

March 2025

We hope you enjoy the latest news from Cancer Society Waikato/Bay of Plenty.

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please let us know.

If you need support and haven't heard from us in a while - please get in touch.

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Waikato/Bay of Plenty Division
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End Cervical Cancer

Important update: Our Hamilton office is now located at 115 Lake Road, Hamilton inside The Cancer Society's Lions Lodge.



Kezia's story: From full-time carer to cancer advocate

Kezia Kurian had finished university and was preparing to leave home to study overseas when her mother suddenly became sick.

"She caught Covid and was having trouble breathing so we took her to the hospital. They had a look and asked if she had any other issues going on. My mum had suspected she had cancer but she didn't want to say anything because she thought she'd be a burden to the family."

Investigation quickly revealed that Kezia's mother had breast cancer, and it was stage four. The cancer had also spread to her lungs, meaning that surgery was no longer an option. Instead, she was recommended a series of experimental drugs.

"Unfortunately, she had an allergic reaction and her left lung completely collapsed. It wasn't looking good so the doctor recommended that we pull her off everything."

With her mum needing constant care and both siblings overseas, Kezia made the decision to pause her studies and stay home as her Mum's primary carer.

"There was a lot to do as she was almost bedridden. Her lung was causing a lot of issues and that meant a lot of hospital runs. We were in hospital for about two months. That wasn't easy as it was during Covid, and I also took on the responsibilities at home because Mum runs the ship."

The experience brought Kezia a mixture of emotions, not just about the diagnosis but that her mum hadn't shared her suspicions with anyone.

"We're pretty close, I felt as a daughter that I didn't do my part because she felt she couldn't open up about this. I felt lost - when your Mum's not able to do anything, what do you do? I just had to do anything to make her better again."

Kezia's story (cont.)

In place of active treatment, Kezia's mother began taking a drug to reduce her estrogen levels and, amazingly, a follow-up PET scan showed that the cancer cells had become inactive.

The return of her Mum's health meant that Kezia could once more explore study options abroad. She'd discovered New Zealand in hospital with her mum, where they'd watch shows together.

"New Zealand had become my dream destination. I'd heard a lot about this course [at the University of Waikato] because it could hone all my skills in engineering and business together, and that was something other universities weren't offering."

Kezia arrived in Hamilton in early 2024 and the first thing she did was investigate ways she could help others in her new home. She discovered the University of Waikato's Employability Plus Award (EPA) programme, which helps students gain work-ready skills by connecting them with local volunteering opportunities.

"In India, you don't have many opportunities to volunteer. It's very big here and that really caught my attention. I looked at it as a way to meet more people and mingle with the community, and I had a lot of time on my hands."

It was through EPA that Kezia first encountered the Cancer Society's Relay For Life fundraising event and signed up as a volunteer, agreeing to donate two hours of her time. But when the day came around, she stayed the whole day.

"It was so much fun, helping out and talking to everyone there. A lot of the stories we heard were relatable. You had sisters, brothers, all going through the same thing that you've been through at some point. Everybody was in a very positive mood because they all know they're doing their little bit. We even ended up running a few laps ourselves."

Kezia will now be returning to the next Relay For Life event on Saturday 29 March, which in an exciting twist will be held at the University of Waikato.

Relay For Life sees teams 'relay' over twelve hours to live music and entertainment while fundraising to help support the Cancer Society's free services in the Waikato. Kezia is now encouraging the public to get involved because she knows first-hand the impact cancer can have.

"Everyone knows cancer but they don't take it seriously until it hits home. Cancer disrupted my life. I want to spread awareness and that's why Relay connects with me. Come and see what the community is doing for each other – it's so much fun!"



Sonesavanh Larnkham
PhD Scholarship Recipient

New research announced

Sadly, ovarian cancer is sadly often diagnosed too late. Research to help diagnose it at an early stage, when treatment is more likely to be successful, is therefore critical.

That's why we are thrilled to announce Victoria University of Wellington researchers, Dr Sarah Sczelecki and Sonesavanh Larnkham (pictured). They are both conducting research to help advance the early detection of ovarian cancer and we are pleased to share they are among the latest researchers given a funding boost from the Cancer Society.



Larelle & Claire in Mangakino

Larelle and Claire (Cancer Society navigators) had the gazebo up and the smiles on over in Mangakino today. They joined the Hikini Te Ora Whānau Hauora Day to help spread the word about the free services available to whānau after a cancer diagnosis.

