

# Necessity Bags provide comfort to breast cancer patients



Entrepreneur and cancer survivor Amanda Fredericks drew on her experience battling Stage 3 breast cancer to develop a thoughtful, practical way to support women undergoing cancer treatment: the Necessity Bag. Filled with items she relied on during her chemotherapy, the Necessity Bag is designed specifically to comfort women as the treatment to eradicate cancer alters their body's chemistry.

"I went into chemotherapy scared and unsure of how my body would react," said Fredericks, who spent 16 weeks in chemotherapy before undergoing a bi-lateral mastectomy and reconstructive surgeries. "A dear friend sent me a list of the things that helped her through her battle with cancer. I took that list and created the first ever Necessity Bag that went with me to every chemotherapy appointment – it felt like my little bit of armor against the disease."

Now Fredericks is packing Necessity Bags for others. After defeating cancer, she began recommending a bag similar to what she carried to friends who were diagnosed with cancer.

"The reaction I got was so overwhelmingly positive that I wanted to help more people heal and get through the process," Fredericks said. "That was when I created the Necessity Bag."

Fredericks and business partner Megan Leto, also a breast cancer survivor, pack each bag with a cozy blanket, an aluminum water bottle, a journal, a bookmark, headphones, a cotton beanie, soothing essential oils, throat lozenges, hot/cold packs and organic lotion.

The bags themselves are washable, tip-proof BOGG bags, which are lightweight and waterproof and

come in multiple color options.

When a loved one is facing breast cancer, we are often at a loss for how to help. Family and community support are crucial to patients during this time, perhaps more so for the lesbian, bisexual and transgender community than any other.

Although sexual orientation has no impact on a person's risk for breast cancer, a 2011 study by the Institute of Medicine found that lesbians and bisexual women have higher rates of breast cancer than heterosexual women. A study published in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine in 2010



found that lesbians and bisexual women also get less routine health care than other women, including colon, breast, and cervical cancer screening tests.

Why? According to the American Cancer Society, low rates of health insurance, fear of discrimination and negative experiences with health care providers are contributing factors to the higher rates of breast cancer in lesbians and bisexual women compared to heterosexual women. Transgender men are also at risk, said Dr. Denise Johnson Miller, Director of Breast Surgery at Meridian Health in New Jersey.

"Depending on whether they've

had a complete mastectomy versus a subcutaneous mastectomy, transgender men may still be at risk for breast cancer," Dr. Johnson Miller said. "It's important for any person who was born female, if they still have breast tissue, to have regular clinical exams."

A Necessity Bag full of comforting items specially selected for women undergoing radiation and/or chemotherapy is a practical way to show a loved one that she has your support during this physically, mentally and emotionally difficult time.

"Whether it's treatment preparation for yourself or for a loved



one while you sit and feel helpless, a Necessity Bag is a beautiful gift," Fredericks said. "It brings a sense of comfort and love during treatment, and when it is over, the bag can be filled with good memories for years to come."

Necessity Bags are available online at [www.necessitybag.com](http://www.necessitybag.com) and can be shipped anywhere in the Continental United States.

Call out: Encourage your friends in the LBT community to get screened regularly. To learn more about what you can do to help reduce cancer risk, visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345. ■

# Trisha Prabhu



**BEQ:** What prompted you to create ReThink?

**TRISHA PRABHU:** In the fall of 2013, when I was 13 years old, I came home one day to read a news story. It was a story of a 11 year old girl from Florida who took her own life due to repeated cyberbullying. I was shocked, heartbroken and angry. How could a girl younger than myself be pushed to take her own life? That is when I decided I would do something to stop cyberbullying from ever happening again.

**BEQ:** The stories we hear about the tragic consequences of cyberbullying are devastating, but it's heartening to know that young people like you are working to change how your peers behave toward each other. How does ReThink help young people put an end to cyberbullying?

**TRISHA:** ReThink is the world's first ever original, transformational and proactive solution to stop cyberbullying before the damage is done. Cyberbullying is a silent pandemic affecting millions. More than 50% of the students in the United States alone have been either been cyberbullied or witnessed cyberbullying. Victims suffer from anxiety, depression, low self esteem and doubt their self worth. There are several apps that allow for victims to report a cyberbullying incident AFTER it has occurred. But research has found that 9 out of 10 kids do not tell anyone; they suffer in silence.

Using patent pending sophisticated context sensitive algorithms, ReThink detects whether a message is offensive and provides an alert in real-time BEFORE the message is sent encouraging the teen to pause, review and rethink before sending a hurtful message. My globally acclaimed, award winning study has found that, with ReThink, over 93% of the time, adolescents change their minds and decide not to post a hurtful message. Encouraged by this success, I have created ReThink as a free app on both Android and iOS devices. ReThink is not just an app, it is a movement. More than 1,000 schools around the world support the ReThink cause and the support is growing every day. ReThink has been introduced to over

1.3 million students in the State of Michigan as a part of their OK2SAY cyberbullying awareness program.

**BEQ:** That is amazing! You're making such a difference already through the app, but you are also an active guest speaker and working with different organizations, like the Tyler Clementi Foundation. Why did you decide to work with that organization in particular?

**TRISHA:** The story of Tyler Clementi has deeply moved me. As I work through the ReThink cause, I have met with parents whose children have gone through immense suffering and hurt produced by cyberbullying. They encourage me every day to keep marching ahead with ReThink to make it available to the millions and to stop the hurting in adolescents. I was honored with the Upstander Legacy award from Tyler Clementi Foundation for my work on ReThink to stop cyberbullying. Thereafter, I was contacted by the Tyler Clementi Foundation to become a member of their Board of Directors. I am glad to be a part of this foundation to promote awareness and to stop this hurting from ever happening again.

**BEQ:** You are an in-demand speaker as well as attending high school and running a business; what's next for you? Do you even have time to think about the next step?

**TRISHA:** Yes, my schedule is very busy. I have great support from family that helps me keep organized. School teachers and administrators have provided great support during my school absences. My goal is to keep marching to release ReThink in various international languages in order to get this in the hands of millions of students around the world.

■ Learn more about Trisha and her life-changing work at [www.trishaprabhu.com](http://www.trishaprabhu.com) and [www.rethink4words.com](http://www.rethink4words.com). Follow her on Twitter @trishaprabhu and @rethink4words ■

Trisha Prabhu is not your average 15 year old. After hearing about the heartbreaking results of cyberbullying among young people, Trisha wanted to do something to halt the "silent pandemic." She turned her considerable talents toward creating an app, ReThink, that stops cyberbullying at the source, before the bullying happens. An innovator, social entrepreneur and advocate, Trisha has received numerous awards for her work, is an in-demand speaker and was recently appointed to the Board of Directors for The Tyler Clementi Foundation.

