



Breast Cancer Support Inc.

Newsletter

July 2011

The Annual Report from the Chair



This report was delivered by Chair Deirdre Parr at the BCS AGM, 20 June 2011

It has been an exciting year, full of potential realised and opportunities offered, as BCS has stretched its wings and explored ways and means of extending its services to meet the developing needs of women who have experienced a breast cancer diagnosis. As I have begun to feel my way as Chair of this exceptional organisation, I have frequently been humbled by the goodwill, generosity and vision of both the women who make up the BCS, and the many ordinary people in the community who have given their support to it in the past year.

It has been my privilege over the past 12 months to work with the five talented and committed women who have made up the committee, and my sincere thanks goes to them all. I have been wonderfully guided and supported by my Deputy Chair, Marie Goudge, who stepped down as Chair after eight years at the last AGM, only to have to continue in the role for another two months while I travelled overseas. I am enormously grateful to our Treasurer, Jennifer Woodroffe, whose role has 'grown like Topsy' as we have sought and obtained funding towards operational costs and special projects, with a corresponding increase in the financial accountability required. She works tirelessly for BCS, not only as Treasurer, but also as a co-ordinator of the Pakuranga Breast Friends, and in addition she takes care of all our printing needs. Our secretary, Rosemary Geard, has proved to have an invaluable eye for detail, both in committee meetings, and in formatting our new BCS Handbook and recent training workshop book. Rosemary has also been a voice for younger women on committee. Mary Forbes has quietly and effectively fulfilled the role of Breast Friends Group Liaison, and I know that the group co-ordinators will have appreciated the efficiency with which she has kept them in touch with committee decisions and information that affects them. And Misha Crosbie has been a voice of wisdom and encouragement to us all, and has generously added her professional expertise and vision to our projects and our recent training day.

It is with great regret that I have received the resignations of Marie, Rosemary and Mary for the coming year. Thank you, each of you, for your commitment and your contribution during your years on the committee: we shall miss you, and I wish all well in the future.

The committee has been ably supported and advised by our Support Services Co-ordinator, Jane Bissell. Without her, BCS would be a less professional and very different organisation.

As a committee and as an organisation we were deeply saddened by the death of Joan Kerr late last year. Joan had joined the committee in 2004, and most recently had been Deputy Chair until our last AGM. She had been an invaluable support to the then Chair, Marie Goudge, during the crucial period when BCS became an independent incorporated society, and she remained a dear friend and supporter of BCS to the last.

Breast Cancer Support Inc.
PO Box 10150
Dominion Road
Auckland 1446

Web: www.breastcancersupport.co.nz
Email: admin@breastcancersupport.co.nz
Phone: 0800 BreaCanSupport (0800 273 222)

Inside this issue:

Annual Report from the Chair	1
BCS to attend <i>Reach to Recovery</i>	3
Supporting BCS	3
Breast Friends News	4
The BCS AGM	6

Marie Goudge becomes a 'life member' of BCS. Read more on page 6...



- To become a Member of BCS, or to make a donation to support our activities, please complete the form on page 3 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.

The Annual Report from the Chair cont.**Core Services and Membership**

At the core of BCS's services are our six Breast Friends Groups, which continue to provide essential support to women who have experienced breast cancer. I extend my thanks to all the group co-ordinators: you work at the coal-face of BCS, and you are frequently a woman's first contact with the organisation. Our reputation rests largely on your compassion, empathy and commitment, and it has been a pleasure meeting you all in your own group settings in recent months. One purpose of my visits was to gather feedback about both BCS's current services and possible new directions. Overwhelmingly, group members endorsed the value of group-based peer support, and identified the need to develop relevant services for younger women.

BCS is the only breast cancer organisation in which everyone who provides or uses its services has, at some stage, been treated for breast cancer. Our services are provided at no charge and BCS membership is not required to access them. In fact, many of our paid members do not attend groups and we are very grateful for their ongoing support. We endeavour to keep our membership subscriptions affordable, and encourage women attending our groups to become members of the organisation if possible. BCS had 131 paid members in the last financial year, slightly down on the previous year. There has also been a slight drop in the average numbers attending groups each month, although there has been an increase in the number of women under 40 attending – a trend we need to pay attention to. Enquiries to our 0800 number and via the BCS website also continue to flow in, so the need is there – the women who use our services confirm that. Our challenge is to raise our profile and the indications are that BCS needs to address this by undertaking a co-ordinated publicity, information and membership drive in the near future.

