



## Welcome to our March 2023 newsletter!

Welcome, Kia ora, Talofa lava to our latest newsletter!

The severe weather events in New Zealand over the past few months have certainly had a big impact. We send our thoughts and best wishes to all those affected. We are planning to re-start our member meetings in the Hawkes Bay area, Northland, and Tairāwhiti/Gisborne area soon.

In other areas of New Zealand, the member meetings and connections have continued. It's been a busy time of reconnecting and change with the new Support Coordinators in the South Island and Waikato regions introducing themselves to members.

We are pleased to let you know that we have now appointed Support Coordinators in Wellington and Auckland central who will be starting on 11 April. Member meetings will get going in Wellington in May with details to be advised ASAP. This means, in just a few days, we shall have our full team of Support Coordinators in place with nine in total across New Zealand, working to support 760 current members!



*Photos from the left: Member meetings in Christchurch, Orewa & Warkworth.*

### **Sandra: "New strands woven in my rope give me strength and hope"**

Sandra has lived with advanced breast cancer for almost 14 years. Since being diagnosed in 2009, she has completed a Master's degree, worked as a school principal and leader in education, and received the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2020 in recognition of her contribution to education.

Sandra shares with us her story and how she tries to live her life to the fullest.

"The strands that make up my rope are many," says Sandra. "I am an eighth generation New Zealander on my English/Irish side and go back to the first landing of waka on my Māori whakapapa. These strands have woven and shaped who I am.

"A rebellious teenager in the 60s, a mother and teacher in the 70s, a school principal in the 80s, an educational leader in the 90s and a breast cancer survivor in the 2000s. While working, studying and being a mother, wife, friend, grandmother, I discovered new strands woven in my rope that gave me strength and hope to get through my cancer journey.



"When I was diagnosed with cancer in 2009, I thought of my parents. They were born in the depression in 1930s and showed incredible determination in the face of adversity. Mum was the youngest of 10 girls and grew up in a boarded tent on the banks of the Waipoa River in Gisborne. She didn't complete primary school because of illness but became an accomplished seamstress, making tailored clothing for the upper crust of Hawkes Bay. She was creative and determined.

"Dad, the youngest of eight, worked as a farm labourer and became a self-taught builder who eventually specialised in designing and building woolsheds.

**"My parents gifted me the values of determination and hard work and encouraged us to take on new learning and challenges. These were the strengths and values that I needed to draw on for my cancer journey."**

"When I was first diagnosed with advanced breast cancer, the oncologist's view was that I should get my affairs in order as I probably had three to six months to live.

"At the time, a friend gave me a copy of Lance Armstrong's book *It's Not about the Bike* – about his battle with cancer. The book was inspirational and gave me courage to control the choices around my cancer treatment and a determination to do my utmost to survive.

"I asked for the highest doses of radiation that I could take. After I finished the course of radiation in December 2009, I camped with my whole family in the Coromandel. There were about 30 of us at the camp - kids, grandkids and friends. I was surrounded by such positive energy and optimism - it strengthened my resilience and determination to survive.

"After many ups and downs, by mid-2010, my condition began to stabilise and I started to get my strength back. I'm very grateful to my husband, family and good friends who helped me get back on my feet - literally - helping me walk again. Eventually I managed to return to work.

"I threw myself into my studies and graduated with a Master's degree in Education Leadership (with First Class Honours) in July 2010 - something that I'm very proud of given my own shaky journey at school and challenges with my health at the time.

**“In July 2010, I also returned to work as principal of Freemans Bay Primary School. I made the decision to live life to the fullest with whatever time I have left.**

"It was a humbling experience to be recommended as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit. When you are following your passion, you don't do it looking for awards. But it was very special to receive the award.

"Since retiring in January 2020, I continue to do some consulting work. I'm enjoying spending time with my husband, family and friends - with more time to spend at the beach, fishing, walking, playing Mah Jong and dabbling in some craft work. I'm also looking forward to my 50th Wedding Anniversary that's coming up in May - we've got a big, family party planned!

"I've found the vouchers from Sweet Louise have been a great support, giving me time and treats to myself. I mainly use the vouchers for treatments such as massages and pedicures. I enjoy hearing the stories of other Sweet Louise members and appreciate the support that we get from the organisation and each other.

"For those who have just found out they have cancer, I think it helps to be optimistic and hopeful. There is a lot of support out there, including from fabulous organisations like Sweet Louise.

