

Hospice

News 2021

Otago Community Hospice Newsletter | February

CEO Message

Happy New Year!

2020 certainly had its challenges, and I was pretty happy to see the back of it. But on reflection I'm so very proud of how our team maintained our services throughout the region, despite all the new-found hurdles.

We even managed some further service development in 2020, with our Kowhai Programme (education/support for carers) now offered throughout Otago.

Our Inpatient Unit, incredibly, stayed open throughout the lockdown and various 'levels' we experienced. They too had some extraordinary trials ensuring those in our Unit had the best support possible. Working in these conditions made us all appreciate how very important human connection is but it also taught us how innovative we can be when put to the test.

Stephen Alexander has written "Deb's Story", an incredibly moving piece about his wife's experience of hospice care during lockdown for this newsletter. It was so beautifully written, we couldn't bear to edit it and so our newsletter is a little bigger this February. Thank you Stephen for sharing Deb's story.

We have developed new systems and ways of interacting, and we have received really positive feedback about our focus on connecting family through video calls. It is good to be able to offer these connections when family can't be in the room or, in some cases, in the country.

We continued developing our Central Otago team adding an education coordinator to the mix alongside a spiritual coordinator and a new nurse specialist who will be working solely with the aged care facilities in Central Otago. We have also expanded our North Otago team with the addition of a new community care coordinator.

The team at Hospice felt so incredibly supported by our community as we farewelled 2020, with many fundraising campaigns continuing despite the traumatic year. The Farmers Campaign, the Central Otago Dinner Club supported by Pioneer Energy and the Rotary Club of Dunedin South Trailer Raffle all went ahead in the last quarter, and all of those have made a significant difference to our financial year already.



Please do continue your support for Hospice. Our team make such a difference to those who are facing end of life, and their families. We can only do this because of your support, which ensures we continue delivering free specialist services throughout our region.

Ginny

Deb's Story

By Stephen Alexander



In September 2016 when Deb's cancer diagnosis was confirmed it changed our world forever. We'd been life partners since 1974 when we first dated as 16 and 17 year olds, we had adult sons, teenage grandsons, we'd shared good and bad times, we'd loved, laughed and cried together.

It was advanced stage 3 breast cancer which had moved into Deb's lymphatic system and the prognosis was not good. Deb faced this new reality with her usual strength and pragmatism as they first removed an almost 15cm tumour then administered months of chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

By late 2017 Deb's determined nature saw her strength recover as she hit the gym and the walking tracks pushing herself to reclaim her former life. For the next two years Deb fought the many side effects of ongoing medications designed to save her life and at one point Deb's surgeon even said that at the 3 year mark we might even start thinking of the other 'C' word...cured.

That was not to be. In September 2019, almost three years to the day from confirmation of Deb's first diagnosis and just a few weeks before Deb's 62nd birthday, a scan showed the original cancer had spread to her hip and pelvis. It had metastasised and cure was no longer a possibility, it was now a matter of looking to slow the eventual spread of the disease. Deb was told she was likely to have just a one to two year life expectancy.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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Living Every Moment

293 North Road | North East Valley | PO Box 8002 | Dunedin
Phone 03 473 6005 | Fax 03 473 6015
Email contact@otagohospice.co.nz

Hospice News

Deb's Story ...continued

Radiation treatment recommenced and as 2019 came to an end Deb was hospitalised, unable to walk. The large Christmas celebration that Deb had planned to take place at our house seemed at risk, but that wasn't part of Deb's thinking. Six days before Christmas Deb walked out of hospital and informed everyone that Christmas dinner was on as planned.

Christmas 2019 was wonderful despite the ongoing hospital visits for more radiation treatment. New Year passed and in early January we were walking the hills overlooking Karitane. The treatment appeared to have slowed and even reversed the cancer's advance.

This hope was short lived. As February arrived the scans showed new tumours in Deb's spine and chest cavity. More radiation followed, but this now seemed to take an increased toll as my strong, strong Deb battled both the advancing disease and the side effects of the even more aggressive treatments.

