

Lifeline



The Newsletter of the Cancer Resource Centre

Fit for the Future

For clients using the Centre, it is business as usual, but behind the scenes the mysterious process referred to as "strategic planning" is proceeding apace.

Chair of Trustees, Jo Lansdown explained in the last issue of Lifeline that strategic planning was about ensuring the Centre was in a position to provide the right kind of services in the future to meet the needs of those affected by cancer in the local area.

On Saturday 18th November, staff and trustees of the Centre spent the day examining some of the external developments which have an impact on how we work, such as changes in the NHS, changes in the incidence and epidemiology of cancer and developments in cancer treatments.

Other important areas covered at the Awayday included looking at the needs of particular groups of users, such as men, the very young and the elderly, carers, the bereaved and those working full-time. The question asked was whether we need to do more to make our services appropriate and accessible to these groups.

Part of the planning process has been to consider whether the Centre needs to change its name to better reflect the character of the place and the nature of the services offered. Name change is a complex and emotive issue, so while everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas, we have applied for funding to bring in professional expertise.

While recognising that in a moving world, the Centre cannot stand still, staff and trustees were clear about the need to provide continuity and stability and to build on the experience and successes of the last 23 years.

Clients speak up

We want to hear from our clients. Please put Monday, 15th January 6-8pm in your diaries. This will be the next meeting of the Centre's User Group – your chance to meet with Director Petra Griffiths and Chair of Trustees, Jo Lansdown and have your say on Centre developments. See page 2 inside for a report on the last meeting in September. As one of the participants said: "The Centre is all about its users."

New Volunteering Scheme

The Centre has started to expand in response to the perceived growth in need for the kind of support we offer. We now have more space and we have been fortunate to find a number of new skilled practitioners willing to provide additional therapies (see page 2).

The key, however, to supporting larger numbers of clients and extending our opening hours and the availability of our telephone Support Line is to develop our use of volunteers.

Pauline Withers-Born has taken on the new role of Volunteer Coordinator for an initial six-month period with a brief to devise and pilot a volunteering scheme which will embrace all volunteers working directly with clients, in person and over the telephone. The scheme will ensure that all volunteers are well trained, supported and supervised.



Pauline, who has been working at the Centre since September 2005 as a counsellor and Home Visiting Supervisor, remembers a time 10 years ago when her husband had cancer and came to the Centre as a client, giving her a personal insight into what it is like to be on the receiving end of services here.

Other exciting projects Pauline will be tackling include investigating the feasibility of providing in-house training for complementary therapy practitioners wanting to work with people who have cancer. This would enable us to tap into the Centre's huge experience in this field to train not only therapists working at the Centre but others who could work elsewhere.

She will also take on the job of coordinating and carrying forward the programme of improvements to the new premises.

"I have always experienced the Centre as a very nurturing place," said Pauline, "and I am looking forward to continuing to enjoy that nurturing for myself and to be part of creating it for other people."

**Watch out for Benefits Advice
Tuesday afternoons at the Centre
Starting soon**

Lifeline

User Group reports back

Centre users met with Director, Petra Griffiths and Chair, Jo Lansdown on September 14th to talk about their experience of using Centre services and to feed their views into the strategic planning process.

Feedback showed that group activities are very popular, because they offer the opportunity to meet other people. There were requests to organise social events from the Centre, like trips to the theatre or to art exhibitions. A drop-in facility was mentioned, with use of the kitchen to prepare food and a "common room" where clients could watch DVDs and videos as part of the Information Service.

Participants were keen on the provision of nutritional advice and support, and suggested workshops in aromatherapy and homeopathy as well as movement groups and dance. The need to offer some groups in the evenings and at weekends for people at work was also highlighted.

Participants were broadly in favour of changing the Centre's name, but felt strongly that any new name must reflect the Centre's holistic approach and convey the fact that the Centre provides care and support for the person not the disease.

Centre User Claire Morgan said: "It is a great opportunity for us to help decide the direction of the Centre and to make suggestions for services that we think will meet our needs." It was decided that Petra and Jo will meet with users on a quarterly basis.

