

Fight Cancer News

Newsletter of the Fight Cancer Foundation

John Opie House - Helping Those in Need

Susan, a devout Buddhist, and David both have a love of wildlife and they wanted to devote some time to wildlife conservation and to find a more peaceful existence away from the fast pace of city life, so they moved from Adelaide to rural northwest Tasmania in 2003. Susan had worked in media and marketing for many years and then became a published author of children's stories. David served his country as a UN Peace Keeper in East Timor.

Susan has had a chronic medical condition since she was 15, and ten years ago when her condition worsened, David retired from the military to become her full time carer.

Late in 2008, David became ill with a serious lung problem which was totally unexpected, as he was a non-smoker, non-drinker and a fit ex-army man. He was diagnosed with sarcoidosis, an auto immune condition that can affect every organ in the body. As part of the diagnosis, David received a full body scan which revealed something unrelated to the initial diagnosis: a rare and life threatening adrenal tumour, and his condition worsened.

At the time of David's diagnosis Susan was not only housebound, but often confined to bed and on very heavy medications for severe and chronic pain. She was determined to be with David every step of the way, and challenged herself to walk

unaided, weaned herself off as many medications as she could and started to drive again for the first time in many years.

They had no family in Tasmania, and would get up in the middle of the night and drive six hours to Hobart for David's medical appointments. Unable to afford the cost of a hotel, they would make the long tiring journey home in the same day. On one visit, Susan made enquiries from the hospital social worker about the availability of local affordable accommodation for patients and their carers. She was thrilled to find that the Fight Cancer Foundation's John Opie House was just a 5 minute walk from the Royal Hobart Hospital. They were relieved to have found just what they were looking for - safe, affordable accommodation close to the hospital.

David's surgery was scheduled and when he was admitted, Susan moved into the House and was there for the many weeks that he was in recovery. The House provided her with comfortable accommodation with communal kitchen and lounge areas offering a chance to meet others in similar situations.

"The Fight Cancer Foundation's John Opie House became my home away from home and offered me a lifeline...I was alone with no friends or family and I did not know if my husband would live or die. I met others in the House...worried



David & Susan

about someone they loved who was also in hospital. Many of the people I met at the House have since become very close friends...Without the House David and I could not have been together through the most challenging time of our lives."

Since David's recovery, they have stayed at the House for follow up appointments, and continue to call it their second home. Their gratitude for what the House provides to those who are experiencing the trauma and stress of serious illness runs deep.

"We thank everyone who saw the need for the accommodation centre and turned it into reality - offering patients and carers a place to call home when they are experiencing a most challenging time with a critically ill loved one. We are very grateful to you all"

You can assist the Foundation to continue to provide a home away from home for patients and their families by making a donation on our website, www.fightcancer.org.au



Darwin City Council showing their true colours!

Footy Colours Day 2011 is Friday 2 September

Excitement is growing for Fight Cancer Foundation's national Footy Colours Day 2011. This special day in September gives all Australians the opportunity to wear their favourite footy colours - AFL, NRL, Rugby League and Soccer and help children living with cancer.

Mark your calendar for Friday 2nd September OR ANY DAY YOU CHOOSE for Footy Colours Day. Register on line at www.footycoloursday.com.au and check out our fundraising ideas. Remember to send us your favourite photos from the day. We'd love to see them!

New South Wales Back on Track Program Acknowledged



Fight Cancer Foundation has been honoured with Benefactor status as a major contributor to the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in Sydney. The Award was presented recently to Fight Cancer Foundation Managing Director Eric Wright by Sydney Children's Hospitals Network Chairman Roger Corbett AO and Chief Executive Elizabeth Koff at a function at the NSW Art Gallery.

Dr Belinda Barton, Head of the Children's Hospital Education Research Institute highlighted the success of the Fight Cancer Back on Track program, which works to ensure that young students living with cancer remain connected with their schools, teachers and peers during treatment and recovery.

*Roger Corbett AO, Eric Wright,
Elizabeth Koff & Dr Belinda Barton*

Albury-Wodonga Accommodation Centre Appeal Update

Plans for the Albury-Wodonga Accommodation Centre have been approved by Albury City Council and the project is underway. So far, \$355,000 of donations and pledges has been received for the Centre which will provide much needed, affordable and comfortable accommodation for patients and carers from southern New South Wales and north-eastern Victoria who need to travel to Albury hospitals for treatment.

Help us reach our goal of \$5 million for this vital community care project. Donate to the appeal at www.fightcancer.org.au or call 03 9342 7888.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.



Lifestyle Furniture Special Offer to Fight Cancer Foundation Supporters

Lifestyle Furniture is once again holding an end of financial year stock take sale and is offering supporters of Fight Cancer Foundation 21% off display stock and 15% off all new orders between 20 May and 30 June 2011. If you are looking for some beautiful hand crafted solid timber furniture and would like to support the Foundation, please visit the showroom at 9 Moncrief Road, Nunawading Vic 3131 (03 9894 2446) or go to www.lifestylefurniture.com.au and don't forget to say you are a Fight Cancer Foundation supporter.



solid timber specialists

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The Ultimate Ride Ends in WA

With their 7,600 km ride behind them, The Ultimate Ride Harley Davidson bikers pulled into Margaret River on Friday May 13, tired but elated. Their two-week journey visiting some of Australia's magnificent food and wine regions and raising money for Fight Cancer Foundation was a success and they are already looking forward to 2012.

John Kemp, Trevor Knaggs & Matt Barrett



Fight Cancer Foundation sincerely thanks organisers Trevor Knaggs of King River Estate Winery and Matt Barrett of Mid North Coast HOG Club (NSW) and sponsors Harley-Davidson Australia, King River Estate, Char Restaurant Admiralty House Darwin, Xanadu Wines Margaret River, Tony Bilson of Bilson's Restaurant and Fastway for their support.