Funding and Donations

As BCS's services have expanded, so has the need for funding to enable this to happen. In the past financial year we have been fortunate to receive funding towards operational costs and special projects from the following organisations: the Community Organisation Grants Scheme, the NZ Lottery Grants Board, the ASB Community Trust, the A H Watson Charitable Trust, the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust, and the Strathlachlan Fund. Details of these appear in the financial report, and BCS gratefully acknowledges the funding organisations concerned. I'd also like to acknowledge the sponsorship of the BCS website by Zeald.com, and to thank the NZ Breast Cancer Foundation for its assistance in printing our brochure. Our special thanks goes to the Auckland Cancer Society for the use of its premises; Neville Newcomb Ltd and Alpha Print (Pakuranga) for providing our printing; Pat Donovan for her donation of the proceeds of her book sales; Cushla Sinclair (Wellsford), Gillian Scott and Cate Campbell (Body Casting NZ), Pilgrim Productions and Henderson Bowling Club for fundraising; and Jenkin Piano Services, Katharine Watts and Kay Shacklock for their services to the BCS Christmas function in December.

Workshop Training Day, 23 May 2010

The ongoing training of our volunteers and co-ordinators is core to BCS business, and the committee endeavours to hold at least one training day each year. This is an opportunity for co-ordinators and volunteers to receive training from a professional in a field associated with peer support and care, and also for them to share their own ideas and provide feedback to the committee. The training workshop in May 2010 was a lively affair, with – if I remember correctly – a lot of laughter amongst learning. It featured a question panel organised by Jennifer Woodroffe, and some good-hearted role playing to demonstrate both good and bad listening skills in a session conducted by Misha Crosbie. Some of the excellent suggestions for further training days were able to be explored in the most recent workshop, held last month – but that will be in next year's report!

Young Women

As mentioned earlier, the number of women under 40 attending BCS support groups is steadily growing, and building our services to younger women has become a pressing priority. To this end, BCS and our sister organisation, Breast Cancer Network, each contributed towards Rosemary Geard's travel to attend the 2nd National Conference for Young Women Affected by Breast Cancer in Australia last September. As a result of contacts Rosemary established at the conference with Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA), our two organisations are now investigating the possibility of setting up an online forum for young women as part of the BCNA online forum. Rosemary and I have now met several times with representatives of BCN, and our work on this project is ongoing.



Social events

The opportunities to bring members of BCS together *en masse* are not many, but our Christmas event, held here at Domain Lodge, has become something of an institution. We were entertained by Pat Donovan, author of *The Dreaded Diagnosis* and a consummate performer – I can recommend her to any group looking for an entertaining speaker; and soprano Katharine Watts, with accompanist Kay Shacklock, who sang a short recital of Christmas-themed songs before leading us in Christmas carols.

The Future

So, where to next? There is no doubt that BCS is in good heart, and there are exciting projects in the pipeline. These include a residential retreat, 'The Nurturing Journey: Empowering breast cancer survivors to survive', in November 2011, led by Soul Path Journeys and funded by BCS. This is a new departure for BCS, but one that the committee sees as entirely congruent with our purpose of providing emotional support to women who have experienced breast cancer. The need for more Breast Friends Groups, both for young women and to meet the growing need in the wider Auckland area, means we now have a sub-committee devising guidelines for setting up a new group and for training new co-ordinators: things BCS has not had to do for a very long time. However, in order to continue to grow and to meet the needs of women with breast cancer, we ideally need a larger committee, so I encourage all of you here to consider whether this is something you could put your time and energy into? I commend Breast Cancer Support and its work to you.

Deirdre Parr, Chair, Breast Cancer Support Inc., June 2011

BCS to Attend *Reach to Recovery* Conference, Taiwan



BCS Chair Deirdre Parr will travel to Taiwan in November to represent BCS at the **Reach to Recovery International Breast Cancer Support Conference**. Deirdre, with input from Misha Crosbie and Moana Papa (Wahine Toa), submitted an abstract entitled *Exploring bi-cultural and multi-cultural models of support for women with breast cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand* for the RTRC. This has been selected for poster presentation (i.e. a static display) at the Conference. "This is an opportunity to contribute to an international discussion on support for women with breast cancer," said Deirdre, "and to put different models of wellness, support and recovery from the NZ context (Pakeha, Maori, Polynesian, and Asian) into that wider picture. It is very exciting." For further information visit the website www.reachtorecovery2011.org.

Supporting BCS



BCS gratefully acknowledges the support of our members and donors. It is through your generosity that we are able to provide our support services to women experiencing a diagnosis of breast cancer. 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 Road, 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 admin@breastcancersupport.co.nz. **Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.**

Breast Friends – News from our Support Groups

Our Breast Friends groups have enjoyed some great meetings so far this year with informative and inspirational speakers, social events and more. BCS Chair Deirdre Parr visited all groups during April and May to talk about BCS—past, present and future. If you would like to know more about any of our six groups in Auckland, please call us on 0800 273 222.

Roz Burkett (Naturalwear) visited Central in April. Technology from NASA is being used to make a prosthesis!



