

Garden news

It has been a fortunate month for us. Thanks to a 2015 Dry July Grant, our balcony garden is now complete. We have shelving, storage for tools, outdoor seating and a variety of pots and plants to grow. Our greenhouse has now been assembled and our fresh air oasis has become a reality. Our veggie tubs have started to produce onions, chilli and capsicum. We also have been helped by the kind donation of seedlings from:

Leppington Speedy Seedlings & Supplies Pty Ltd.

Phil Pettit from the **Sydney Botanical Gardens** gave us some great ideas on how to treat our native plants last month. Coming up he will talk from 10:30am – 12:00pm on the following dates:

- **13th Jul** Caring for backyard fruit and berries
- **10th Aug** Growing Succulents and Cactus
- **7th Sep** Bulbs - Tubers ,Rhizomes and all that jazz

To get some more green know-how call Melissa on 8738 9816 or Sebia on 8738 9853.

Gardening lovers with some spare time are welcome to help us retain this area as an inviting green, tranquil space for all to enjoy! Call Jan on 87389808 if you're interested in giving a hand.

Donations

We gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the **John Richard Kuhlmann Foundation** who provided us with a second electric massage table and a generous donation of \$15,000 to purchase new wigs for the Wig Service. The Kuhlmann's support for the wellness program was acknowledged at a morning tea on 19th May.



Dry July 2016

This year, we have created a Team for our "Dry July Challenge". We would like to raise funds for our patient activities at the Wellness Centre. Our real costs are set out below:



- Acupuncture clinic - \$9,360 for one term
- 2 Tai Chi classes a week – \$4,160
- 2 Yoga classes a week - \$3,640
- Zumba gold class - \$2,080

So we are asking all our generous readers to kindly support us by making a donation of \$5, \$10 or \$25 to

Liverpool Wellness Centre, Cancer Therapy Services, Liverpool Hospital at this link:

<https://www.dryjuly.com/teams/liverpool-wellness-centre-cancer-therapy-services-liverpool-hospital>

Please donate or sign up to join our 'dry wellness' team. Go to www.dryjuly.com/users/sign_up.

Art news

Further Wednesday Art workshops with Laurel are scheduled for June. Come along and build up your watercolour, sketching or painting skills.

Workshop dates are

1st, 15th & 29th of June from 12.30pm to 2.30pm in the Wellness Centre.



To book, contact:

Melissa on 8738 9816

or Sebia on 8738 9853

Thanks to Wendy

Unfortunately our scrap booking teacher has left but scrap booking will still continue. The next session is on **24th June 10 – 12 noon**.

Book with Sebia on 8738 9853

Cancer related fatigue

Most people with cancer will tell you they often experience fatigue. Each person's experience will be different as the tiredness can come and go, be mild or severe, last a short or a long time. Feelings of tiredness and exhaustion, in the body and mind can be related to the cancer or its treatment.

Cancer related fatigue is the most common symptom cancer patients complain about. It can occur at any time during treatment and can continue after cancer treatment ends. Regular fatigue is a feeling of being tired and having little energy, but it gets better with rest and sleep.

Cancer related fatigue is different because it:

- is not related to recent activity or exertion
- does not get better with rest or sleep
- interferes with a person's ability to function in daily life

Is there help for cancer fatigue?

Yes there is but it might not be what you expect. You can help yourself through:

- Low to moderate tailored Exercise
- Dietary adjustment
- Family support
- Tackling Sleep related issues
- Improving your thoughts, behaviours and attitudes and applying tips to help you to reduce stress
- Identifying your priorities and activities and actively managing them

Want more information?

