

# focus on



Cancer  
**Focus**  
NORTHERN IRELAND

Issue Eight: Spring 2014



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S FOREWORD



Thank goodness for the brighter days, springtime and Easter, which is just around the corner – it certainly helps lift the spirits. Firstly, I'd like to say a special thank you to the staff and customers at Danske Bank who've raised over £400k for our Family Support Service over the last three years – a fantastic effort.

Talking of the spring and things that grow, I'm delighted to report that our Keeping Well mobile service is continuing to expand, bringing health checks and messages to more people than ever across Northern Ireland.

### Parents' Page

We've also created a new Parents' Page (front cover) on our website ([www.cancerfocusni.org](http://www.cancerfocusni.org)) that gives a mixture of interesting information and practical, easy and often fun solutions to the problems we face every day in our quest to keep ourselves and our children healthy. There are sections on eating healthily, care in the sun, smoking, physical activity, alcohol, body awareness and sexual health.

Congratulations to our Family Service Coordinator Rachel Smith who won the Voluntary Sector category in the Belfast Telegraph Woman of the Year Awards. Well done, too, to our beauty consultant Fiona Barr, who was shortlisted, and the Sing for Life choir which performed at the event.

Coming up in May, we'll see international cyclists who are competing in the Giro d'Italia race riding through the streets of Belfast. We'll be out with our collection buckets on Friday 9th May, so if you'd like to volunteer to help please email [moragchambers@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:moragchambers@cancerfocusni.org).

I wish you all the very best for Easter.

Roisin Foster  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Roisin Foster (left) and the ECL Board

## A voice in Europe

Congratulations to our Chief Executive Roisin Foster who has been appointed to the prestigious Board of the Association of the European Cancer League (ECL).

ECL is a European umbrella organisation of national and regional cancer leagues. It provides a unique and important platform for cancer societies who want to be effective players in cancer prevention, control and care.

Together practitioners, charities, organisations and politicians work together, share ideas and discuss developments in fields related to cancer.

Roisin said: "There is a vast wealth of talent in Europe and it is vital to be part of that important network and share innovative research and developments in the battle against this devastating disease.

"I believe Cancer Focus can make a valuable contribution by being a strong voice pushing forward best practice and new laws that will raise standards of care and making the case to governments for more funding for research and facilities.

"I will be able to work to ensure that our services at Cancer Focus are based on evidence of what works best, both to prevent cancer and to support those affected by the disease. I'm looking forward to challenge."





# Family Service is such fantastic support

Ciaran Stewart (35) tragically lost his wife Fiona to breast cancer a year ago. Ciaran and children Cára (9), Ryan (7) and Caiden (4) use our lifeline Family Support Service.

Fiona and her family were devastated when she was diagnosed with cancer when Caiden was just six months old.

Heartbreakingly, Fiona lost her fight on April 2 2013, leaving Ciaran to raise the children, with help and support from their family and Cancer Focus. "Not long after Caiden was born, Fiona noticed a lump in her breast but thought it was a blocked milk duct. She had a scan but never in our wildest dreams did we think things would turn out so badly," says Ciaran.

"Fiona had an operation to remove the glands and affected cells and later a second operation to remove more," he recalls. "She started a year of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which was tough, but she was very courageous. She had such fight in her and gave us all great strength and hope. "For a while it seemed we were getting our lives back on track – 2011 was a good Christmas," he remembers.

Sadly, another scan detected cancer in the liver. "It was devastating news. We couldn't believe it – after all she had come through. I remember breaking down, totally devastated, completely numb," he reveals. "I knew



Fiona and Ciaran Stewart with their children

in my heart 2012 was going to be our last Christmas together. It was so tough trying to put a brave face on for the children and for her. I had terrific support from family but it was hard to cope at times. When you have children you have to keep it together for them," he says.

"One of the hardest things I ever had to do was tell the kids that their mum was going to die. It was terrible. I tried to tell them it was nothing to be scared of, that daddy was going to be here. They are resilient, though, and I think they are doing all right."

Ciaran says that our Family Support Service is one of the big factors helping him through. "I'm so grateful to Cancer

Focus for all the help and support. We go along to the group nights when the children meet youngsters in a similar situation and I can chat with other parents. It does us all good to know that we are not the only ones going through this.

