

Friends^{of the}
cancer centre

Newsletter

www.friendsofthecancercentre.com



Researching a brighter future

Professor Joe O'Sullivan, Consultant Clinical Oncologist and Clinical Lead for Radiotherapy, plays a central role in 'Friends' research programmes, and oversees radiotherapy and prostate cancer research at the NI Cancer Trials Centre (NICTC). In the last five years, Friends of the Cancer Centre has channelled nearly £500,000 to NICTC for various research projects and posts, with a further £125,000 committed for 2012.

Sponsored by:

 **Diamond**
WINDOW SOLUTIONS



Colleen Shaw

Welcome

Here at Friends of the Cancer Centre we've hit the New Year running, with new ventures launching, long-planned projects coming to fruition and, we're delighted to report, donations and support coming in from every corner of Northern Ireland.

It's an energetic and exciting start to 2012 but, as you will read in this, our latest newsletter, we are planning to keep up the pace throughout what promises to be a particularly demanding year.

Friends' funding has always been directed towards projects and services which are outside and in addition to the provision already made by the Health Service, responding to needs highlighted by the Cancer Centre's own expert medical staff. As recession bites, the funding channel which we offer to those dedicated professionals is more important than ever before and we expect 2012 to be a record year for requests for

support, whether for medical equipment to help with the diagnosis and treatment of cancer; specialist medical posts; patient comforts and support, or for research projects.

The benefits delivered by many Friends' projects will be immediately apparent, understood and appreciated by all; such as supporting Such as the refurbishment of the ward day rooms and Bridgewater Suite. In other cases benefits may be less immediate, although no less important: research for example can take many years and considerable investment to complete.

Friends of The Cancer Centre is uniquely well placed to provide funding for projects at both ends

of the scale - able to respond with speed, flexibility and common sense to deliver near instant action and also willing to commit long term investment to ventures which could change diagnosis, treatment and even survival rates.

We can do this because of the unique relationship which we enjoy with the senior professionals from the Cancer Centre who make time to work with our Trustees to evaluate each and every funding request, ensuring that every pound you donate works to deliver maximum benefits.

We can't do it without you and people like you. Thank you for being a friend.

Colleen Shaw
Director

The Friends of The Cancer Centre newsletter is generously sponsored by **Diamond Window Solutions** of Lisburn. Thank you to all of our friends there for adding a little extra sparkle to our communications!

Researching a brighter future

« Continued from front cover

In the last five years, Friends of the Cancer Centre has channelled nearly £500,000 to NICTC for various research projects and posts, with a further £125,000 committed for 2012. One such post was filled by Stacey Hetherington (pictured on the front cover), a research radiographer.

Professor O'Sullivan explains, "Much of the research we undertake is clinical and directly involves patients. If a trial is available and suitable for a patient's situation, they'll be offered the chance to participate by their oncologist. Understandably patients are hoping it offers the chance to access new and potentially better treatments but many people are also motivated by the desire to help others.

"Northern Ireland has seen a huge increase in the numbers taking part in clinical trials over the past five years, particularly in the field of Radiotherapy, which is making a positive impact on our work in the Cancer Centre. "I am currently very excited about a number of 'home grown' clinical trials, including a trial of a Bladder Scanner in prostate cancer and a study examining a new type of



Paul Burns, a prostate cancer patient who is taking part in a clinical trial chatting to Professor Joe O'Sullivan.

marking device for breast cancer radiotherapy patients." Paul Burns (as pictured with Joe below), is a prostate cancer patient who is taking part in a clinical trial.

The potential benefits for any breakthrough can be enormous ... but they can be a long time coming. Professor O'Sullivan continues, "however results for many of the recent drug trials in prostate cancer for example have been available within a few months of the completion of the trial which is fantastic news for patients.

"With research you can't give an exact timescale or be precise about results because you can't know what any study may yield. However, research offers

the opportunity to promote the highest standard of care for our patients and to improve their lives and those of future patients with cancer.

"Getting funding for clinical research, in particular funding of staff costs, is very difficult these days and at a time when health budgets are under considerable pressure we are extremely grateful to Friends of the Cancer Centre who have had the courage and foresight to invest in the potential for better treatments and improved patient outcomes.

"By supporting 'Friends', the public helps ensure high quality cancer research can continue in Northern Ireland - helping patients now and in the future."



Staff and management of Rice's Supermarket Keady raised £5,000 at a pub quiz organised in memory of their friend and relative Sinead Rice-Arriota



Timothy Rea and Stephen Andrews from Ballynahinch raised over £5,000 by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro for 'Friends'.

Thank you to our Friends

Every day someone somewhere in Northern Ireland is doing something special for Friends of the Cancer Centre, helping not only to raise much needed funds but also extending the hand of friendship to people whose lives are touched by cancer.

We truly appreciate every gesture of support we receive from you and people like you. Still more importantly, your acts of friendship will be appreciated by the 11,000 people who will be diagnosed with cancer in Northern Ireland in 2012.

Friends of the Cancer Centre depends totally on donations from the public and the fact that the charity can do so much is due to the generosity of our friends right across Northern Ireland.

We haven't space to record every activity or donation - that would take a book! - but here are a few of the fantastic people who make it all happen.

Your help does not go unnoticed!



The people of Drumquin took part in a Strictly Come Dancing event in memory of Gavin Mimmagh and raised over £8,000



The occupational therapists in the Cancer Centre raised £746 at a staff coffee morning for Christmas



Paul Mason from Dundonald and his explorers from the 7th Belfast Scout Group walked Hadrian's wall and raised £2,251



The Rock the Lough event organised by our Fermanagh Support Group in Enniskillen raised £1,500



Kennedy's Pharmacy in Rasharkin raised £200 from donations that were given in return for passport signatures.