March 2020 saw Deb admitted to hospital with respiratory problems as the cancer began attacking her lungs. After a 2 week stay Deb's condition was stabilized and she was discharged home. Some changes to medication, an oxygen machine and walking frame allowed Deb to maintain a degree of mobility and independence, but most importantly of all to Deb, her dignity.

On the morning of Wednesday March 25th, the day that NZ was about to move into Covid-19 Alert Level 4 and full lockdown, Deb's condition deteriorated markedly. We called an ambulance to take Deb to hospital and for the first time in the three and a half years of Deb's cancer journey I was unable to go with her due to the alert level restrictions. Deb spent that day and night in a hospital bed without me there.

Before Deb's cancer diagnosis, Deb had worked at the hospital and as many will attest, Deb had a special way of building relationships with people. And so, on Thursday morning, the call came through that I would be allowed to visit Deb in hospital for a short period of time.

In Deb's hospital room we were told that Deb was unlikely to live more than another week or two. I was told that this would be my only visit, that due to Covid restrictions neither I nor any other visitors would be able to see Deb, but that Deb would receive all the care and attention she needed to allow her to die with dignity and pain free. As the afternoon arrived and I was preparing to leave my gorgeous girl to face her final journey alone, the hospital's palliative care nurse arrived telling us she had just arranged for a place at Hospice where Deb and I could be together. Deb's wishes for her end of life journey were always: 1. To be pain free; 2. To be at Hospice; 3. To have me by her side. All three wishes were about to come true.

At 2pm on Thursday 26th March 2020 when we arrived at Hospice we received many apologies from the people working there. They were wearing protective clothing and there was no touching; this is not part of normal hospice care, but as we were taken into Deb's room which was to become our home for the next 9 days, Deb and I thought we were in heaven, surrounded by caring people, looking out into the beautiful gardens and hearing the sound of birdcall.

I left Deb that night while I took care of some practicalities, arranging care for our Kitten Hazel, and returned the next day

with some things for Deb to have around her during these final days. We arranged for our sons and grandsons to come and visit Deb and while, because of Covid restrictions, they were unable to come inside Hospice they were able to speak with their Mum and Nana from the garden outside Deb's room through what we dubbed the 'window of love'. This would never have been possible had Deb's final days been spent in hospital. The boys visited many times and through that window saw Deb at peace and pain free.

Deb and I settled in to our new routine at Hospice. The staff were hamstrung by many of the new protocols that Covid 19 placed on them and would often apologise for this, but again, Deb and I could not have dreamed of a better final journey where I was able to provide Deb with the care and attention that, as my life long partner, Deb not only deserved but I was privileged to give.

As the days and nights progressed there was one point when Deb, with a little glass of wine in hand, asked me whether perhaps this was all a mistake and that we were simply on another of our many holidays away, such was the level of care and peace we experienced at Hospice.

Each night I slept in a bed next to Deb waking often to attend to Deb's meds as Hospice staff arrived with doses ready for the next time Deb woke. The expert medical care at Hospice ensured that the medication dispensed kept Deb pain free throughout her final days.

Deb's unrelenting strength and dignity endured till Friday April 3rd and up to that evening I would assist her out of bed, help her to the bathroom and would be dismissed while she took care of business then called for me to come and help her back to bed.

On the morning of Saturday April 4th 2020 Deb woke from a long sleep, one I was unsure she would wake from, to tell me "I'm happy" and smiled. Deb slept again for most of that morning and our boys made their final visit to the 'window of love' to see their Mum peacefully sleeping. Early that afternoon Deb woke again and we spoke a little. I kissed Deb and held her in my arms as at 1.50pm Deb took her final quiet and peaceful breathes and left this world for a better place.

