

SAVE THE DATE

Patient Art Exhibition

Our watercolour participants are busy framing their work and preparing for their exhibition in November. Come along for a cuppa and see what they have achieved with Laurel's help.

Wednesday, 2 November 2016

12.30pm - 2.30pm

Wellness Centre, Level 1, Liverpool Hospital



To RSVP, please contact Melissa on **8738 9816** for catering purposes.

Farewell from Jan...

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to meet and work with so many of you who are either coming to Liverpool or Campbelltown for your treatment. I have been very fortunate to have enjoyed coming to work each day.

I will miss Monica and the Zumba divas and their toe tapping music, and the gentle stretching and work out in Julie's yoga/pilates class.

I will also miss the quiet atmosphere in the meditation room at Campbelltown where Maria helps the hectic pace of the day be wound right down as her group of mediators find rhythm in their breathing and observation of their thoughts.

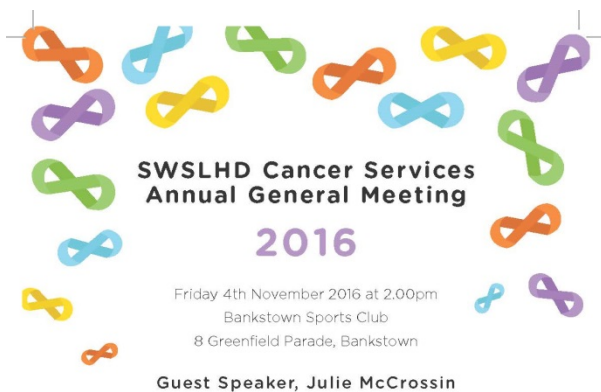
I hope that everyone continues to enjoy the garden terrace and if you have time pop by to help water the plants so that garden oasis feeling can be maintained.

Abbey's cooking has been great and I will definitely miss the great recipes and tastes that she regularly produces. Each fortnight I have also seen the beautiful art work made with Laurel's encouragement and I have enjoyed the subtle shades that only watercolour provides.

I hope that the wellness programs continue to expand and provide you with the necessary ongoing support to help you manage your conditions and be as well as possible.

Regards to you all,
Jan





Cancer Services Annual General Meeting 2016

The AGM will be held on Friday, 4 November 2016 at Bankstown Sports Club. It is a chance for us to acknowledge and celebrate our achievements and to thank our staff, volunteers and donors. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Caryn.Knight@sswahs.nsw.gov.au or call Caryn on 8738 9815.

Julie McCrossin talks to people for a living. After 20 years as a broadcaster with ABC Radio National, ABC TV and Network Ten, she is now a freelance journalist and facilitator. Julie will share her cancer journey with us.

The AGM is an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of our staff, thank our wonderful volunteers and generous donors, and to share our vision for the future of Cancer Services.

RSVP: caryn.knight@sswahs.nsw.gov.au | Ph: 8738 9815



BankstownSports

We would like to thank Bankstown Sports Club for generously donating the use of their beautiful facilities for this event.

Carers Week 2016 (16th – 22nd October)

This week is about raising awareness among all Australians about the diversity of carers and their caring roles. Carers make an enormous contribution to our communities and their caring roles are valued at \$60.3 billion annually – more than \$1 billion per week. If you know a carer

The Carer Gateway is a national online and phone service offering practical information, resources and local support services to support carers. Call **1800 422 737** Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm or go to the website. Approximately 17 carers information stalls will be set up in the main foyer at Liverpool Hospital, plus the memory bus out the front from Alzheimer's Australia.

Active Survivor's at Campbelltown

The Active Survivor Exercise Therapy Program at the Campbelltown Hospital Gym has got off to a great start and is also making good use of the outdoor gym equipment in the local park. To join this program - you just need a referral from your doctor (GP or specialist). *For more information, speak to the Wellness Centre, your specialist and cancer care team, or Health Solutions (02 4283 3522).*



Meditation at Liverpool

Dianne Perry has started a meditation class at the Liverpool Wellness Centre on a Wednesday morning. Dianne is a trained meditation teacher who can assist people to feel emotionally more comfortable and calm. Why not book for this new class. Meditation classes continue to also run at Campbelltown on a Thursday morning at 11am with Maria. Maria also runs a meditation discussion before the practice at 10 am. This group is an opportunity to discuss feelings that may arise. Book with Melissa on 8738 9816.

Recipe of the month – Spinach Frittata

As our garden is flourishing with silver beat spring onions and herbs I thought you'd like a recipe using these local ingredients. The following recipe is from SBS Food.



Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 6 eggs, lightly beaten
- 3 Spring onions diced
- 125g parmesan
- salt and black pepper
- 160g silverbeet leaves, stalks removed, finely sliced

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C. In a bowl, combine the eggs and cheese, and season to taste.

Place a large, ovenproof frying pan over medium heat. Add the olive oil and silverbeet and spring onions and cook for 1½–2 minutes until wilted. Add the silverbeet to the egg mixture and stir to combine. Pour the mixture back into the saucepan (you may need to add some extra olive oil to prevent it from sticking). Gently shake pan to evenly distribute the mixture and cook for 7–8 minutes until the bottom is set and beginning to firm up around the edges. Transfer the frying pan to the oven and cook for a further 8–10 minutes until golden.

To serve, slide frittata onto a chopping board and cut into slices or serve directly from the pan at the table.

Cancer Wellness Centre Attendance

Our activities have been growing into a significant program. Here's what people have been coming to since January this year:

Liverpool Jan - Jun 2016	Attendance
Physical activity	
Yoga	409
Tai Chi / Qigong*	371
Zumba	61
Skills Training	
Meditation	105
Relaxation Group	6
Confidence Building	12
Social/peer support	
Healthy Cooking	30
Gardening	22
Art, Scrap booking	109
Wig Service	55
Shared Stories	4
Vietnamese Support Group	0
Guest Speaker & Education	29
Handcare/Manicure	10
After Treatment Group	19
Drop In Service	114
Complementary medicine	
Massage	298
Hypnotherapy	0
Acupuncture	43
Total	1697

Campbelltown Jan - June 2016	Attendance
Physical activity	
Yoga	84
Tai Chi	231
Skills Training	
Meditation	79
Relaxation Group	46
Bounce Forward	2
Social/peer support	
Morning Tea Consultation	0
Shared Stories	0
Wig Library	64
Education	17
Complementary medicine	
Massage Vouchers	71
Hypnotherapy Vouchers	15
Acupuncture Vouchers	13
Total	622



Not on our list or want to refer a friend?

Subscribe at:

<https://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/cancer/news/>

Great news!

Congratulations to Dave Scott, our Musician. He is getting married!
We wish him and his bride all the best for their wedding day!



Singing Lessons with Dave

Dave is still keen for people to join his singing group. This term he will be focusing on Christmas Carols that can be performed to the patients late on in the year.

Why not come along on a **Thursday** and join the group at **10am** for some fun in the Wellness Centre. All welcome!
For enquiries, call Dave on 0429 866 359.



Congratulations to all the Dry July'ers, and the lines are still open for donations!

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

So far we have raised...

Liverpool Cancer Services (Wellness and Radiation Therapy) \$61,462

Macarthur Cancer Services \$24,453

Phil's Gardening Workshops

Join our Gardening Workshops on the Wellness Terrace with Phil Pettitt from the Sydney Royal Botanical Gardens. The workshops will be held on the following Wednesdays from 10.30 – 12noon.

- **9th Nov**
Making compost tea, beneficial worms and pollinators for the garden
- **30th Nov**
Caring and selecting plants for hanging baskets, propagation techniques
- **14th Dec**
Botanical Christmas Craft



Laurel's Art Workshops



Come along to our Art Workshops and create a masterpiece! The workshops are being held on the following Wednesdays from 12.30 – 2.30pm in the Wellness Centre.

- 12th Oct
- 26th Oct
- 2nd Nov (Art Exhibition – see cover page for more info!)
- 9th Nov
- 23rd Nov
- 7th Dec

A's story



In October 2014 I had just come back from six week vacation in Italy where I was visiting relatives.

One month after in November 2014 I was diagnosed with Breast cancer. I was 52 years old at the time.

I'd gone to the doctors after work and was by myself. The news that I'd got breast cancer came as a big shock. I felt very frightened. I called my husband to pick me up. I remember going home in tears and feeling like the whole world had collapsed on me.

I subsequently had a lumpectomy as I had stage 1 infiltrating ductal carcinoma. I remember thinking how lucky I was to have caught it in time and to only need radiation. Pathology tests were done but then these changed the situation. I was diagnosed with HER2+++.

Luckily no lymph nodes were involved but the results meant I had to have radiation, chemotherapy and one year of Herceptin every 3 weeks. I was looking at a long year ahead and I remembered going home thinking about how I'd manage such a long period of treatment. I didn't really want to have chemotherapy. I had long black hair which I didn't want to lose and I didn't want to feel sick as a dog.

I began researching the internet for alternative Chinese medicine option such as Chinese herbs. I made up my mind that I wasn't going to go through the treatment process proposed and this was at the front of my mind when I went to my next appointment at the Cancer Therapy Centre.

