



Breast Cancer Support Inc.

Newsletter

June 2009

Report from the Chair, Marie Goudge



As I commence writing this report I am mindful of the courage and strength shown by women I have met through Breast Cancer Support over the years. Many have come to receive support and stayed to give support. This is the nature of our organization – those who have been there, smoothing the way for those who follow.

The past year, the third since Breast Cancer Support became an Incorporated Society, has been a year of planning and growth. The purpose of BCS is to offer support for those affected by breast cancer. Our predecessors of the 1970's had this vision and successive committees have endorsed it.

The question is, and has always been, "How, Where and What?" BCS has to be mindful that the manner of support offered is what is needed today. That is the challenge that the committee has grappled with in the past year.

The members of that committee have been: Marie Goudge (Chairperson), Joan Kerr (Deputy Chairperson), Joan Parker (Secretary), Jennifer Woodroffe (Treasurer), Carol Scott-Dye, Karen Kranz, Sarah Tantrum and Sue Drower (co-opted onto committee in November).

Unfortunately Carol, Karen and Sarah, one by one, became unable to complete their full year of service.

I would like to express my appreciation to Carol for spearheading the groundwork for the BCS website, to Karen for her considerable contribution to the Strategic Plan and to Sarah for editing the quarterly newsletter.

To the other members of the committee I give my most sincere thanks – to Joan Parker for excellent records and wise counsel, to Jennifer Woodroffe for clear accounts and loyalty to BCS, to Joan Kerr and Deirdre Parr for pastoral care and creative ideas and Sue Drower for common sense and an eye for a job needing to be done. Ladies, it has been a pleasure to be your Chair.

Joan Parker (10 years help with the BCS newsletter) and Sue Drower are not available for re-election in 2009/2010. BCS wishes them all a happy healthy future.

Membership

The number of paid up members at the end of the financial year was 120. It is important that the membership of BCS increases, not only for the financial advantage but because publicity by word of mouth is the best publicity. It is important to note that financial membership is not a requirement for attending the support groups.

One to One contacts

There has been a steady trickle of enquiries for one to one support. 27 contacts have been recorded but I am very aware that many more informal meetings have taken place.

Breast Friends Support Groups

I am delighted with the positivity and the increased vitality in the Breast Friends Groups. The average numbers attending have increased, especially in the Central and North Shore groups. Thank you to Jane Bissell and Carol Scott-Dye for their years of leadership on the

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- To become a Member of BCS, or to make a donation to support our activities, please complete the application form on the back of this newsletter and post to us.
- For information about our support services, please contact us by phone : Marie (09) 835 1890 or Jane (09) 428 3385, or visit our website and complete the Contact Us online enquiry form.

Hibiscus Coast and North Shore. You led you groups with sincerity and skill. The women thank you and so does BCS. On the Hibiscus Coast Barbara McLean and Dianne Murray have taken over the leadership and on the Shore Geraldine Stayte, Cathy Sandy, Mary Anne Abplanalp and Jenny Short are sharing the responsibility. Christine Rule, (Central) Marie Gouge, (West Auckland) Jennifer Woodroofe (Pakuranga) and Annette Coutts and Jill Mellow (Auckland South) are the coordinators of the other groups. The support groups are the core business of BCS and I praise the very fine leadership that the coordinators give. They display dedication, sensitivity, patience and empathy. They are indeed BCS's "Best, Breast Friends."

Newsletter

The newsletter has been distributed quarterly. Thanks are due to "Becca Engineers Planners" for photocopying each edition. Included in the publication are reports about the groups, personal stories, reports and helpful hints. It is meant to keep our members up to date with the work of Breast Cancer Support and inform them about any special events affecting BCS. It is not filled with medical reports or scientific research. The articles are intended to encourage and promote hope. Through sharing we can become stronger.

Printed Card for BCS

BCS now has a printed card. Printed on the front is the Logo and, "From Breast Cancer Support" while the postal and website addresses are on the back. This card is a multipurpose card and is proving very useful.