Link to this video for helpful strategies from Dr. Mike

Evans: <http://health.sunnybrook.ca/cancer-fatigue-content/video/>

(Dr Evans, the founder of the Health Design Lab at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, an Associate Professor of Family Medicine and Public Health at the University of Toronto)

Healthy cooking news

If you're interested in healthy easy to make recipe ideas, join Abbey in her fortnightly course on **Wednesdays from 11:30am – 1:00pm.**

- **June 1st Hearty soups**
- **June 15th Rice delights**
- **July 6th Xmas lunch**
- **July 20th Asian Soups**



SAVE THE DATE: 6th July Christmas in July Lunch

As the weather cools it's a great time to enjoy some traditional festive fare, so save the date and book now for a great fundraiser lunch with us to support our wellness programs. Enjoy some Xmas trivia, try some Zumba and enjoy the company of peers.



Time: 1pm Cost: \$15:00

Join us at Casula Powerhouse



Opening night 10 June 2016 at 5.30pm for 6pm start -Special Guest Julie McCrossin

You've seen some art being made at both centres, so why not see the whole exhibition. To RSVP to opening night call Sebia on 8738 9853 by June 8th

Read more about our patient mask exhibition at:

<http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/cancer/pdf/art.pdf>

Linking with GP knowledge

In 2015, the Liverpool Cancer Therapy Centre celebrated 20 years of service to the community of South Western Sydney. During this celebration, an educational forum for General Practitioners was held in October. We invite you to see the videos on our website at:

<http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/cancer/gpforum.html>

Shared stories

Everybody's experience with cancer treatment is different but there may be similarities that when shared can help anyone facing the challenge of cancer. The process of telling and sharing with others can help the storyteller because they have an opportunity to become more self-aware and reflect on how well they have coped. It's a way to think about your emotional wellbeing and personal resilience. It may also help people to identify positive relationships and connectedness to people that have been helpful. We feel it is important to respect people's privacy and so stories for sharing are identified just by a letter. If you'd like to share your story with others why not make an appointment time with Jan to tell of your experiences or ask for your story guide. This month K shares her story with us, we hope you enjoy reading it.

K's story

I really had no experience with cancer until it happened to me. I had some lumps in my neck. I used to feel them in the shower mainly when I was washing my face otherwise I didn't really pay them much attention. I wasn't worried I thought it was just swollen glands and the doctor didn't originally show concern. But after I'd had them for 3 months a biopsy and blood tests were ordered.

I was by myself when I got the diagnosis from the test results that I had Hodgkin's Lymphoma. I went into shock. I remember coming out into the car park where my husband was waiting for me and telling him I had cancer. It frightened me but I didn't really know what it meant. I just knew that I had to work on projects. My youngest daughter hadn't had children but I knew that I wanted to give her crochet blankets for her future children like I had for my other 2 daughters and their children. I wanted her to have the same experience as the other two of having things made with care especially for them. People sent me flowers to show they cared. I remember thinking to myself they must think I'm going to die but I'm not dead yet.

I had treatment in 1999 and was sent to see Dr Dunlop who was a haematology specialist. I know that he probably explained things to me but I don't think I took everything in.

I do remember him saying to me you're not going to lose your hair with this chemotherapy. But by the second treatment my hair had gone.



He looked at me my next appointment and said "What no hair!..".

In 1999 you walked in had your chemotherapy and walked out again. There wasn't a wellness centre then and no "colouring in" or "music" for you.

During the treatment I had mixed experiences. I got given a plan by the doctor and I went with the flow so to speak. At around the same time my husband's brother was also diagnosed with cancer but he had Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He used to ring me and we'd talk together about cancer. He was very close to my husband as there was only 13 months between them and they were very close as kids.

It's funny what sticks in your mind. I remember early in my treatment there was a mistake and I was given the chemo into my tissues and so I remember feeling like I was going to vomit on the way home. I didn't have anything with me and I remember my husband saying don't you dare vomit in the car. I remember opening the car door and just vomiting by the side of the road.

Often I felt very vulnerable and that nobody cared and people were avoiding me. I kept this to myself. This however was just a perception as my daughter used to help me when I felt like throwing up. I do have

very high standards when it comes to cleanliness and I am very houseproud. So I used to feel I wanted the normality of doing what I used to do to keep the house sparkling and I resented having no energy to do these things.

One day when a friend was over I was telling her I've got cob webs on the picture frame above my bed. She just looked at me astonished and said "who cares."

