



Bucket power for Look Good Feel Better

Beauty pageants are not just about appearance. They are also about community awareness and service to others. All contestants in local pageants are required to raise money for the charity Look Good Feel Better, for women suffering the side effects of cancer. The charity provides workshops and makeup for women battling cancer, providing a tremendous morale booster.

Look Good Feel Better began in 1987, when the daughter of the owner of a large privately owned American cosmetic company realised what a little bit of make-up could do for cancer patients. After losing all her hair, eyelashes and eyebrows during cancer treatment, and feeling that she had lost her identity, she received a morale boosting makeover from her firm, raising her spirits immensely. Wanting to bring the same benefit to other women patients, she independently approached the major cosmetic companies to enlist their support to set free cosmetic/skincare workshops for cancer patients. Look Good Feel Better was born. The same programme has been running in New Zealand since 1992 when it was founded and developed by the Cosmetic Toiletry and Fragrance Association of NZ. The CFTA donates more than \$2.5 million of cosmetics each year which means that they are able to help thousands of New Zealand women cope with the trauma of cancer treatment.

Last year more than 1900 women received the benefits of the Look Good Feel Better programme, so watch out for the girls soon at a town near you - and help them to support a worthy cause.

swimwear, daywear and evening wear – and they are all totally different.”

Dianne recalls how shy country girls are encouraged to join their city sisters onstage, where some tuition in the basics soon has their natural beauty and relaxed rural natures shining through. Girls more used to wearing gumboots, sloppy clothes and Ugg boots soon mastered the delicate art of walking in high heels – and found they relished the rare chance to dress up. Some start their pageant experience with very, very cold feet, floods of tears and running mascara. It’s not so much a matter of achieving transformation into beautiful butterflies, as having a major case of butterflies in the stomach. But Dianne knows how to reassure. She simply believes in them and encourages them to believe in themselves.

“The girls learn so much, they soak it all up and love it. They have so much fun and there is a lot of laughter and giggling. Some entrants have been in pageants before, but for most it’s a whole new experience. A beauty pageant is primarily a show, with entertainment, entertainment, entertainment, the whole time. They all learn the opening number, even if they start off having two left feet.

“It’s wonderful to watch these shy young women, who never before thought of themselves as being special, absolutely turn their image around. After six weeks preparation, sometimes their own mothers don’t recognise them. The experience can open so many doors – to represent New Zealand overseas, modelling opportunities and TV appearances.”

Dianne teams up with her sister Vanessa Murch organising pageants and says she absolutely loves her involvement, calling herself “the worker in the background,” with the last minute panics of lost clothing, undone zips, missing buttons and stray shoulder straps. She even has on hand spare pairs of shoes in the average size of 7-9 for any footwear disasters and as always, acts as a proud, encouraging ‘surrogate mum’ as young women take their first tremulous steps on the pageant pathway.

Footnote: Anyone can become a ‘winner.’ A talent scout attends beauty pageants, spotting those with potential onstage and in the audience for possible careers in modelling and film and television.

Meet the judges

Judges Robbie Robson, Dianne Foley,
Vanessa Murch and Leanne Linley



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