



## Fighting for time

**AT 31, DESIREE NEVER THOUGHT** she would be diagnosed with breast cancer, let alone a diagnosis of secondary breast cancer four years later.

Desiree Arthur is one of Sweet Louise's first Wellington Members, joining in 2009.

When she found a lump, her GP told her she didn't need to worry about it. A month later, as a precaution, she had a mammogram, an ultrasound and a biopsy.

*"I was so naïve and never for a moment suspected it was breast cancer they were checking for,"* Desiree says.

*"I got called in a couple of days later and told the news. I was shocked. It was the healthiest time of my life, I was going to the gym and eating well."*

Four years later, Desiree had back pain and was getting short of breath. "I went to see my oncologist, in the middle of preparing for my wedding and working full time."

Her secondary diagnosis came as a complete shock. She says *"I was so close to reaching the five year mark when I could be declared officially free of cancer. I was told just two weeks before my wedding and only months after I'd had my son Hayden."*

For the new mum, her diagnosis changed everything.

*"The second time round, as a mum, I was naturally more scared and worried. I need to be around for Hayden."*

*"I am an organised person and I like to plan where I can. But living with secondary breast cancer, I soon realised that we*



Desiree, Andrew and Hayden spend quality time together

*couldn't plan longer than six months."*

After her diagnosis, Desiree wanted to meet people with secondary breast cancer and learn more.

*"When I was diagnosed, I didn't know what secondary breast cancer was. I searched online, hoping to connect with people who were in a similar situation. And that's where I found Sweet Louise."*

At the time, Sweet Louise wasn't in Wellington. *"Needless to say, I was one of the first Members when Sweet Louise came to town."*

The Sweet Louise meetings are a real source of support for Desiree. *"I meet with women in a similar situation, we connect and talk freely without worrying about upsetting a family member or friend."*

*"It's nice to openly ask questions, hear about different experiences and learn how others cope."*

*"Living with secondary breast cancer, I soon realised that we couldn't plan longer than six months."*

*"Sometimes it's hard, especially when you form a friendship and the friendship is taken away. But that's the nature of secondary breast cancer."*

Now, Desiree and her family take each day as it comes and enjoy just spending time together.

*"I don't go on about the cancer, the treatment and the struggle, in an effort to keep things normal for my family."*

*"We do try to live a normal life - over time we've learned not to dwell on the 'what ifs' and only take each day at a time."*

The support from Sweet Louise, the Member meetings, vouchers for services or family support, has helped Desiree live with secondary breast cancer.

*"Sweet Louise is a crucial part to my journey living with secondary breast cancer. Sweet Louise has always made me feel like I'm not alone."*

Thanks to support like yours, Members can attend monthly meetings - a place to connect with others on the same journey. Visit [www.sweetlouise.co.nz](http://www.sweetlouise.co.nz) to donate to help other Members like Desiree.



# A life with secondary breast cancer

**IN NEW ZEALAND** around 3,000 women and men are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. At least 15% will go on to develop secondary breast cancer. However many people, just like Desiree, don't know what secondary breast cancer actually is.

A primary breast cancer can be successfully treated. However, the cancer cells can spread from the primary breast cancer to other parts of the body, travelling either in blood vessels or lymphatic vessels to form a new cancer. This is known as secondary, advanced or metastatic breast cancer, which is a terminal diagnosis.

The most common places that breast cancer spreads to are the lymph nodes, bones, liver and lungs. Occasionally it can spread to the brain. Secondary breast cancer may only affect one part of the body

but it is common for it to affect more than one.

Women and men living with secondary breast cancer are often in and out of treatment. This can sometimes go on for many years. Advances in research and treatment options means that many of those with secondary breast cancer are able to live well for months and years whilst maintaining a good quality of life. For others, time may be more limited.

Sweet Louise Members need ongoing support, whether it's to fully understand their treatment options, someone to talk to, or doing everyday tasks like housework.

With help from people like you, our Members are able to receive the support they need in the toughest time of their lives. Thank you so much.



**Sweet Louise Member Jo and Senior Support Coordinator Sinda at a monthly meeting**

## SERVICE PROVIDER STAR: SCENT FLORAL BOUTIQUE, WELLINGTON

**FLOWERS BRIGHTEN UP A DAY** and Scent Floral Boutique brighten up a Sweet Louise Member's day with flowers once a week.

Ingrid Pritchard and the team at Scent Floral Boutique donate a "random act of kindness" of flowers to Sweet Louise Members every week.