But I did care and so I'd go and sit in the bath and cry sometimes. The bathroom was like a get-away sanctuary where I could let my tears out and deal with my thoughts that no one cared.

I'd sit in the sun some days and then as I felt overwhelmed go off to my



bathroom sanctuary to have a good cry.

I was certainly very clean on some days having up to 2-3 baths.

Good stuff also happened as my daughter had a baby and I was able to go to the birth and spend time with a new grandchild. I really enjoyed this.

My brother in law didn't fare so well, he lasted around a year with his illness. He had a low immune system and his disease was more aggressive. When he died I remember that I did feel very guilty. Guilty because I seemed to be getting past it and was still standing there and he didn't make it.

At his funeral I remember thinking "Why did god take him and not me?" I did end up getting sent to a psychologist to deal with some of my anxiety.

When my husband got cancer the first thought I had was "Oh no here we go again." My girls were more stoic they took the line that we've beaten this once with mum and we'll do the same with dad. I know that I initially found myself doing a lot of complaining I felt my husband wouldn't let me help him, he'd tell me to leave him alone. I remember feeling a bit numb when Dr Dunlop told my husband he was dying.

It takes about 6 months to get over news like that. My girls have been great and were sharing the load from the beginning helping take him to chemo. Initially I resented their help partly because I felt guilty. My kids were working and I was working and we were all juggling. I decided it should be me to do the support and so I gave up working and we settled into a pattern. His lungs are affected so we all take turns to do chest percussion each person doing a different day. Because we were facing uncertainty we started having a family meal every Thursday so we could spend time together.

We've become more comfortable with living with uncertainty.

I did miss my work though that I loved and my mood dived down. I ended up in my doctor's surgery in

tears one day. He pointed out that he thought I had some resentment about giving up work and that some anti-depressants might help me. They did and as I adjusted my husband adjusted too.

We've both learnt to have more patience with each other and I've learnt to be a lot calmer I'm able to tell myself in my head "let this go". I've learnt how to delegate with the girls and how to accept their help. My husband and I are both tighter, the circumstances and experiences have brought us together. I know that my husband is going to probably have treatment for a long while. But we are going to enjoy the time we have together, we are going to keep on enjoying watching our grandchildren grow and to be part of their lives.

Sitting up in the wellness centre has been a good option for us both. I've been able to go to yoga and my husband has made use of the massage therapy.

Yoga has really been a great help. It has taught me to be more aware of my body, its posture and to use breathing techniques to help me feel calm. I've met new people and I've gained skills that I can use every day. I know how to stretch and so don't get so sore anymore.

I've also gone to scrap booking which has been something of a rediscovery. I used to do this years ago but had put things away and forgotten them.

My husband has encouraged me to enjoy the art and craft and I've found it's been good to go back to it.

I'm currently putting together my husband's family photos of the Tasmanian side of his family. It's nice to start putting the family treasures together again. I've also put together an album of the grandchildren.

I think my husband has also learnt a lot more about me and we've grown closer in supporting each other. If he does stop chemo for a while then maybe we'll do some more travelling. We did a small road trip last year on the great ocean road in Victoria and I really enjoyed it. I want to visit Kempsey and check out some family history on my mother's side of the family. Maybe we'll do a cruise again.

I think one of the most important things I've really learnt is to stop focusing on the future and really enjoy the present and to make the most of every day. I've learnt the important thing is now the present and to accept help. My grandchildren help out with the housework and the garden. They get pocket money for helping and learn some skills too.

I think there is a lot more patience between us and we have become more comfortable living with uncertainty, we've both grown and matured as people through the experiences we've had together.

Research supports Exercise Benefits

If you missed the ABC Catalyst Program on the benefits of exercise for cancer patients you may want to go to the following link: <http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/4459555.htm>

Get started with Yoga Pilates, Tai Chi or Zumba Gold until our exercise physiology program gets going. Book with Sebia on 8738 9853 or Melissa on 8738 9816