

# Power of Friends

AUTUMN / WINTER 2020

Friends<sup>of the</sup>  
cancer centre



YEARS  
of care and support

## Our very own healthcare heroes

Our Lung Cancer Clinical  
Nurse Specialist and her  
work on the frontline  
of COVID – 19



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How we have been  
supporting people  
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To all our amazing  
friends

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How your support  
today can help our  
work tomorrow



**THANK YOU TO OUR  
NHS & KEYWORKERS**

It has been an incredibly challenging few months for everyone, but we would like to say a really big thank you to all our funded staff, those who work throughout cancer services and all key workers for all they have been doing to keep us safe.

Friends of the Cancer Centre proudly funds and supports 38 members of staff who are supporting local families through this difficult time.

**To help us continue this work we need your help now, more than ever.**

**To donate please visit [www.friendsofthecancercentre.com](http://www.friendsofthecancercentre.com)**



## A warm welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter, Power of Friends.

In our last edition, we were filled with excitement as we told you about our plans to mark the charity's 35th anniversary this year. Little did we know what was ahead of us. In recent months COVID-19 has changed all our lives and just like many other organisations, we have had to adapt our plans and find new and innovative ways of continuing our work.

While many things have changed in recent months, our commitment to supporting patients, families and staff has not.

COVID-19 has brought huge challenges to the health service, including cancer services. That is why we have worked hard, harder than ever, to ensure that our work reached those who needed it. We are proud that our staff, including our specialist nurses, have continued their vital work in the most difficult of circumstances, supporting their patients every step of the way. You can read more about how we have been supporting people during lockdown on page six.

On behalf of everyone at Friends of the Cancer Centre, and the people we support, we would like to give a heartfelt thank you to our funded staff, staff across cancer services and all key workers who have been working hard to keep us safe.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you, our wonderful supporters, for your continued friendship during these difficult months. We have been humbled by the lengths you have gone to, raising money for the charity in the most creative of ways and we are incredibly grateful for your support.

However, we cannot ignore that we are facing challenging times ahead. While our fundraising events have been cancelled, there are still lots of ways you can show your support for the charity. Every penny will make a big difference, now more than ever.

Thank you for being a friend.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen Shaw".

**Colleen Shaw**

Chief Executive

## Be A Friend

While our plans for our anniversary year have changed due to COVID-19, we are still marking this milestone year and we would love you to be part of it. We are calling on our amazing supporters to Be A Friend and show your support. You can take part in a virtual challenge, become a regular donor or share with us how the charity has helped you or your family over the last 35 years.

Find out how you can Be A Friend at [www.friendsofthecancercentre.com](http://www.friendsofthecancercentre.com)

## Our very own NHS heroes

We have always been incredibly proud of the staff that we fund throughout cancer services. Their commitment to their jobs, and more importantly their patients, has always been evident but in recent weeks, they have gone above and beyond for the people they care for.



Stephanie Todd

**Like all NHS staff, our team of 38 funded staff have been working incredibly hard during these uncertain times to care for patients. Wonderful people like our Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist, Stephanie Todd.**

As well as continuing to offer vital specialist support for her patients with lung cancer, Stephanie has also shared her expertise with the team on the frontline of caring for Covid-19 patients. In March, Stephanie and

her colleague, Carol, embarked on a training programme for all medics and nurses working in the Nightingale Hospital (the tower block at Belfast City Hospital), sharing their knowledge and insight into respiratory care for those now battling coronavirus.

Talking about sharing her expert knowledge, Stephanie said: "A key factor in our battle against COVID-19 was bringing together as much knowledge as we could. I was able to use my experience and share techniques that I

use in the day to day care of my patients with lung cancer, to advise and train staff working on the frontline of COVID-19, giving them the tools they needed to care for people with the virus.

“One aspect of our training focused on managing the symptoms of those who were hospitalised, but not considered in need of ICU care. This included advising on pain relief, ways to ease coughs, controlling very high temperatures, as well as advising on what drugs could make patients more comfortable. Sadly, as we know, many people were not able to fight the virus, so another part of our training focused on how staff could make patients as comfortable as possible in their final days.

