

SWEET Louise

Welcome to our December 2023 newsletter!

Welcome, Kia ora, Talofa lava to our last newsletter of 2023!

We hope you've now received your Sweet Louise Christmas Care pack in your mailbox.

If you haven't received it yet, please get in touch with your Support Coordinator as soon as possible so we can check on the delivery.

Thank you to all the wonderful people who donated goodies for the packs and to the team of volunteers from Visa who packed up all the goodies!



Team news

Sara Jensen has recently joined the team as our Support Coordinator for Northland.

Sara is settling into Northland life after living in Auckland. She will now be halfway between her four adult children and three mokopuna, who live across Auckland, Whangarei and the Far North.

Sara has a background in nursing and midwifery. She loves anything that takes her to the bush or ocean and loves to kayak and walk.

Sara says: "I love the concept of Sweet Louise and am already amazed by the members that I've met, who are the core and strength of this organisation."



Sara Jensen

Jen Mephram is our new Support Coordinator for the lower half of the South Island.

Jen is a qualified physiotherapist originally from the UK. Jen has been living in Dunedin for eight years and has spent three years living in Auckland prior to this.

She has a special interest in breathing techniques and anxiety management. She is a mum to two preschoolers, is a keen netballer and enjoys walking and cycling the Otago harbour path.

“I am looking forward to working for an organisation that values living life to the full,” says Jen.

Farewell to Sarah. Sadly, we must say farewell to our Wellington Support Coordinator, Sarah, who is moving with her family to a new city and to new adventures. Thank you Sarah for your contribution to Sweet Louise and wish you well with your new adventures.

Recruitment for a new Wellington Support Coordinator is already underway.



Jen Mepham

Meet Nicole

Meet Nicole from Auckland. She's mum to four children - her three boys, Elias, Aydin, and Kamran, and daughter Emelia.

“I was diagnosed with breast cancer in April 2023. Little Emelia was just 10 months old when I found a lump in my breast so initially, I just thought it was because of breast feeding.

“I went to get the lump checked and at first it looked like it was stage 2 breast cancer. But then a CT scan it showed that the cancer had spread. I went from having primary breast cancer to stage 4 in just a week.

“When I was first diagnosed, we told the boys I have a naughty lump and that I must take medicine and my hair might fall out. They thought that was hilarious.

“I approach life with the fact that I have a chronic disease rather than a terminal illness. I do have some difficult days. But taking care of the kids is a blessing and keeps me busy.

“Our home is noisy, busy and full of life. The kids really help to keep me motivated and help me to get on with living life as normally as possible.

“We used our Sweet Louise Family Time on an annual Zoo pass for the family. The kids love going and we can go whenever we like. We usually take a picnic and it’s wonderful to spend this quality time together – to have time to focus on being a family.

“Now Emelia is a little bit older, hopefully I will get some time to use my Sweet Louise vouchers for a massage or maybe a retreat - something to focus on my mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. I really want to savour the experience.



"I went to my first members meeting recently and it was good to meet others, especially the mums who have been living with this disease for a while. It gave me so much hope to hear their stories.

"I'm really looking forward to Christmas and love getting ready early. I feel well at the moment, and I am so grateful for that. I treasure every day and want to stay well and keep on living my life to the full."

Christmassy Member Meetings!



Photos clockwise from top left: Pukekohe meeting with special thanks to Ngaire and her husband, John (aka Santa!), for gifting beautiful hand-crafted wooden bowls to members; Botany meeting and looking festive in Wellington!



Photos clockwise from top left: Hamilton, Henderson, top of the South Island and Orewa.



Member's Day

Despite a blustery and rainy start to our Auckland Member's Day on 30 September, we all enjoyed a variety of informative, creative and participatory activities, with great kai and an amazing venue at Roche NZ in Auckland CBD. The Roche venue offered wonderful space, calmness, and the ability to mix in social spaces. Thank you to Gattung Catering who generously provided the kai – with enough left over for everyone to take goody bags home!



The workshops covered topics including advanced care planning and making natural hand creams thanks to Lynn from The Herb Farm. Brendan provided both yoga and mindfulness sessions, and Sandra talked about creative writing and her experience. Angela Gattung provided the Fashion Sister pop-up store with everyone taking time to browse, try on and buy some excellent clothing items! We even had the opportunity to try some alcohol-free gin with lunch. A big thank you to Ecology and Co who provided the dry and spiced gins.



South Island Member's Day: Coming Soon!

We're excited to be planning a Member's Day in the South Island for early 2024. We will keep you updated as plans progress!

ABC Global Alliance Conference

Sweet Louise CEO, Catrin, and Head of Member Services, Lorraine, were privileged to receive grants to attend the ABC Global Alliance Conference in Portugal in November. Sweet Louise member, Denise, also attended as the Metavivor Chair and as a representative of BCAC.

At the conference there were great sessions on rehabilitation and the benefits of exercise, nutrition, and well-being. Very little research has been done overseas in this area for metastatic breast cancer, so Sweet Louise was able to provide insight from the Auckland University METS programme, which many our members have participated in over the years.



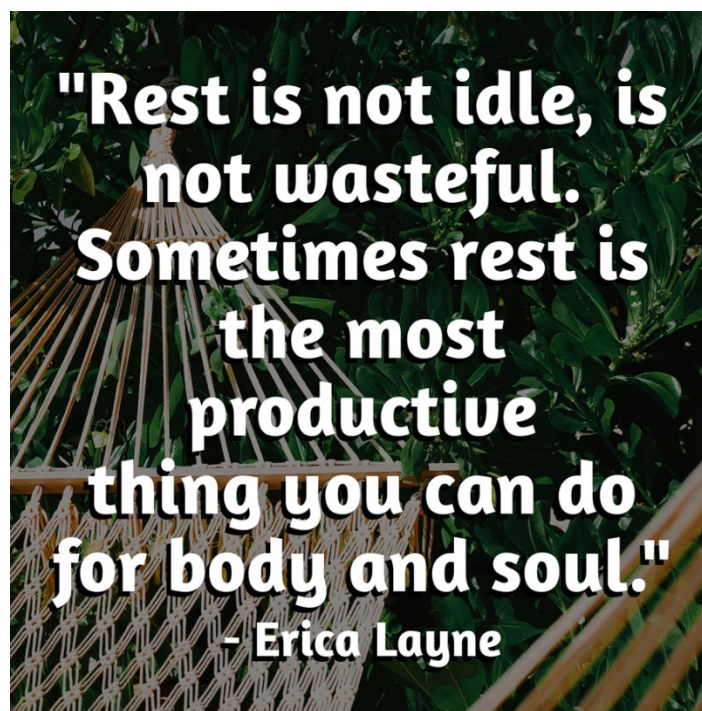
Denise, Catrin and Lorraine.

Sweet Louise was also one of the agencies included in the hard-to-reach community toolkit and we were delighted to be showcased on the interactive digital platform as a unique support organisation from a global perspective.

We contributed to a workshop on communication around prognosis in order to formulate guidelines for health care professionals. We came away with lots of contacts and resource links, and we look forward to sharing these with you.

Christmas Break

The Sweet Louise Team will take a break from 23 December 2023 until 3 January 2024. Please contact your relevant medical professionals if you have any queries or concerns during our break.



**May peace and joy surround you and those you love this Christmas season.
We look forward to seeing you in 2024!**

Arohanui from the Sweet Louise Support Coordinator Team: Angela J, Ange T, Ashleigh, Chrissy, Jen, Kendra, Kate, Lorraine, Nadine, Sara & Sarah

**SWEET
Louise**