



## *Fighting for the Every Day*

MEET EMILY, A YOUNG SWEET LOUISE MEMBER FROM BLENHEIM, WHO IS DETERMINED TO LIVE AS BEST SHE CAN WITH SECONDARY BREAST CANCER.

"It's time for some truths. Firstly, there are the easy truths, the facts; my name is Emily. I'm 32. I have two amazing daughters aged 2-and-a-half and 5 years old. I am married to my best friend, my high school sweetheart. I am also fighting every day to live with incurable breast cancer.

The other truths are much harder to face and the actual reality of living with a terminal illness is much less 'pink'. I've been told I'm brave. I'm not. I am terrified.

I just do what countless others do. We fight every day to survive. Within terminal breast cancer groups some find being called a fighter, a battler or a warrior a term they don't like to associate with. Without speaking for them, I get it. We didn't choose this war against our own body. We can 'battle' as much as we want but in the end we know the hard truth is that we will lose. Cancer will win.

This is to no fault of us not trying or fighting hard enough. We all want to live. I want to live. Which is why, every day, I do fight. Not cancer, I have no control over it but I am a fighter, a battler, a warrior.

***I fight to live regardless of the cards that I have been dealt.***

When faced with yet another setback though, reality hits hard. I have to learn to let go of dreams. No lifestyle block in the tropical north, no teaching in the Cook Islands, no trip to Japan, no growing old, and my children growing up without me. Those are just my dreams. The ripples of cancer takes more than one person's dream.

So, part of my fight is to continue to get up every day and be present every day. It's taken an adjustment. I am currently having scans every three months, that's as far as I allow myself to plan ahead. I am grateful to be alive two years down the track - I've hit my average life span!

But behind the smiles, positivity and attempt at 'normality' are numerous battle wounds that tell my war story. Living every day is emotionally and physically draining. Physically, most noticeably is my lopsided chest. A full mastectomy and axillary node clearance has left me with a tidy scar where my left breast once was. I have scar holes on my forehead where my head brace was drilled into my skull for

Gamma knife treatment, a type of brain radiation. I've had burn scarring from chest radiation, tattoos dotted on my body to mark radiation points, I have red, sensitive feet after chemo drugs made them burn, blister and peel.

I have bruising, cuts and a lump on my chest where I've recently had a portacath inserted. I have stretch marks on my knees from steroid swelling. I have fluid retention, shakes, muscle wastage, facial hair, a 6-month pregnant stomach, a humped neck, irritability, fatigue, hyper activity and hunger.

Having the support of Sweet Louise makes a huge difference to my family's life and mine as I cope with all of these challenges.

**I especially love using the vouchers, which I mainly use for buying precooked meals. Knowing there is food on the table is a very reassuring routine when the rest of life can be chaos!**

I am not a cancer sufferer and I refuse to be. I hope that my journey of drugs, guilt, scars, imperfections, baldness, joy, love and living life can serve a higher purpose for others to keep fighting their fight, whatever it may be. "



## 2 **Heading South**

SWEET LOUISE IS THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE WE HAVE APPOINTED A NEW SUPPORT COORDINATOR FOR THE SOUTH ISLAND. FRANKIE ROAKE, WHO IS BASED IN CHRISTCHURCH, WILL BE REPRESENTING SWEET LOUISE IN THE LOWER HALF OF THE ISLAND, NAMELY CANTERBURY, OTAGO, SOUTHLAND & WESTLAND.

With a background in Haematology and Oncology nursing, Frankie joins Sweet Louise after nine years as the Cancer Society's Groups Coordinator.

"I feel privileged and excited to be joining this vibrant team and working within an organisation that embodies my philosophy of practical supportive care. I look forward to helping in ways that enable those we serve to face challenges while encouraging hope."

Sweet Louise is excited about this new step in the organisation, moving further down country, extending our services so no one has to face advanced breast cancer alone.