Deb died six months to the day before her 63rd birthday. In Deb's final days at Hospice, knowing the funeral she wanted would be impossible due to the Covid restrictions, Deb re-planned her final exit or, as the plaque on her urn reads, 'Sortie Finale' (that's another story in itself!). Deb wrote the newspaper notice of her death, described to me what the urn for her ashes should look like, and chose the photos and music to be shown and played at the celebration of her life that Deb wanted to be held on her 63rd birthday, at our home with all our family and friends there. Deb even chose the catering for the day and how the house should be decorated, like a big Christmas celebration with the tree up, white doves and fairy lights in place. None of this would have been possible without the care provided by Hospice.

On Sunday October 4th 2020, I brought Deb's wishes to life, surrounded by the tears, laughter and love of 80 family and friends. The tree looked resplendent, Deb's photo show and music played, and Deb was with us smiling and happy, as at precisely 1.50pm, six months on from the day Deb died, we raised to toast and sang happy birthday to our gorgeous girl.



Alexandra Shop Opening

With our growing Hospice team in Central Otago, we've had to think about how we can do more fundraising in the region. As part of this mission, we went on a hunt for a larger shop premises in Alexandra. Our search resulted in 13 Ennis St becoming our latest addition to the Hospice Shop network.

Shop Manager Gitty Meyer, Retail Development Manager Cat Callanan and a host of wonderful volunteers put in huge hours and effort to transform 13 Ennis St into a fabulous, much larger hospice shop.

Fundraising volunteer Russell Garbutt did the honours and opened the new shop on Monday 30th November. It looked amazing on the night of the opening, with 40 locals joining us to celebrate what will be a new era of hospice shopping in Alexandra, as well as toasting Gitty and the team for their five years of effort thus far generating income for Hospice.

The shop, which is directly opposite The Warehouse, has in its first month done remarkably well. If you live in the area or are passing through, make sure you visit as there are so many treasures to be found.



Rotary Trailer Raffle

The Annual Christmas Trailer Raffle, run by the Rotary Club of Dunedin South and supported by Mitre 10 Mega Dunedin, did an incredible job raising money for us over December with more than 16,000 tickets sold, and a whopping \$25,000 raised.

Wendy Bowman, President of Rotary Club of Dunedin South, says they couldn't do it without all the fabulous volunteers who help sell tickets across the region, and also for the community who buy up the tickets like wildfire.

"The Christmas Trailer Raffle is a firm favourite and we love playing our part. We are very grateful to Mitre 10 Mega Dunedin for once again supporting us, and the great cause that is Otago Community Hospice."

Neil Finn-House Group CEO Mitre 10 Mega Dunedin says his team loves to be able to give back to and assist a vital service in the community, and enjoys the strong connections it has with the Hospice.

Palmerston woman Angeline Donovan seen here with her winning trailer and its goodies

2nd Prize (corner sofa and coffee table) – LEEANNE BARNES of Dunedin

3rd Prize (BBQ) – ANNE DIX from Balclutha

4th Prize (EGO Electric Lawnmower) – BEVERLEY YOUNG from Balclutha



Hospice News

Central Otago Dinner Club

The second Central Otago Dinner Club, sponsored by Pioneer Energy and held at The Packing Shed on Friday 16th October, raised \$15,172 for the local Otago Community Hospice team.

The Dinner Club, attended by 80 people and supported by over 30 local businesses, had been postponed due to the lockdown, but keen supporters saw the event sell out despite the shadow of Covid.

Pioneer Energy CEO Fraser Jonker said Pioneer Energy was privileged to once again sponsor this event.

"We are proud and thankful to our community, other sponsors and business partners who so generously supported the night and helped us raise the bar on last year's success."

Russell Garbutt, the main volunteer behind the event who knows first-hand the value of the Central Otago Hospice service which looked after his wife four years ago, was also rapt with the evening.

"It was a huge night. A massive thanks to Pioneer Energy as the major sponsor, to Pallas Hupé Cotter who was our MC and guest speaker, and to the many local donors of goods or services which were auctioned by Peter Hishon from Tall Poppy Real Estate."