New Faces



Barbara Kohler

Barbara joined the Centre's team of therapists in August, offering massage and reflexology on Monday afternoons. Barbara, also an aromatherapist, trained with the Home Visiting Service in 2004 and runs her own private complementary therapy practice.

Stephen Croson

Stephen has been offering healing sessions on Monday afternoons since September. Trained with the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, Stephen has worked as a healer for about four years and has seen his private practice shift in focus from treating sporting friends and colleagues to working with individuals with cancer.



Anj Eggleston

Anj is a former Centre user. For some time now she has been putting her counselling training to use helping the Support Officer on a Wednesday morning answering the phone and greeting clients. She is now volunteering one of her many other talents – as a reflexologist – on Thursday afternoons.

Rachel Bishop

Rachel, our newest therapist, describes holistic massage as "nurturing touch for the whole person" which is intended to "honour each individual". You can find out more on her website at www.rachelbishop.co.uk.



Prostate Campaign Targets Asian Community

We reported in the spring issue of Lifeline on the launch of a poster campaign targeting men in the African Caribbean community with information about prostate cancer. Following this important initiative, the Cancer Resource Centre is now collaborating with the Prostate Research Campaign UK to produce information aimed at the Asian community.

The aim of the leaflet, initially printed in Urdu and Gujarati, is to provide education on the symptoms of different prostate problems including cancer, what to do about them and where to find help. The leaflets are available free of charge to all Asian community groups and health workers.

Nutrition Workshop a Success

Dietician Dalene Rottier's healthy eating workshop on 4th November proved popular with clients and staff. 27 people came into the Centre on a Saturday to find out more about eating to reduce further cancer risk and healthy eating during cancer treatment.

Centre User Imelda Salazar said: "It was a little bit technical, but I definitely learnt things I didn't know before. It gave me a good prod to try to improve my eating habits – I went home and got out my juicer!" **Home Visiting Volunteer Christine Wright said:** "The main message was that during treatment you should eat for energy – lots of carbohydrates, but in remission, a balanced diet is essential."

"I felt very relaxed and calm. It was just like heaven."



My story

Pauline

In terms of my health, a lot of bad things have happened to me since the year 2000. It may sound strange to some people, but having cancer, diagnosed in 2002, has been the easiest problem to cope with physically, but mentally it has been the worst.

After a routine mammogram in late June 2002, I got a call two days later telling me I could go back for the result straight away as there had been "a cancellation". When I arrived, all unsuspecting, the doctor just told me quite baldly: "You've got breast cancer." I don't know who was more shocked – me or a poor young medical student who was observing.

The doctor was very kind and introduced me to the Macmillan Breast Care Nurse, who he said would be looking after me over the next five years. But I just thought: "I'm going to be dead before then." I was so frightened; if the doctor had said he would take my breast off right there and then in his office, I think I would have said yes!

I had a full mastectomy a month later, which went well, but I felt cheated when they told me I couldn't have chemotherapy because I have weak kidneys. I was put on Arimadex instead. Also, as I am diabetic, my scar took a long

time to fully heal up, so it was November before I was completely over the operation.



I remember the first time I came to the Centre in February 2003. As soon as I walked in I felt safe. Everyone was so kind and welcoming. I had my first appointment with director, Petra Griffiths and she made me feel really wanted. It was such a good feeling.

I was very wary of things like healing and reflexology when I first arrived. To be honest, I thought it was a lot of "hocus pocus". But once I had plucked up the courage to try the different therapies, I found out they are wonderful and I think everybody should come and try them.

I still come to the Centre once a month for a yoga class, although movement is becoming increasingly difficult since I was diagnosed with Parkinsons two years ago. And as a result of my friendship with Jasvir, I have been adopted as an honorary member of the Asian Women's Support Group and join in all their activities.

Many thanks to Pauline for her generous donation of £100 to the Centre's work. She raised the money by saving up £2 coins. "Small amounts soon build up and that way you don't miss it," said Pauline.

Nina takes up Information Post



After a frustrating start, when our newly appointed Macmillan Information Officer sadly had to leave for health reasons, the Centre is fortunate to have found an excellent replacement in Nina Kenyon.