“I have nothing but admiration for the staff who were working directly with patients with coronavirus. They worked tirelessly, ensuring they could provide the best care for every one of their patients.”

As well as training staff working with patients with COVID-19, Stephanie also continued to provide expert care to her own patients with

lung cancer throughout lockdown.

“It was a really worrying time for patients – the fear of a respiratory virus when you have lung cancer understandably made so many of them anxious. We continued to support them all through lockdown, adapting how we delivered treatment, care and support with more phone calls and remote support taking the place of

face to face consultations.

However, we got through it and I’m now looking towards resuming all of our clinics in both the Cancer Centre and Mater Hospital, which feels like a really positive step forward.

“I feel proud that I have been able to contribute to Northern Ireland’s COVID-19 response. I’m also very thankful to Friends of the Cancer Centre and the

charity’s amazing supporters. I never could have imagined that my post would be needed in a pandemic, but if it wasn’t for the charity my post would not be here. Not only would my lung cancer patients be affected, but so too would all those who have been affected by COVID-19.”



## Clap for all our carers

It was not just Stephanie who found herself adapting her role in recent weeks. Other staff were redeployed at the height of the pandemic, moving to frontline wards to help their colleagues as they cared for patients with coronavirus. Our research staff were also able to use their expertise to help with COVID-19 testing while their normal work on a range of clinical trials was put on hold. All cancer service staff continued to provide vital treatment and care, adapting how they do their job, quickly implementing virtual support and increasing phone consultations to ensure all patients were supported.

We would like to say a huge thank you to all staff for their hard work and dedication.

## Always by your side

The last few months have been an unprecedented time for the charity sector, with many charities closing their doors and suspending or withdrawing their vital services for patients.

**While other charities have pulled back during this crisis, we have not.**

Since lockdown came into effect, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that patients continue to receive the care and support they need. That's just what friends do. In recent weeks we have:



Continued to fund 38 additional members of staff through this crisis, including 11 specialist nurses who have contributed over 9,000 hours of care in the last 6 months.



We have provided over £23,000 in financial support to patients in the last 4 months alone.



We have purchased 10 tablets to help patients who couldn't see family and friends stay in touch with loved ones.



We have worked to replace the face to face services that we fund, such as our yoga classes, with online videos that people can use at home.



We supported the development of restoration spaces, also known as wobble rooms, which provide staff with a quiet space to stop and rest.



We have even helped one of our nurses host an 18th birthday party for a young patient celebrating their special day on the ward, without their family.

We are committed to continuing this vital work and ensuring that you and your loved ones receive the support you need. If you are in need of financial support, please contact the hospital's social work team and if you would like to find out more about the online resources available, such as yoga, please contact the team at the Macmillan Support and Information Centre on 028 9063 8980.

# Be Cancer Aware

In recent weeks and months, our thoughts have rightly been focused on coronavirus and the challenge and changes it has brought to our health service, as well as our day-to-day lives. Coronavirus and weeks in lockdown have also meant many of us are more wary of visiting our GP, which has resulted in a reduction in the number of referrals of suspected cancer cases.

However, cancer has not gone away. We understand that noticing changes to your body, or finding a lump, is really worrying but we are encouraging everyone with any concerns to see their GP. Early diagnosis is important as it means your treatment can start at the earliest opportunity. Most importantly, we also want to highlight the great care and treatment that is available to anyone who is diagnosed at this already worrying time.

To help make us all more cancer aware, we have two health awareness campaigns aimed at encouraging women and men to be aware of the signs and symptoms of breast cancer and testicular cancer.



## Talking Balls

Our Talking Balls self-check card is a wallet size step-by-step guide on how men can check themselves in just a few minutes. Not only that, but we've also got a Talking Balls stress ball, the perfect reminder to get checking.

## Breast Bud

Checking your breasts and chest every month is a simple way you can stay breast aware. To help you get in the habit, we have a handy hanger which you can pop in your shower, with a step-by-step guide on how to carry out a self-examination as well as some of the things you should look out for.



