



# Breast Cancer Support Inc.

Newsletter

July 2010

## Report from the Chair, Marie Goudge



### Chairperson's Report for BCS AGM, 28 June 2010

I write this report with a sense of excitement – excitement because of the projects completed during the past year and excitement about the future direction of BCS. For me the 2009/2010 year has been the most satisfying one of the eight years I have been on the committee. I am aware that the BCS of today exists because of the dreams of its founders, the vision of past members and the conscientious hard work of previous committees and group leaders. We can rejoice with them that some of their goals have been fulfilled.

Always the focus must be on the women diagnosed with breast cancer and their families. BCS exists to offer them emotional support, encouragement and hope. The challenge for BCS is to determine the appropriate forums of support that will meet the needs of a wide variety of women in a rapidly changing society. That's scary but exciting!

The committee for the past year has been: Marie Goudge (Chairperson), Joan Kerr (Deputy Chairperson), Rosemary Geard (Secretary), Jennifer Woodroffe (Treasurer), Deirdre Parr, Mary Forbes and Liz Hunt. Jane Bissell, as Support Services Co-ordinator, but not a committee member, has been part of that working team. Unfortunately for most of the year both Joan and Liz, for personal reasons, were not able to fully contribute to the work of the committee. Sadly neither is available for re election for the 2010/2011 year.

My sincere thanks go to all of the above women. They have been prepared to make bold decisions and tackle the extra work that followed. I have been conscious of their dedication to the goals of the society and their continual support of each other. They have been a joy to work with. In particular I want to recognize the long service of Jennifer Woodroffe, our treasurer. She has given confidence to the committee as it has faced the financial challenges of a growing society. My special personal thanks too, go to Joan Kerr. Since joining this committee six years ago Joan has often been the one I have mulled things over with and bounced ideas off. She has been a Deputy Chair of quality.

### Membership

BCS had a membership of 141 at the end of the financial year, March 2010. Traditionally subscriptions dribble in throughout the year. I sense that sometimes membership of the society is confused with membership of a support group. It is not a requisite of BCS to be a financial member to attend the Breast Friends groups. BCS has always offered a free service to women accessing support. However, BCS is grateful that some women choose to be financial members as well as participants of the groups. As the services are extended the costs expand and financial restraints are always a factor in what our organization can offer. Perhaps BCS should consider a deliberate membership drive in 2010/2011.

### Grants and Donations

Breast Cancer Support has been very fortunate to receive substantial grants from the J.R. McKenzie Trust, NZ Lottery Grants Board and Community Organization Grants Scheme.

**Breast Cancer Support Inc.**  
PO Box 10150  
Dominion Rd  
Auckland 1446

**Web: [www.breastcancersupport.co.nz](http://www.breastcancersupport.co.nz)**

**Email: [info@breastcancersupport.co.nz](mailto:info@breastcancersupport.co.nz)**

**Phone: 0800 BreaCanSupport (0800 273 222)**

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- *To become a Member of BCS, or to make a donation to support our activities, please complete the form in this newsletter and post to us.*
- *For information about our support services, please contact us on 0800BreaCanSupport (0800 273 222) or visit our website and complete the Contact Us online enquiry form.*

*"Statistics of attendance have been kept since October 2009. 293 women are associated with the groups, the average monthly attendance at each group is 15 and since October, 51 new women have linked up for support."*



*"Women from the Breast Friends groups were invited to be photographed. Twenty five volunteered. Now BCS has a resource of photos of real breast cancer survivors!"*



Details of these appear in the financial report. BCS gratefully acknowledges all donations. Special thanks go to Zonta Auckland West for their fund raising dinner, Doris Tiley and Cheryl Christine for funds from a Garden Party/ Fashion Parade and Pat Donovan for proceeds from her book of poems.

#### **Support Services Co-ordinator**

In May 2009 BCS contracted Jane Bissell to do some administrative and co-ordinating work. It had become clear that achieving the goals that BCS was setting would be far beyond the scope of what could be reasonably expected of a fully voluntary workforce. Volunteers do not have the time or necessarily the skills to implement the visions of the society. Appointing Jane to work alongside the committee has been a brilliant move. Her administrative skills, her contacts, her maintenance and building of the website and her knowledge of things "breast cancer" are proving invaluable.

#### **Breast Friends Groups**

There has been a trend this year to have more team leadership where the duties of the coordinator are divided between several women. In groups with this new arrangement it seems to be working well and is of course lightening the load of the sole coordinator. Statistics of attendance have been kept since October 2009 (thank you coordinators). 293 women are associated with the groups, the average monthly attendance at each group is 15 and since October, 51 new women have linked up for support. Each group has a page on the BCS website and activities, often with photos, are reported. Those visiting the site must feel encouraged when they see women responding so positively.