Nina qualified as a nurse last year after completing her nursing degree. Her first job was as staff nurse on the Private Patient Unit at the Royal Marsden, where she had experience of all types of cancer at all stages of the disease.

Nina met Director Petra Griffiths at the volunteering fair Forum3 and offered to help fill the information gap in a voluntary capacity while she looked for a new job using her nursing training in a community setting.

The arrangement has worked so well, it has evolved into an initial six month contract as Macmillan Information and Outreach Officer to work three days a week on Mondays,

Tuesdays and Wednesdays looking after the information needs of Centre clients and those telephoning the Centre.

"This job makes perfect sense for me," says Nina, "because it allows me to use my cancer background and work in the community."

Nina's brief is to work closely with the Centre's Support Officers and with the CAB Benefits Advice Service based at the Centre one day a week, so that clients receive a seamless service.

Help us beat the taxman

Have you received a Gift Aid Declaration within your copy of Lifeline? If you have, you may be able to help us! Just to remind you, the Gift Aid scheme allows us to reclaim tax on donations since April 2000 and into the future. That means that for every £1 you give the Cancer Resource Centre, we can now reclaim 28p from the tax man.

If you are a UK taxpayer, and are able to complete and return the enclosed Declaration in the reply paid envelope provided, we may be able to claim a tax refund on donations you have made since 6 April 2000.

: "I find everyone so helpful and sympathetic and caring."



Fundraising Focus

TRUST FUNDRAISER

While the Centre is working to increase its support base and maximise revenue from individual giving, income from grant-making trusts is still key to our financial stability.

The role of Trust and Companies Fundraiser has now been made a full-time post to reflect its importance and the Centre is very pleased to have appointed Gemma Cannings to the job.



Gemma comes to us from the charity Liberty, formerly the National Council for Civil Liberties, where she worked as a Development Officer for over three years.

Gemma has a degree in Social Anthropology and her first

fundraising efforts were in Sudan for a charity helping displaced women. From there she moved to the British Library, where she spent two happy years raising money to rescue "slightly dishevelled books".

Herself a Reiki practitioner for the last five years, Gemma felt a move to the Centre from the more abstract political and campaigning field of civil liberties would bring a better work/life balance.

"The whole ethos of the Centre appealed to me," said Gemma. "I like the fact that it is service-user led and you can see the results of your work in the shape of client satisfaction."

Gemma will also be helping to develop corporate giving and to raise the Centre's profile through increased publicity.

Thanks to Hoggett Bowers

A team of consultants from leading executive search and selection consultancy, Hoggett Bowers, have raised over £13,000 for the Centre in memory of their colleague Richard Roberts, who died in 2004. We are deeply grateful to the team, who raised the money by undertaking the mountain walking challenge known as the Welsh 3000s in September.

Arriva Gold Award



Centre user Michael Dodds presented a top Gold Award of £1,000 to Director Petra Griffiths on behalf of Arriva Buses. The award, in October, was given in recognition of the excellence of the Centre's services to the community. Michael, who works for Arriva, said: "The Cancer Resource Centre has made a huge difference in enabling me to cope with

the stresses of a cancer diagnosis. If it wasn't for these people, I wouldn't be here."

Three Cheers for Leo!

Leo Thompson writes:

"My mum Viv Knowland has been working at the Cancer Resource Centre for 8 years. She gives weekly massage and reflexology sessions to clients with cancer and their carers. She is also a Home Visiting Service volunteer.



Having begun to feel very guilty at seeing her do so much and I so little, I decided to help out by doing the

South Coast Triathlon - a 1.5km sea swim, 40k bike and a 10k run in aid of the Centre."

The race was on September 2nd and Leo raised over £2,000. So a huge thank you to Leo and all his supporters!

Can you do any of these to help ?

- Charity bridge (or poker) party
- Special occasion like a 50th Birthday or 25th Wedding Anniversary? Ask your guests to make a gift to CRC instead of bringing presents
- Nailbiter or chocaholic? Whatever your naughty habit, give it up with a little sponsored help from your friends
- Bring-a-book coffee mornings: charge a small entrance fee for coffee and biscuits and sell the quality used books your guests bring
- Host a movie night with themed food and guests
- Plant sales are a great idea for green-fingered fundraisers.

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