If you are in the region and would like to contact Frankie please do at [frankie.roake@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:frankie.roake@sweetlouise.co.nz)

# Huge support from Hugh Green



FROM APRIL THIS YEAR, AND FOR TWO YEARS FOLLOWING, SWEET LOUISE IS HONOURED TO BE RECEIVING A FINANCIAL GRANT FROM THE HUGH GREEN FOUNDATION.

The Hugh Green Foundation, which was set up in 1998 by Hugh Green, is a charitable trust that aims to improve the health and wealth of local communities. The foundation aims to reduce inequity within the health system by supporting community led solutions which offer practical assistance for families & individuals who are suffering through medical and hardship issues.



Adrienne Thurston, the Foundation's CEO says, "The Hugh Green Foundation staff and Trustees are really excited about cementing in a true partnership with Sweet Louise. HGF has been funding Sweet Louise since 2012 and over the past couple of years have built a much closer relationship which has evolved into increased funding for the next three years."

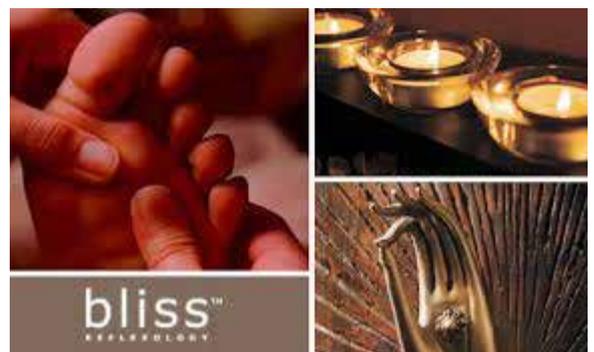
***"We absolutely believe in the support Sweet Louise offers its members and their families and we feel humbled to be able to play a small part in their journey."***

Thank you so much Hugh Green Foundation for your incredible generosity and kindness.

## Total bliss

A big thank you to Bliss Reflexology who have been wonderful to Sweet Louise over the last year with their gifts in kind for members and fundraising.

For the best foot and body massage check them out at [blissreflexology.com](http://blissreflexology.com)



**IN 2018 HELD:**  
**SWEET LOUISE:** **278** member meetings throughout the country

**TALKED FOR:**  
**219** hours on our 0800 number to members

**WELCOMED:**  
**262** New members

**We could not and cannot do any of this without you!!**

Thank you for your continuous generosity and support towards those living with incurable breast cancer.

# Gibbs Farm - making a difference for our members

FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW, SWEET LOUISE HELD A FUNDRAISER AT THE INCREDIBLE GIBBS FARM SCULPTURE PARK ON SATURDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH.

Gibbs Farm is a private farm, owned and treasured by Alan Gibbs and his family. The farm, located northwest of Auckland, contains the leading collection of large-scale outdoor sculptures in New Zealand, as well as an array of animals including alpacas, emus, bison, zebras and giraffes.

Despite the threatening wind and rain on Saturday, the day was a great success!

Chrissy, who came along says, "We enjoyed Saturday at Gibbs farm so much. Luckily, we arrived as the rain lifted and got to enjoy all the stunning scenery and a delicious lunch. The organisation of it was faultless including a cheery welcome and farewell. Thanks again. Sweet Louise is a great charity that we are delighted to support."

Carolina, a Sweet Louise member and supporter says, "Kudos to the team for this great event. It was a great way to spend our Saturday afternoon.

We are glad we were able to contribute to the great work Sweet Louise is doing

for the community and for making a difference for cancer patients like myself."

**Your generosity has meant we raised an amazing \$70,000 to help our members. We are so grateful to all of you who came and supported Sweet Louise on the day. With your donations we are able to continue helping women and men facing incurable breast cancer with emotional, financial and social support.**

Thanks go to Cafe2U, Dr Feel Good, Bird on a Wire and Hello Delicious Catering for all their tasty treats that kept people fuelled throughout the day.

A special thank you also to all the amazing staff at Gibbs Farm who helped us on the day, and of course, to the Gibbs Family who opened up their magical home to all of us.