"I read once that cancer is like a bear hibernating in a cave. I think of my remission like that. And while I still have my health and energy, I will enjoy every day as much as I can.

**"Whatever you choose to do, make sure it is your choice. If there is anything in your dream box that you wish to do, don't put it off. Live those dreams! Having a positive attitude doesn't change anything but it does help you get through each day!"**

## **Introducing our new Support Coordinators**

### **Mel Gaffaney, Support Coordinator Lower South Island**

Mel has recently returned 'home' to Dunedin, after far too long living, working and travelling overseas and most recently being based in the Kapiti Coast. Mel is loving rediscovering what she calls 'one of the most beautiful spots in the world' and introducing her two teenage daughters to life in the south.

Mel is a registered senior nurse with vast experience working primarily with the most vulnerable tiny humans in the NICU/ PICU specialties both in Wellington and in the UK. Mel has also worked for Victoria University's Child Psychology Department and worked in medical recruitment in London.

Mel says: "Throughout my career, the part of my role I've always been the most passionate about is the connection, understanding and empathy for people, patients and whānau as they live their loved one's health story. I felt this even more strongly after experiencing loss and being on the other side of the health system myself.



**"I'm excited to join the amazing team at Sweet Louise. What an incredible organisation and it's a privilege to be able to honour Louise's legacy and share in our member's stories."**

### Ashleigh Williams, Support Coordinator Upper South Island

After years working as a registered midwife, Ashleigh decided to use her transferable skills and join the Cancer Society Supportive Care Team in Invercargill. A personal family experience with cancer prompted this career change.

Ashleigh, being a born and bred Cantabrian, has recently relocated back to Christchurch after 10 years in the deep south.

**Ashleigh says: "I'm incredibly excited to join the Sweet Louise family and to be able to continue working within the cancer support space."**



### Angela Tatton, Support Coordinator Waikato

Angela has been a pharmacist for over 30 years and recently worked in a cancer care facility, working with funded and unfunded cancer treatments.

Angela says: "I am very excited to take on this Support Coordinator role.

**"I'm really looking forward to getting to know the members in my area and supporting them the best I can. I'm married with an adult son, who is studying counselling. My interests include food, gardening, jigsaw puzzles, and more importantly, spending time with friends and family."**



## Tom's Marvellous Imagination

We are fortunate to have tickets to the next Southern Stars Production - Tom's Marvellous Imagination – at the Bruce Mason Centre in Takapuna, Auckland, on Saturday, May 13 at 10am and 1pm. If you are keen to have a family treat and you are in Auckland on 13 May, please get in touch with your Support Coordinator, call 0800 11 22 77 or email [members@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:members@sweetlouise.co.nz) before Friday, 21 April.

## New Service Provider in Tauranga

We have a new service provider in the Tauranga area where members can use their vouchers - In Knots: Kara Boyes via <https://campsite.bio/inknots> or text 020 4138 5233. In Knots follows a Māori holistic model of health, offering a range of energetic and bodywork modalities to nurture, align and balance your four 22 dimensions of wellbeing (spiritual, emotional, physical and family/community). Mirimiri | Romiromi, Massage Therapy, Kawakawa Copper Foot Bath.

## Upcoming Member Meetings

Member meetings will only go ahead if it is safe to do so in each local area and short notice decisions and changes may be required. For questions about meetings, please contact your Support Coordinator, email [members@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:members@sweetlouise.co.nz) or call 0800 112277.

## **NORTHLAND, AUCKLAND NORTH**

RSVP to Kendra on 0211976638 or 0800 112277 or email [kendra.ellis@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:kendra.ellis@sweetlouise.co.nz)

**North Shore:** Wednesday 5 April, Monday 1 May\* and Wednesday 7 June @ 10:00 – 11:30am, King's Plant Barn Café, 11-13 Porana Road, Wairau Valley. \* *Please note change of meeting day in May*

**Whangarei/Northland:** Tuesday 11 April, Tuesday 9 May and Tuesday 13 June @ 10:30 – 12pm, Daffodil House, 73 Kamo Road, Kamo, Whangarei.

**Silverdale/Orewa:** Wednesday 19 April, Wednesday 24 May and Wednesday 21 June @ 10:00-11.30am, Walnut Cottage, 498 Hibiscus Coast Highway, Orewa.

**Warkworth:** Wednesday 19 April @ 1:00pm – 2:30pm, Matakana Palms\*, 102 Omaha Flats Road Warkworth. \* *Note new venue.* Wednesday 24 May and 21 June @ 1:00pm – 2:30pm – venue to be confirmed closer to dates.