Website

Much of the committee's energy this year has gone to getting a website up and running. More and more we, as a society are turning to the internet for information. To keep faith with the women we aim to support it is clear that BCS must offer a website as part of its support package. A comprehensive survey asking what women and their supporters would find helpful on the site, was sent to all BCS members and women in the support groups. Three designers were approached to submit quotations for setting up the site. The committee chose to give the work to Zeald. Jane Bissell was contracted to help with the writing of material and also for the ongoing maintenance of the site. Because professional skills are needed for this work it will be an ongoing cost to BCS. The address is:

www.breastcancersupport.co.nz

End of Year Function

For some time there had been a feeling that the women attending the groups would like to meet with the women of the other groups. On 1st December the committee invited all the women to a social function at Domain Lodge. Robyn Gouge, a singer and harpist, was asked to entertain and a special supper was served. Over thirty women attended and declared it to be a very enjoyable occasion. Several suggested it should become an annual event. Thank you to the Cancer Society for making Domain lodge available for this function and for other meetings throughout the year.

Fund Raising Dinner and Fashion Parade

"Cheryl Christine" Designer Clothing in conjunction with the "Old Flame Restaurant" from Conifer Grove in Papakura arranged two fund raising ventures for BCS -the first on the 30th June 2008 and the second on 28th February 2009.

The functions took the form of a smorgasbord meal, a parade of garments designed by Cheryl Christine (models included women from the Papakura Breast Friends) and a lively auction of donated goods. Adelaide Tucker conducted the Charity auction and on the second occasion Gray Bartlett, the renowned guitarist entertained. Proceeds for BCS totalled over \$4,500. We are extremely grateful for this generous gesture from the business people of Conifer Grove.

Play, "Jonna's Body, please hold"

Jonna Tamases is a professional actress from USA married to a NZ'er. She has had three cancers including breast cancer and has written a funny but uplifting play based on her ex-



Pakuranga group coordinator
Jennifer Woodroofe

"Much of the committee's energy this year has gone into getting a website up and running."



Jonna Tamases



periences. When I received her email in which she offered to perform her one woman play for BCS the committee took a deep breath and decided to support the venture.

"Pilgrim Productions" an Auckland Theatre group agreed to make their acting space, lighting etc. available, the Parish of the Central Methodist Church waved charges for their building and the CityLife Hotel sponsored accommodation for Jonna and her husband. On 22nd May, ninety people were treated to an extremely fine piece of theatre. Out of the pain of her cancers Jonna had extracted a comical, encouraging, hopeful message. \$800 was raised from the Koha for BCS.

The Future

It has become clear that the future challenge for BCS is to provide the services that are relevant for a changing modern society. This task has become almost impossible for a fully voluntary organization. To find a committee with the appropriate skills and sufficient time to fulfil these demands is extremely difficult. To this end the committee has contracted Jane Bissell to work for BCS for a maximum of 8 hours a week for 6 months. Jane's tasks include: administration, maintaining the website, preparing a brochure, developing links with breast cancer support groups throughout the country, liaising with other breast cancer organizations, researching the best way to support younger women and women from all cultures and applying for funding to support her own position. Jane will work closely with the Chairperson and report to the committee monthly. This is a bold step by the committee but I believe a sound one.

Breast Cancer Support looks back on a proud history of service. Our predecessors did well. I am confident that the Breast Cancer Support of 2009/2010 and beyond will also give valuable support, encouragement and hope to those diagnosed with breast cancer.

Marie Goudge, Chairperson BCS Inc. June 2009

BCS Fundraiser 'Jonna's Body, Please Hold!'

The Auckland Methodist Central Parish, Pilgrim Productions, CityLife Hotel and BCS joined together to present a wonderful evening of entertainment with visiting Los Angeles-based actress Jonna Tamases and her award-winning one-woman show "Jonna's Body, Please Hold!" On Friday 22 June, 90 people gathered at the Theatre Pitt to enjoy the show. Jonna performed in Auckland courtesy of the aforementioned sponsors and helped raise over \$800 for BCS.

