

BIZNET SUPPORT

At the Biznet Christmas function held on 5 December, President of Biznet, Peter Cowan-Lunn presented BMCH President, Robyn Yates with a cheque for \$1165. All monies raised at a silent auction held after a golf day on 22 November were for BMCH. Robyn informed Biznet that monies would be used to provide Christmas vouchers to four children of two recently deceased young women and the remainder would go towards next year's cancer conference. She thanked all members of Biznet for their generosity and support of BMCH and its work.



Peter Cowan-Lunn presenting cheque to Robyn Yates [Entice Photography]

AUSTRALASIAN INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE ASSOCIATION 13TH INTERNATIONAL HOLISTIC HEALTH CONFERENCE August 2007, held at Peppers Fairmont Resort, Leura.

A representative group of members, nurses and therapists of Blue Mountains Cancer Help attended the Annual Conference of the Australasian Integrative Medicine Association recently in Leura. All will agree that the information provided and the opportunity to workshop ideas was invaluable to a group such as BMCH.

There were many well-known speakers such as Petrea King (The Meaning of Life), Dr Craig Hassad (Mindfulness & Meditation), Prof Gerry Bodeker (Global Trends in Natural Healthcare), Dr David Joske (The Psychology of Cancer), Prof Marc Cohen (Food as Medicine), Rhea Dempsey (Empowerment through Pain), Simon Borg-Oliver (Hatha Yoga), Prof Helen Caldicott (Nuclear Power, Radiation & Disease), Dr Peter Spitzer (Clown Doctors—Practice Humour or How to tickle your funny bone!) and many more.

Of particular interest to many of the attendees was hearing from Dr David Joske the Founder/Director of SolarisCare a purpose-built cancer support centre at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Perth, Western Australia. This centre was previously known as

the Browns Dairy Cancer Support and is now a hospital-based facility offering twenty-one complementary therapies to patients in hospital! SolarisCare provides a drop-in centre and is a free service with a strong volunteer base. Complementary therapies are provided in the centre by volunteer therapists to both in-patients and clients in the community where drop-in facilities are available five days a week. The success of SolarisCare as an integrated cancer care centre is truly inspiring.

One of our members who attended the conference, Richard Nolan, made the following observations:

As a cancer patient I valued the opportunity to get an overview of those sections of the medical fraternity who are stepping beyond the conventional bounds and helping their patients to better outcomes. Integrative was seen to be more than just adding therapies not usually found in the confines of western medicine (useful as that is) but to involve also the dropping of boundaries, either self imposed or accepted in conformity with the professions expectations. Two of the speakers, pioneers we may call them, explained how from their own experience they had been able to drop the barrier between themselves and their patients with improvement in their own lives and their patients and better overall outcomes even if they could not fix it for everybody. A person was a person, not just a case. A welcome return to humanness, a realisation that the subjective is the ultimate reality not the projection sometimes called objective. The perceptions of the patient are as real as any other view, however formed, and needed to be fully accepted and worked with. On no account was hope to be ever extinguished. The patient is not there to die on schedule.

There was a lot of information on display and presented in workshops by medical vendors, much of which could be presented at any medical conference but there was also a greater freedom to roam over a wider territory than a more narrow medical conference might have tolerated which was refreshing in itself.

The most challenging presentation was by Petrea King who invited everyone to let go all the habits and conditioning which



Our members with Petrea King, from Quest for Life, Bundanoon.

we live with like on some autopilot, what she called our second nature, and allow ourselves to be our first nature, our ego-free divinity, and lead the lives we are meant to lead manifesting, if you will, the glory of God (however you choose to define god), the only reason (the real reason) we exist on this planet. Petrea took this a step further with a workshop on the ways we limit ourselves and a guided meditation which produced in me that deep rest which enables the knots of stress to start to be unwound and the diminution of attachment to old and restrictive patterns. It was obvious that she had done the hard yards over the years and spoke only from her actual experience. She challenged us to clean up our act and when we do our physiology will change and instead of dying on schedule we will be like those who having committed to life continue to confound the expectations of others and live on in vibrant enjoyment of their lives as many have already done for many years. Her final advice was to learn to look after ourselves and that it was not some greedy selfishness to take proper care. Our health then becomes a gift to the world and an enhancement of our interaction with our fellow human beings, which is what makes life worth the candle.