It was great to have a presence in Mangakino so we could connect with the community and local hauora providers. Props to Hikini Te Ora for putting the event together and for being the driving force helping whānau create and achieve their aspirations!

Claire said they have been "very busy and everyone has been so appreciative of our support!"

Join Relay For Life

Relay For Life is an incredible that brings the community together to celebrate, remember and fight back ® against cancer by raising funds for the Cancer Society's free services. A huge thank you to our lead sponsors: ACLX and The University of Waikato!

Date: Saturday 29 March

Time: 9am-9pm

Venue: University of Waikato

You can sign up on the website by visiting relayforlife.org.nz then search for the Hamilton event or scan the QR code below.

What's on:

- Celebration Lap (formerly Survivor's Lap)
- Celebration Morning Tea (free for people who have or have had cancer - see below)
- Candlelight Ceremony
- Closing Ceremony
- NEW family games
- Live music and performances
- Food trucks
- Spot prizes and more

Register as part of a team below:



Celebration Morning Tea - RSVP now

We invite everyone who has or has had cancer to join us at our FREE Celebration Morning Tea at Relay For life held from 9.15am. You are also invited to be part of our opening lap at 9am. Spaces are limited to 100 guests; RSVP's essential. Please scan the QR code below to fill in the RSVP form or contact fundraising@cancersociety.org.nz



Red Stag Rotorua Marathon

How about tackling a marathon past world-renowned geysers, sulphur lakes and waterfalls? The prestigious Red Stag Rotorua Marathon has chosen the Cancer Society Waikato/Bay of Plenty as their charity of choice and we are so excited! Maybe you know someone who'd love to tick this off their bucketlist? Or maybe someone looking for a challenge while also raising much-needed funds for the Cancer Society? Please encourage them to sign up on the Marathon website - link below. Walkers and runners welcome; varying lengths available.

Date: Saturday 3rd May

To signup, visit bit.ly/MarathonCancerSociety



Gift basket donation

A huge thank you to the Women's Institute of Matamata for their kind donation (see above). We received these goodies after our Lodge team stopped by to give a short presentation about what we do at the Lodge. Thank you so much for your donation!

He iti tangata e tupu - he iti toki e iti tonu

People grow, adzes remain small - people are more valuable than material possessions



Mango almond smoothie bowl recipe



For a healthy, easy and quick recipe that ticks all the boxes when you can't eat much, try this recipe. Manoges are a SUPER FOOD that are high in vitamins and fibre, especially vitamin C, antioxidants and mangiferin.

Serves 1. Prep: 10 mins

Ingredients

- ½ cup frozen chopped mango
- ½ cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup frozen sliced banana
- ¼ cup plain unsweetened almond milk
- 5 tablespoons unsalted almonds, divided
- ⅛ teaspoon ground allspice
- ¼ cup raspberries
- ½ teaspoon honey

Method

1. Blend mango, yogurt, banana, almond milk, 3 tablespoons almonds and allspice in a blender until very smooth.
2. Pour the smoothie into a bowl and top with raspberries, the remaining 2 tablespoons almonds and honey.

Tip: Use frozen fruit instead of fresh to ensure your smoothie bowl has the right consistency!

Need support?

Our supportive care nurses are here to help. Contact us on 0800 22 77 44

Sunscreen stands available

The Cancer Society provide sunscreen stands to the community for a small charge (this is waived if you purchase sunscreen). This is a great way to show that your event is SunSmart and you are helping attendees be safe in the sun. Autumn is no time to slack off on SunSmart practices as the UV rays are still strong enough to cause damage.

Please contact admin@cancersociety.org.nz to enquire about sunscreen stands.



Support groups

Our groups provide a relaxed space to connect with others and share experiences and knowledge. Support groups are open to people who have had a cancer diagnosis and/or their carers.

Western Bay of Plenty

Katikati prostate cancer support group

When: Meets every second month

Where: 181 Park Road
Katikati

Contact: Rod on 027 590 9710 or
Stuart on 027 774 8933 for details
about the next meeting.

Mt Maunganui Walk for Wellness

Our weekly walking group is an opportunity to walk, chat and build fitness in a supportive way.

When: Every Monday (except public holidays)
9.30am - 11.15am (approx).
Optional cafe stop at Coffee Club.

