

Cancer patients find meaning in the alpha and omega of life

- Six-Years of Moments in Time -

Despite this being the sixth production of the Moments in Time project, the reveal of the 2008 product range does not disappoint and delivers what South Africans around the country were expecting and hoping for: another uniquely charged offering more magical than the years that have come before it. And from the positive response received during the nationwide launch tour, sales of the 2008 calendar and supporting products will undoubtedly reach new heights to the benefit of local cancer patients.

As in previous years, the Moments in Time calendar features a specially selected cancer patient for each month in 2008. All patients have different forms of cancers in various stages of the disease, all from different backgrounds, with different experiences, who have opened themselves up to the lens of the camera. While seemingly average everyday citizens, the patients in the calendar are anything but. They have all chosen to stand up and be counted, saying "yes" to life in spite of their pain and choosing to fight cancer and become crusaders for the cause.

The calendar is a visual expression of the fruits of the Human Spirit and irresistibly captures, through the lens of the camera: "hope in the face of despair", "passion in the face of pain", "joy in the face of sadness", and "power in the face of vulnerability". Although every picture tells a story, a short but profound narrative accompanies each photo, thereby enriching the page.

For the most part company social responsibility (CSR) projects have a particular hallmark that at best can be labeled as corporate and traditionally operate within the confines of a particular CSR blueprint. But not the AstraZeneca Moment's in Time project. For the past six-years this unusual project - a partnership between the public and private sector and the first of its kind to launch anywhere in the world - has raised money for indigent cancer patients through the sale of these products.

While retaining its multidimensional, multimedia artistic expression of the concept of meaning in life, this year the project, again in full colour, has incorporated new design elements. It has also extended the philosophy to include a fourth dimension, which is a seamless additional theme running through the project and is intimately related to the location it has been produced in.

Project director and AstraZeneca Executive Director Prof Matt Haus says, "With the Moments in Time project now in its sixth-

year of production, finding something new and adopting a fresh approach to ensure the continued appeal of the project was essential but by no means easy."

Haus explains that the project's first dimension is clearly the patient and their story; the second dimension is the existential philosophy of Viktor Frankl and the concept of 'Meaning in Life'. The third dimension is the styling and composition of the photography to reflect the patient's story and their interests. "The fourth dimension needed to reflect a common theme across all of the pictures, which we were hoping to find in a location that identified with the theme."

Haus says: "We settled on the exotic and historical venue, Forum Homini, in the world-renowned Cradle of Humankind. In this setting, the "present" could easily be seen as assuming a falsely humble and almost irrelevant posture. It was here that the fourth dimension becomes evident and that it reflects instead the grand concept of the alpha and the omega of time, the beginning and the end of mankind's journey, and the fact that there is a seamless thread that ties the beginning and the end ... the "now". It is the 'us'. It is the 'I am'. More importantly, the overriding concept of "the circle of life" presents itself. The circle of life begins at the alpha of our current lives (the now), ending in the omega of our time on earth, only to begin again. If this circle is broken by any of us, the meaning of our lives will disappear. It is this philosophy which provides the fourth dimension to this year's Moments in Time project."

The 2008 photographer selected for the second consecutive year is one of the country's leading fashion photographers, Merwelene van der Merwe.

The colours and textures incorporated into this year's artistic design reflect the 'earthy' qualities of the terrain in the Cradle: browns, dirty oranges, yellows. The rich colours of the grassland and the veldt are presented in the images. The pages have been embossed and varnished with patterns and images which reflect the theme of each particular picture, which Haus believes commonly and consistently reflects our personal journey within the alpha and the omega of mankind's eternal journey.

One of the challenges faced by the creative team was portraying the individual's psyche through one photograph. This is why selecting the right location, using expressive clothing and props that support and enhance the patient's message was so vital - every creative element employed in each shot contributes to making a state-

ment about the person and their outlook on life.

Prof Haus, also the narrator and composer of the project's sound track Meaning in Life, says that the music CD provides a greater opportunity to spread the Moments in Time message of meaning in life to a far greater audience. The message of hope and encouragement is taken to many more people by way of a medium which, because of the universal appeal of music which transcends cultures, nations and individual differences, speaks a common language. The song integrates seamlessly with the visual and poetic images of the calendar, and also undeniably reflects and validates once again the timeless message of Viktor Frankl's philosophy about choosing one's attitude under any given set of circumstances, thereby deriving meaning in one's life.

On the composition of the song, Haus says that the words of Meaning in Life needed to be concordant with the poetry and the prologue, and for the music to be at idem with the ethos and spirit of the project's message. "They had to express the message of hope, meaning and joy in our lives."

As has been the case every year since the project's inception, prior to the initiation of the project, AstraZeneca secured the support of South Africa's leading oncologists, without whose buy-in, the project would not have been successful. Patients willing to be involved in the project were put forward by their respective oncologists for possible inclusion in the calendar. The calendar's creative team completed the selection of candidates and ensured the final count is as representative as possible in terms of age, race, sex, location within South Africa and cancer profile.

AstraZeneca is involved in several corporate social investment projects, all of which bring the public and private sector together for a greater good. The Moments in Time project can be considered a bold display of good corporate citizenship.

All the Moments in Time products are on sale from mid-August and can be ordered online at www.momentsintime.co.za, by emailing Rachel.kivedo@astrazeneca.com, or by simply calling 0861 66 66 00.

For additional press information: Melanie Letcher or Verity O'Donoghue
SIMONSAYS communications
011 465-9815
mel@simonsayscom.co.za
verity@simonsayscom.co.za