"Jonna's Body, Please Hold" offers an original, often hilarious but poignant, tender look into Ms Tamases' own battle with cancer, a performance that uplifts, inspires and challenges despair with Jonna's own contagious zest for life.

Jonna gives us a glimpse into the hectic day to day world of her body, complete with Baby Toe (who is squeezed into a too-tight shoe), Upper Back who threatens to go on strike if she doesn't rest up a little and those irrepressible twins Uta and Ula, breasts begging to be released from the torment of a restricting bra. A busy receptionist sits at a switchboard, fielding calls from these irate tenants, dishing out as much comfort and advice as she can while her boss, Ms Jonna, carries on with life, somewhat oblivious and neglectful of the goings-on inside her body ... that is until two unwanted tenants move in - the charming French Madame Venice and the tough 'old goat' Walter - two cancerous personalities determined to set up housekeeping and wreak their havoc..

With courage, honesty, and humour Jonna takes us inside her battle with cancer. We are with her every step of the way as she is diagnosed, more than once, endures tests, scans, biopsies and multiple rounds of chemotherapy and then we are there as her ravaged body begins to recover from the trauma of the disease. The body parts report in as they fight the battle and struggle to recover and restore her to health. Jonna's performance moved, inspired and delighted the audience - a truly talented actress with a brave, courageous and moving story to tell.



Jane Bissell

"With courage, honesty and humour, Jonna takes us inside her battle with cancer."



Jonna as Walter, the invading tumour. Visit her website at www.jonnasbody.com for more information.

Breast Friends - News from our Support Groups

South Auckland

At the March meeting Ashleigh West from Bella Vista beauty Spa demonstrated her products and techniques. Raylene won the draw to have a facial and we all went home with lovely gift bags.

In April, Marlene spoke about her trip to Italy, Croatia and Montenegro, making the ladies very envious. She certainly has the travel bug. The pictures were amazing.

At the May meeting Christine Hawke talked to us about the Eastern Bays Hospice in St Heliers. It is a day hospice. Christine showed us a video of their services and explained how this is run by volunteer support.

In June Luellen, one of our group, is holding a Lorraine Lea Linen Party, a fun fund raising night for the group.

North Shore

The May meeting saw fifteen ladies at our new venue. The guest speaker was Lesley Sanderson, a dietician, who was excellent. There was plenty of chat over a cuppa as we gathered.

In June we had a great Mid-winter Pink Christmas Luncheon at McHughs, right on Cheltenham Beach. Unfortunately quite a number of women couldn't join us during the day for this but we were trying to cater for others who are reluctant to go out at night. It is working well having our monthly meetings alternate between having a speaker one month and having a meal together the next.

Central Auckland

As our April meeting was on Easter Monday it was difficult to decide whether to cancel the meeting but we decided to hold it for those who were able to come. We had five ladies, lots of laughter, chat about topics as varied as cancer treatment, fishing and make-up. We also had those Easter treats that we allow ourselves on rare occasions.

It was a great May meeting with seventeen ladies attending. We were pleased to welcome several from the North Shore group as well as some new ladies. Claire Doole, who is very knowledgeable about Lymphoedema, was our guest speaker and also answered questions. A sixtieth birthday was celebrated and cake enjoyed by all.

In June we had a great meeting with thirteen ladies, including one from Whangarei who was staying at Domain Lodge while having treatment. Isobel Innes demonstrated the art of floral arrangements without the need to buy expensive flowers. She showed a variety of styles making great use of different leaves and greenery as well as some beautiful posies. Our sharing time covered a range of topics.

West Auckland

In March eleven ladies came to listen to Mohinda Anand talk about diet, simple exercise, Yoga and laughter. It was very interesting and a lot of fun doing the laughing part. We had one new lady come. A cuppa and a chat finished the evening.

Thirteen women met in April to hear Mary Forbes speak about the Public Library Service. The libraries offer a wide range of services as well as book lending – computer access and training, services to those who are ill or restricted in mobility, and excellent children's books and holiday programmes.