## Going the extra mile

ON FEBRUARY 16<sup>TH</sup>, TWO BEST FRIENDS, JOSHUA LEWTHWAITE AND OLLIE SUCH, WALKED 100KM NON-STOP AND WITH NO TRAINING AROUND THE AUCKLAND REGION. THEY DID THIS CRAZY FEAT ALL IN THE NAME OF PUSHING BOUNDARIES AND GIVING BACK TO TWO CHARITIES THEY BELIEVE IN, GIFT FOR KIDS AND SWEET LOUISE. FOR JOSHUA, SWEET LOUISE WAS A PERSONAL CHOICE AS HIS MUM IS A MEMBER.

Josh says, "Ollie and I are quick to confess our love of building our mindset through challenging activities. We actively set goals and push ourselves to achieve them. The 100km walk came about via a phone call chatting about what we could achieve next."

**"Linking the walk to two charities we are personally connected to was a no brainer. We wanted to use the opportunity to enable the charities close to us make a greater impact in the community."**

**Joshua and Ollie managed to reach their walking goal in 23 hours and 40 minutes, all while raising over \$6k in donations.**

A heartfelt thank you to both of you and all your supporters. We are in admiration of your courage, kindness and the sheer determination you had to get to that finish line!



# The California Honey Drops

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE FINE FOLK FROM ORAKEI BAY VILLAGE, SWEET LOUISE IS EXCITED TO PRESENT 3RD TIME BYRON BAY BLUESFEST ACT – THE CALIFORNIA HONEYDROPS ON SATURDAY APRIL 13TH 2019.

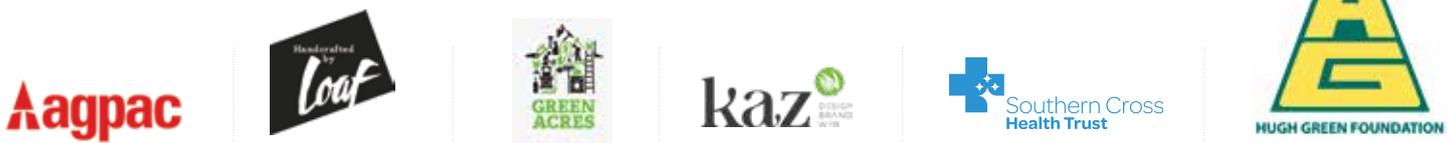
Drawing on diverse musical influences from R&B, funk, Soul and Blues, The Honeydrops bring vibrant energy and infectious dance-party vibes to their shows.

Take the train to Orakei Station (there are only limited carparking spaces available) and head next door to the Kings Plant Barn carpark at Orakei Bay Village to enjoy an outdoor afternoon of Soul infused music and singing!

'You are welcome to pack a picnic (food and non-alcoholic drinks only please). This is an alcohol free event but please visit one of the great eateries on site before and after to enhance your concert experience. Feel free to bring a deck chair although we don't think you will be sitting still for long!'

- Tickets prices are as follows: \$50 adult, \$20 10-18 years old, free for 10 and under.
- All proceeds from the event will go towards supporting Sweet Louise members.
- Don't delay - buy your tickets online today

WE THANK THESE SPONSORS WHO HAVE SO GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED US:



## Yes, I would like to support Women living with incurable breast cancer

**DONATION DETAILS** Here is my gift of:

- \$100 - so a family like Emily's can have a special day out
- \$50 - to give a member a fridge full of home cooked meals
- \$25 - to help run a member meeting
- Your choice: .....
- Tick here to receive information on how to become a regular giver.

### PAYMENT DETAILS

I would like to pay by:  Visa  Mastercard  Amex  
 Card Number .....  
 Expiry ..... CW (3 digits on back of card) .....  
 Name on Card .....  
 Signature .....

**OR:**

- Cheque: Please make cheques out to 'Sweet Louise'
- Direct Credit to Sweet Louise: 12 - 3198 - 0032019 - 00

### 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