You can order your Talking Balls self-check cards and your Breast Bud self-check hanger from our website [www.friendsofthecancercentre.com/shop](http://www.friendsofthecancercentre.com/shop)

# Thank you to our fantastic friends

A BIG thank you to all our wonderful friends who have been raising money at home during lockdown. Your support means so much to the charity, particularly at the moment. If you're inspired to get involved and raise money for the charity we would love to hear from you.

Get in touch [info@friendsofthecancercentre.com](mailto:info@friendsofthecancercentre.com)



Belfast Operatic Company



Marian and Louise McKenna



Richard Murphy



Jim Kane



Stephen and Emma-Louise Cunningham

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED



The O'Neill family



Randalstown Ladies Hockey Club



Aaron Watson and grandson Cole



Ruth Young



Cairnshill Primary School



Greg Quinn



J P Taggart



Nicole Keizer



Lauren Callender and her mum Davina



Gemma Armstrong and her daughter Colbie



Ian Moore and family



The Kennedy family



Glenn Devine-Caldwell and his grandfather, Raymond

*"I wanted to help a charity that helped me."*

The support we receive from the local community is at the heart of everything we do. In recent weeks, despite a global pandemic, this support has continued and we would like to thank all those who have been raising money for us in the most creative ways.



Norman Sleator

**People like Norman Sleator (65) from Belfast, who took part in our 2.6 Challenge while shielding at home after being diagnosed with bowel cancer last year. As part of the challenge, Norman walked an incredible 260 miles in 52 days raising over £2,870 for the charity. This is Norman's story.**

"At the end of January 2019, a Bowel Cancer Screening Kit arrived in the post. I'd had clear results on two previous occasions, so wasn't worried about sending my samples this time. However, the tests confirmed the presence of blood in my stools and a colonoscopy revealed the presence of a sizeable growth in my bowel which needed to be surgically removed. Thankfully, a CT scan revealed nothing sinister elsewhere in my body.



"I had my surgery on 10th May last year and it was a success, but a course of preventative chemotherapy was also required. After a few weeks of recovery at home I met my oncologist and a specialist nurse. This meeting left me thinking that, whilst I wouldn't wish for chemotherapy, if needs must then these are the right people to help me, in the right place."

Norman began four cycles of chemotherapy towards the end of July and this treatment was carried out in Cancer Centre's Bridgewater Suite.

"My impressions of the Bridgewater Suite were very positive and the staff were professional, caring and compassionate. This is where I first learned of the support provided by Friends of the Cancer Centre. From the free cups of tea and coffee to the newspapers and magazines, all of these things were very welcome distractions on busy clinic mornings."

Norman finished his chemotherapy treatment in October last year, but due to coronavirus, he has been shielding at home and using this time to support Friends of the Cancer Centre.

"Each day I have been taking walks around my garden and this has given me time to reflect on the first class treatment and care that I have received. I felt that I would like to give something back and use my daily walks as an opportunity to support the charity. When I heard about the 2.6 Challenge, I thought that was something I could do. Knowing that lockdown would continue longer for me, due to being in the vulnerable category, I decided to do a 2 x 26 day ramble - 52 days in total - and I also incorporated the Belvoir Walk At Home into my challenge.

"You can see my elation as I smashed through the finish line. I am so proud to have raised over £2,870 which is well in excess of my expectations so sincere thanks to my kind and generous supporters. I'd planned to walk 228 miles, but actually covered 260 miles in 52 days, averaging 5 miles per day. By coincidence 260 miles is approximately 10 marathons, which I think is ok for the 2.6 Challenge.

"It has been a really strange time for everyone, but I am delighted that I could do something so positive during lockdown. The charity needs our support now more than ever and I would encourage anyone reading this, to do what they can to help as your support will go on to help many others just like me."

## Thank You

To everyone who took part in the Belvoir Walk At Home, raising over £3,000 to support our work and all those who took part in the 2.6 Challenge, raising almost £12,500.

# Corporate support continues through Covid-19

We have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from our corporate partners. Despite facing their own challenges, they have come forwards to ensure that their support for local families continues. Each company is finding a way to raise awareness, fundraise and offer practical support. These are exactly the kinds of friends who make what we do possible.

