

focus on



Cancer
Focus
NORTHERN IRELAND

Issue Nine: Summer 2014



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Square
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S FOREWORD



It's lovely to have summer with us again. As I'm writing this, the sun is shining, but who knows how long that will last! Much as we love the bright days, this is the time of year to remind everyone to take care in the sun, even in our often cloudy climate.

While I was waiting for the warmer weather to arrive, I cleared out the family's wardrobes and delivered a pile of goods to our charity shops. Please think of us when you're doing the same – we always need more stock (and volunteers!). The money we raise from our 12 stores helps run our vital Keeping Well health check vans that visit communities all over NI.

One of our big commitments is to research, so we're delighted that a new discovery - which we funded - could help women at high risk of breast and ovarian cancer. This ground-breaking research has the potential, in the foreseeable future, to benefit women all over the world. We are only able to support this important work because of your generosity. You can read more about it on Page 4 and on the Research section of our website, www.cancerfocusni.org.

You might have spotted our new posters on billboards and bus shelters when you've been out and about. This is part of our campaign to make sure everyone knows about us when they need us – please help us spread the word.

I hope you have the best summer possible.

Roisin Foster
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Beautiful partners

We've teamed up with Look Good Feel Better, the beauty industry charity, to hold free workshops at Altnagelvin Hospital. Every two-hour workshop is run by trained beauty volunteers who take cancer patients through a specially designed skincare and make-up regime.

Both the beauty workshops and the Cancer Focus NI bra-fitting service are about increasing the confidence and self-image of women who have been affected by cancer. Using make-up and feeling good in your clothes can make a real difference - the two services complement each other perfectly.

The next dates are Tuesday 10th June and Thursday 17th July. To find out more please call **Debbie Leslie** on **028 7134 5171** ex **214044**.

Fond farewell

Long-serving staff members Ruth Campbell and Theresa McSwiney have retired. For many years Ruth worked as a counsellor and as Head of Care Services. She spent her last years with us helping women who've had breast surgery in our bra-fitting department.

Theresa set up our counselling service at Altnagelvin Hospital, where she was based for many years. She plans to continue her excellent work with us by facilitating Zest for Life sessions part-time.

Both Ruth and Theresa have been fantastic assets. We send them our sincere thanks for all their dedication and hard work and wish them the very best in the future.

Ellie Louise and the magic of art therapy

Ellie Louise Brown (5), from Dungannon, was only three when she was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in March 2012.

She enjoys her time out with our art therapist Joanne Boal.

Mum Fiona, a nurse, explains: "It all happened frighteningly quickly. Two weeks before she was diagnosed with cancer, we were told Ellie Louise had chickenpox. But she was running a very high temperature that wasn't responding to paracetamol and I felt there was something more wrong.

"One day she was as white as a sheet so we rushed her to hospital where it was found she had throat, lung and bladder infections and her haemoglobin count was very low. She also had abnormal cells in her blood. My heart just hit the ground. She was an extremely sick little girl and her dad and I were so frightened.

"At the RVH in Belfast she was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia - her life was literally hanging in the balance. She spent the first month in hospital and at the start of her treatment had a number of bad seizures. It was a very scary time.

"Ellie Louise has a very challenging, life-threatening illness and has been through nine months of really high intensity chemotherapy. She also had a line in her arm for nine months taking treatment to her heart and numerous lumbar punctures, all of which is very unpleasant and frightening, especially for a child. It was a very, very tough time and our whole lives changed. But every day we got through, we knew we were a day closer to the finish."

"We're just over two years down the line now. She is still receiving chemo daily and will hopefully finish treatment sometime this year.

"Cancer Focus NI's art therapy service is playing a hugely important role in her journey. One of my worries is how this will all affect Ellie Louise



Ellie Louise Brown (5) with art therapist Joanne Boal

emotionally and psychologically in the short and long term. I want to do everything possible to help her cope with what she's going through," Fiona continues.

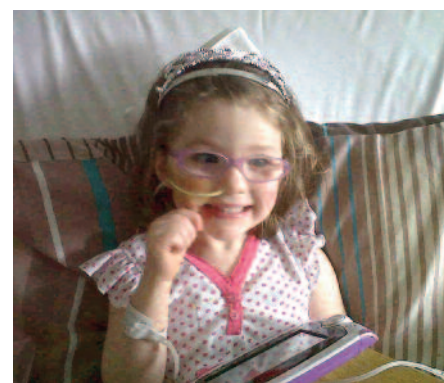
"Ellie Louise has a warm, bubbly personality and is a ray of sunshine. Art therapy keeps this lovely part of her bright. It helps her deal with whatever emotions she is experiencing and isn't yet old enough to articulate.