Central (from Christine Rule)

In April, Roz Burkett from Naturalwear Royal Oak brought along not only bras, prostheses and bathing suits but also nipples, which few of us had seen before. These can easily be placed over the prosthesis and are available as part of the subsidised scheme. We were intrigued to hear that the makers of some of the prostheses have used NASA scientific techniques, whereby if the woman is too hot, it will cool down and even smarter is the heat replacement! It will cool if the woman is too hot or warm up if she cools down. We were also shown a compression sleeve which should be used during flying (to prevent or alleviate symptoms of lymphoedema). A glue can be used (and easily removed) to hold the sleeve up or another option to secure the sleeve is a small harness going over the shoulder. We celebrated mid-winter in June and were pleased to welcome six new ladies to our group. Everyone brought along sumptuous food to share for lunch instead of our usual afternoon tea. There was much chat and plenty of good, hearty laughter.

Hibiscus Coast (from Barbara McLean)

It was 'all about the Irish' in March as our ladies got into the St Patrick's Day spirit and wore something green - we had a lovely springy shamrock hair band, a bright green boa and a large green leprechaun hat! We began the meeting with a round of Irish jokes and finished the meeting with a general catch-up, where we are in our lives, and an Irish Blessing -

"May your glass be ever full,
May the roof over your head be always strong,
And may you be in heaven half an hour before the Devil knows you are dead."

Our May meeting opened with the reading of the poem "Get your Mammies Grammed" which gave us all a laugh to set the mood. Our speaker in May was Claire Harper Wilson, a nutritional therapist (visit the 'Nutrition Therapy' website), who gave a very relaxed but fascinating talk on the subject of detoxing and optimising digestion, including the best timing and techniques to stay well hydrated, and how to keep the body's pH in balance. Her advice on food combining and tips for easy ways to manage this were fascinating and she left us with some wonderful recipes to try. We all enjoyed our mid-winter lunch in June at the Whangaparaoa RSA. 19 ladies attended, including two new Members and everyone enjoyed a very reasonably priced menu and the food - and the company! - was excellent. At the end of the meeting we gathered together for our annual mid-winter photograph. It was a fun get together and much enjoyed by everyone.

Hibiscus Coast celebrated St Patrick's Day in fine 'green' style!



East Auckland (from Jennifer Woodroffe)

The East Auckland group enjoyed a visit from a Pink Dragon in June! Guest speaker Paula from the Pink Dragons Dragon Boat Team told us the history of their team, the origins of Dragon Boating, and how to become a team member – aside from having had breast cancer. Paula brought her own paddle with her and told us about events the team had entered, including one trip to Australia. Having good fitness is a definite must and Paula also told us what she must do if the Dragon Boat capsizes! I have decided to stay on the land! In May we learned all about 'being prepared' with Neighbourhood Watch. Barbara has been a member of our group for a number of years and 'in another life' she is also the Street Coordinator for her local Neighbourhood Watch. Barbara holds the Survival Kit for the street and brought it along to show us the contents and tell us how her own 'street neighbourhood watch' works. Barbara said a lot of her items come from the 'two dollar shops' and when we looked at all the items



East is 'well prepared' with 'Neighbourhood Watch.'

Breast Friends – News from our Support Groups

she carried it made us stop and think about the possibility of any event occurring and to 'Be Prepared'. In April we had a fascinating hour with Kiri Mann, Clinical Nurse Specialist Reconstruction who has been working for the past year within the South Auckland Health area. Kiri gave us an informal but comprehensive talk on the three different types of reconstruction - implants or new 'boobs' made from either the muscle around your back or muscle from the stomach area. Kiri is writing a booklet on reconstruction and will start a monthly support group for women who have had a reconstruction, at the Manukau SuperClinic. She also explained the women who have had a mastectomy can have a reconstruction at any time following the mastectomy. There is no time limit until one can be done, nor age limit, and it does not matter if the woman has had her mastectomy through the private or public sector, she is still eligible to have one done through the public system. However the wait could be from 6 months to a year.

West Auckland (from Marie Goudge)

In March the West Auckland Breast Friends had an education about feet and caring for our poor, oft-forgotten feet. We were given simple but helpful advice from podiatrist Kathryn Erickson on what to look for when buying shoes, definitely what to avoid and some of the causes of different common feet problems and treatments available. Lymphoedema is always a topic that interests the women and therapist Denise Flett joined us in May to talk about this unpleasant side effect that some women develop. Taking sensible precautions to cut down the risk of lymphoedema developing and careful management of the problem should it arise was Denise's overall message. And in June, the question was ... what is the largest organ of the body? Guest speaker Margaret Walsh provided the surprising answer: "The skin! It's everywhere. It holds everything inside the body!" Margaret, the owner of *Face and Body* in Titirangi, told us how to take care of this all important skin. Margaret often works with women who are having chemotherapy, guiding them through the process of drawing in eyebrows and lining eyes that haven't any eyelashes. The women warmed to Margaret's practical advice and sensitive understanding of dealing with the side effects of cancer treatments.