## Gifts-In-Kind

### The Tomorrow Lab



Our friends and long-term corporate partners from The Tomorrow Lab and The Pierce Partnership have helped in practical ways, sharing their skills and knowledge to enable the charity to reach out and support patients and their families. From creating step by step guides to help patients communicate with their families, to redesigning our tea and coffee cups, as well as taking part in the 2.6 Challenge and raising money to support our work.

John Mulholland Motors and Belfast International Airport have gifted radio advertising, to help us share messages about cancer awareness and reach even more families so they know we are still here to support them if they need it.

## Taking Part in our events

### we'reasure Insurance – Belvoir Walk At Home



Employees at we'reasure insurance chose to support Friends of the Cancer Centre due to the support received by families in their local community. Some fundraising activities have may been hampered due to Covid-19 but Scott Collins (Business Development Executive at we'reasure) took up the challenge of the Belvoir Walk At Home.

### Applegreen 10K-A-DAY Challenge



The continued support of our friends at Applegreen, who have now raised over £120,000 in two years, is making a huge difference to young people with cancer in Northern Ireland. In July, employees across their Lisburn North, Lisburn South, Ballymena and Templepatrick sites took it in turns to cycle 10K a day in store to raise money and awareness.

## Organising their own events

### Halifax around the world in 8 days



Now in the third year working alongside the charity, the team from the Fraud department at Halifax in Belfast have put their best feet forward, taking part in the site wide fundraiser 'Around the World in 8 Days' in June.

## Dr McAleer back on his bike

**Dr Seamus McAleer, an oncologist at the Cancer Centre in Belfast, is back in the saddle as he undertakes his very own Friends Everest Challenge.**

Dr McAleer will be putting his pedal power to the test as he takes on the hills around his home, climbing 29,029 feet over two months, which is the equivalent height of Mount Everest.

Dr McAleer began in early August and he will aim to climb over 3,600 feet per week in order to cross the finish line by the start of October. As well as being motivated to raise money for the charity as we face difficulties as a result of COVID-19, Dr McAleer is also taking on the challenge to support our work following his own cancer diagnosis earlier this year.

Commenting on what inspired him to take on the challenge, Dr McAleer said: "I've always been a great supporter of Friends of the Cancer Centre, as my patients and many others rely on its work every day. The charity funds vital additional staff, precious equipment and helps us offer new and better treatments to our patients through its support of clinical trials.

"I also have some personal motivation, as I have recently been touched by cancer myself and spent lockdown recovering from surgery. Cycling is part of my recovery, and a great opportunity to support the charity in its 35th anniversary year and at a time when it really needs it."

This is not the first time Dr McAleer has got on his bike for Friends of the Cancer Centre. Over the years he has completed several cycles, including the Camino Santiago, Mizen to Malin and last year's Soft Border Cycle which have raised over £200,000.

Recognising how the charity has been negatively impacted by COVID-19, Dr McAleer said: "COVID-19 has had a big impact on the charity's ability to raise money, with cancelled events and fewer people in the community being able to raise money as they normally would. I wanted to get back on my bike and do what I can to support this great cause and help ensure its vital work can continue."

**You can make a donation to Dr McAleer's Everest Cycle Challenge by visiting [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/seamus-mcaleer2](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/seamus-mcaleer2)**



### Be Inspired

If you have been inspired by Dr McAleer's cycle challenge and would like to raise money to support our work we would love to hear from you.

We understand with social distancing and other restrictions that raising money is difficult at the moment, but we are here to support you.

Email us [info@friendsofthecancercentre.com](mailto:info@friendsofthecancercentre.com) or call 028 9069 9393.

## Ways to donate

Your support and generosity is at the heart of everything we do. As a charity, we rely entirely on our amazing friends making donations and raising money, which enables us to fund additional staff, invest in vital research and make patients and families as comfortable as possible when going through treatment.

However, this year is set to be the most challenging for the charity, as we face a dramatic reduction in income as a result of cancelling events due to COVID-19.

That is why your support is so important, now more than ever. If you can and would like to make a donation, there are lots of ways to do it.



