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Katrina shares her brave cancer battle

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HER grandmother was diagnosed aged 70 and her mother in her 50s, but a family history of breast cancer did not lessen the blow dealt to Katrina Beats when she was diagnosed last year aged 31.

The Bli Bli resident had endured many operations during a six-year period to remove unusual benign lumps from her right breast and was aware she might be facing a mastectomy.

She wanted to wait until she had a second child to undergo the surgery but fate had other plans and lumps removed early last year were found to be cancerous.

"It was not even a week later that I had to get my right breast removed and reconstructed. I didn't even have time to think about it," she said.

Luckily, the lymph nodes were clear, negating the need for chemotherapy or radiation.

The speed with which this happened to the young mother made it hard for her to comprehend at first, but with the support of husband Stuart and the generosity of the Cindy Mackenzie Breast Cancer Foundation, she was able to make it through. Her elder son Connor, now four, took on a protective role for his mother.

"He understood mummy was sick and that I still have my 'owies' with scars and he has always been careful and mindful of that," Mrs Beats said.

"It was really hard because I couldn't pick him up and couldn't



SPEAKING OUT: Katrina Beats, with her children Connor, 4, and Samuel, six months, is the guest speaker at the Cindy Mackenzie Breast Cancer Foundation gala event.

PHOTO: BRETT WORTMAN

go in for the great big cuddles."

The Beats' were blessed with a second bundle of joy, son Samuel, in October last year. "He's our Pinktober baby," Mrs Beats said.

"It took a lot of mind over matter really but I was able to breast-feed him for the first six months on my left side and have only just weaned him."

When she was 14 weeks pregnant, Mrs Beats stood in front of a

crowd of 500 at the annual CMBCF Black Tie Gala to share her story.

On May 14, she will once again take to the stage, at this year's Hot Dice Shanghai Nights gala event, to show how far she has come in 12 months.

Tickets, \$195 per person, include all food and beverages. Book online at www.cmbcf.com.au, call 1300 557 710 or email events@cmbcf.com.au.