The BELB Busdrivers organised a Christmas Raffle and raised £1,335



Anne McNeely and family from Cloughmills raised £1,000 at a surprise birthday party for her husband.

'Friends' Social Work Fund

What can £200 do?...A great deal

It can help with travelling costs to and from hospital ... it can top up your heating ... buy new clothes when cancer or its treatment mean rapid weight gains or losses ... it can pay for equipment for the home ... or child care when you need it most.



Richard Hardy, the Social Work Team Manager at the Cancer Centre with Dawn McDowell, Social Worker.

The small grants programme, funded by Friends of the Cancer Centre and administered by the Social Work Team at the Cancer Centre, isn't about big cheques. It's about timely and thoughtful support given without fuss and, according to Social Worker Dawn McDowell small grants of up to £200 can provide a real lifeline.

She says, "In addition to the obvious problems, both physical and emotional, which cancer brings, it can also mean financial difficulties. You may find yourself out of work and spending recovery time at home, often on reduced income and eating into

savings, fretting about the cost of heating or home equipment, new clothes, or help with cleaning or childcare. When you aren't well to start with, those worries can seem insurmountable and just add to your distress.

"Thanks to help from Friends of the Cancer Centre we can step in and give support not only where

it's needed, but just as importantly, when it's needed without massive fuss or form-filling and, hopefully, without anyone seeing the support as any sort of a handout. We all need friends sometimes."

There are plans to extend the small grants programme in 2012, a move which Dawn and her colleagues welcome with huge enthusiasm. She says, "We just can't over-state the value of this really practical scheme and we're hoping that, in the months to come, even more people can benefit. I think everyone who supports Friends of the Cancer Centre with donations or fund-raising can be very pleased and proud of the positive impact their money is making on the lives of real people. In our experience, £200 can go a very long way."

In recent months, 'Friends' social work fund has provided:

- Respite breaks for patients and their families
- Assistance with household cleaning and heating expenses
- Travelling costs for patients visiting for treatment
- Christmas and birthday gifts for the children of patients
- Personal clothing and bedding
- Wheelchair hire

Make a run for it!

...at the Belfast City Marathon!

We're calling for good sports to step up to the plate and take part in the 2012 Belfast City Marathon on Monday 7th May to raise funds for Friends of the Cancer Centre.

Whether you're a finely honed athlete or just an armchair commentator, 2012 could provide your moment to shine in sport. Last year Friends' supporters used the race to bring home £40,000 in sponsorship, a portion of which came from the Dalton family who tackled the big Belfast race to celebrate the memory of their mother, Moya.

The family raised £4,500, money which made a huge positive impact on the lives of cancer patients and their families and this year they're hoping that even more people will volunteer to 'go for gold'!

Daughter Martina says, "It was just one amazing day and we all felt we were doing something positive to remember mum. We all wore Friends of the Cancer Centre t-shirts and we got mum's picture put on the back and we just went for it! Mum would probably have hated her picture on those t-shirts, but I'm sure they'd have given her a laugh, just the same!

She continued, "There's something for everybody in the Marathon and it really doesn't matter whether you do the full 26 miles or run in a relay team or just walk. Even if you have to stop and start, that's fine. The point is that everybody can take part and raise money for a really important good cause."



From serious and dedicated runners, to sporting wannabes, relay teams and fun runners (or walkers!) everyone can enjoy the great sense of achievement that comes with crossing that finishing line... but it's a sense of pride that can run even deeper.

If you're up for the mega-challenge of running the 26 miles then now is the time to lift the pace of training in preparation for the big day. However, even less hardy souls can play their part, tackling the route in 3.5 - 7 miles 'bite size chunks' as part of a Relay Team or by taking part in the 3 mile Marathon Day Fun Run.



The Dalton family

Up for the challenge?
Contact Kelly on info@friendsofthecancercentre.com or 028 9069 9393

Upcoming events 2012



Europa Abseil

Sunday 1st April

Europa Hotel, Belfast. Do something abseil-utely MAD this April Fool's Day, we dare you!

Registration: £25



Belvoir Forest and Lagan Valley Walk

Saturday 2nd June

Bring the pram, the dog, and as many people as you can! A light lunch will be provided. **Registration:** FREE



Belfast City Marathon

Monday 7th May

Run, walk, relay or fun run. Be a good sport and sign up now.

Contact 'Friends' for more information



Dragon Boat Race

Saturday 25th August

Belfast Boat Club

Registration: £10

Each boat requires 17 participants

Individuals/smaller groups can also be accommodated for.



Slieve Donard Challenge

Saturday 8th September

Climb 850m (2,789 ft) and reach the peak of the highest of the Mourne Mountains.

Registration: £10

OTHER RUNNING EVENTS...

DATE	EVENT
Sat 4 March	Larne Half Marathon
Sat 31 March	Omagh Half Marathon
Sun 15 April	Run Armagh and 5K
Mon 7 May	Coleraine 10K and Fun Run
Wed 23 May	Bann 10K and 4K Fun Run
Sun 3 June	Newry Marathon and Fun Run
Wed 20 June	Lisburn Half Marathon, 10K and Fun Run
Fri 29 June	Ards Half Marathon
July TBC	Cookstown Half Marathon
Sept TBC	Waterside Half Marathon
Mon 29 Oct	Dublin Marathon

For more information on any of the events, contact Kelly on 028 9069 9393