"The children can talk in an informal space, through games, drama and various activities – if they say they miss their mum, everyone knows exactly what it means to them. They can ask all those awkward questions that perhaps they don't know how to ask me, make memory boxes, have little outings. It's a wonderful service." Amazingly, Ciaran and other family members and friends have now raised over £8k through various fundraisers to help other families and to say thank you to Cancer Focus for the support they've received.

For more details email [rachelsmith@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:rachelsmith@cancerfocusni.org) or call **9066 3281**.



Cára, Caiden and Ryan

# Danske Bank raises over £400,000

Danske Bank employees and customers have raised over £400,000 for our Family Support Service during our hugely successful three year partnership, which has just drawn to a close.

In the last three years the family service has helped 358 local children and adults. In 2013 alone, we were there for 100 families. The money raised has helped us expand by taking on two more support workers, increasing the number of individual and family support sessions, and providing breaks for bereaved children. We'd like to say a big thank you to Danske Bank staff and customers who have helped with numerous fundraising events. The money raised has made a huge difference to emotionally vulnerable children during a very difficult time in their young lives.

Danske Bank's Head of Corporate Banking, Ivan McMinn, has not only come through his own cancer experience but raised a staggering £66,000 for us by competing in last year's London marathon. Tony Wilcox, Managing Director of Personal Banking, also undertook two personal cycle challenges, covering 700 miles in total. "This is an important and fantastic service run by an inspirational group of people," he said.



Ava Downs (5), Joyce Savage, Cancer Focus, and Tony Wilcox, Danske Bank, say a big thank you

# Lidl staff and customers are Keeping Well



Fiona McManus, Cancer Focus, and Gordon Cruikshanks, Lidl NI, check out the Keeping Well van

More than 300 staff and customers of Lidl NI got free health checks on board our Keeping Well vans during visits to 16 stores in January. The mobile drop-in units bring health checks and cancer awareness to workplaces, sports and community groups in a bid to lower people's risk of cancer. The uptake was excellent – we had a full schedule nearly every day. Over 20% of clients were referred to their GP for high blood pressure, 7% for high blood sugars, and 6% were referred on to stop smoking services in their local area.

We're delighted that about half of our clients were men. Research shows that men are less likely than women to seek health help or advice, but our figures show that men are willing to use our service, that there is a need for it and that we're meeting that need.

## Little Stars Badge Appeal

If you would like to support our Little Stars Badge Appeal for our Family Support Service by buying a badge please call **9068 0745/0752**, email **supporters@cancerfocusni.org** or text **STAR33 £2 to 70070**.

This vital service helps local children when a mum, dad or grandparent has cancer. We support families with one-to-one home visits and family support groups, encourage children to express their feelings and help them understand cancer. If a parent's prognosis is less positive, we help them to write thoughts and stories for the future, and to create lasting memories. If the adult sadly dies, we help children to create memory boxes and offer family bereavement groups.



# Fashionweek frolics and fun

Cancer Focus will be strutting its stuff at Stormont's iconic Great Hall on Friday 21st March as part of Belfast Fashionweek.

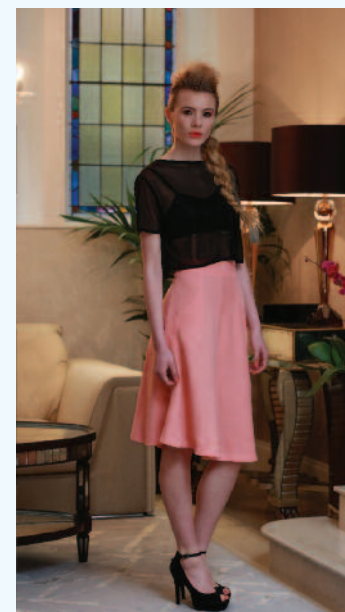
We're taking part in a special charity challenge and will dazzle fashionistas with on-trend, quirky and vintage styles that you can find at bargain prices in our 11 stores across Northern Ireland.