**By post** Send a cheque to Friends of the Cancer Centre, Cancer Centre, Belfast City Hospital, Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 7AB



**By Phone** Call us on **028 9069 9393** and we will process your donation over the phone.



**Via our website** Visit [www.friendsofthecancercentre.com/donate](http://www.friendsofthecancercentre.com/donate) and make a donation in just a few clicks



**JustGiving** Visit [www.justgiving.com/fcc](http://www.justgiving.com/fcc) and don't forget to Gift Aid your donation



**Facebook donate** Click the '**donate**' button at the top of our profile. Or why not create a fundraiser and ask your Facebook friends to donate?



**Text Donate** To donate £3 now, text **Friends** to **70660**.

Each text costs £3 plus your standard network charge. Friends of the Cancer Centre receives 100% of your donation. You must be over 16 years old and please obtain bill payer's permission. Charity Number NIC101345. Contact us on 028 9069 9393.



**Become a regular donor** You can make a monthly donation via Just Giving, a standing order, or donating through your payroll scheme in work.



**Become a Forever Friend** Leaving a gift in your Will is an amazing way of continuing your support, long into the future, helping future generations to live healthier, happier, longer lives.

## Looking to the future

As a charity, we continually look to the future and at ways in which we can support the ongoing development of patient care.

It has been an incredibly challenging time for everyone, and COVID-19 has certainly brought with it challenges for our future work. However, we remain committed to supporting patients and their families now, and in the future. While the world stopped at the height of the pandemic, we endeavoured to keep the charity moving forward by agreeing funding for new projects which will make the hospital a more comfortable environment.

In the last few weeks alone, we have approved a number of new staff posts, including a Clinical Nurse Specialist for Secondary Breast Cancer and a social worker dedicated to supporting young patients and their families. This is only made possible thanks to your continued support.

### Meet Laurena

We would like to extend a really warm welcome to our new Social Worker for Teenagers and Young Adults, Laurena Kane. Laurena, who is the first social worker the charity has funded, will provide practical and emotional support to help young people, and their family, through treatment. Friends of the Cancer Centre is very proud to be the largest funder of the regional Teenage and Young Adult Service, which supports young people aged 14 -24 years old with cancer across Northern Ireland. Our latest investment supports our ongoing commitment to our young people, through our two wonderful Clinical Nurse Specialists for Teenagers and Young Adults, Renée and Bronagh.

Commenting on the charity's support, Laurena said: "I am really delighted to be a member of Team Friends and I would like to sincerely thank the charity for supporting my post. I've been working within the TYA team for many years now, working alongside the charity's vital nurses and I've seen the incredible difference the charity's support makes to the lives of young people in Northern Ireland. I would like to thank everyone who supports Friends of the Cancer Centre which in turn provides essential funding for these vital posts."



# 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Raffle

HELP US RAISE £10,000

1<sup>st</sup> PRIZE

OXYGEN GO!  
ELECTRIC BIKE

Generously donated by E Bikes NI



Help us raise £10,000 to support local families

Our exciting 35th Anniversary raffle gives you the chance to WIN some fabulous prizes while supporting the charity's vital work. The prizes have been donated so all of the money raised from the raffle will be used to make a difference to local families

2<sup>nd</sup> PRIZE

FLAT SCREEN TELEVISION

3<sup>rd</sup> PRIZE

£100 TESCO VOUCHERS

Tickets

£1 Each

Raffle draw takes place on Wednesday 16th December at 4pm. Please ensure all sold and unsold tickets are returned before this date using the FREEPOST envelope provided. Payment can be made by cheque or by phone. Please call us on (028) 90699393 if you have any queries, require additional tickets or could help us by selling tickets to your family and friends.

Legal information: Each raffle entry is £1. You must be 16 years or over to purchase or sell a raffle ticket. Underage gambling is an offence. Licensed and regulated by Belfast City Council. Full terms and conditions on our website or from the Promoter, Colleen Shaw, at the address below.

Friends of the Cancer Centre, NI Cancer Centre, Belfast City Hospital, Lisburn Road, BT9 7AB  
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