



Westville Life Hospital nurse Rita Naidoo helps patient Robert Verwoerd in the hospital gym yesterday. Naidoo is a cancer survivor who, despite her own suffering, has dedicated her life to helping the sick. She was hailed as a hero by her colleagues on International Nurses Day yesterday. PICTURE: S'BONELO NGCOBO

Nurse who beat cancer is hailed by colleagues

Lungelo Mkamba

A DURBAN nurse who successfully fought breast cancer was hailed as an example to others and a hero of her profession at a function to mark International Nurses Day at the Westville Life Hospital yesterday.

Rita Naidoo said her world came crashing down when doctors found a lump in one of her breasts in 2002 and she had to undergo aggressive chemotherapy.

“The side-effects of going bald and losing weight were not easy,” said the nurse, who has more than 20 years experience.

She overcame the cancer and is grateful to be alive, and is focusing on “making a difference”.

Yesterday Naidoo, who is the cardiac unit manager, was honoured by her colleagues.

Amanda van Rensburg, the nursing manager, said Naidoo was “an amazing person” who had been through a lot.

Naidoo has already received an “International Relay For Life Hero of Hope” award from the American Cancer Society for working with the Cancer Association of South Africa in its Relay for Life in Durban.

“We say thank you to all the nurses who go the extra mile for this job and service to humankind,” she said.

Naidoo said she was worried about the shortage of nurses, and hoped more people would consider the profession.

“If people have passion and

tolerance, then they must consider nursing as a career. There are a lot of opportunities to grow by becoming a matron, and later on a manager.”

International Nurses Day is celebrated each year on the anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.

This year’s theme was “From Duty to Privilege”.

At the function, Westville Hospital’s nurses promised to adhere to the “Nurses’ Pledge of Service”.