"Sweet Louise is incredible, the services that are offered to members make a huge difference in a difficult time in life's journey," says Ingrid.

The special connection started a few years ago. Ingrid was at a memorial of a family friend and Sweet Louise was mentioned.

"After all the speeches I had a talk with the Wellington Support Coordinator and offered my services for flowers to Sweet Louise. We have been donating flowers ever since."

It's not just the gorgeous flowers but the kindness behind them that really means something to our Members.

As one of our Members said, "The flowers were amazing. I nearly cried when they were dropped off at my door! It's such a lovely thing for Scent to do."

Thank you Ingrid and the team at Scent Floral Boutique for brightening up Members' days. Your kindness is much appreciated.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: STELLA WALL

**STELLA WALL** joined the Sweet Louise Volunteer team after her daughter, and Sweet Louise Member, Donna passed away last year. After her loss, Stella wanted to give back to those who helped Donna.

Stella comes into the Sweet Louise office once a week and helps with a variety of admin tasks. She edits data, stuffs envelopes and collects information - all important tasks that make such a difference for the staff!

Not only does Stella help in the office but she also helps to make the special cushions we give to Members when they join Sweet Louise. Stella uses her applique skills to decorate the cushions with a variety of patterns ranging from hearts to cats.

"I feel like I am the one that has benefited from being able to help," says Stella.

"I really love volunteering, especially knowing that Donna received so much support and nurturing from Sweet Louise through her journey with breast cancer."

"Volunteering for Sweet Louise has given me a purpose again after losing Donna."

We really appreciate Stella and feel blessed to have her help.

*Photo courtesy NZ Herald/Canvas*



## FIRST SWEET LOUISE BEQUEST

**ALETA PAIGE**, a Sweet Louise Member, passed away in June this year and we had the lovely surprise of receiving our very first bequest from her.

As a Member, Aleta was always keen to spread the word about Sweet Louise and happy to share her story. She wanted to ensure others knew of our services if they needed them. As she said, "Sweet Louise brings you to an understanding you are not on your own. As much as you know that your family loves and supports you, you can't always talk openly to loved ones ... for a start you don't want them to have that type of burden."

Aleta enjoyed meeting other Members - "to be able to meet with others who are or have been in your situation, share stories, help each other out, you form a bond with the other Members, knowing it's okay to talk and share where you are at. It also opens your mind to being able to go back to your

own specialists with questions. I was a bit naive about my breast cancer. Doctors don't always know everything."

Our Support Coordinators are the "face" of Sweet Louise and work hard to support Members. "Right from the start the Sweet Louise people were lovely, they sent information and before long I started going to meetings. Sweet Louise kept in touch, picked me up and took me to meetings of the North Shore group when I was too sick to drive..."

A huge thanks to Aleta for thinking of Sweet Louise and entrusting us with her special gift. Leaving a gift in your will would help us to continue supporting our Members and we would be grateful if you were to consider Sweet Louise. For more information, see our website or email [liz.henry@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:liz.henry@sweetlouise.co.nz).

# Welcome to the team, Tracy!



**THE SUPPORT COORDINATORS** are an amazing help and support when our Members need it most. Our new Wellington Support Coordinator is Tracy Smith. Not only will Tracy support Members in Wellington, she will also help expand Sweet Louise services into the Christchurch area.

For the past 22 years Tracy worked at Mary Potter Hospice as an occupational therapist in palliative care. *"Many people I have worked with in hospice have spoken of the positive support they have received from Sweet Louise. I see this role as a privilege, to be able to journey with Sweet Louise Members and to offer care and support as I can at the end of their lives,"* says Tracy.

*"I am excited that the work is a team effort with partners, volunteers, and of course the wider Sweet Louise team. Developing the Christchurch service is a wonderful challenge and an opportunity to bring the Sweet Louise support to new Members."*

## SANDRA SU'A – YOU ARE AWESOME!

**RUNNING A HALF MARATHON** is no mean feat but Sandra Su'a is taking the challenge head on, running in the ASB Auckland Marathon for Sweet Louise.

*"My daughter and her friends said I should run the marathon for a charity. It's on my bucket list to give back and do something worthwhile. And I've had family members with secondary breast cancer,"* says Sandra.

Wanting to get her students at Best Youth Academy involved, Sandra has encouraged them to help in her fundraising efforts.

*"I want to raise awareness*

*for Sweet Louise and secondary breast cancer as well as educate my students. The students have never known anyone that has run for a charity. So I'm role modelling for them."*

Sandra and her students in the Business and Enterprise Technology class have been holding regular fundraising activities including "coffee and muffin" runs every fortnight, raising almost \$300.

