

PINK RIDE



When her foot was crushed in a horseback riding incident, **Independent Senior Sales Director Melinda Gresham** of Rome, Ga., feared she'd never walk or ride again. Yet today, she leads an annual riding event that raises money for The Mary Kay FoundationSM and increases cancer awareness. And that's just part of the amazing story she told us about her journey through it all.

NURSE'S DILEMMA

I was first introduced to the Mary Kay opportunity in the late 1980s when I was a stay-at-home mom. I loved everything the Company stood for and earned my red jacket. But my main goal was to earn a nursing degree once my two boys were school-age so that I could help my hardworking husband, Doug, support our family. Consequently, my Mary Kay business went by the wayside.

As a cardiac nurse, I found great joy in helping people. But after several years, nursing became limiting. Ideas I had for improving processes were not welcomed. Moving into management was an option, but that meant being on call 24/7 – too high of a price to pay for my family.

In July 2002, with my sons about to graduate from high school, I decided to call **Independent Beauty Consultant Vickie Fisher** of Summerville, Ga., who was my original recruiter. I wanted to sign my Independent Beauty Consultant Agreement and try selling again. At that time, I never imagined the role my Mary Kay business soon would play in my life.

As time went on and I experienced even more stress as a nurse, I remember saying, “If I would just work my Mary Kay business more, I wouldn’t have to put up with this.”

Because of my enthusiasm for Mary Kay® products, many of my nursing friends purchased generous amounts of product. I started to see the potential of my business and began holding more parties and facials. I wondered if my business could replace my nursing career, but that seemed like an impossible dream.

ACCIDENT OF FATE

What I haven’t told you yet is that growing up, I had a love for horses. I must have been 13 or so when I got my first horse, and it was a dream come true. But once I started high school and began dating Doug at age 16, Dad felt the horse would come second. I was devastated when he sold her, and I vowed to someday own horses again.

That dream came true a few years after Doug and I purchased our 35-acre farm and had enough income to take on the expense. I bought two horses, and Doug learned to ride. I don’t know how I lived so

long without something that brought me so much joy.

One afternoon after a ride in November 2003, we were in a hurry to unsaddle so we could get to evening church services. I let my Arabian mare canter through the side yard on the way to the barn. She accidentally tripped, and instinctively, I lay back in the saddle to avoid being thrown. As she landed hard on my right foot, I knew instantly it was broken.

The doctor said it looked like a small bomb had exploded in my foot – the bones were shattered into tiny pieces. I lay in the hospital for one week, afraid I would lose my foot. Finally, the doctor decided to place my foot in external fixation with metal pins and bars holding everything in place to see if the bones would mesh back together. His prognosis: I would likely need a cane for the rest of my life, and I would not be able to ride again. He suggested I find something besides nursing to make a living.

RACE AGAINST TIME

My mind raced thinking about what to do. Take a confining desk job? Go back to school? I didn’t want to do either. Was it time to take my Mary Kay business to the next level?

My Independent Sales Director had retired, so I was moved directly under now **Independent National Sales Director Judy Harmon**. I called her and asked one question: “Judy, do you think I can replace my nursing income if I become a Sales Director?” She said my success was up to me, and she encouraged me to consistently work my business by holding parties and team-building appointments each week. My response was, “I will do it!”

Then I asked God in prayer: “Is this really what You want me to do?” I knew in my heart it was.

After 12 weeks, the bones in my foot began to heal back in place, but recovery took six more months with physical therapy. I did what I could to call my customers and fill orders. Once I regained some mobility, I was in a race against time to debut as an Independent Sales Director. The flexibility and freedom afforded by the Mary Kay opportunity propelled me forward, and Judy supported and coached me via phone from the West coast.

In February 2005, after healing significantly, I became an Independent Sales Director. Within a

few months, I had replaced my nursing income.

For me, building a customer base with more than 100 women, developing my unit and debuting an offspring Independent Sales Director gave me the opportunity to replace my nursing income and achieve the flexibility I dreamed of.

My Mary Kay business has been a blessing in so many ways. Because of my success, Doug was inspired to change his career, and that has given both of us more time for the things that matter most.

