

St Joseph's, Boroko, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Monday September 18th 2017

Thank you to the Kim family for the opportunity to offer a tribute to Joan. I am humbled and privileged.

May I first introduce myself. My name is Dr Ann Clarke. I am Joan's friend as well as her employer on a new project called Businesses for Health. I am here today because last year, Joan sent me an email saying, "we need you here!"

I first employed Joan in 2007 as part of the start-up group that became known as BAHA, or the Businesses Coalition against HIV and AIDS. The founding board of private sector leaders asked to me get a team together and get to work to minimise the impact the AIDS epidemic, which according to predictions from around the world was going to place a severe challenge to private sector workplaces in PNG.

Joan was referred to me through another colleague, I asked her to drop by. A couple of hours later she did, and I met a beautiful beaming-with-health woman, who dropped by to say sorry she couldn't come by for an interview today, as she had to do school pickup, get to a dental appointment and do some banking. As I am not a very well institutionalised 'boss meri', and had been given absolutely no rules for how I was to establish my super team, I hired her straightaway.

In this very brief encounter, I saw in Joan the qualities that made her a real leader.

Joan valued her health intensely, Joan charmed everyone with her beautiful smile and had an innate understanding of the value of health protection and disease prevention. She was a mother who knew that without education her family and her country would

make slow progress in its development challenges. She could drive herself – literally. She was determined to be on time and she knew her way around a bank queue. These, as you know, are unique and highly valued qualities in an employee, and in demand for new soon to be successful business.

I was also in need of team member who was fearless, in a hurry and able to handle the demands of a job that was being made up as I went along. Joan was not intimidated by that, or me. She laughed, apologised for laughing, and said she would back the next day. The rest is history.

Joan began the process of helping us to develop contacts with hundreds of businesses throughout Papua New Guinea. She became friends with the thousands of people we trained to become leaders of the HIV policy and programs, she knew the names of all of them, and it seems their phone numbers.

Bit by bit our team grew. Most of them are here today. Together we became a force to be reckoned with. Team BAHA was everywhere and we made a difference. We hung the largest red ribbon in the world on the Deloitte tower for World AIDS Day, we coerced hundreds of businesses to join us in our effort to make sure everyone in every workplace knew about HIV, AIDS and how to protect themselves. We promoted the use of and distributed millions of condoms.

We engaged timid business leaders – mostly men in uncomfortable conversations about sex, diseases and other incredibly difficult issues like rape and post exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection. Each of those activities requires person in the background who gets permission, speaks nicely, keeps in touch and knows the name of the person who minds the gates, manages the queue, the tower, the side of the building or the door ways. Each of those actions required being test driven and then recorded in my ridiculous

monitoring system. She passionately supported me in my obsessive need to count everything we did and to show our sponsors what we were achieving. I cannot emphasise enough, the fact that Joan helped us to prevent many thousands of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Meanwhile she cajoled and gently moulded into shape all the young men on our mostly female team. Joan took them all on. What I didn't know was Joan was taking on the well-being, of what it seemed, was most of the rest of her community.

Joan just kept coming to work as well. Disaster seemed to beset everyone else, or everyone else's family. Joan seemed able to swing under, around or through whatever crisis, ailment or natural disaster that made everybody else late, sick, injured or ill prepared for work. Including me.

She did that with an infectious laugh and deep humility. She did things I know challenged the teachings of her faith. She embraced change and learned to do new things. She was patient and tolerant of me. These are the qualities of a real leader. She could make her feelings felt, she literally walked the talk of good health, and she stood up to announce when things were wrong.

In PNG, we are confronted daily with the dilemma of knowing something is that is not quite right, not quite working, not quite true or not quite clean enough. Joan seemed not to struggle with this. She just managed to fix a lot the issues herself, or if something was wrong, she would tell me, or ask someone she trusted. I can hear now, saying, "that's not right", and then apologising.

I return to my email from Joan last year.

As PNG's HIV challenge has become our TB challenge, Joan was retained by World Vision, with support from the Australian government to help close the functions of the HIV specific BAHA, and be part of a new organisation and team that could tackle the complexities of the new greater challenge of TB, drug resistant TB and TB HIV co-infection. Joan wanted to be part of it, and she decided to make sure I had been engaged to get our new show on the road.

When I arrived, Joan was here to meet me. My first question to her was, Joan, we are up for this? It's a very big challenge, can we do this again? She replied with her usual laugh, Yes!

Being a leader is knowing your own mind, being confident you know what is right and then acting upon it. Being a leader is also about being kind and good fun. Being a leader is setting a good example, and living by the standards you have set. Joan lived by these qualities.

Joan was that kind of leader, she is, as someone wrote our Businesses for Health: TB Facebook page, a PAWA MERI!

The world and PNG needs more people like Joan Kim. I trust, that for all those whose lives she has touched, you will step up to challenge of continuing her work, not just as a leader, and a good woman, but as a thoroughly wonderful human being.

Thank you and we will miss her terribly.

Ann