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Family F.Y.I.

Truly Organized

Toluca Lake mom Michelle Nicastro had it all: Two beautiful girls, a happening career as an actress and recording artist, a loving husband. But in one quick diagnosis, her world fell apart: She was diagnosed with stage four breast cancer, which, at the time, required the removal of a small lump and no chemotherapy.



Michelle Nicastro (right) relied on Kim Arial (from left), sister Kristin Nicastro and Maria Newton to help her through her battle with breast cancer.

However, four years later, the cancer returned to her breast and spread to her spine, hips and ribs. She became bedridden, unable to do such simple tasks as make lunches for her daughters, Callie, then 11, and Cady, who was 8. No longer able to walk, Nicastro became confined to a wheelchair and a hospital bed installed in her guest house.

Thankfully, that wasn't the end for Nicastro. While she was engaged in a battle for her life, a strong group of friends and family became constant sources of support. With a little help from modern medicine, Nicastro survived her battle with cancer. Throughout her ordeal, her sister, Kristin Nicastro, and friends Kim Arial and Maria Newton were there to help her through painful treatments.

"We would all come over and sit in the guest house with Michelle and just talk and share about life and our day-to-day events," says Kristin Nicastro. "We wanted to transform this guest house from a place of sickness to a place of healing."

When Nicastro emerged happy and healthy (although the cancer left her four inches shorter due to damage to her bones), she and the other members of the foursome had a moment of clarity and inspiration. They pooled their talents and decided to start a business based on helping other busy moms.

The team created TrulyMom™ and the TrulyMom planner. Putting a lot of thought into what busy moms need to stay organized, the women created a tri-fold planner that includes a pull-out calendar, post-it pads and address book, all in a stylish 9-by-6-inch package. They come in linen as well as the extremely durable Majilite, a leather-like material that can survive Starbucks mishaps.

"We try to look at the organizers and stationery products like we're packing the perfect school lunch – with the care and the detail that a mother would do," explains Michelle Nicastro.

Using stripes and polka dots as the predominant style, the moms hope the organizer holds the key to helping moms have more time with their families. Truly Mom planners range from \$65 to \$95. They also offer a line of custom stationery. Visit www.trulymom.com to order or for more information.

– Carolyn Graham