Award-winning makeup guru Paddy McGurgan will also demonstrate his stunning skills in his Birds of Paradise show. For tickets visit [www.belfastfashionweek.com](http://www.belfastfashionweek.com)

## Donation Day

We're urgently appealing for donations to our shops and are having a special Donation Day on **Saturday 5th April** when you are invited to bring your unwanted quality items to our stores – all the addresses are on our website,

[www.cancerfocusni.org/shops](http://www.cancerfocusni.org/shops)



## Community Wellbeing

Our Community Wellbeing programme, delivered by Cancer Focus and LiLAC Cancer Support through our Better Together partnership, has been launched.

Thanks to £150k from the Rural Development Programme, over 2,000

people in rural communities in Mid-Ulster and Fermanagh will benefit from a range of cancer support and prevention services.

These include health checks and awareness sessions. There is one-to-one and group support for people with cancer, family services and bereavement support. Our van also visits many community venues. Community Wellbeing is working to improve the overall health of everyone. We're actively making positive changes and we'd urge everyone to use these wonderful free services. To find out more email [communitywellbeing@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:communitywellbeing@cancerfocusni.org) or call **07776 990 443**.

This project was part-funded by South West Action for Rural Development (SWARD), local delivery agent for Axis 3 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 by the EU and DARD. RT Autoparts bought the mobile van for Cancer Focus.



Wellbeing team: (l-r) Clare Davidson, Sandra Gordon and Fiona McManus

## Dates for your diary

**Art Therapy** - 7th March – 11th, April, Ards Hospital, each Fri, 2pm-3.30pm; 9th April - 14th May, Downe Hospital, each Wed, 2.30pm-4.30pm

**Walks** - 15th March - meeting point Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park lower car park, outside café, 10.30am; 5th April – meeting point outside countryside centre, Crawfordsburn Country Park, 10.30am; 19th April – Lagan Towpath from Stranmillis, Belfast, meeting point TBC, 10.30am

**Breast Cancer Support Groups** - 19th March, Dufferin Training Complex, Downpatrick; 10th April, Rathain Fold, Union Street, Coleraine; 16th April, Dobbin Street Community Centre, Armagh; 27th May, Cancer Focus, Eglantine Avenue, Belfast; 25th March, 22nd April & 27th May, Lavender group for young women, Cancer Focus, Eglantine Avenue, Belfast

**Support Groups** - Myeloma – 24th March, Cancer Focus, Eglantine Avenue, Belfast; NW Prostate Cancer – 7th May, Altnagelvin Hospital

**Sing for Life Choir** - 13th April – Evening Service, Roseyards Presbyterian Church, Ballymoney, 7pm; 16th May – Agape Centre, Lisburn Road, Belfast, 8pm; 19th May – Evening of music and drama with Bart's Players, St Bartholomew's Church, Stranmillis Road, Belfast, 7.30pm

**For more details**  
email [care@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:care@cancerfocusni.org)

## Volunteer Ambassadors

We're on the hunt for special Volunteer Ambassadors. Our volunteers bring a huge amount of experience, skill and understanding to our work and we want to take that out into the community by recruiting Volunteer Ambassadors to represent us in their local areas. You can help by distributing leaflets and attending information or fundraising events to let local people know about our support services, education work and research – helping us reach out to as many people as possible. It's ideal if you're looking for a flexible voluntary role that can fit easily into your lifestyle. We need your help so please get in touch!

We also urgently need volunteers for:

- **Giro d'Italia** – volunteers for bucket collection in Belfast on Fri 9th May
- **Beauty Therapy** – Can you help with our Beauty for Life service, which provides short beauty sessions for patients in Belfast City Hospital?
- **Family Support** – to help support children and families affected by cancer
- **Student Health Education** – to help take our cancer prevention messages to schools

To find out details call Morag on **9066 3281** or email [moragchambers@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:moragchambers@cancerfocusni.org).

“  
*It feels good  
to be involved  
in the local  
community*  
”



Philip Erskine, Shop volunteer

## Push for plain cigarette packs

Cancer Focus is delighted that our MLAs have listened to our campaign and taken on board the views of the public and health bodies by including Northern Ireland in proposed new UK law to ensure the tobacco industry use standardised packs for tobacco products.

We've been campaigning for plain packs for a long time. The campaign has gained massive public support because it will protect future generations from being seduced by tobacco industry marketing and will encourage more smokers to stop.

This decision is the right one and shows that our politicians have prioritised the health of the public and, in particular, the health of our children.