In May nineteen women, including two new ladies, gathered to hear Janene Cooper speak about nutrition. Janene stressed moderation in all facets of our eating and living. She drew our attention to the ten points recommended by the World Cancer Research Fund. The women were given a list of healthy eating choices. An interesting discussion followed about those who had allergies to certain foods and had to arrange their diet around those limitations.

Hibiscus Coast

In March thirteen ladies attended together with Lyn Meurant and our guest speaker, Fiona



Some of the Ladies enjoying a mid-winter lunch at McHughs on Cheltenham Beach.

"We had five ladies, lots of laughter, chat about topics as varied as cancer treatment, fishing and make-up."

Breast Friends - News from our Support Groups

Dalziel, the daughter of one of our ladies and a trained physiotherapist. She has recently begun offering Pink Pilates to women with breast cancer. Fiona explained how the Pink Pilates Trust came about and her involvement and a little bit about what happens when she treats a patient with Pink Pilates. The women were fascinated when she got on to the subject of correct breathing and a lively discussion followed.

Ten ladies attended the April meeting even though it was just after Easter and in the midst of school holidays. We had a general catch up and discussed venues for our mid-winter luncheon in June. Most ladies had to get home to prepare lunch for grandchildren.

In June we had our Mid-winter luncheon at The Lakes golf club. It was a pleasant venue, with good food and excellent service. There were twenty-two ladies, including one new one. It was good to have Jane Bissell join us to catch up with everyone and take some photos for the BCS website.

Pakuranga

For our March meeting eleven ladies attended, including one new one. A Member of the group, Rhyanne, demonstrated and then helped each one to make a canvass picture out of serviettes. What a great evening was had by all!

In April our guest speaker was Marietta from the Highland Park library. Marietta gave a very interesting talk on the services offered by the Manukau libraries and mentioned that there will be free computer classes beginning soon. Ten ladies were present including one new member along to have a look.

Other news ...

Breast Cancer Support Annual General Meeting

Over 40 people attended the BCS AGM at Domain Lodge on Monday 22 June. Marie Goudge's Annual Chairperson's Report mentioned many of the organisation's accomplishments over the last 12 months. She spoke highly of the wonderful work the Breast Friends Groups are doing for our women in the community. Attendance at all groups is very healthy and growing, particularly in the North Shore and Central groups. Marie indicated a bright future for BCS with the introduction of the new website (www.breastcancersupport.co.nz) and the employment of Jane Bissell to assist with expansion and development of services both in Auckland and nationwide. 'We look towards a positive future,' said Marie, 'giving valuable support, encouragement and hope to those diagnosed with breast cancer.' BCS's new committee was voted in with Marie returning as Chair and Jennifer Woodrooffe as Treasurer. Deirdre Parr and Joan Kerr were re-elected to the committee. Rosemary Geard was elected to the position of Secretary and Mary Forbes and Liz Hunt join as committee members. BCS offers it's thanks to Joan Parker for her excellent work as outgoing Secretary and to Sue Drower.

Unfortunately Dr. Marli Gregory was unable to speak at the meeting due to illness and we were grateful to Lynne Walker for agreeing to step in at the last minute. Lynne is a qualified reiki teacher and practitioner and she gave a fascinating talk about reiki—its origins and practice and the health benefits this particular therapy is offering. Lynne invited seven of her reiki colleagues to come along and offer a brief reiki session to our AGM guests. Many of those attending participated and all enjoyed this special treat. Lynne would like to see reiki more widely practiced and offered within our communities. She is a Service Provider for Sweet Louise, a qualified YWCA Encore programme facilitator and teaches reiki.

The new BCS website

Good things are worth the wait and the new BCS website is certainly living up to expectations! Do visit and let us know what you think—www.breastcancersupport.co.nz. More features planned for the site, so watch this space! We welcome contributions too.



Two of the Hibiscus Coast Breast Friends enjoying their mid-winter lunch at The Lakes Golf Club.

"We look towards a positive future," said Marie, 'giving valuable support, encouragement and hope to those diagnosed with breast cancer."



The new BCS committee, L to R Marie Goudge, Liz Hunt, Deirdre Parr, Mary Forbes, Rosemary Geard, Jennifer Woodrooffe

