

IN TOUCH

**BREAST
CANCER
NOW** The research
& care charity

Newsletter Issue 25 | Autumn 2020

Breast Cancer Now did so much to help my family through the shock of my diagnosis and hair loss.



Sarah and her three children were supported by Breast Cancer Now

Sarah Gaeta, 46, had three school age children when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. The children found the news and their mother losing her hair hard to take. So she contacted the charity for help.

‘One evening I was getting ready to go out when I found a thick, hard area in my breast. I went to see the doctor and a week later I was told that I had breast cancer. I would have to start chemotherapy straightaway. It was a real shock, but my greatest concern was telling my children. I knew that once the treatment started and my hair began to fall out there was no way I could hide it.

‘My husband and I did the best we could breaking the news to them. When my hair did start to fall out my youngest, who was just seven, became terribly upset. I also know the other two worried about me constantly, while trying not to show it. As for myself I just wanted to hide. I stopped doing the school run and shut myself away. I knew then that we needed expert help, especially in the way we talked to and treated the kids.

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO

Welcome to the first issue of In touch from Breast Cancer Now. As a new charity, dedicated to the needs of anyone affected by breast cancer, we’re providing support today and hope for the future by bringing together world-class research and life-changing care.

But we never forget that without your generous support we would not be able to provide our vital support services nor fund our important research projects. We simply couldn’t do all that we do without you. Thank you.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 →

← CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

'I phoned the **Helpline** and spoke to a lovely nurse who recommended **Mummy's Lump**, a book that helps you talk to your children about breast cancer.

'I CALLED THE HELPLINE MANY TIMES AS I FOUND HAVING SOMEONE IMPARTIAL TO SPEAK TO REALLY HELPED.

'There were things I didn't want to discuss with my family because I knew they would just worry.

'My thirst for information led me to downloading all the relevant booklets from the Breast Cancer Now website. And I also started reading what people were posting in the online forums. There was a chemotherapy group that I followed who'd all started their chemotherapy the same month as I had, so they were all going through the same experience. They'd talk about treatments, side effects, and questions for the doctors, (you never know what to ask!).

'Once treatment was over I signed up for a Breast Cancer Now **Moving Forward** course. I gained a lot of practical information and shared stories with people who'd been through the same thing. Just talking to them made me realise that my feelings and concerns were all normal.

'To give something back, I started to attend fundraising events and, as well as raising money, I was thrilled to model in the Breast Cancer Now fashion show. I couldn't imagine myself doing that before and I certainly wouldn't have had the confidence without Breast Cancer Now's incredible support.'

For information and support, call our free Helpline on **0808 800 6000** or visit **breastcancer.org**



Jane Murphy, one of Breast Cancer Now's clinical nurse specialists

A huge thank you to each person who helps to keep our Helpline running.

THANK YOU

JANE'S DIARY

Jane tells us about three calls made to the Helpline, sharing the variety of calls the Helpline receives.

CALL 1 I take a call from someone who has been diagnosed with secondary breast cancer. She wants to know about treatments and our research in this area.

We discussed her diagnosis and treatment plan. I explained other treatments that are used and although these might not be suitable for her, she found it helpful. I also told her about our support for people living with secondary breast cancer and that we are funding research projects including understanding why and how breast cancer spreads and how to stop it spreading. She found it helpful to know there is a range of support options for her. She also found it reassuring that work is in progress, offering more hope to those diagnosed in the future.

CALL 2 I take a call from a man whose partner had finished treatment for primary breast cancer but she was finding it difficult to move forward. He wanted to know how best to support her.

I explained that many people are surprised at how emotional they feel when their treatment finishes. Adapting to life after treatment can be difficult and often the need for

support continues. I let him know about our **Moving Forward** resource pack and course, designed for people who are just finishing their hospital treatment. I also explained our information and support specifically for partners, including our booklet called **In it together** and the **Someone Like Me** service. He was relieved to hear that feeling like this is common and there is support for him and his partner.

CALL 3 My next call was from someone who was experiencing hot flushes due to hormone treatment. She asked about herbs or vitamins that might ease these but didn't want to bother her treatment team.

I explained many people ask about supplements to help manage side effects. It's often assumed that vitamins and herbs are safe as they are considered natural. But herbal treatments don't have to comply with the same regulations or testing that conventional medicines do. Many products lack the research to support their use and some interfere with medicines including cancer treatments.

I let her know that it's always best to speak to a hospital doctor, breast care nurse or GP before taking any supplements which she said she would do.