THANKS TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS:

Alexandra New World, Benjer Drinks Co, Cardrona Distillery, Clyde River Cruises, Creagh Cottage & Vineyard, Cromwell Golf Club, Edgewater Wanaka, Emerson's Brewery, Grahame Sydney, Highland Motorsport Park, Kika, Lake Wanaka Cruises, Mt Difficulty Wines, Olivers, Paddon Rallysport, Pembroke Patisserie, R.Redpath Ltd, Rockburn Winery, Sue Noble-Adams, Tall Poppy Real Estate, The Packing Shed Gallery & Café, The Post Office Café & Bar, Two Paddocks and Wooing Tree Vineyard



Farmers Campaign



We weren't sure if the Farmers Campaign would be happening in 2020 given the Covid-19 conditions, so it was wonderful to hear from the Farmers team that the campaign would start on November 19th. The Dunedin and Oamaru Farmers teams once again did the most incredible job raising funds for our local hospice service through their add-a-donation campaign, alongside selling beautiful Christmas baubles designed for Farmers. They raised \$33,383. We are in awe of the continuous enthusiasm and commitment that the Farmers staff have for this campaign, and also for the wonderful support from Farmers customers.



Southern Trust Golf Tournament

This year's Southern Trust Hospice Golf Tournament raised a magnificent \$50,407 on the 30th of October. With a full contingent of 44 teams of four taking to the St Clair Golf Course in high spirits with the sun shining, everyone was in the mood for this fantastic event.

Kevin Galliven, from the Southern Trust, year after year throws his heart and soul into this event and gets a terrific result, but this year's total floored us all. We are so grateful for the generosity of all the players and those key supporters who donated auction and event items. The golf tournament itself has raised well over half a million for the Hospice in the last 14 years. Thanks Kevin and the Southern Trust!



Kowhai Programme

In the last 12 months there have been some fresh developments in the Kowhai Programme. We have now extended into the regions, successfully hosting programmes in Wanaka, Alexandra, Cromwell, Oamaru and Balclutha (despite the effects of Covid and lockdown!). Being able to offer the service across the region has been a goal of the Otago Community Hospice team for some time so bringing this to fruition has been very exciting.

Historically, Kowhai has had ten 1.5 hour sessions with a different topic each week. Regionally we adjusted this to five 2.5 hour sessions with three topics on each day. This was well received and our evaluation forms reflected deep satisfaction with the programme.

Acknowledging this, and recognising a need to fit programmes in before the end of 2020, we also used this five week format in Dunedin, again with excellent feedback. It is likely we will continue with the five week format for the foreseeable future as it also gives us greater flexibility around programming should Covid-19 cause further disruptions.

Corporate Supporters Update

Welcome to Preens/Linenmaster who have come on board as Gold level corporate supporters of Hospice. The Hospice has a long history with the Wellington family from Preens, and so we are thrilled to add them to our team of highly valued supporters.



