

Kia Honoa

Let's Connect with the Cancer Society
 Canterbury-West Coast Division

Gail's Story

Gail Brewerton's routine mammogram late last year picked up a spot on one of her breasts. The spot was a micro-calcification and Gail was referred for an ultrasound, followed by a biopsy and an MRI, which detected early-stage cancer.

Following Gail's mammogram and diagnosis, local cancer nurse co-ordinator Andrea Reilly referred her to the Cancer Society.

"The whole way through from when I was having my biopsies, the Cancer Society's Supportive Care Coordinator Maree Yaxley has been keeping in regular contact,"

Gail says.

"I didn't feel like I was on my own - all I had to do was text Maree and she was there."

"Maree was there to sort everything out and I didn't have to do any organising

- it was all done on my behalf,"

Gail says.

"It's hard enough to get your head around what is wrong with you -your headspace isn't that great - so it is amazing to have people there to organise things so you have less to think about," she says.

Maree arranged a meeting between Gail and a local woman who had been through similar surgery, which Gail found very helpful.

"Following your diagnosis all you hear is white noise, but once you've calmed down it is important to do your research so that you can make an informed decision about what is right for you," Gail says.



Maree Yaxley and Gail Brewerton (right)

"Knowledge is power - finding out from people who've been there and done that and hearing that it isn't the end of the world is huge," she says.

During the past six months since her mammogram, Gail has travelled from her West Coast home to Christchurch a total of five times for a range of investigative treatments including biopsies, an MRI, an appointment with a specialist and, more recently, surgery to remove both of her breasts (a bilateral mastectomy). Each time, Gail has stayed at the Cancer Society's free accommodation at Daffodil House.

"Daffodil House is a godsend, having somewhere to stay that's free makes a huge difference when you live away from a main centre," Gail says.

"I think it's amazing - I'm just blown away that the service is there and that it is accessible," she says. **"The service offered by the Cancer Society is gold standard."**

Gail says that being on a low income and a Community Services card holder, the Cancer Society's support made a huge difference for her financially.

"It takes that worry away of how you're going to get backwards and forwards and where you're going to stay - all I had to pay for was my food," she says.

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About micro-calcifications

- Breast calcifications are small areas of calcium in the breast. They cannot be felt and can only be detected on a mammogram.
- Usually, micro-calcifications are not due to cancer. However, in a small number of cases, a group of micro-calcifications seen in one area (a cluster) may be a sign of pre-cancerous changes in the breast or of an early breast cancer. When breast cancer cells are detected because of micro-calcification, they tend to be either pre-invasive cancerous changes in the milk ducts of the breast or small early breast cancers that have not spread.

Canbead Workshop

During the April school holidays our North Canterbury centre held a Canbead workshop for those going through cancer and their family members.

Participants had a lovely time making bracelets and keychains.

Ethan with one of his favourite bead choices



Juno busy creating with beads



Gail's story continued

Gail describes Natasha Hurst, Accommodation Administrator at Daffodil House as **"very positive"**.

"You just get a lovely vibe off her and it makes you feel better," Gail says.

When Gail stayed at Daffodil House for her surgery, the Cancer Society team at Daffodil House organised a taxi to transport her to hospital for her surgery and storage for her luggage while she was an inpatient.

Following Gail's surgery, Catherine Dwan from the Cancer Society's Supportive Care team in Christchurch visited her in hospital and drove her back to Daffodil House.

Because Gail couldn't drive for six weeks following her surgery, Maree organised for Cancer Society volunteer driver John Best to drive from Greymouth to Christchurch to collect Gail and bring her back home to the West Coast.

Maree says that the aim was to get the best outcome for Gail and that this was achieved by working collaboratively across the Cancer Society teams on the West Coast and in Christchurch to ensure that Gail was supported at each stage. In addition to providing free accommodation and transport for Gail, the Cancer Society supplied food vouchers for easy to prepare meals post-surgery and breast care pillows to help make her travel more comfortable.

Gail describes the support she has received from the Cancer Society as **"phenomenal."**

"All people need to do is ask and they just support you," she says.

Gail's advice to others is to stay up to date with mammograms.

"I believe it has saved my life," she says. "I didn't have a lump, just a change in cells so there was nothing to feel or notice."

"I'm so thankful that we've picked it up early enough and now I'm home and feeling brilliant and healing really well," Gail says.

Fantastic community support for new centre



Tom Walsh outside the new cancer centre



Kelly Hutton checking out the prototype accommodation room

Introducing our new Brand Ambassadors

We are delighted to announce that the Cancer Society Canterbury-West Coast Division has two new Brand Ambassadors – Olympian shot putter **Tom Walsh** and former Canterbury Flames netballer **Kelly Hutton**. We had the opportunity to show both Tom and Kelly around the new Canterbury Cancer Centre recently before Tom headed off to the US and Europe for five months of training and competitions and before Kelly started another round of cancer treatment herself.

When he is not training or competing, Tom is a builder by

trade so was able to appreciate the craftsmanship that is going into the new centre, particularly some of the building's timber features. Meanwhile Kelly's own personal experience of ovarian cancer means she understands first-hand the value of the services the new centre will offer to those with cancer and their whānau.

Thank you to both Tom and Kelly for being amazing supporters of the Cancer Society's mahi by helping raise awareness about our new cancer centre and our **"More Precious"** fundraising campaign.

