

David's Story

When North Canterbury man David Mattsen learned he had testicular cancer, the Cancer Society was there to support him and his family during and after his treatment.

This time last year, North Canterbury man David Mattsen learned he had testicular cancer. David says that he had been extremely tired and suffering from indigestion but initially thought he may have had a kidney stone. However a scan found that David had three tumours, and a biopsy of the tumours revealed that they were metastatic testicular cancer.

Treatment involved surgery and chemotherapy. As a result of his treatment, David became neutropenic three times, which means that he did not have enough of a type of white blood cell called neutrophils in his immune system to fight off infection. Neutropenia is a common side effect of



David attended Relay For Life in Rangiora with his family

chemotherapy and radiation and being neutropenic meant that David had to spend a total of 16 nights in hospital.

Following his diagnosis, David rang the Cancer Society in North Canterbury and spoke to Centre Manager Gabrielle O'Connell, who advised him about the Cancer Society's volunteer driving service. David used this service to transport him from Rangiora to his chemotherapy treatments at Christchurch Hospital.

"This took away so much stress of finding a park or catching the shuttle. You just need to send through the times of your appointments and then someone rings up the day before to confirm the pick-up time," he says.

"The volunteer driving coordinator for North Canterbury at the time was fantastic and I know everyone was trying to do their best for me at the Cancer Society and the hospital," David says.

Signs and symptoms of testicular cancer (*Matepukupuku raho*)

Testicular cancer is cancer that starts in a testicle. If found early, testicular cancer is one of the most treatable cancers.

The most common symptoms of testicular cancer include:

- A painless swelling or lump in a testicle
- A change in the size or shape of a testicle

Less common symptoms include:

- A feeling of heaviness or unevenness in the scrotum
- Pain or aching in your lower tummy (abdomen), back, testicles or scrotum
- Swelling or tenderness of the breast tissue (caused by hormones released by the cancer cells)

Having these symptoms does not mean you have testicular cancer. But it is important to have any changes that last longer than two weeks checked by your doctor.

Shortly after his treatment, David went to the Relay For Life in Rangiora where he took part in the survivor's lap surrounded by his family. "It was a very emotional day for me seeing all the other families affected by cancer," he says.

David says cancer has changed his outlook on life. "We make sure we spend weekends together as a family. We used to put stuff aside for a rainy day, but now we have decided to live a little bit more. You need to live life while you can," he says.

To try and lighten the mood David would wear a chicken hat into the chemotherapy ward.



Ehara tāku toa i te toa takitahi, ēngari, tāku toa i te toa takitini
Success is not the work of one but the work and support of many.

Farewell to our Volunteer Manager

We are sad to be losing our lovely Volunteer Manager, Jane Condell, this month. Jane stepped into the role in August

2018, working with and supporting our large team of volunteers from their initial interviews, through their induction process

and throughout their volunteering roles with the Cancer Society. We currently have over 840 active volunteers across our Canterbury-West Coast region and they perform many important roles including driving our clients to their cancer-related appointments, helping with refreshments in the oncology waiting room at Christchurch Hospital and assisting with administrative tasks and fundraising events and activities.

We know that Jane's cheerful manner and sunny disposition will be sadly missed by our volunteers and staff here at the Cancer Society's Canterbury-West Coast Division and we wish her all the best for her future endeavours.



Golfers show their support

Golfers in both Ashburton and Christchurch have been teeing off in support of the Cancer Society's Canterbury-West Coast Division.

On Friday 1st October the annual Ashburton Invitation Charity Golf Classic took place under Covid Alert Level 2 with a limit on the number of players. Cancer Society staff and volunteers helped out on the day. This year the event raised \$19,000 for the Ashburton Cancer Support Group.

The following Friday (8th October) Avondale Golf Club in Christchurch hosted its inaugural Cancer Society Charitable Ambrose Golf Tournament. More than 50 teams participated throughout the day and Cancer Society staff helped spread the SunSmart message by providing sunscreen and UV bracelets for the golfers on what was a very warm and sunny Christchurch day. This event raised over \$8,000 for the Cancer Society.

Keen golfers will have another opportunity to combine the game they love with fundraising for their local Cancer Society in The Longest Day Golf Challenge.

The Longest Day Golf Challenge involves playing 72 holes (4 rounds) of golf in one day, which is roughly the same distance as walking a marathon!

Players tee off at dawn and finish at dusk and they can complete the challenge anytime between 1st December and February on a day and at a location that suits. They can take on the challenge alone as a part of a team. For more information or to sign up visit www.longestday.org.nz

Daffodil Day in lockdown

As well as being the Cancer Society's major annual appeal, Daffodil Day is also an important opportunity to raise awareness about the role of the Cancer Society in reducing the impact and incidence of cancer within our communities. Sadly, our Daffodil Day street appeal could not proceed on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th August this year because the re-emergence of community cases of Covid-19 in the North Island had resulted in a nationwide lockdown.

While this was hugely disappointing to our staff and volunteers around the Canterbury-West Coast region we were heartened by the support we received via our online appeal. Thank you to

those families and businesses who showed their support in many ways such as decorating their windows with daffodils, holding yellow-themed Zoom get-togethers and by offering a donation when we were unable to supply and deliver fresh daffodils as we had planned.



Ashburton's Holly Chapman with her Daffodil Day poster

South Canterbury's Daffodil Day breakfast at Columbus Coffee Timaru took place earlier in August before Covid-19 restrictions.

Pictured are Rachael Foster, Carole Sutherland and Penny Leary.

Progress towards Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 – your chance to make change!

A huge thank you to everyone who made a submission on the template included in our last issue of Let's Connect to show your support for government proposals for a Smokefree Action Plan. Your submissions were included in the Cancer Society of New Zealand's national submission.

