

The Miami Herald

From breast cancer diagnosis, an author emerges

Posted on Tue, May. 27, 2008

email print reprint
AIM del.icio.us Digg Facebook Yahoo! Buzz

BY DESONTA HOLDER
dholder@MiamiHerald.com

Mimi Rutland, 51

First-grade teacher

Miami Shores

A survivor: Two weeks after 9/11 I found out that I had breast cancer. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. My mother had ovarian cancer. My grandmother had ovarian and breast cancer. An uncle had male breast cancer. I tested positive for the BRCA2 gene mutation. Long story short, I had a complete hysterectomy, double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery. I decided to be proactive and take care of myself.

Fried, smothered: Growing up, we ate fat back, black eyed peas, corn bread with real butter, mashed potatoes, country fried steaks. We eat nothing like that now. I try to get as much organic as I can.

Steamed, grilled: I'll eat a breakfast bar with skim milk. Spinach salad for lunch with carrots, low-fat dressing and cottage cheese. A little bit of lean meat or salad for dinner. I try to eat a lot of vegetables. My teenage daughters, Meredith and Sarah, are much more aware of the value of good nutrition. We saw the film *Super Size Me* and the kids were repulsed. We don't eat fast food.

Walking, talking: Walking is my favorite thing because I love to talk. You can walk with friends and talk. I have a pool and I like to swim at night, too. Ideally I walk or swim three to four times a week.

Writing, teaching: Having breast cancer changed my perspective on life. I wanted to write, so I wrote a children's book. *Miss Pistachio's Big Day* (Paul Mould, \$14), with English and Spanish text, is about the ultimate kindergarten teacher. People have no idea how much time and dedication teachers put in. (More info: www.misspistachio.com)

Author, author: This summer I'll do a lot of book signings, mainly in South Florida. Ten percent of book sales are being donated to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation.

In harmony: I love to read and write and I've been singing since I was 15. I'm in the choir at Miami Shores Presbyterian Church, where my husband, Sam Rutland, is the pastor.

Guilty pleasure: Dark chocolate with almonds and a good book in the Jacuzzi bathtub with bubbles.



RONNA GRADUS / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Mimi Rutland reads to her students at Miami Country Day School. The title character in her book, *Miss Pistachio's Big Day*, is 'a compilation of wonderful teachers and my grandmother,' she says.