It is wonderful that many organisations around the South Island are as excited about the new Canterbury Cancer Centre as we are and have contributed funding to support the project in the past few months. We would like to acknowledge the following organisations, businesses and individuals for their generous grants, sponsorship of rooms and donations to help with build costs or purchase items for the new centre:

- Foodstuffs South Island
- Mainland Foundation
- Pub Charity
- One Foundation
- Aoraki Foundation
- New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT)
- Bidwill Trust Hospital
- Nelson-Tasman Cancer Society
- Mitre 10 Westport
- Parks
- Bradleys Furniture
- Stewart Johns Family

Leola Wilson, Tina Rogers from Bidwill Trust Hospital and Janice Porter-Hoare from Cancer Society



Christine Dwyer, Craig Watson from Cancer Society and Casey Scanlon and Troy Scanlon from Mitre 10 Westport

Of course, while we are building this amazing new facility we still have the regular, ongoing costs of providing our free cancer services. We are therefore incredibly grateful to the following organisations for contributing funds to help us with our "business as usual" expenses such as staff salaries:

- PA Blackmore Trust
- TTCF (The Trust Community Foundation)
- Trust Aoraki
- Aotearoa Gaming Trust
- The Lion Foundation
- Gattung Foundation

Meet our new Accounts Administrator – Linh Nguyen!

Dear volunteer drivers,
please remember to email
your mileage claims to Linh at
accounts@cancercwc.org.nz
before the 5th of month.

If you're sending a hard
copy, please use nice clear
handwriting. Thank you!

Linh Nguyen started with the Cancer Society's Canterbury-West Coast Division in March 2023. Before this she was living in Auckland and working for a construction company.

Linh says that she and her partner decided to move to Christchurch because there was less traffic and it was more affordable to buy a house.

Linh's role with the Cancer Society involves processing supplier invoices, payroll, raising invoices for sponsors and donors and processing mileage claims for our volunteer drivers.

Linh studied Business Administration at University.

"I like working with numbers," she says.

Outside of work, Linh enjoys going to the gym and she and her partner enjoy hiking and exploring walks around the Christchurch area.



Linh Nguyen

Support groups recognise the value of new centre

Our local support groups have recognised the value of the Canterbury Cancer Centre to their communities with support groups from the following areas providing either room sponsorships or donations to the project, or in some cases, both:

- Hokitika
- Buller/Westport
- Waimate
- Ashburton
- Cheviot
- Malvern

Thank you so much for the amazing work you do volunteering to support those with cancer in your respective communities

The Ashburton Support Group is sponsoring a room in the name of **Annie Bonifant**, who recently retired as Manager of the Cancer Society's Mid-Canterbury Centre

Relay For Life wrap-up

Thank you to the 700 individuals and over 80 teams who supported our three Relay For Life events in Timaru, Rangiora and Rolleston during March and April.

These three **Relay For Life** events raised over **\$200,000** in total to help us continue to fund community-based cancer support services and local cancer-related research and prevention programmes. While fundraising is an important part of Relay For Life, they are also very special occasions to acknowledge the cancer survivors amongst us and remember those who we have lost to cancer.



Family fun at RFL North Canterbury



Rangiora High School team costumes at RFL North Canterbury



The Cancer Society has partnered with 9 skydive companies across Aotearoa to offer you a free skydive when you raise \$1,000. You can sign up as an individual, or as a team, such as a workplace. Each person in the team must raise \$1,000 or more to qualify for a free jump.

When you sign up, you get to choose where you would like to do your jump, including some iconic South Island locations such as Mount Cook, Abel Tasman or Franz Josef Glacier. You can also choose to support the Cancer Society's Canterbury-West Coast Division but decide to do your skydive at one of the North Island locations.

To find out more or sign up for Jump For Cancer, head to www.jumpforcancer.org.nz

SHOOT FOR THE MOON - CHALLENGE -

We're excited to be bringing back our "Shoot For the Moon!" challenge again this year. The challenge is for individuals or teams to shoot 384 goals in their chosen sport during June (or July) and get sponsored to achieve this challenge.

Why 384 you ask?

Because the distance from the Earth to the Moon is 384,000km!

If you or your sports club would like to sign up or find out more, go to

www.shootforthemoon.org.nz

An evening of fun and feasting!

TOO MANY COOKS

Those who bought tickets to Too Many Cooks on 24th March enjoyed a fabulous evening of delicious food prepared by our wonderful guest chefs. **Thank you to everyone who made this event possible.** Here are a few images of the night!



Your local Cancer Society Centres

Christchurch Centre

PO Box 13450, Christchurch 8141
P: 03 379 5835 E: contact@cancercwc.org.nz

North Canterbury Centre

43 Church Street, Rangiora 7400
P: 0800 226 695 E: northcanty@cancercwc.org.nz

South Canterbury Centre

32 Memorial Avenue, PO Box 682, Timaru 7940
P: 03 688 0124 E: southcanty@cancercwc.org.nz

Mid Canterbury Centre

122 Kermode Street, PO Box 296, Ashburton 7740
P: 03 307 7691 E: midcanty@cancercwc.org.nz

West Coast Centre

98 High Street, PO Box 81, Greymouth 7840
P: 03 768 9557 E: westcoast@cancercwc.org.nz

Selwyn Centre

6B Kidman Street, PO Box 25, Rolleston 7643
P: 03 925 9708 E: selwyn.centre@cancercwc.org.nz