*"The students take orders from staff and students. We have an account set up and the students collect and bank the money."*

Even though the marathon is still a few weeks away, Sandra is already thinking about her next challenge.

*"I'm already encouraging people to get on board next year!"*

Thank you Sandra and your students in the Business and Enterprise Technology class for supporting women and men living with secondary breast cancer. You're amazing!

You can support Sandra and our other Marathon runners by visiting [www.fundraiseonline.co.nz](http://www.fundraiseonline.co.nz) and search for Sweet Louise.

## SUPERCHARGING MANAWATU

**OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS**, Mid Central Support Coordinator Geraldine Carswell has clocked up more than 30,000 kilometres driving to meet with Sweet Louise Members. This has taken a major toll on her car.

Lately Geraldine has been travelling about in a fantastic, new car generously donated by Z Energy and Toyota. And to top it off, Z operator John Hurley donated a \$2000 petrol gift card!

Kent Hagen and Deborah Hart of Manawatu Toyota, along with John, gave the keys over to a very excited Geraldine.

Based in Palmerston North, Geraldine has already driven more than 1600 kilometres in a few weeks and visited a number of outer cities in the new car.

*"Having a Sweet Louise car has made a huge difference. I now have the freedom and ability to visit Members who are unable to travel and to visit the outer regions more frequently,"* says Geraldine.

After Z's "Good in the Hood" promotion, Sweet Louise were chosen as one of 14 groups to be "supercharged". Z and Toyota worked together after watching a heartfelt video of Sweet Louise Member Maree.

*"It is very difficult to fully express my gratitude and words seem inadequate, however I send a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved for making our wish of having a car come true."*

A huge thank you to Z and Toyota for their amazing donation. And a special thank you to everyone who voted for Sweet Louise in Good in the Hood this year! Your support means Sweet Louise can reach more men and women living with secondary breast cancer.



**Kent, John, Deborah and Geraldine with the new Sweet Louise car.**

## In Memory

**YOUR DONATIONS** to honour the memory of Pam Beehre and Angela Litterick-Biggs are very much appreciated.



MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS FROM THIS QUARTER



Thank you to **Sir Ralph** and **Lady Pam Norris** for their wonderful support of Sweet Louise. Thank you also to the **David Levene Foundation**.

# Sweet Louise Heroes

A huge thank you to the amazing individuals and groups who have given their time and effort to raise funds for Sweet Louise Members over the past few months.



A special thank you to Sovereign who held a week full of activities and events to raise money for Sweet Louise. Country fairs, bake sales and raffles were just some of the things on offer for the week and Sovereign raised more than \$5000!

Thank you to Sophie who spent hours putting cushions into bags for Sweet Louise Members. As part of the community service component of the 'William Pike Challenge', Sophie chose to donate time to help Sweet Louise which is a charity close to her family's heart. You are amazing Sophie!

Thank you to Nicky Read who wrote and illustrated a children's book, with all proceeds going to Sweet Louise. Visit [www.sweetlouise.co.nz](http://www.sweetlouise.co.nz) to buy one!

A huge thank you to Green Acres who held a wonderful morning tea and raised almost \$400 for Sweet Louise Members.



## #pinkbales

**LEADING NEW ZEALAND** crop packaging company Agpac is once again wrapping the countryside pink to support rural women with secondary breast cancer. A percentage on the sale of pink bales of baleage and pink and black striped bales of hay will go towards supporting Members.

The #pinkbales initiative really took off last year and we're hoping for an even bigger response this year. We'll also be launching a #pinkbales photo competition so keep an eye out on our social media pages.



### Yes, I would like to support Women and Men living with secondary breast cancer

#### 1. DONATION DETAILS

I would like to donate:

- \$30 – for a Member to get a gift of flowers
- \$50 – to get a Member's lawn mowed
- \$100 – 10 meals for a Member
- Surprise us! \$.....

#### 2. PAYMENT DETAILS

I would like to pay by:

- Visa    Mastercard    Amex
- Card Number.....
- Expiry..... CVV.....
- Name on Card.....
- Signature.....

OR

Cheque: Please make cheques out to "Sweet Louise".

#### 3. CONTACT DETAILS

Name.....  
Address.....  
..... Postcode.....  
Phone.....  
Email.....

#### PLEASE RETURN TO

Sweet Louise  
PO Box 137-343, Parnell, Auckland 1151

Thank you for your generous support

Tick here to receive info on how to support us through a bequest.