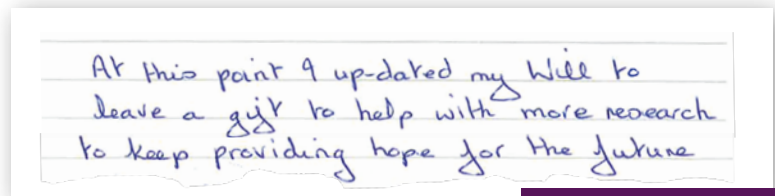
WHY ELAINE DECIDED TO PLEDGE A GIFT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



Four years ago Elaine Jones was diagnosed with breast cancer and had a mastectomy. Like so many women, she found the physical and emotional impact of losing her breast very difficult to manage.

She turned to us for support and reached out to the **Helpline** for emotional help and reassurance in coming to terms with how her body had changed. Through our **Someone Like Me** service she regularly spoke to another woman who'd undergone a mastectomy about the issues that were affecting her on a day-to-day basis.

She and her family really valued the support she received from Breast Cancer Now, and wanted to give something back. So, having spoken to her family, she decided to leave a gift in her will to help fund more research and life-changing care, for future generations.



Elaine wrote to us about adding a gift to her will

Leaving a gift like Elaine did is a lasting way to support the work we do. So, once you've made arrangements for your loved ones, a gift in your will to Breast Cancer Now helps to ensure that other people affected by breast cancer will receive the support they need in years to come and that our research to prevent breast cancer and save lives can continue.

'I UPDATED MY WILL TO LEAVE A GIFT... TO KEEP PROVIDING HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.'

If you've already left a gift in your will to Breast Cancer Now, thank you so much. If you would like to know more about gifts in wills please contact Yogi Kong on 0345 092 0817 or email gifts@breastcancer.org

MOVING FORWARD GOES ONLINE

The coronavirus outbreak has meant we've had to rethink how we deliver our Moving Forward courses, with the safety of people facing breast cancer being paramount.

These courses are now available online for patients nearing the end of their hospital-based treatment for primary breast cancer. Over four weeks, patients can view presentations on a range of topics by our clinical team and other healthcare professionals. Moderators are available during the course to signpost and answer questions. Participants can also provide mutual support through active discussion and sharing their experiences with each other.

To find out about these courses, go to breastcancer.org/MFOIntouch or email movingforward@breastcancer.org





RESEARCH ROUND-UP

The coronavirus pandemic has meant our world-class research is facing a challenging time.

A lot of our lab-based research was temporarily put on hold, though while labs remained closed, our researchers used the time as best they could. Where possible, they were analysing data, writing up their results and planning future experiments from home. Now, we want to ensure we can make up for lost time.

The stark reality is that the current COVID-19 situation represents a major roadblock to breast cancer research progress. It's meant we have had to make the difficult decision to cancel our funding grants due to be given in August and December 2020.

But thanks to your continued support, we are able to ensure that many of our vital research projects can still continue. Like the ones we've explained below.

More women are now surviving breast cancer than ever before and it's thanks to progress in research and care.

Can we make chemotherapy kinder?

Dr Robert Falconer wants to turn strong chemotherapy that currently can't be given to people, into an effective and kind breast cancer drug.

We know there are some chemotherapies that are very effective against cancer cells, but they are too dangerous to be safely given to patients. We are funding Robert's research which could lead to a new chemotherapy drug with fewer side effects, improving people's quality of life during and after treatment.



Can we stop breast cancer coming back?

Professor Mike Dixon and Dr Arran Turnbull want to find ways to stop breast cancer becoming resistant to hormone therapies.

Understanding how it happens is crucial to finding a way to stop it. We are funding Mike and Arran's research to find the changes in DNA that can lead to resistance to hormone therapies. This will help to ensure that everyone receives the most suitable treatment and help to reduce the chance of cancer coming back.

Can the immune system help treat breast cancer?

Dr Sophia Karagiannis wants to harness the immune system, so that in the future we have new ways to treat triple negative breast cancer.

Cancer cells sometimes find ways to hide from the immune system. Antibodies are a part of our immune system that protect us against bacteria and viruses. We are funding Sophia's research to develop antibodies which recognise triple negative breast cancer cells. In the future, they could be turned into new treatments or be used to more accurately diagnose triple negative breast cancer.

If you would like to learn more about our research, please visit our website: breastcancernow.org/breast-cancer-research



NOTELET COMPETITION UPDATE



The winner of our 2019 Notelet competition is **Jacqueline Rackham!** To buy your own pack, visit shop.breastcancernow.org

Each pack comes with five cards of the same design, with envelopes. All proceeds from this notelet, as well as our other merchandise go to Breast Cancer Now; helping us to provide expert support and fund world-class research for people affected by breast cancer.

OCTOBER IS FREE WILLS MONTH!

If you are 55+, you can get a simple single or mirror will written for free this October.

Visit freewillsmoonth.org.uk or call **0333 022 0396** to register your interest.



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Breast Cancer Now Ibex House,
42-47 Minories, London EC3N 1DY