforthecure.org.

what's on: april



Join the Tokyo Pregnancy Group from 11am-1pm as Dr. Taikan Jo from the Acura Clinic speaks about acupuncture for pregnancy and labour. For more info, email Christine and Colleen at tokyopregnancygroup@gmail.com, or visit <http://tokyopregnancygroup.blogspot.com>.

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Come along to Girls' Night Out, on the third Wednesday of every month, at Paddy Foleys in Roppongi. Free entrance and your first drink is free thanks to SKYY BLUE Vodka. All foreign women welcome, anytime from 7pm til late. No reservation necessary.

Help support Japan's first food bank, Second Harvest Japan, at their concert tonight at 6pm at What the Dickens in Ebisu. www.2hj.org

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Come out to Suji's in Azabudai for the next BAB Brunch and meet with fellow broads from all walks of life. Noon-2pm, mains range from ¥1,200-¥2,200. See page four for more details and RSVP to amy.dose@carolinepover.com.

Learn about a new working in a new industry at this month's career seminar. Entrance is just ¥1,000 and includes informative talks by foreign broads in the industry here in Japan as well as the chance to meet other foreign women with similar interests. For more information, subscribe to the online newsletter through www.being-a-broad.com.

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Dance with your toddler at Tokyo's first Baby Loves Disco at Ex'Realm in Harajuku. These world-wide events allow families to dance to quiet music, during the day, with healthy snacks, at mainstream clubs. Find out more about this new event at www.babylovesdisco.co.jp.

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