

## Young and surviving cancer

Halifax photographer points her lens at a neglected group battling the disease

By PAT LEE Staff Reporter  
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Photographer Shari Tucker is working on a book called *Young and Fearless*, about people under the age of 30 who are dealing with cancer. (CHRISTIAN LAFORCE / Staff)

HALIFAX – Young and female, Shannon Ferguson isn't exactly the poster child for colon cancer.

But she does fit the profile for a new book about young people with cancer, which will tell their stories in photographs and words.

"I'm interested in getting my story out there and knowledge about my type of cancer," Ferguson, 30, who lives in Dartmouth, said recently about her inclusion in *Young and Fearless — Inspiration of Cancer Survivors* by photographer Shari Tucker.

"I want to get it out there that (colon cancer) isn't just for men (and) it isn't just for those over 50."

Tucker, a Halifax photographer, is currently working on the book — her second portraying those with

cancer — and has almost finished recruiting her "30 under 30" subjects.

She said a book she did last year included 21 cancer survivors of all ages, but this year she decided to point the lens at a less understood demographic.

"People generally think that cancer is a disease of the elderly, and generally speaking, it is," she said. "But there's a whole segment of younger people who get cancer that no one knows about."

Tucker, 30, said she's been struck by how different it is to have cancer at 80 than at 20 "when you're in university, you're planning a family and you're thinking about getting married. It really affects your life."

Ferguson, for example, is on a medical leave from her job at Nova Scotia Power as she undergoes chemotherapy and radiation treatments. She was diagnosed in 2007.

As with last year's book, there is also an art show tied to the project. This year's show of photographs and a book launch will be held on Oct. 4. A portion of the proceeds from the show and sale of the book will go to the Canadian Cancer Society.

"It started as an art show because I was inspired by some people I had met (with cancer)," said Tucker, who specializes in portrait photography.

"As I started getting to know people and learning their stories — although photos tell a story, they don't tell the whole story — it turned into a coffee table book from there."

Last year Tucker did everything involved with the publication, including writing the companion profiles. This year she has a group of 10 people creating profiles and designing the book while she focuses on the photography.

"Last year it was just me, but it just grew and grew and grew," said Tucker, who came up with the title after being named a Young and Fearless Entrepreneur by Progress Magazine in 2007.

The photographer, originally from New Brunswick and a graduate of Nova Scotia Community College, said she plans to continue the project in various forms for years to come.

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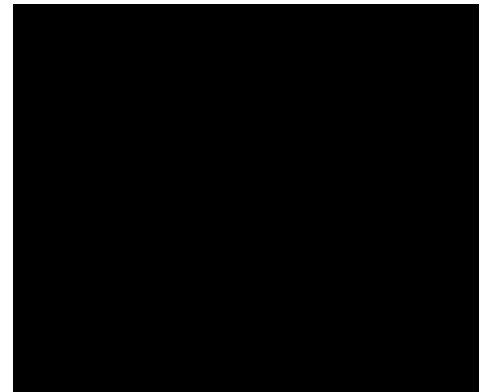
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For more information see the Facebook group Young and Fearless — Inspiration of Cancer Survivors or [www.sharitucker.com](http://www.sharitucker.com).

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