We also welcome a new law designed to crack down on the sale of tobacco to children that has been passed by the NI Assembly.

The Tobacco Retailers Bill creates a register of traders and introduces steps to deal with persistent offenders. It aims to restrict the availability of cigarettes to those aged under 18 and target adults who buy for children.

## No Smoking Day



Judith West, Cancer Focus, Paul Martin, British Heart Foundation NI, and David Tumilty (right), Public Health Agency (PHA), urge smokers to break the habit for good on No Smoking Day, 12th March. Stopping smoking is the most important thing that you can do to improve your health but it can take commitment and planning. For more information visit [www.cancerfocusni.org](http://www.cancerfocusni.org), call the Smokers' Helpline, **0808 812 8008**, or visit [www.want2stop.info](http://www.want2stop.info) to order a Quit Fit free of charge.

## Breaking bad habits

Cancer Focus has just completed very successful workplace stop smoking sessions (funded by the Public Health Agency) at Montupet in Dunmurry. Twenty-four staff members enrolled resulting in 17 quits in four weeks – UK quit rates average at 55% in four weeks, while Montupet achieved 70%. Thanks go to the employees who also raised £1,000 for us.

The one-stop-shop stop smoking service is free and confidential and offers behavioural support along with a range of pharmacotherapies such as patches and gum. Therese McGuckin, Personnel Manager at Montupet, said she was delighted with the level of interest from staff and wanted to continue to promote health and wellbeing among the staff.





## Marathon Relay 'Dream Team'

Calling all runners to sign up a 'dream team' for Belfast City Marathon relay on 5th May to raise cash for Cancer Focus. **Call us on 028 9068 0754 or email [belfastmarathon@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:belfastmarathon@cancerfocusni.org)**

## Titanic Triumph

The Star Ball Party of 2013 at Titanic Building, Belfast, in memory of much-loved Estelle Poots, raised £20,472 for Cancer Focus funded research at Queen's University Belfast.



## Catherine's Run raises £44k

Stephen Montgomery, his family and friends organised a fundraiser in memory of his wife Catherine, marking her first anniversary and raising £44k. Stephen, Emily (11), James (9) and Matthew (4) hand a cheque to Rosie Forsythe, Cancer Focus community fundraiser.



## Focus Fit

The Mid-Ulster Focus Fit Challenge No 3 raised a mammoth £19,393. The whole project has raised just over £50,500 for us. Special thanks to Fit to Function, Cookstown, for their help.



## In fond memory

Neil and Tanya McCance and their children Mark and Melissa held a Mournes walk last September and raised an amazing £15,466 for our Family Support Service. Sadly, Neil passed away at the start of the year. Our Family Service Coordinator Rachel Smith supported the family and helped Neil write his eulogy, read by Tanya at his funeral.



## Upcoming events

**Ballymena Ladies Luncheon**, sponsored by Clarins, 19th March, Tullyglass House Hotel; Gina Carrigan Forget Me Not cycle and walk, 25th May, starting in Killyclogher, Co Tyrone; Comber Coffee Party, 8th May, Unicarval House, 88 Ballygrainey Road, Comber – email [maevecolgan@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:maevecolgan@cancerfocusni.org) or call **9068 0761**

**Father Ted Quiz**, Weigh Inn, Omagh, 14th March; Eglington Classic Car Club annual show, 6th April, City of Derry

RFC – email [garethmcelduff@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:garethmcelduff@cancerfocusni.org) or call **07585 956 830**

**20 mile walk**, North Down Coastal Path, 29th March – email [suzimcilwain@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:suzimcilwain@cancerfocusni.org) or call **9068 0746**

**Helen Lowry Forget Me Not Fund coffee & cake sale**, Bloomfield Presbyterian Church, Belfast, 22nd March 10am – 1pm

## Boxing clever is a knockout

The Braid ABC Fright Night white collar boxing event at Tullyglass House Hotel, Ballymena, raised a massive £13,000 for us. We can't thank organiser and former world champion Eamonn Loughran enough for supporting us for a second year. A big thank you also goes to main sponsor Scott McGarry, Braid ABC, for all his assistance and everyone else who helped make the night such a roaring success.