BECOME A



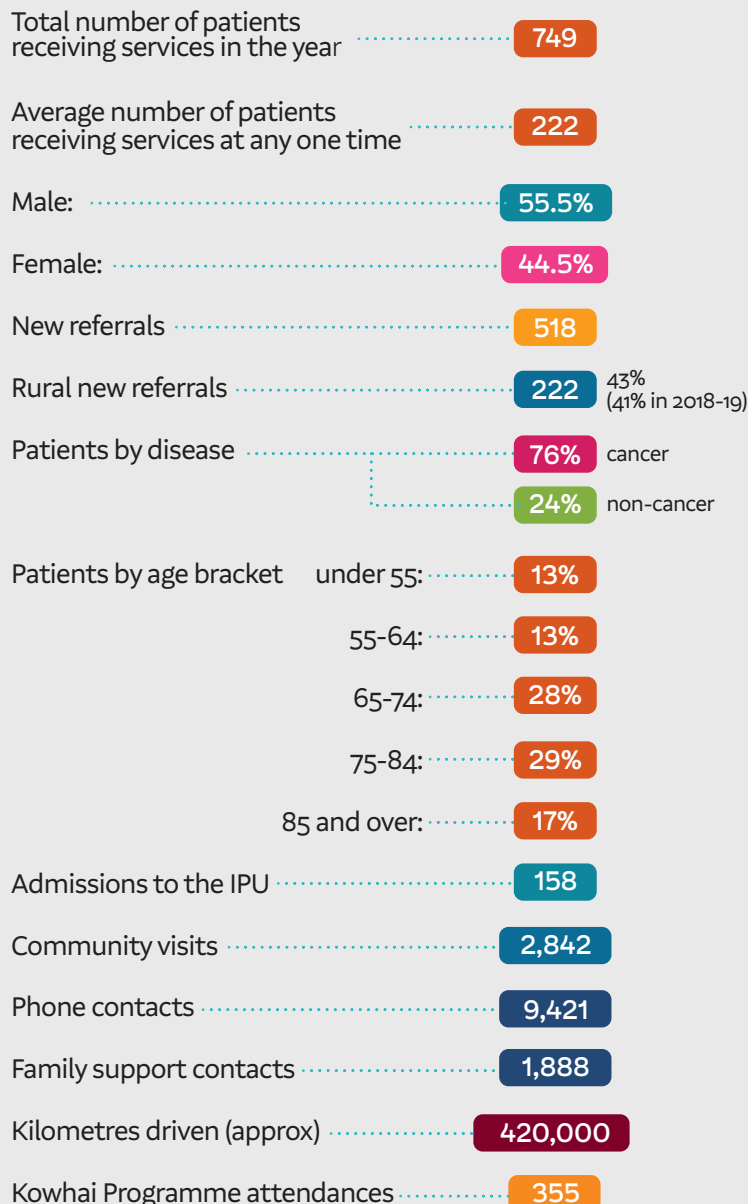
TODAY!

Become a Friend of Hospice today by setting up a monthly automatic payment. Not only are you simplifying your gifting to Hospice, you are also making an incredible difference to our Hospice's sustainability. The equivalent of one cup of coffee each week makes a significant difference to the care we can provide throughout our region. Simple to do, good for our community and good for you. Please contact Michelle for more information on how to become a Friend of Hospice on **0800 682 464** or friends@otagoohospice.co.nz

Hospice News

Snapshot of our service delivery in the region

1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020



THANK YOU!

Our heartfelt thanks to the following trusts who recently supported us with extremely generous grants:

Goodwill Charitable Trust
 The Southern Trust
 Vero Insurance Hardship Grant
 Foodstuffs Community Trust ReSTART Grant
 DCC Rates Relief Grant
 The Trusts Community Foundation
 Dunedin Casino Charitable Trust
 Upper Clutha Hospice Trust
 J N Lemon Charitable Trust

Hospice Events Calendar

Friday 5 March
Otago Community Hospice Street Appeal
 – throughout Otago!

Friday 19 March
SEVEN – A degustation dinner

An evening of style and bonhomie is booked in at Titi, combining an exquisite location with an incredible seven course menu designed by chef Hannes Bareiter. Sponsored by Quartz Reef.

Monday 17 – Sunday 23 May
Hospice Awareness Week

Got a fundraising idea for Hospice? Make an impact by fundraising for Hospice during our Hospice Awareness Week.

Friday 9 July
Shorts for Hospice

Yep, we are doing this again and we want you to all play a part. It's super simple: wear a pair of shorts on Friday July 9th in support of your Hospice! Visit our Hospice Events Calendar to find out more:

<https://otagohospice.co.nz/support-us/events/>

Keep an eye on our website for more information on these events as they happen.

www.otagohospice.co.nz



Have your details changed?

Address _____

Email _____

Phone Number _____

Cell Phone _____

<Giving_Number>

