

Kia Honoa

Let's Connect with the Cancer Society
 Canterbury-West Coast Division

Di's Story

In November 2020, Di Hone was diagnosed with Stage 4 breast cancer. The cancer was an aggressive type and she was told to go home and enjoy Christmas before she started treatment.



Di says that she had always had fibroids or lumpy tissue in her breasts and because of this she had been very careful to have a mammogram every year.

"The tumour was the size of a golf ball," she says. "I thought to myself 'how's this happened'?"

Di's treatment consisted of chemotherapy to shrink the tumour and then a double mastectomy, followed by 5 weeks of radiation.

Di says that initially she was told that the breast without cancer was healthy tissue and so would not be removed. However, she was adamant that she wanted both breasts taken off. Di didn't know until a couple of weeks before her operation whether her request would be granted but she was relieved that it was.

"It's not everyone's cup of tea to have both breasts removed

by choice but I definitely wasn't coming back to do this again. So my decision was pretty easy and I have no regrets and embrace my new look, scars and all," Di says.

"The surgeon did an amazing job - I had no pain and I recuperated really well," she says.

Di's surgeon referred her to the Cancer Society's Canterbury West-Coast Division and let her know about Daffodil House and Daffodil Lodge.

Di, who lives in Hanmer Springs, stayed at Daffodil House while she was having chemotherapy and at Daffodil Lodge following her surgery and while having radiation.

"I can't say enough about Daffodil House, it's amazing, It really is a home away from home!" she says.

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About breast cancer

Matepukupuku ā-Ū

Every year more than 3,000 women and a small number of men are diagnosed with breast cancer. Women and men both have breast tissue. In women, breasts are made up of fat, connective tissue, and milk glands. Milk glands consist of milk sacs (lobules), where milk is made, and tubes (ducts) that take the milk to the nipple. Most breast cancers begin in the milk glands. During puberty, males produce large amounts of the male hormone testosterone, which stops the growth of lobules in their breast tissue.

What you should look for

Be breast aware and know how your breasts normally look and feel. Breasts naturally change with age, and it is normal for some changes during your period (menstrual cycle).

Signs and symptoms of breast cancer may include:

- a lump in the breast
- the skin on the breast is thicker or dimpled (it can look like an orange peel)
- a lump or swelling in one or both armpits
- a change in the shape or size of the breast
- the nipple turning in (unless the nipple has always been turned in)
- a rash on the nipple
- discharge or bleeding from the nipple
- pain or discomfort in the breast that does not go away

Having these symptoms does not mean you have breast cancer, but it is important to have any changes checked by your doctor.



Covid-19 Cancellations continue

Two years on, Covid-19 is continuing to cause the cancellation of community events around New Zealand. This is very disheartening for us here in the Cancer Society's Canterbury-West Coast Division as we have been forced to cancel two of our **Relay For Life** events this year and convert our remaining two into virtual Relays.

Just as disappointing is that we have also had to cancel our dinner

event **"Too Many Cooks"** which was postponed from October last year and was to have been held in March.

Instead we will be going ahead with an online auction from **March 14th to March 20th** so we would really appreciate your support in bidding for items or sharing information about the auction with your networks.

Keep an eye on Facebook for more!





Di's story continued

Di says meeting other people at Daffodil House with all kinds of cancer also helped her put things into perspective.

"I was angry for about three weeks," she says. "Then I met so many other cancer patients young and old with greater issues than me and I was blown away."

"I thought to myself, my journey is nothing compared to all these people."

Di says she learned a lot from other people telling her their experiences and giving her advice such as to shave her hair off prior to treatment to avoid the pain of it falling out.

Di is keen to let other women know about her own experience to try and take away some of the anxiety that can accompany the prospect of having a mastectomy.

"I love my scars," she says. "It's great not having to wear a bra anymore." "Yes, it may look like a shark attack but I'm still alive and that's all that matters."

Di felt that she had been given so much support through her cancer experience that she had to give back. She initiated two separate fundraising events for the Cancer Society's Canterbury-West Coast Division, including a head shave with her sister-in-law and two friends, which raised **\$5,000**.

A fundraising breakfast hosted by Hanmer Springs Four Square, where Di works, also raised **\$5,000**.

Di is very grateful to both of her employers, Hanmer Springs Holiday Homes and Hanmer Springs Four Square, for continuous support during her cancer treatment.