"She still has to have regular lumbar puncture tests and has to fast for long periods, which is very difficult for a child. Joanne comes to the hospital and distracts her with painting and drawing. It helps take her mind off her hunger and what's ahead, and that is a fantastic help - a brilliant diversion and so therapeutic.

"I feel Ellie Louise has fewer temper tantrums and is more relaxed after an art session and will sleep in the car on

the way home. She trusts Joanne, who's so easy going and gentle, and is really comfortable with her. Joanne says she's impressed with her imagination, which is as fresh as ever. I'm confident my daughter is in safe hands with a very highly skilled professional who goes above and beyond what is expected in her role."

If you are interested in this free service please call **028 9066 3281** or email joanneboal@cancerfocusni.org



Ellie Louise when she was first diagnosed

Research is good news for high risk women

Cancer researchers at Queen's University Belfast have made a breakthrough that could signal new treatments for women at high risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

The pivotal work was funded by Cancer Focus NI, which invests up to £400,000 each year in research. Around one in 1,000 women in the UK carry a BRCA1 mutation - the same condition that prompted Hollywood star Angelina Jolie to undergo a double mastectomy. These women have up to an 85% risk of developing breast cancer, and up to a 40% risk of ovarian cancer. Until now, preventive surgery has been the only way to reduce the risk.

The breakthrough may mean women affected with BRCA1 could use drugs, which are already available, rather than undergo irreversible surgery. It also opens up the possibility of pausing treatment for a period in order for women to have children.

The research proves for the first time that there is a direct link between high levels of oestrogen and DNA damage, which causes cancer, in the breasts and ovaries. It shows that the cells of women with the BRCA1 mutation cannot effectively fight the very high levels of oestrogen that exist in all women's breasts and ovaries, leaving them vulnerable to DNA damage.



Dr Kienan Savage, who led the research, gives Christine Garrett, who has the BRCA 1 gene, a tour of his lab

The researchers are currently seeking funding to launch clinical trials within 12 months.

To read more please search for the Research section of our website on www.cancerfocusni.org

Drug review welcomed

Cancer Focus NI welcomes the Health Minister's plans to review the cancer drugs approval process in Northern Ireland. At present, some patients are unable to access cancer treatments that are available to others in England and Scotland.

We're urging the Minister to set a timeframe for the review - patients want decisive action to improve access to drugs that could extend their lives, improve their quality of life and ease symptoms.

We welcome the unprecedented level of support we've had from our MLAs on this issue.

Cancer - a top priority

We've published a new report on behalf of the All Party Group on Cancer (APGC) at Stormont, highlighting why cancer remains a major public health issue.

Around 12,700 people are diagnosed each year with 4,047 deaths annually, making cancer the leading cause of death in NI.

The APGC calls on the NI Assembly to provide leadership and financial support to improve the health of the population and local cancer services through new legislation.

Its recommendations include: plain packs for tobacco and banning smoking in private vehicles; changes to alcohol pricing, health warnings and advertising; focusing on support for practice nurses and GPs delivering cancer prevention messages; and a call for a new strategy to improve men's health.

The full report is on the Public Affairs section of our website, www.cancerfocusni.org

Focus on skin cancer

This summer Care in the Sun is focusing on people who work outside or enjoy outdoor activities.

Look out for our sun safety tips in the GAA Championship match programmes and for sunscreen give-aways at matches in June and July. We'll also be at GAA summer camps in Co Down to do a sun safety training session for the camp co-ordinators, and to give information to parents and children.

We'll be giving out posters at the IFA football grounds and information at its summer clubs, and children at Belfast City Council and Belfast Trust summer schemes will be getting sun safety tips.

On 7th June and 26th July we'll have a stand at Victoria Square, Belfast; an event for employers of outdoor workers on 12th June at Greenmount College; a presentation to the All Party Group on Cancer at Stormont on 17th June; and a sun safety day at Belfast Zoo on Sunday 29th June from 10am-4pm.

We've already been to the hugely popular Balmoral Show, and so far this year have held skin cancer prevention updates for 57 school nurses.



Staff members Suzi McIlwain and Caroline McNelis get ready for the sun

Our Care in the Sun work is carried out in partnership with the Public Health Agency. For more information or to register please contact **Marbeth Ferguson** on **028 9066 3281** or email marbethferguson@cancerfocusni.org

Full marks for school work

We are celebrating our most successful school year ever. When we did our sums we realised we've worked with an amazing 62,590 primary school and 935 nursery school children all over NI.