INSPIRATIONAL CANCER CONFERENCE

Attendees at the recent cancer conference held at the Jemby-Rinjah Lodge, Blackheath reported in feedback that it was inspirational, informative, had knowledgeable speakers as well as great lunch and location. Organised by Blue Mountains Cancer Help the conference attracted a full house, was a great success and the first of proposed annual community conferences.

Dr Qi Xin Chen, a fully qualified medical practitioner in both western and Chinese medicine, talked about the differences in approach to treatment between traditional Chinese medicine and western medicine. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) being acupuncture, herbal medicine and specific exercises. The principal of TCM is to balance the body and provide support and strengthening of the immune system so the body can help cure itself. Dr Chen also works with oncologists in supporting patients on a traditional chemotherapy regime to achieve better outcomes with their treatment. With over 5000 years of TCM history and over 2000 Chinese herbs he described how complex and specific

the prescribing of herbal treatment was. Courses in TCM are now being run through Sydney and Western Sydney Universities. Treatment trials using TCM on cancer patients are now in the evaluation stage at Liverpool hospital.

Leonie Dale, who has a Masters in Nursing and is a well known local massage therapist and teacher of massage, presented her research into complementary therapies and their beneficial effects on the cancer patient. She referred to Sloan-Kettering Memorial Hospital cancer centre in New York who provide many therapies to cancer patients, in particular massage therapy. Research related to this has shown that patients achieve better outcomes with their medical treatment when it is combined with therapies.

Dr Ben de Silva, a local general practitioner and a natural therapist, spoke on the interface between spirituality and *happyness* in both living and dying. Whilst not specifically relating to any religious belief system he believes there needs to be a spiritual dimension in one's life, acceptance of this allows one to see dying as part of the life process.

Neville Brown a cancer survivor and counsellor to terminally ill cancer patients described his situation of forty-one years ago when he was given four days to live after major bowel cancer surgery. Neville's message was that no matter how serious the situation there is always hope.

The conference was made possible through the generosity of Central Blue Mountains Rotary Club and the owners of Jemby-Rinjah Lodge.

For further information contact: Blue Mountains Cancer Help, Ph: (02) 4782 4866.

A TESTIMONIAL FOR BM CANCER HELP SUPPORT GROUP

After I had breast cancer in November 2003, I contacted a few organizations for advice and support. My daughters live in Sydney and Orange, so I felt fearful and alone in those post-operation weeks when I returned home by myself.

I attended a couple of different support groups, but the focus seemed to be mainly on raising money, 'getting on with life' by having outings or joining 'Dragons Abreast' and so on. These are all worthy efforts, and I was touched by the dedication of the organisers. However, I was feeling very low, and I knew that I needed a more peaceful place to heal my mind and body.

A local advertisement offering low-cost massage for cancer patients caught my eye, and initially I became a member of BMCH to take advantage of this. And that was how I heard about the support groups. I had already decided that I was definitely NOT a "group" person, and only went along on Thursday morning out of gratitude for the kindness shown to me by BMCH.

However, the group has made a significant change to my life. Although small, that's where its value lies, for each person gets a chance to talk (if they want to) and, more importantly, to listen and be listened to. This support group differs from others I have attended because of the intimate and caring interactions we experience.

The counsellors play a pivotal role by reminding us each session that the information we choose to share is completely confidential. Therefore, we feel safe to talk about personal matters that we may have subconsciously repressed for years.

When I started going to the group, I thought 'what has all this got to do with healing ourselves after our cancer experience?' I now know that all cancer patients have certain similarities. Listening to others' stories has brought clarity and meaning into my own life. It is reassuring and powerful therapy for everybody.

At the appropriate time, and without any pressure or expectation, group members are gently encouraged to share any



Dr Qi Xin Chen, with Kevin Stapleton in background

sadness or suffering of the past. This 'unburdening' cleanses our minds, renews our confidence, and strengthens our bodies to allow healing to finally take place.

The BMCH support group provides a unique opportunity to share knowledge, experiences and emotional trauma without any fear of judgement. There is an understanding, a certain empathy, amongst us that even our loved ones cannot discern.