#### **One to One Contacts**

Much of this support is given on an informal basis. It is very difficult to keep an accurate record. However, a new source of request is coming through the 0800 number. It is too soon to judge if this will develop into a frequently used service.

#### **Newsletter**

The quarterly newsletter has a new look about it – thank you Jane. It is distributed quarterly. This is an informal newsletter designed to keep the readers informed about what BCS is doing. It has a "people" emphasis. There is usually a personal story in its pages and reports from the Breast Friends. Back dated editions can be found on the website.

#### **The Website: [www.breastcancersupport.co.nz](http://www.breastcancersupport.co.nz)**

The BCS website is one year old. In June 2009 the site received 191 visits but in May 2010 there were 756 visits, 645 new visits and 111 return visits. Obviously the site is getting known and BCS is reaching out to people beyond the Auckland area. As always the emphasis is on offering friendly support through real people sharing personal experiences. We aim to keep the website vital, interesting, informative and relevant through regularly introducing new material. BCS encourages participation from its members. It is important that our website reflects the heart of our organization.

#### **Photo Shoot**

BCS has always struggled to get suitable publicity photos so it was decided to ask Marie Richards of No Limits Photography to take a series of photos for BCS to have on hand as a photo bank. Women from the Breast Friends groups were invited to be photographed. Twenty five volunteered. Now BCS has a resource of photos of real breast cancer survivors!

#### **The Brochure and Business Cards**

With quality photos available the production of the brochure was much easier. Thank you to Red Apple Design Ltd for designing the brochure and the much needed business cards. Jane Bissell's writing skill and Deirdre Parr's eye for detail has been invaluable. All the committee contributed many hours to the production of a brochure of which BCS is proud. Distribution has begun and the response from the recipients very positive.



**Workshop Training Programmes**

BCS has run two training workshops since the last AGM. One was in September and designed for the Coordinators. The other was in May and included the One to One support women.

The focus of the first programme was on the role of the groups within the BCS organization and the support that was available from the Central Committee. The second concentrated on reflective listening and basic skills needed for supporting women who may be reacting to their diagnosis of breast cancer in vastly different ways. It is clear that programmes like this are necessary and appreciated.

**End of year Function**

In December the BCS committee invited all the women associated with the Breast Friends to the annual end of year function held at Domain Lodge. Eighty women came to meet each other, laugh a little and enjoy Mr. Mystery, the magical entertainer’s magic programme. This social event is proving popular with the numbers increasing each year.

**The future**

For the immediate future BCS hopes to build upon present initiatives and enhance the existing services. The distribution of the brochure is a priority as is the growth of the website. Attention will be given to providing suitable support for young women – possibly through a facility on the website. BCS will continue to foster good relationships with other breast cancer organizations both in Auckland and in other parts of the country.

As always, the needs of women diagnosed with breast cancer will be the central focus of any future plans for Breast Cancer Support Inc.

**Marie Goudge, Chairperson Breast Cancer Support  
June 2010**

**Supporting BCS ...**

***BCS gratefully acknowledges the support of our members and donors and wishes to thank the JR McKenzie Trust, NZ Lotteries Commission, COGS and Zonta for their donations towards our work in 2010.***

***Would you like to become a member of Breast Cancer Support or make a donation? Please complete this form below and post back to us at Breast Cancer Support, PO Box 10150, Dominion Rd, Auckland 1446, or call us on 0800BreaCanSupport (0800 273 222) for more information. Thank you!***

Name .....

Phone (0 )..... Mob .....

Email ..... Address .....

.....

My membership/donation is enclosed:  Individual membership (\$20)  Group (\$30)

Unwaged (\$15)  Joint (\$30) I enclose a donation of \$.....

I am a breast cancer survivor  I would like to volunteer - please contact me

Please contact us for further information on 0800 BreaCanSupport (0800 273 222) or email us on info@breastcancersupport.co.nz.

***Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.***

*“BCS has run two training workshops since the last AGM. One was in September and designed for the Coordinators. The other was in May and included the One to One support women.”*

*(Pictured is guest presenter Misha Crosbie).*



*Would you like to become a Member of Breast Cancer Support, or make a donation to help us in our work? Please complete the form at left, or call us on 0800 273 222 for more information.*



## Breast Friends - News from our Support Groups

### Central

At the March meeting ladies enjoyed a presentation by our guest from the film archives who showed footage from silent films made near the turn of the last century up until the sixties. There was a real cross section of life and living across the years.

In April the group was treated to an inspirational talk by Glen, an adventurer extraordinaire! When Glen was diagnosed with breast cancer she took it as another challenge in a life full of adventures. Glen worked on Raoul Island for 4 months and also serves as a volunteer for Search and Rescue. Volunteers are on standby 24/7 and are sometimes lowered by rope and harness into search areas by helicopter. She has visited Macquarie Island and the Antarctic and brought her photo albums for us to look at.