I remember my oncologist telling me that if I chose not to do the chemotherapy the cancer could spread to another part of my body and this was a 30% probability. When I got home I reconsidered what I'd been told.

My husband told me "You must have the chemotherapy." My own thinking told me it would be stressful for me to be constantly thinking about whether the cancer had spread to some other part of my body. And so in early January 2015 I had an intravenous port inserted so that I could start 6 rounds of chemotherapy.

When I came for my first treatment I was very wound up and nearly fainted just from worrying about the chemotherapy. But then when I looked around at all the other cancer patients, I told myself well if they can do it so can I. The chemotherapy turned out to be better than I had anticipated. I had minimal side effects except for ongoing fatigue like being punched in a fighting ring. The nurses were kind but they didn't really give out a lot of information unless I asked. So I read for myself and some of the Cancer Council information helped as did reading the stories of other women in my situation through the Breast Cancer Network. People's stories inspired me to stick to some practical measures that I still follow.

Now I don't accept just anybody's food and rarely eat out. I wash my hands frequently and was very careful with my food and hygiene.

After the treatment I decided I would change my lifestyle and focus on eating healthy. I now eat lots of pulses, seeds, nuts, greens and vegetables. .

Before having cancer my life was so busy I would grab food always on the run. I never focused on my needs and always put the needs of others first. My health changed for the better. New thinking allowed me to change a lot of things and I was lucky I got a second chance in life.

I prayed every day and God helped me all the way. I knew I was in his hands. I just took things day by day and knew I would get through this journey with patience.

My husband was there to support me. In fact I don't know where I would have been without my husband. My parents are elderly and I don't have children so my husband's support was important. He used to take me to all the chemo sessions and sit there for three hours just to be with me.

I guess like everyone, I had good days and bad days. At times I would feel scared, and at other times I would be able to be more positive and tell myself "You can fight this" to help reduce my fear of dying and not being here. I found listening to music to pass the time and reading helped me pass the time and be positive in my outlook.

One question I often asked myself in the beginning was "Why have I got cancer? ' I was physically fit and healthy. I did not smoke or drink. I thought that perhaps my cancer was hereditary as Nina my first cousin who is always in my heart having died at 36yrs old leaving two young children had had cancer. I had taken her death as a wake-up call and had got regular checks but it subsequently turned out there was no genetic link as the types of cancer we had were different.

Now I've learned to accept that "Anyone can get cancer. One in three of us will get it."

I've also come to realise that lifestyle may have been a factor. I was always busy, on the go and a bit of a perfectionist. I was very houseproud, doing everything for everyone and trying to be "superwoman".

I had thoughts of "I could not have been here", and I used positive talking "it could have been worse" to build up my strength and tell myself I needed to fight until the end: to be like a warrior. I feel that I've learnt to see every day as a gift and the experience has made me a lot stronger. At times I did find fatigue overwhelming and of course sometimes the fear just bubbled up. One day I was so tired and shaken. I remember dropping a bottle of

olive oil which went everywhere. My husband was there to help me mop up. Sharing things has definitely brought us closer together.

On April 2016 my treatment finished 1 ½ years had gone so quickly. My port was removed on the 26th April 2016 which was a big relief. Whilst it was there I was conscious of it all the time, it was great to have it out. I now feel free from doctor's appointments, blood tests, needles, chemotherapy and Herceptin. I know that I could have been the unlucky one but this wasn't the case I am here and I am a survivor God has good plans for me ahead.

In my journey I had surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, Herceptin, needles here and there, blood tests, and heart scans. I saw oncologists, doctors, nurses and specialists. It was one and a half years of chemicals in my body. I knew I could make it to where I am now. I fought like a warrior to save my life.

Was the cancer a curse or a blessing? It was both. I couldn't go on doing everything for everyone the cancer told me to stop. My husband helps with everything now.

Reading a lot helped me on my journey of how to boost my immune system. I feel I've started to answer the "what do I do now?" I've decided to cut back on work to work part time and I'm making this transition. Previously I was a traveller and this may definitely reappear back on my agenda - Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand are on my list to visit.

I enjoy doing things that I've always wanted to do to help my wellbeing e.g. massage, yoga acupuncture and hypnotherapy. Life is too short and never should be taken for granted. If you want to do something you enjoy or want to travel - go for it, you may not have the opportunity again.

I don't wish breast cancer on anyone, but I am thankful that there are resources that are available to help you if you do end up on this journey. There is information from the cancer council and BCNA journals, information from the staff you meet - chemotherapy nurses, oncologists. Prevention, detection and cure are important for breast cancer. It's definitely important to get screening checks even at a young age.

It's very important that we learn to live and be happy with what we have and not take things for granted. Your health is your wealth.

A breast cancer survivor.