One special highlight of 2013/2014 was the 25th anniversary of our Smokebusters club for P6 and P7 pupils.

We're also very excited by our new project for Year 9s called Dead Cool, which we piloted with 730 young people this year to encourage them not to smoke. It will be rolled out to more schools soon.

Two more great new programmes for secondary schools are also being launched this autumn on being body aware and the dangers of sunbeds, so watch this space...



Matthew Divine (P6) and Lauren Burton (P7), Rosemount PS, L'Derry, check out the Smokebusters newsletter

Men, men, men...

Health professionals from all over Northern Ireland attended our 2014 ManAlive Conference at the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim.

The guest speakers included author and broadcaster Christy Kenneally, who spoke inspirationally on 'Say Yes to Life – Living Well with Cancer', about his own personal experiences.

The conference focused on communications in health and well-being – ways to convey health messages effectively and to empower men to improve their own health, make healthier choices and access support when needed. How men receive and understand information was also examined.

Professor Gerard Hastings, from Sterling University, looked at the theme of 'Making Sense of Health Information' and Professor Mark Lawler, QUB, spoke on 'Manning Up to Cancer – Male Empowerment to Overcome Cancer Inequalities'.

How you really can make a difference



TV presenter Pamela Ballantine calls for more volunteers to help out in our shops

To mark Volunteers Week (June 2nd-8th) we've turned the spotlight on the vital contribution our volunteers make to our work.

There are so many ways that you help us help others. Fundraising, driving, leading walk groups, health promotion, supporting families, providing beauty treatments, helping in our charity shops, at reception and with administration, counting coins, giving out leaflets, facilitating support groups, manning information stands - everyone championing our cause.

Our volunteers do all this and more and are true local heroes who give up an amazing average of 4,000 hours a month to support the charity. A huge thank you goes out to all our volunteers from everyone here at Eglantine Avenue.

We always need more help so if you can spare an hour or two, please email moragchambers@cancerfocusni.org or call 028 9066 3281.

Looking good

Fundraisers Rosie Forsythe and Suzi McIlwain (right) have a laugh helping Cool FM DJ Gareth Stewart get ready for a make-up selfie.

Gareth has chosen to support Cancer Focus NI and become an ambassador for us. He has kindly given his time to promote our fundraising campaigns, organise street collections, coordinate fundraising events and raise awareness of our work.

We're delighted that he has chosen us and thank him for his continued support.



Dates for your diary

Walks 28th June – Tipperary Woods, Newcastle, 10.30am 19th July – Holywood Coastal Walk, 10.30am 2nd August – Victoria Park, Belfast, 10.30am 16th August – Cavehill, Belfast, 10.30am 30th August – Murlough Bay, Dundrum, 10.30am
Breast Cancer Support Groups 11th Sept, 23rd Oct - Rathain Fold, Union Street, Coleraine 17th Sept, 19th Nov - Dobbin Street Community Centre, Armagh 24th June - Lavender group for young women, Cancer Focus, Eglantine Avenue, Belfast **Zest for Life** 9th Sep -14th Oct - Cancer Lifeline, 44 Alliance Avenue, 2pm-4.30pm **Art Therapy** Mondays from 9th June – 4th Aug – Aurora Leisure Complex, Bangor, 3.30pm-5pm **Writing My Cancer Journey** 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th June, 4th July – Macmillan Support Centre, Belfast City Hospital, 11am-2pm
 For more details email care@cancerfocusni.org



Tractor run

Thank you so much to the organisers and participants of the Sean McDonagh Memorial Tractor Run, which was held in Brookeborough and has raised over £5,000 so far.

Victoria Square

Former Miss NI Meagan Green flipped a coin and made a wish at Victoria Square fountain with the help of our furry mascot Genevieve the Goat.



She was launching the start of the new partnership between us and the stylish Belfast shopping centre. Together we hope to raise thousands of pounds for local cancer patients.

An exciting calendar of fun events has been planned over the next 12 months that will showcase our good work. Our Keeping Well van is attending various events, while Genevieve - a firm favourite with children - is joining in family activities. Keep an eye out for us if you're visiting during the summer.

On yer bikes

Well done to the Dawson family, from Craigavon, their friends and family, who raised a massive £4,196 taking part in a Big Italian Bike Ride and the Belfast marathon, and are planning a football tournament, BBQ and quiz on 21st June.