At the May meeting we were delighted to have Lois Busch from Colours as our guest speaker, assisted by her friend Moyra. Lois demonstrated how different colours and styles suit different people. She also brought along some of her clothes and showed us colour combinations that many of us would never have considered and also how changing the colours of the tops or adding a scarf or jewellery can change the entire look of an outfit. In June we celebrated Helen's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. She had made a delicious carrot and pineapple cake for us. Everyone brought a recipe for cheap, easy to make finger food. These went into the hat, everyone drew one out and will create their selection for our July meeting.

*Central welcomed Lois Busch from 'Colours' in May.*



### Hibiscus Coast

In March to celebrate St Patrick's Day everybody wore something green, the most interesting items being an Irish football shirt, an extremely elegant green mask with a peacock feather on top, and the general favourite, a huge green "Mad Hatter" style hat which had been bought in Ireland. We discussed issues of concern to the group and most felt there was not enough information available about the prosthesis and bra subsidy. Two ladies present had been unaware of the subsidy until joining the group. From there the discussion moved to hospital experiences and new treatments available.

Our group had a wonderful meeting in April when Louise Stevens conducted a Laughter Yoga session. We started the meeting with a surprise birthday cake to Dianne, our co-convenor. After we had all enjoyed a slice, Louise gave us a brief explanation of the founding and purpose of Laughter Yoga, then we worked off the cake calories with a session of laughing!

We welcomed Marie Goudge to our May meeting. Marie showed us the new BCS brochures and then guest speaker Tamarin Pigneguy gave a fascinating talk about Chinese medicine, covering the fundamental principles very succinctly. Her demonstration of how the body's blood (carefully measured water with a realistic colouring of cochineal) copes with the input of a can of fizzy drink was very thought-provoking, and will hopefully help us all to reduce our sugar intake.

In June we had our mid-winter Christmas luncheon at the Warkworth Golf Club. After a photo session outside on the deck with the stunning club grounds as a background, and a free-spending raid on the club's trading table, most of the group found a sunny corner of the clubrooms for a general group get together.

*Hibiscus Coast Members 'laughed it up' in April and were 'out to lunch' in June.*



### North Shore

March saw a welcome to new members and a half hour session of Pink Pilates with Megan Clarke. It was great to experience this form of exercise. The stretches and breathing are gentle and one only does as much as one can. This is a great form of exercise for "rebuilding" after breast cancer. Everyone felt stimulated but relaxed after the session.

Our group alternates a formal meeting and speaker at the Senior Citizens' Clubrooms in Takapuna one month followed by a social gathering at a restaurant or someone's home the next. In April we gathered at Jocelyn's home in Devonport for our first social meeting of the year. We are never short of entertainment at our gatherings! Jocelyn played her harp beautifully not to mention her piano and ukulele skills which had us singing along as she played some old favourites. We also told tales of what we were doing



*Visit the website [www.pinkpilates.co.nz](http://www.pinkpilates.co.nz) for more information.*

## Breast Friends - News from our Support Groups

at age 25 and the group offered a range of wonderful stories. In May, Janice Wood, Breast Care Specialist Nurse at North Shore Hospital, and Jan McMullen, Oncology Specialist Nurse at Auckland Hospital, described for us their roles within the continuum of our treatment and then, best of all, were happy to answer the variety of questions that members had. It was a most informative session for our group.

It is hard to imagine that we are already half way through 2010. Time passes so quickly as we get older, so we must enjoy everything. It can be largely our own attitude to life that determines whether we are miserable or happy. Of course, we all have our own huge burdens to bear and battles to fight at times, but let's snatch the good times when we can – and we did, enjoying our mid-winter lunch at McHugh's in Devonport. Beautiful day and location, top class food and best of all was the company of the other BCS members.

### Pakuranga East Auckland

In March the East Auckland group met for another popular craft evening run by our own Rhyanne who has a 'natural' ability for craft and has shown us how to make pictures or other novelty items. Always a successful evening with lots of fun and laughs – and glue!

Our April get together was a 'Bits and Pieces' meeting. There were a lot of administrative issues the co-ordinator needed to go through so it was decided by some in the group to have this type of planning meeting. But it wasn't all business! We shared what we were doing at age 21! This brought a lot of enjoyment and it was interesting to see what other cultures do to celebrate their coming of age.

Laughter Yoga came out East in May, giving us a really fun night. Our ladies had previously asked at the beginning of the year if we could have a breast care nurse to one of our meetings. So for our June meeting Denise Flett, breast care nurse, came along and gave us a very interesting talk on various aspects of breast cancer diagnosis, treatments, thermo-mammography and a lot of information about lymphoedema and the newer treatments.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the talk and Denise gave time afterwards to answer queries from people too.

