

Survivor's tale set for film

33

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Special

ANNE PARKER had a good story to tell, so Hollywood came knocking on her door.

The courage and resilience shown by Parker, the Living Arts Centre's corporate sales manager, when dealing with ovarian and breast cancer and a tumour will all be part of an independent Hollywood film, *Decoding Annie Parker*.

The movie's storyline will also feature the life and work of well-known American geneticist Mary-Claire King, who proved there might be a genetic link to breast cancer in some families. Produced by Steven Bernstein, the film's cast includes Helen Hunt, Samantha Morton and Aaron Paul.

In 1996, Parker, now 61, underwent genetic testing that revealed she carries a mutation of the BRCA-1 gene. That discovery helped the Brampton woman to understand she may have inherited cancer. The results made sense in light of the fact Parker's mother, sister and a cousin all died of breast cancer.

"My family was one of the first families in North America to be genetically tested," said Parker. "When I found out I carried this ticking time bomb, I was not surprised because I knew there was something more to all this than just bad luck. It really was a family curse."

On Oct. 28, Parker will be among three people to be recognized at the 4th annual Hope Awards at the CIBC Celebration of Hope fund-

raiser in Markham. The awards are given to individuals who show courage and lend hope to others after being diagnosed with cancer.

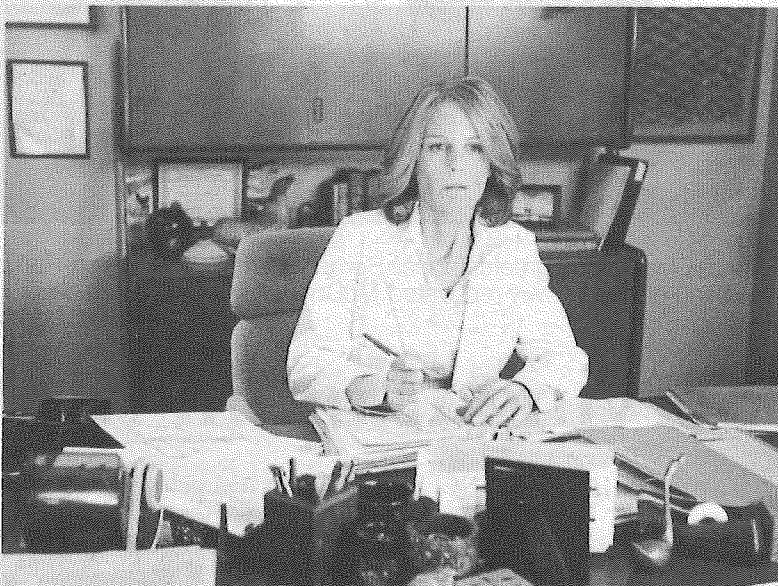
Parker has become an advocate. She believes opting to undergo genetic testing gives women — especially those with a family history of breast cancer — more control of their lives.

Parker was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1980. Eight years later she was told she had ovarian cancer, which she beat as well. Then, about seven years ago, Parker's doctors discovered a tumour behind her liver, which they successfully removed.

"Through *Decoding Annie Parker* I want the world to know about my story," said the three-time cancer survivor. "I want people to see the film and understand some of the positive actions they can take."

The film happened purely by chance. Ten years ago, Parker decided to pen a book about her life. The book did not turn out the way she hoped it would. Her agent, however, recognized a good story and sent the manuscript to a contact in Hollywood.

Decoding Annie Parker will be released early next year.



Decoding Annie Parker is a film about Parker, the Living Arts Centre's corporate sales manager, who is a cancer survivor. The film's cast includes Helen Hunt (above), Samantha Morton and Aaron Paul.