Di's latest scan showed no sign of cancer cells and she is delighted to be in remission.

"I've been really lucky," she says. "I feel blessed."



Di with Sharon Gilfedder, Kate Alexander and Sue Hone.



Longest Day Golf Challenge a success

Once again, golfers from around the Canterbury-West Coast region have put themselves to the test and completed the Longest Day Golf Challenge.

The challenge was to play 72 holes (or four rounds) of golf in one day. Golfers could choose any day in December or January for their challenge and we had a total of 71 players register in our region this year.

Some chose to complete the challenge alone, like Blair Struthers from South Canterbury, who achieved the

amazing feat of doing two Longest Day Golf Challenges or 144 holes of golf and raised over **\$10,000**. Others played in pairs, or teams of three or four.

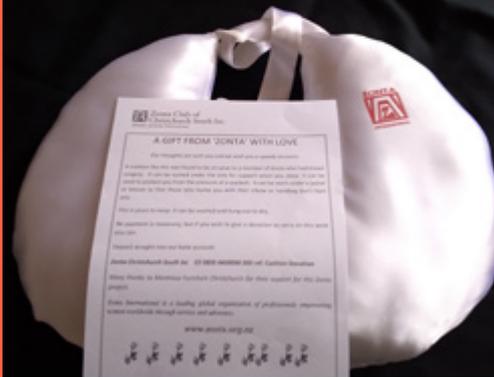
Two of our very own staff members, Pavel Bares from the West Coast Centre and Tiff Wafer from our North Canterbury Centre, put themselves to the test and also signed up for the challenge.

The total of funds raised to date is **over \$92,000**. What a great effort!



Blair Struthers, left and Pavel Bares, right.

ZONTA helps women with breast cancer



The Zonta Club of Christchurch South has been making and distributing breast cushions since 2005 and provides 25 cushions per month to the Cancer Society's Christchurch Centre. These cushions are provided to women who have undergone breast surgery to help alleviate their discomfort.

Thank you to all the Zonta Club members who cut and stitch the cushions at home and meet up several times a year to stuff, complete the stitching and then wrap the cushions. Members of the Zonta Golden Z Club from Lincoln University have also given time to this project since 2019.

Meet our new Driving Coordinator

Those of you who have visited the Oncology Radiation department in Christchurch Hospital lately for treatment will have been greeted by a new face in our Driving Coordinator's office. Belinda Wilkinson has stepped capably into the role and says she absolutely loves the job.

"It's the most amazing service - I love what it is achieving for patients and I'm just in awe of the generosity of our volunteer drivers," Belinda says.

"The staff at the hospital are amazing too." she says.

We know the rapidly changing situation around Covid-19 protocols can be challenging for both our drivers and those using our service, so Belinda recommends contacting the Driving Service office to discuss any concerns. If your appointment has changed or been cancelled, please try to let Belinda know as soon as possible so she can let the driver know.

Belinda comes to us from the Champion Centre where she had been working since 2003 in administrative and fundraising support roles. Prior to that Belinda spent 20 years working at The Press. She says she is enjoying working back in town again with Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens nearby.

Belinda describes herself as an outdoorsy person who loves walking and being out in nature. She admits to being a bit of an amateur photographer and says clouds and landscapes are favourite subjects of hers.



**Belinda Wilkinson,
Driving Coordinator**

03 364 0752

driving.service@cancercwc.org.nz

Intern Clare King at the picnic



Teddy Bears' Picnic

Our Christchurch-based Health Promotion team and our bright yellow **You Can** van were out at Foster Park in Rolleston in January promoting SunSmart behaviour at the Teddy Bears' picnic. 1,200 people attended the event and, with UV levels high on the day, the Selwyn centre's gazebos provided some well-needed shade.

Our team were kept busy teaching attendees about the importance of sun protection in a range of ways, including getting children involved in the task of helping Florence the bear get dressed to cover up and protect herself from the sun. There was also an activity which involved guessing the number of UV beads in the jar.

Children were able to take away a sun protection activity booklet generously sponsored by **Harcourts Grenadier**.



Bulbs, beautiful bulbs!

Keen gardeners will be pleased to learn that the Cancer Society's Canterbury-West Coast Division is teaming up with Hadstock Farms to sell daffodil and tulip bulbs once again this year. The feedback from those who bought bulbs last year was that they were excellent quality.