# Huge thanks to all our fundraisers

The Celtic Mountain Challenge team raised £14,396

Lady Captain Elaine Nelson, Ballyclare Golf Club, raised £3,515 for breast cancer awareness

Lesley Smylie, Richhill, held a sponsored walk at Peatland Park, Dungannon, raising £1,864

The Cancer Focus Christmas Gift Wrapping Service at Victoria Square raised over £200

Susan Lavery's, Ballynahinch, coffee morning raised £155

Joanne Keenan hosted a work coffee morning raising £252

Brian Robinson took part in Grow A Mo raising £90; Jason Ling, £125; Kevin McCartan, £400; Peter McGuigan, £240; Stephen Burton, £150

Paul McErlain and Rodney Young, Magherafelt, raised £2,068 at their Indoor Ironman Challenge



Pavers Shoe Shop, Dungannon, donated £100

Belinda and the team at Newways, Newtownabbey, raised over £90 at a Christmas fair

Northern Regional Colleges raised £2,685 from a Pink Day at all six colleges. Male teachers raised £1,485 more by growing a Mo

Gary Mitchell and the Foyle Foods lads in Campsie raised £1,347

Strabane Academy raised £2,052 at a Think Pink Day

South West College pink Pamper Day raised £1,400

Moneyneeh Primary School's Funky Tie Day raised £650

Glastry College, Newtownards, raised £860 at a onesies party and male

teachers taking part in Grow A Mo

Jenny and Coleen, Department of Justice, Belfast, raised £1,738 at a Pink Coffee Morning

Adrian Moat ran the Dublin Marathon raising £6,850 on his justgiving page

Ballyclare Secondary raised £1,755 at a Wear It Pink Day

Stormont Hotel and Diva Dolls raised £1,036 at a Girls' Night Out

Armagh Breast Cancer Support Group held a bucket collection at O'Kane's Garage, Armagh, raising £945

Belfast City Council property and projects department raised £826 at a sausage sizzler and carol service

John Teacy, Belfast, filled a coffee jar with change raising £141 for our Man Van

Spectrum Automation, Ballymena, donated £500 in lieu of Christmas gifts for their customers

The Lowry Singers, Armagh, raised £3,000 from CD sales

James Leckey Design, Lisburn, grew moustaches raising £3,475

Grace McNeill, Ballygally, raised £360 with a raffle, 24hr fast and donation

The Probation Board NI raised £308 Bangor Rugby Club sang carols topless raising £1,864

Lagan Valley Athletics Club fun run raised £200

PSNI D District raised £2,405 at a Think Pink Girls' Night In

Shirley Telford ran the Dublin Marathon and raised £815 for Cancer Focus and Aware Defeat Depression

Heather Penrose, Cara Peoples, Noeleen McFall and Sandra Lawler held a Retro Girls' Night at the Clarion Hotel, Carrickfergus, raising £3,056



The Harte Family raised £3,500 for our Family Support Service from their Anna's Bananas Shave, Wax and Dye fundraiser in Lurgan

Clonduff Camogie Club donated £420 to our breast cancer campaign

Eamon Magill and the Bellevue Arms, Newtownabbey, raised £1,318 growing Mos

Helen Gorman, Craigavon, raised £280 for breast cancer at her coffee morning

Stephen Mawhinney raised £900 at Dromore High School Reunion

The SU staff at St Mary's University, Belfast, raised £952 in a Suit Up day and Girls' Night In

Allstate NI, Belfast, used our cancer prevention services and donated £600

Jessica Breen's coffee morning, with the Derrytrasna Kids Line Dancing Club, raised £1,010

Teachers at Glenlola Collegiate School, Bangor, grew Mo's and raised £5,443

The New York Marathon team raised almost £21,000.

Places are now available for the 2014

race on 2nd November



## Sporting Events 2014

Obel Abseil	12 - 13 Apr
London Marathon	13 Apr
Glens of Antrim Trek	27 Apr
Paddle Strangford Lough	17-18 May
West Highland Way	24-30 May

Visit [www.cancerfocusni.org/events](http://www.cancerfocusni.org/events) to see all the challenge events for 2014. If you can't see the event that suits you – just give us a call and we can make it happen.

For information on our upcoming events log onto  
**[www.cancerfocusni.org](http://www.cancerfocusni.org)**