Where: Meet at the green restrooms halfway
down Pilot Bay.

Contact: Rozie, 021 1630 739

Prostate cancer support group

Hosted by Prostate Cancer Foundation

When: First Thursday of every month,
6pm

Where: Club Mount Maunganui, 45 Kawaka St,
Mount Maunganui

Contact: Ian Armstrong, 021 504 093

Raft support group

When: Third Tuesday of every month,
10-11.30am

Where: Classic Flyer's Aviation Museum
9 Jean Batten Drive

Contact: Rozie, 021 1630 739

Oesophageal, throat and stomach support group

Meets bimonthly on a Friday.

When: 10.00-11.30am

Where: Daffodil Cottage, 21 Twelfth Ave,
Tauranga

Contact: Phone Lyn for details, 021 804 041

Katikati support group

Gentle tai chi exercise followed by morning tea.

When: Every Friday during term time,
9.30-10.30am

Where: The Club (old RSA)
corner Henry and Main Roads,
Katikati

Contact: Helen, 021 025 68992

Eastern Bay of Plenty

For more information on support groups in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, please contact Leona on 021 713 096.

Whakatāne Walk & Talk group

Weekly walking group meeting for a cuppa afterwards. **If you would like to join us just for a cuppa, please meet us at The Comm at 11am.**

When: Every Thursday
10am

Where: Whakatāne Information Centre
entrance, Quay St, Whakatāne

Contact: Kaye, 027 694 7052

Kawerau support group

When: Third Monday of the month,
10am-12noon

Where: Ground floor boardroom, KEA Centre,
60 Onslow St, Kawerau

Ōpōtiki support group

When: Second MONDAY of the month,
10.30am-noon

Where: Te Ao Hou Trust,
38 King Street, Ōpōtiki

Whakatāne support group

When: First Tuesday of the month,
10am-12noon

Where: Whakatāne Lyceum Club, 58 Domain
Road, Whakatāne

Whakatāne prostate cancer support group

When: Third Monday of the month
7.00pm

Where: East bay Primary Health Alliance
5 Louvain Street Whakatane

Contact: Mark Wootton ph 027 273 1437

Waikato groups

Hamilton Walk & Talk group

When: Every Tuesday, 9.30am
Where: Meet at Hamilton Gardens Cafe entrance. Those not wishing to walk can join the group at the cafe at 10am
Contact: Lynette 021 177 9543 or Jenny 0274 946 808 to confirm dates

Matamata support group

When: First Tuesday of every month, 10-11.30am
Where: Railside by the Green
41a Hetana St, Matamata

Morrinsville support group

Facilitated by Cancer Society volunteers.
When: Third Wednesday of every month, 10.15am-12noon
Where: St Joseph's Church, 1 Victoria St, Morrinsville
Contact: Lenie, 021 100 4320

Paeroa support group

When: Second Thursday of every month, 10.30am-12noon
Where: St John's Hall
31 Belmont Rd, Paeroa

Te Aroha support group

Facilitated by Cancer Society volunteers.
When: Second Tuesday of every month, 10-11.30am
Where: The RSA
67 Rewi St, Te Aroha
Contact: Laurel, 027 274 1252

Te Awamutu support group

When: First Wednesday of every month, 10am-12noon
Where: Te Awamutu Baptist Church
106 Teasdale St, Te Awamutu

Te Awamutu carers support group

When: Second Wednesday of every month, 1.30-3.30pm
Where: Te Awamutu Baptist Church
106 Teasdale St, Te Awamutu

Taumarunui support group

When: Fourth Tuesday of every month, 11am-1pm
Where: REAP, 115 Hakiha Street, Taumarunui
Contact: David, 027 815 4447

Cambridge Coffee & Chat

When: Fourth Tuesday of every month
10.30-11.30am
Where: Community House, 193 Shakespeare St, Leamington, Cambridge

Tokoroa support group

When: Third Tuesday of every month, 10am-12noon
Where: St Marks Presbyterian Church, 83 Bridge St, Tokoroa

Prostate cancer support group

When: First Tuesday of every month, 7-8.30pm
Where: Cancer Society's Lions Lodge, 32 Tainui St, Hamilton
Contact: Kris, 021 032 4481

Hamilton mutual evening support group

When: Second Wednesday of every month
7-8.30pm
Where: Cancer Society's Lions Lodge, 32 Tainui St, Hamilton

Hamilton mutual support group

When: Second Tuesday of every month
10-12pm
Where: Cancer Society's Lions Lodge, 32 Tainui St, Hamilton

Head & Neck support group

When: First Thursday of every month
10am-12noon
Where: Cancer Society's Lions Lodge,
32 Tainui Street, Hamilton

Cambridge Prostate Cancer support group

An informal forum for men to share their personal experiences of prostate cancer.