North Shore (from Jenny Short)

North Shore Members have enjoyed visits from some wonderful women so far this year! It was a dynamic meeting in March with a dynamic speaker. One of our own members gave a rousing talk about keeping our own power for ourselves and not being cowed or broken by any experience or any other person. We all felt immediately that we would start to manage our own lives – and our treatment and recovery – in a much more pro-active way. In May Janice Wood, Breast Care Nurse at the North Shore Hospital Breast Clinic outlined the role of the Breast Care Nurse and conducted a fascinating question and answer session with the group. After all those fabulous visits from such amazing women, we celebrated our own inspirational selves with a McHugh's mid-winter lunch.

Auckland South (from Jill Mellow)

The guest speaker at our April meeting was Rosemarie Knapman-Smith from the Lisa's Wish Charitable Trust. Lisa was a Member of our group and before she passed away, she set up a Trust to provide a fun time for children of parents affected by cancer. Lisa knew that children of parents battling cancer have to endure a lot and sometimes miss out on just being children. The Trust is run by a Board and sponsorships allow it to provide outings and events in the Auckland area. The outings are run by volunteers and Members of the Board. Trips so far have included the Zoom Primate and Tiger Experiences and a visit to the Parakai Hot Pools. In May we had a visit from Deirdre Parr and Misha Crosbie (BCS) and in June we enjoyed our mid-winter social.

Would you like to know more about our Support Groups and other services? Call us on 0800 273 222 ...



Caring for ourselves from toe ... to top! West enjoys visits from podiatrist Kathryn Erickson (above), skin therapist Margaret Walsh and lymphoedema therapist Denise Flett (below).



Charitable Trust Lisa's Wish provides treats for children of parents affected by cancer. For more information, visit their website: www.lisaswishtrust.com

The Breast Cancer Support AGM, 20 June 2011

The Breast Cancer Support Annual General Meeting Monday 20 June 2011

Over 35 people attended the BCS AGM held on Monday 20 June at the Auckland Cancer Society. In her Chairperson's Report, Chair Deirdre Parr outlined the progress BCS has made over the last year, highlighted some achievements (Workshop Training Day in 2010, focus on developing more appropriate support services for younger women) and concluded by saying BCS is "in good heart" for the coming year."

The Officers and Committee were elected for the 2011-12 year. Marie Goudge, Rosemary Geard and Mary Forbes stepped down from the Committee and the following BCS Members were elected, pictured at right, from left to right: Debbie Morrow, Josie Stanley, Deirdre Parr (returning Chair), Misha Crosbie (returning Committee Member), Jennifer Woodrooffe (returning Treasurer).



The new Committee will meet for the first time on 4th July 2011. The retiring Committee Members were thanked for their efforts during the past year and special mention was made by Deirdre of the long-standing commitment and dedication of Marie Goudge. Marie began visiting women in need of support in 1988.



In 1998, at the request of the Committee, Marie established the West Auckland Breast Friends, a group which has thrived under her guidance and continues to offer support to women from this area. Marie became a Committee Member in 1998 and assumed the role of Chair in 2002, steering Breast Cancer Support with care and diligence along the pathway to becoming an independent Incorporated Society in November 2006. Marie's input, and her kind, supportive presence will be much missed at Committee meetings. Marie has been made a Life Member of Breast Cancer Support in recognition of her services to the organisation.

The AGM audience listened to a very informative presentation given by Mr Wayne Jones. A Director and Breast Surgeon at Breast Associates since 2002, Mr. Jones is also Head of the Breast Unit and Clinical Director of General Surgery at Auckland Hospital. He is involved in a number of breast cancer research projects, and is a Member of the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group. Mr. Jones gave a fascinating talk on the recent advances in the treatment of breast cancer. A summary of his presentation can be seen on the Breast Cancer Support website at by visiting <http://www.breastcancersupport.co.nz/News/News+from+Breast+Cancer+Support.html> and viewing the pdf.



The AGM and presentation were followed by a delicious supper and plenty of good conversation!

A thank you from BCS to our primary funders and sponsors...



ASB Community Trust
Te Kaitiaki Putea o Tamaki o Tai Tokerau
supported by ASB



BCS gratefully acknowledges the support of our primary funders and sponsors.

We thank the NZ Lottery Grants Board, COGS, the ASB Community Trust, the Guardian Trust, and Zeald for their sponsorship of our website. We also thank the team at Alpha Copy Centre for their support of BCS and to Zonta for keeping us well supplied with the invaluable 'moon cushions' that are of such comfort to our ladies.

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.