Marathon greats

Huge thanks to our super-fit London marathon team, who pulled out all the stops to run on April 21. They have raised almost £50,000 so far.



Spinning success

A big thank you to all our Giro D'Italia street collection volunteers and those who gave so generously. Special thanks to the Halifax, Citigroup and finance advisors Johnston Campbell, who helped us notch up a massive £7,612 (and counting) for breast cancer. Pictured is the Johnston Campbell team.



Helping hand

Rathfriland Cancer Focus Group has helped boost our funds for local people with cancer and their families by raising a fabulous £18,055 from various activities throughout the year. Thanks to all who made this possible.



Moustache men

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster netted £15,000 from its Don't Shave in November moustache campaign and a Think Pink sponsored walk, which took place before the Rural Women in Business seminar at Stormont last October.

Huge thanks to all our fundraisers



The Spring Charity Ball at Clondeboy Lodge, Bangor, raised £2,210

Moiria dentist Marilyn Todd raised an impressive £4,650 by scaling Kilimanjaro

Limavady Rotary Club raised £1,100 for our women's services at Altnagelvin Hospital

Martin Whitmore raised £400 from the LA marathon

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Belfast Marathon – the money's still coming in. Cancer Focus staff raised £1,696 in the relay event

Belfast-based property consultancy CBRE chose Cancer Focus NI as its charity of the year 2013 and raised £2,000

Ballymena Walking for Health Group raised £1,300 at a charity walk



The six week Focus Fit 4 Challenge in Mid-Ulster, with help from Fit 2 Function in Cookstown, raised £21,236

Barbara Wilson & Barbara Campbell raised £4,850 for their walking challenge

The PSNI D District Larne Half Marathon team raised over £6,000 – special thanks to Eileen McCaw and Colin Gray who rallied the troops!

Allstate NI raised £6,270 through their yearly fundraising efforts

Glens of Antrim 6, 12 and 18, mile walkers have raised £4,300 so far

D H Christie Primary, Coleraine, raised £230 from alternative Christmas gifts

Taaj Restaurant, Magherafelt, raised £500 from a curry tasting evening

RT Autoparts, Cookstown, raised £21,000 at a charity dinner dance

Malaysia & You Belfast 2014 raised £1,725 at their Malaysian festival and gala ball

Lorraine McCord, Carnmoney, raised £2,902 for Cancer Focus NI and

Alzheimer's Society, at a Night at the Races at Greenisland War Memorial Club

Year 14 at Larne Grammar School raised £643

Sean and Grace raised £4,480 with their Death Valley Cycling Challenge

Dromore Rugby Club raised £462 at its annual dinner

Billy Bowling Club, Bushmills, raised £600

Slimming World, Lisburn Road, Belfast, held a sponsored walk raising £147

Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch, Belfast, hosted a Big Breakfast raising over £4,000

SERC Lisburn Hair & Beauty students raised £475 at their Pink Pamper day for mums

Paul McGinty, who ran the Derby 10k in drag, raised £1,564 in memory of his much loved and missed friend Stuart McCann

Huge thank you to the gorgeous Pink & Brawn Charity Calendar organisers and models who raised a massive £8,191 for Cancer Focus NI and Pretty 'n Pink

MEP Jim Nicholson and his assistant Lindsay Millar donated £650 raised at a business breakfast in Dungannon

The Europa Abseil Team raised £2,547 abseiling down the hotel facade



Huge thanks to the 15 teams and 12 solo runners from our charity partners Lidl NI who entered the Belfast marathon relay to raise funds for us

Upcoming Events

Ards Half Marathon and Walk, 26th June

Annalong Valley Challenge, 30th August

Ben Nevis Challenge, 5th-7th Sept

Great North Run, 7th Sept
Email

sarahatcheson@cancerfocusni.org or call **028 9068 0765**.

Visit www.cancerfocusni.org/events to see all the events for 2014.

If you can't see the event that suits you, just give us a call and we can make it happen.

FROG: Fun Run Of the Glens, 25/50/75/100 mile cycle event, Martinstown, 14th June - email Paul.McToal@uk.fujitsu.com or call **07714 205 659**

Charity Tag Rugby Tournament, Belfast, 9th August - email suzimcilwain@cancerfocusni.org or call **028 9068 0746**

The 5K Colour Run, Titanic Quarter, 23rd August - email suzimcilwain@cancerfocusni.org or call **028 9068 0746**

BeFit Outdoor Zumba Party, Broadway, Larne, 28th June, 11am – 1.30pm

For information on our upcoming events log onto
www.cancerfocusni.org