DREAM RIDE

You may think that’s the happy ending to this story, but there’s more. During this time, I had watched my first Mary Kay customer and nursing co-worker, ▶



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CYNDY'S STORY

Independent Beauty Consultant

Cyndy Ferguson of Rome, Ga., (who is a member of Melinda Gresham's unit) neglected getting her routine mammogram until a friend, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer, finally convinced her to go. A week later, she received a call: The results were abnormal, and she needed more tests.

"I laid my hand across my chest and there it was, a lump on the upper part of my right chest," Cyndy recalls.

Cyndy told the technician what she had found. But to her amazement, the abnormal mammogram report concerned her left breast, not her right chest wall. An ultrasound was performed, and the radiologist immediately concluded that she needed further testing on the right. The results revealed cancer.

"The Pink Ride took on a whole new meaning for me."

"The next morning, I woke up and quoted my favorite scriptures. I knew I was going to beat this. My life will not stop; I will be a walking testimony for all women," Cyndy told herself. "The Pink Ride took on a whole new meaning for me."

Cyndy has since undergone treatments, and her cancer is in complete remission. "I believe that early detection is the best protection," she shares. "During The Pink Ride, I always post a sign with the letters **H.Y.H.Y.M.** standing for 'Have you had your mammogram?' Have you?"

Melissa, battle breast cancer that had spread throughout her body and saw how that affected her family. While I was in recovery, my nursing friends walked for her in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. While I couldn't participate, I promised myself that I would someday ride horses again, and when I did, I would plan a trail-riding event that would raise money for cancers that affect women.

In early 2007, it was time to put plans in place for the cancer trail-riding event we named The Pink Ride. Melissa was in remission and agreed to speak at the event – a huge step outside her comfort zone. During the time I spent waiting to ride again, I developed a love affair with breeding and training horses. My herd had grown to nine Tennessee walking horses and brood mares that could be used in the ride.

But I needed help, so I asked a person who had slowly come into my life first as a neighbor and friend, then as an Independent Beauty Consultant in my unit. **Cyndy Ferguson** was a fellow horseback rider, and I knew she would be great.

Neither of us had any experience in developing a charity trail ride. As members of the Western Saddle Club, we agreed that a wildlife management preserve that bordered the Saddle Club would be the ideal location. We found other volunteers to help and started pulling it together.

That summer, with our minds on women's cancers, Cyndy's close friend was diagnosed with breast cancer. Cyndy decided that it was time she had a mammogram herself. She received a call from her doctor that she needed a repeat test. That

second test revealed that she had cancer. Just two months before the ride in October 2007, the right-hand chairperson was diagnosed with breast cancer herself. At the same time, Melissa lost her battle with cancer.

Cyndy, still dedicated and enthusiastic, rode in that first event just days after her lumpectomy and just days before her chemo began. I witnessed how The Pink Ride gave her something to fight for and how family members and friends can be healed by doing something meaningful for a loved one.

HAPPY TRAILS

We've now completed four years of The Pink Ride, raising a total of \$43,000 for The Mary Kay FoundationSM. Many local Independent Sales Directors and Independent Beauty Consultants have made it possible to expand the event each year. With their support, we have plans to keep growing.

As for me, my doctor just can't understand how I have done so well. I recently gave him a photo of me and my Tennessee walker jumping obstacles. In fact, now you can see me all over town in my **high heels** working with and inspiring women to look beautiful, inside and out.



Melinda at home on her 35-acre farm with her horse, Sugar, and dog, Bingo.

TEAM UP FOR WOMEN!® 2011

To help support The Mary Kay FoundationSM in its missions to fund cures for cancers that affect women and to work to end domestic violence, you can take part in the *Team Up for Women!®* 2011 Spring Fundraiser.

From March 25 – May 12, you can collect donations at parties and submit them to the Foundation. Independent sales force members who submit \$50 or \$100 in donations, along with the *Team Up for Women!®* donation form postmarked no later than midnight Central time on May 20, will receive a name badge ribbon and standing recognition at Seminar 2011! Look for the donation form on the Mary Kay InTouch® website.