When: Contact Ron for more details
Where: ONYX Cafe & Bar, 70 Alpha St, Cambridge
Contact: Ron, 027 276 0336

Aratika Cancer Trust - holistic support

Aratika Cancer Trust offers integrative and holistic programmes to empower people living with cancer. To find out more, please visit www.aratikatrust.co.nz

Support groups cont.

Thames men's space

When: Wednesday 5 February
10-11.30am
Where: Thames Community Centre
609 Mackay St, Thames
Contact: Lareece, 027 880 5644

Whitianga Coffee & Chat

In partnership with Mercury Bay Cancer Support.

When: First Friday of the month,
10-11.30am
Where: St Andrew's Church Hall
82 Albert St, Whitianga

Whangamatā support group

When: Fourth Monday of every month
10.30-11.30am
Where: Varies (please phone Caro for
location)
Contact: Lareece, 027 880 5644

Coromandel support group

When: Second Tuesday of every
month, 10-11.30am.
Where: Hato Hone St John's Building,
285/345 Tiki Road, Coromandel

Lymphoedema info sessions

When: 20 March, 17 April, 29 May, 26 June,
31 July, 28 August, 25 September, 30
October, 27 November, 18 December.
Where: Cancer Society's Lions Lodge, 32
Tainui St, Hamilton
Time: 1-2pm

Look Good Feel Better -free wellbeing classes for cancer patients

Look Good Feel Better provides a range of free sessions, for anyone with any cancer. at any stage. It is time away from the world of diagnosis, treatment and recovery, to help you navigate cancer with confidence, feel stronger and live better. Some wellbeing classes are hosted at the Cancer Society's Lions Lodge. You can sign up or join a virtual session by visiting their website at: www.lgfb.co.nz/

Rotorua/Taupō

Rotorua support group

When: First Tuesday of every month,
10.30am-noon
Where: Cancer Society's Rotorua office
1235 Ranolf St, Rotorua
Contact: Claire: 021 1630 739

Weekly Walk & Talk support group

A warm welcome to join us each week to support walking and wellness. All levels catered for.

When: Every Thursday, 9.30-11am
Where: outside Sequoia Cafe
Tarawera Rd, Rotorua
Contact: Claire: 021 1630 739

Taupō support group

When: Third Thursday of each month
10.30-12noon
Contact: Rozie, 021 1630 739

Blood cancer support group

We warmly welcome you to a friendly environment where you are welcome to share your thoughts and experiences while gaining personal and practical support. **RSVPs required.** Please enquire for more information

Contact: Sean 027 245 0933 or email
seanr@leukaemia.org.nz

Rotorua prostate cancer support group

We warmly welcome you to our newly established support group in Rotorua. The dates, times and venue may change monthly so please contact Heinz for more information.

Contact: Heinz 027 570 7601
rotorua@prostate.org.nz

Rotorua ostomy support group

When: Third Wednesday of every month
For details on time and venue, please contact:
Margaret, 07 348 5882 / Mike, 07 349 6609

Rotorua young person's support group

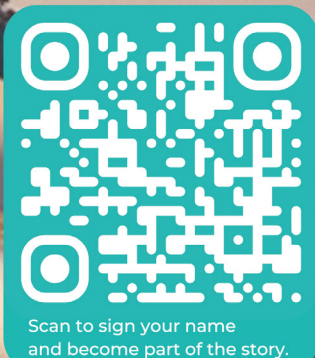
Run by Aratika Cancer Trust, this support group connects those navigating cancer while juggling a young family or career.

When: For details on date, time and venue -
please contact below
Contact: Susie or Shelley 022 429 5063

“Who will help end this cancer?” she called.

Elimination of cervical cancer in our lifetime
is within reach.

Be part of the story that ends cervical cancer.



Scan to sign your name
and become part of the story.



**Cancer
Society**

Te Kāhui Matepukupuku
o Aotearoa

endcervicalcancer.org.nz