Thank you also to those who supported our petition to phase out the sale of tobacco to save lives and enable our communities to reach the goal of a Smokefree Aotearoa 2025. 7,874 people signed our petition in just two months.

While community support was strong, our collective work is not yet done! Our health promotion team is busy preparing for the release of the Smokefree Action Plan (expected within the next month). Following



this, another submission process via the Health Select Committee is likely in the first quarter of 2022 and we need your voice! As smoking is still the biggest cause of cancer

and preventable deaths in Aotearoa, we want to encourage everyone to write a submission when the time comes to do so. Submissions don't need to be long or complicated. If you would like to discuss this in more detail or would like some support to do this, please contact your local health promoter or email amanda.dodd@cancercwc.org.nz.

In the meantime keep up to date on this issue by following us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/cancercwc> or Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/cancersocietycwc/>, or by visiting our website www.cancer.org.nz

"I recently lost my husband to colon cancer. A very tough time especially during Covid. The Canterbury West Coast Cancer Society were amazing and I will always remember the support and assistance given to us ❤️"

A big thank you to the Waimakariri Bike Project - RAD (Recycle a Dunger) for donating this repaired bike to our North Canterbury Centre. Our North Canterbury centre members are looking forward to using their new sustainable mode of transport to get out and about around Rangiora.

Gabrielle O'Connell tests out the new bike while Martin Pugh looks on



Getting muddy on the West Coast



West Coasters showed their spirit by submerging themselves in cold muddy water at Greymouth's Mighty Mud Challenge on Sunday 1st August. This fundraising event for the Cancer Society's West Coast Centre involves navigating your way around a 3km course of natural and not-so-natural obstacles at On Yer Bike in Coal Creek. The event raised over \$2,600 for the Cancer Society.



Pictured is chef Jimmy McIntyre

Dinner anyone?

This year our Fundraising team has been busy planning a unique dinner experience, "Too Many Cooks", to replace the traditional Cancer Society Ball. Attendees will get to enjoy a delicious three-course meal prepared by award-winning Canterbury chefs, Jimmy McIntyre, Darren Wright and Andrew Brown. The chefs will plate up the courses live on stage at the Majestic on Durham while MC Michele A'Court keeps the banter going.

While Covid-19 restrictions disrupted our plans to hold this event on Saturday 9th October, we are thrilled that our amazing chefs have committed to our new dinner date of Saturday 19th March next year. We are also very grateful to our principal sponsor for this event, Cook Brothers Construction, and our co-sponsors VIP Structural Steel and Hanlon Plumbing. Tickets to Too Many Cooks are still available on our event website www.toomanycooks.co.nz or by phoning the Cancer Society's Christchurch Centre on (03) 379 5835.



Can exercise help cancer patients better manage treatment?

Jessica Allan is carrying out a feasibility study into the potential for exercise to mitigate some of the side effects of cancer treatments. Jessica is a recipient of the Cancer Society Canterbury-West Coast Division's Local Research Fellowship Grant, which means that she receives \$25,000 per year for three years to enable her to carry out this research.

Jessica is currently studying for her Ph.D in the School of Health Sciences at the University of Canterbury and, with support from the University, the Canterbury District Health Board and the University of Otago in Christchurch, she has established an exercise laboratory space in the new Waipapa wing of Christchurch Hospital to use for her research.

For this study, Jessica is looking for people with early stage breast or colon cancer who are keen to be involved. She says that those participating in the study will receive individual exercise programmes "tailored to where people are at" and that it will certainly not be "a boot camp"! Jessica's message is that "exercise is safe" for cancer patients and ACSM Guidelines for Exercise and Cancer advise that resistance exercise does not exacerbate lymphedema.



Exercise may help patients manage many of the negative side effects of cancer treatment, with potential benefits including:

- Improved mental health
- Reduced fatigue
- Maintenance of muscle mass
- Assisting return to functional capacity

Jessica is also interested in the emerging research regarding the role of exercise in terms of oxygen availability and muscle mass and how this may assist with the body's ability to tolerate chemotherapy. If patients can complete the recommended dose of chemotherapy, then their outcomes will likely be better.

Relay For Life is about celebrating cancer survivors, remembering family members and friends lost to cancer and fighting back against cancer by raising funds to support the mahi of the Cancer Society.

Unfortunately, once again Covid-19 restrictions disrupted our plans to hold two Relay For Life events last month – Relay For Life Mid Canterbury had been scheduled for Saturday 16th October, while Relay For Life Selwyn would have taken place on Saturday 30th October.

We now have three Relay For Life events scheduled for early next year so put the following dates in your calendar:

19th February 2022 – Relay For Life Mid Canterbury

5th March 2022 – Relay For Life West Coast

12th March 2022 – Relay For Life South Canterbury

Gift ideas for Christmas

With Christmas only a matter of weeks away, we have some great gift ideas here at the Cancer Society.

Calendars

Celebrate the beauty of our rugged West Coast with a gorgeous calendar of scenic images taken by local photographer Gaylene Donaldson. You can choose to purchase an A3 wall calendar for \$25 or a desktop calendar for \$15. Email westcoast@cancercwc.org.nz or phone (03) 768 9557.

Greeting cards

We also have cheerful greeting cards featuring the iconic daffodil sculptures created by Jackie Claridge from our Selwyn Centre. Each pack costs \$12.50 and contains five cards. You can purchase these from either our Selwyn Centre or our Christchurch Centre. For more information email selwyn.centre@cancercwc.org.nz or phone (03) 925 9708.



WAYS TO CONNECT WITH US

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South Canterbury Centre

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West Coast Centre

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Mid Canterbury Centre

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