



Yael

Cohen

She's just saying what we're all thinking: F%o#? Cancer.

Written By Michael Hill

◀ As the founder of F*** Cancer, Yael Cohen has brought her concern for early cancer detection to the White House and the United Nations.

don't go to research, however. As Cohen notes, 90 per cent of cancers are curable if caught in stage one, with apathy playing a role. As a result, funds go towards prevention, education and early detection awareness aimed at Generation Y. "If you want to create a paradigm shift and really change how we think about cancer ... you have to go to the youth," says the 25-year-old. Cohen's message has spread like wildfire to the White House, the United Nations and the non-profit Technology Entertainment Design (TED).

Cohen hopes to create a discourse for ending late-stage cancer diagnoses by using Facebook, Twitter and video campaigns such as the Cancer Talk initiative. Like parents giving their children the 'sex talk,' this campaign urges youth to encourage their parents to get checked for the warning signs of cancer.

In 2012, Cohen will be pushing this message through new mediums, like an innovative social media game and common resources such as video and print. "We're focusing heavily on the communication of cancer," she says, explaining how many individuals – family, friends or cancer patients themselves – are searching for a community of support. "And that's what we're going to build for them," says Cohen. Oh, and f*** cancer. ©

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Don't let Yael Cohen's clean image and faultless features fool you. The founder of F*** Cancer is as poised and self-assured as a heavyweight champion. And when your non-profit's name is that direct and controversial, you would certainly have to be.

"I'm very proud of what we do," says Cohen. "We've been successful because of our authenticity, our rawness and because of our name. It's memorable. You see it once and you won't forget it."

While some may feel that employing such a racy, candid title is brash and immature, for Cohen, there was no better way to sum up the confusion, anxiety and anger she felt when her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009. "I realized this is a statement and this is a disease that really affects everybody, and it's a widely shared sentiment," she says.

At a tremulous time when the world looked its bleakest, these two loaded words she happened to hear brought clarity in the most lucid of ways. Cohen made a T-shirt for her courageous mom with the slogan boldly emblazoned on its chest, and the next thing she

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knew, she was swamped with requests for her fearless attire. "I'll never forget one of the first times I wore the shirt in public and we were at a coffee store, and a mother holding a three- and a seven-year-old's hand said, 'Yeah, f*** cancer.'" The F*** Cancer movement was born. But the cause hasn't been without controversy. In 2012, for example, Vancouver's Moulé boutique received complaints and some threats after posting F*** Cancer signs in their windows.

In less than three years, F*** Cancer has sold over 10,000 T-shirts and raised more than \$1 million. Proceeds