Elizabeth Ho

Client & Carer Support Group Timetable

DECEMBER - Saturdays 8th & 22nd
Tuesday 11th

JANUARY - Saturdays 5th & 19th
Tuesdays 8th & 22nd

FEBRUARY - Saturdays 2nd & 16th
Tuesdays 5th & 19th

ALL GROUPS 10AM -12MD
Gold coin donation.

66 Waratah St Katoomba (CNR Waratah & Lurline)
Parking next door in Lurline St

Introducing our new Breast Cancer Support Group Treasure Chests

This informal, fun & friendship group is for women who have experienced breast cancer either recently or in the past.

The next meeting will be December 7th from 10am -12md.
Leonie Dale RN & Massage Therapist will be our guest speaker
Tea & Coffee will be provided.

For enquiries regarding any of our support groups please don't hesitate to call our office on 47 824866.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Annual General Meeting – 8th October 2007

At our AGM this year the following members were elected :

1. Maggie Deahm – Vice President.
2. Geoff Luscombe – Fund Raising co-ordinator (shared position).
3. Bob Reid - Fund Raising co-ordinator (shared position).
4. Janine Shoemark – Committee member.
5. Kevin Stapleton – Secretary, Op-Shop & Volunteers Co-ordinator.
6. Sarah Whearat – Committee member.
7. Robyn Yates –President (Founder/Director)
8. Bob Yates - Treasurer

Welcome to all new Committee Members. We look forward to another busy & productive year.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING DAY

Another successful Training Day was held at Santa Maria Centre on Saturday 18th August. Fifteen volunteers learnt about the philosophy of Blue Mountains Cancer Help & the Bloomhill model.

Participants were able to experience two of our therapies first hand with the a session on Music Therapy by Sam Schoeler - Jones & later some Reiki from Rosemary Schofield. The afternoon took us to a session on Loss & Grief facilitated by Bicky MacIntyre & Clare McHalick. Kevin spoke about the Op-Shop policies including Occupational Health & Safety issues. Sarah Whearat RN then gave instruction on First Aid & Emergency procedures.

At the completion of the training day the Committee joined the Volunteers for a lovely vegetarian meal at which the new volunteers were welcomed & certificates presented.

A BIG THANK YOU TO :

Cup Cake - Wentworth Falls
The Hominy Bakery - Katoomba
Pens Plus - Katoomba

For your support of our Volunteer Training Day

Our next Volunteer Training Day will be in March 2008



Volunteers at the Training Day

AN INVITATION

Poem by Rowen Boyd

Have you a few hours in the week to spend just helping out to give others all the aid they just can't do without?
We have a place that needs you, your contacts and your time where the smiles and talk with visitors should make the day sublime.
We have a lovely Op-Shop which funds the health and care of cancer survivors who live around, about or simply near.
To give the aid that our clients need, the help surely must be to share the burden and the fun of helping us for free.
Our shop is warm and full of sun, its doors they open wide to love, laughter; hope and faith, come to join us inside.
Please think about what I've had to say and take this to your friends and see if you can find some time to help us meet our ends.

More Volunteers are always needed.

Make it a New Years resolution & join our team, just call in to the Op-Shop & pick up your application form!



Op-Shop Corner

Op-Shop sales have increased by 45% for July, August & September compared to the corresponding period last year 2006. This is due to the constant & generous community donations, the commitment of all our volunteers & the hard work & dedication of Libby, Neil, Kerry & Jean.

A BIG BIG THANK YOU TO YOU ALL !



BLUE MOUNTAINS CANCER HELP

is a locally based organisation established to provide support for local residents who have been diagnosed with cancer, funded through our Op-Shop, fund-raising, bequests and donations. Services provided include:

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Massage, Reflexology, Reiki, Art & Music Therapy, Meditation and Counselling

SUPPORT GROUPS

held on a regular basis for clients and their carers, each group is facilitated by a trained counsellor and a registered nurse.

BUDDY SYSTEM

a special volunteer assigned to a particular individual or family.

ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORT

for medical appointments as required in conjunction with Great Community Transport.

OP-SHOP

Visit or donate to our Op-Shop at Unit 2/27 Whitton Street, Katoomba
Mon-Fri 10am-4pm & Sat 10am-2pm

MORE VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!
Volunteer Training provided.



CONTACT

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