19 ladies attended (a record for us!), including Marie Goudge and Mary Forbes as representatives of the BCS Committee. We welcomed two new members.

There was a lot of talking over supper and we were very lucky to have our group 'Photograph Album' brought along. Member Rhyanne takes great pride in doing this for us. It is a fantastic album and everyone had a chance to look through and see themselves from a few years ago!

### West Auckland

Joan from Look Good Feel Better was our March guest speaker and in April the group met for an evening with a difference - an auction to raise money for the maintenance of the BCS website. The women were extremely generous with the goods they brought to be auctioned and equally generous with their bidding: handmade sewing and crafts, homemade baking and a selection of miscellaneous items including a set of silver goblets and bottles of wine. When all the laughter had died down the women had raised \$250.00!

In May, twenty one women attended the Breast Friends meeting in the West, welcoming four new women. Our numbers are growing with over fifty on the contact list. Trish Spencer from "Anita, Unique Body Wear" showed us a lovely range of attractive and yet practical bras and prostheses and a range of specially designed bathing suits.

Our June meeting was a lively one with women telling funny stories and sharing amusing experiences. Our guest was Linda White from Look Good Feel Better who spoke about skin care and applying makeup for women who have been diagnosed with cancer. Linda chose one of the women to be the lucky recipient of the beauty treatment for the night!

*Would you like to join a Support Group? Phone us on 0800 273 222 for information about a group in your area, nationwide.*



*East gets a bit crafty in March.*



*An auctioneer 'all in pink' raised \$250 for BCS out West in April .....*



*and Trish from Anita Body Wear came along in May.*



## Breast Friends - News from our Support Groups

### Auckland South

We had a hilarious evening of Laughter Yoga in March with Noel and Gavin. It was great to see our ladies enjoying a good laugh and learning about the benefits of laughter. After an hour of laughter yoga, you feel as if you have had a hard workout at the gym but with more fun and merriment. Thank you to Noel and Gavin for introducing us to this. Our April meeting fell during the school holidays so we had a small number attending. This gave us the opportunity to have a summit meeting and discuss future speakers and social activities which had a very productive outcome. In May we welcomed speakers Joe and Shirley, from the Papakura Genealogy Group. They spoke to us about tracing your family history and how to go about it. At our June meeting we had a wine appreciation night where we learned about wine, the regions it comes from, the colour, smell and taste. Husbands and partners joined us so it was a wonderful evening together.



*Marie Goudge stepped down this AGM after six years as Chair of BCS.*

### The Breast Cancer Support AGM, 28 June 2010

The BCS AGM held on 28 June recognised not only the accomplishments of the Society over the last year but also marked the resignation of Marie Goudge as Chair after a six year tenure. Marie has seen much progress during a total of eight years of governance as both a Committee Member and Chair.

"The last six years in my role as Chair have been full of challenges and huge learning curves," said Marie, paying special tributes to Treasurer Jennifer Woodroffe, also a long-serving Committee Member, the BCS Committee and Volunteers, Support Coordinator Jane Bissell, the Cancer Society and the sister breast cancer organisations who have supported and worked with BCS during her time as Chair. A special thank you was reserved for husband Stan, who "... has taken messages, talked to callers, had dinner early and late and has taught me some valuable computer skills ..."

Marie was presented with tokens of appreciation and many words of praise and 'thank you' for her tireless dedication and commitment to BCS. The new Committee was elected with Deirdre Parr taking up the role of Chair. Jennifer remains as Treasurer and Rosemary Geard as Secretary. Marie agreed to sit on the Committee for the coming year and will be Acting Chair for the next six weeks while Deirdre is overseas. Mary Forbes was re-elected to the Committee and Misha Crosbie is new to the team for 2010-11.

The guest speaker for the evening was Misha Crosbie. Misha is a "two-time survivor of breast cancer" and counsellor who teaches counselling skills at an Auckland tertiary institution. Misha's talk was entitled 'Breast cancer does not have to be our future' and focussed on the initiative of Dr Susan Love, *The Army of Women* ([www.armyofwomen.org](http://www.armyofwomen.org)), launched in the US in 2008. Dr Love's project supports research to find a medical prevention for breast cancer—a vaccine or similar treatment that can be given to young girls so they will never encounter breast cancer in their lifetimes. Her goal is to recruit one million women of all ages and ethnicities to directly participate in research and so challenge the scientific community to find a medical prevention for breast cancer. Women join the *Army* and receive emailed updates inviting their participation in trials and research programmes for which they feel they may be qualified. "This generation – those of us currently involved in the project, irrespective of age – are the ones who can encourage women to sign up from all over the world for the research. I made a decision to take every opportunity that comes my way, give it a go – who knows what will come from that?"



*AGM guest speaker Misha Crosbie: "It's important to let women know what's out there."*

*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Breast Cancer Support Inc.*