The bulbs are available for sale in bags of 10 from our centres in Christchurch, Rangiora, Rolleston,

Greymouth, Ashburton and Timaru. The cost is \$10 for a bag of mixed daffodil bulbs and \$12 for a bag of mixed tulip bulbs. There is a discount for bulk orders, with 100 daffodil bulbs available for \$95 and 100 tulip bulbs for \$110.

To place an order, either phone or visit your local Cancer Society centre or call **(03) 379 5835**. The bulbs will be available for collection in mid-March.

GROWING SUPPORT FOR THE CANCER SOCIETY
DAFFODIL & TULIP BULBS FOR SALE

- 10 x MIXED DAFFODIL BULBS \$10
- 10 x MIXED TULIP BULBS \$12
- 100 x MIXED DAFFODIL BULBS \$95
- 100 x MIXED TULIP BULBS \$110

TO ORDER, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CANCER SOCIETY CENTRE:
Christchurch - Rangiora - Rolleston - Greymouth - Ashburton - Timaru
Payment on delivery (approximately mid-March).

Cancer Society
Te Kaitiaki Takekōwhiri o Aotearoa



Relay For Life goes virtual

Our Mid Canterbury Relay For Life on Saturday 19th February was held as a virtual event.

Those participating decided how they would like to mark the day – some people chose to walk around their backyard or neighbourhood, while others gathered with their teammates to Celebrate, Remember and Fight Back against cancer.

Mid Canterbury Relay For Life Chairperson Lester McLean welcomed virtual attendees via social media at 10am and, after a blessing and reading of the oath, Lester declared the first virtual Relay For Life in our region underway!

During the day teams were encouraged to share photos and videos of their virtual Relay For Life activities on the Mid Canterbury Cancer Society Facebook page and there was also the opportunity to enjoy some online performances by local entertainers.

At 9pm candles all over Mid Canterbury were lit in remembrance of those lost to cancer. We are so grateful to our Mid Canterbury community for embracing this virtual Relay For Life and for their amazing fundraising efforts.



This is Smudge the cat, who is a regular visitor to our Mid Canterbury centre in Kermode Street, Ashburton. Health promoter Mandy Casey recently posted this photo on Facebook and commented about Smudge's excellent Covid protocols - waiting patiently outside the door and frequent paw washing. The post got lots of people commenting about Smudge's roaming habits, including the cat's owner.

Research students present findings

On Friday 21st January students from the Christchurch Summer Studentship Programme gave their final presentations at the University of Otago, Christchurch. Four of these studentships were funded by the Cancer Society and our local support groups as follows:

| Student | Research topic | Funded By |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Ben Topham | Characterising the role of peroxidase in breast cancer cell invasion | Cancer Society Diamond Harbour & Cheviot Groups and Cancer Society of New Zealand Canterbury-West Coast Division |
| Millie Taylor | Investigating immune cell Vitamin C concentrations in melanoma patients undergoing immunotherapy | Cancer Society Hokitika Group & Cancer Society of New Zealand Canterbury-West Coast Division |
| Connor Kennedy | Investigating the correlation of Vitamin C levels in plasma of patients with advanced melanoma and patient response to immunotherapy | Cancer Society Malvern Group |
| Samantha Meredith | Are there protein amyloids in cancer? | Cancer Society Ellesmere & Oxford Groups and Cancer Society of New Zealand Canterbury-West Coast Division |

Well done to all the students for their hard work and thank you to the support groups for funding these important cancer-related research projects.



Your local Cancer Society Centres

Christchurch Centre
97 Fitzgerald Avenue, PO Box 13450, Christchurch 8141
P: 03 379 5835 E: contact@cancercwc.org.nz

North Canterbury Centre
143 Percival Street, Rangiora 7400
P: 0800 226 695 E: northcanty@cancercwc.org.nz

South Canterbury Centre
32 Memorial Avenue, PO Box 682, Timaru 7940
P: 03 688 0124 E: timaru@cancercwc.org.nz

Mid Canterbury Centre
122 Kermode Street, PO Box 296, Ashburton 7740
P: 03 307 7691 E: midcanty@cancercwc.org.nz

West Coast Centre
98 High Street, PO Box 81, Greymouth 7840
P: 03 768 9557 E: westcoast@cancercwc.org.nz

Selwyn Centre
6B Kidman Street, PO Box 25, Rolleston 7643
P: 03 925 9708 E: selwyn.centre@cancercwc.org.nz