## **AUCKLAND WEST & CENTRAL**

RSVP to Lorraine on 0210463507 or 0800 112277 or email on [lorraine.bailey@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:lorraine.bailey@sweetlouise.co.nz)

**Central:** Wednesday 5 April, Thursday 11 May and Wednesday 14 June @ 10:00am-11:30am at Cornwall Park Bistro, One Tree Hill

**Henderson:** Tuesday 4 April and Tuesday 9 May @ 10:00-11.30am, Henderson Plant Barn, 224 Universal Drive, Henderson.

## **AUCKLAND EAST & SOUTH**

RSVP to Nadine on 027 525 1985 or 0800 112277 or email on [nadine.morton@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:nadine.morton@sweetlouise.co.nz)

**Pukekohe:** Tuesday 4 April, Monday 1 May and Wednesday 7 June @ 10:30am-12pm, Columbus Coffee, Mitre 10 Mega, 12 Wrightson Way, Pukekohe

**Manurewa:** Wednesday 12 April, Tuesday 9 May and Tuesday 6 June @ 10:30am-12pm, Café Miko, Botanical Gardens, 100 Hill Rd, Manurewa

**Manukau City:** Tuesday 18 April and Wednesday 10 May @ 10:30am-12pm, Urban Soul Café, 652 Great South Rd, Manukau

**East Auckland:** Wednesday 26 April, Wednesday 24 May and Tuesday 20 June, 10:30am-12pm @ Kings Plant Barn Café, 280 Botany Rd, Golflands

## **WAIKATO**

RSVP to Angela on 0212218488 or 0800 112277 or email on [angela.tatton@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:angela.tatton@sweetlouise.co.nz)

**Hamilton:** Tuesday 18 April 10.30-12.00 and Tuesday 16 May 10.30-12.00 @ Café Angora board room

## **BAY OF PLENTY, LAKES and TAIRAWHITI**

RSVP to Angela on 027 328 8009 or 0800 112277 or email on [angela.jackson@sweetlouise.co.nz](mailto:angela.jackson@sweetlouise.co.nz)

**Rotorua:** Wednesday 12 April 10.30am - 12.00pm @ Cancer Society Rooms, Ranolf Street – Look Good Feel Better session and Thursday 11 May 10.30am - 12.00pm @ Urbano Bistro, Fenton St, Rotorua, and Thursday 15 June 10.30am - 12.00pm @ Eastwood Café, SCION.

**Taupo:** Thursday 25 May 11.00am - 12.30pm @ Victorias Café Kitchen Bar, Toingariro St, Taupo

**Katikati:** Thursday 27 April 11.00am - 12.30pm @ Robert Harris Café

**Gisborne:** Friday 2 June 10.00am - 11.30am @ PBC Café, Childers Rd, Gisborne

**Tauranga:** Thursday 18 May 10.30am - 12.00pm @ Breast Cancer Support Trust meeting room, Fraser St, Tauranga

**Te Puna:** Thursday 22 June 10.30am - 12.00pm @ Nourish Café, Te Puna

## MID-CENTRAL

RSVP to Chrissy on 027 328 8008 or 0800 112277 or email [chrissy.luke@sweetlouisie.co.nz](mailto:chrissy.luke@sweetlouisie.co.nz)

**Palmerston North:** Thursday 13 April 10.00-11.30 @ The Herb Farm and Thursday 11 May 10.00-11.30 @ Joseph Street Kitchen

**Levin:** Friday 14 April and Friday 12 May 10.00-11.30 @ Salt and Pepper Café

**Whanganui:** Thursday 20 April 10.00-11.30 @ Article Café and Wednesday 24 May 10.00-11.30 @ Citadel

**Hawera:** Thursday 20 April and Wednesday 24 May 1.30-3.00pm @ Someday Café

**New Plymouth:** Friday 21 April and Thursday 25 May 10.00-11.30 @ Bach on Breakwater Café

**Hawkes Bay:** Thursday 27 April and Friday 19 May 10.30-12.00 @ Serendipity

## CHRISTCHURCH & UPPER SOUTH ISLAND

RSVP to Ashleigh on 027 328 8003 or 0800 11 22 77 or email on [ashleigh.williams@sweetlouisie.co.nz](mailto:ashleigh.williams@sweetlouisie.co.nz)

**Christchurch:** Tuesday 11 April, May 9 and June 13 10.30am-12.00pm @ Urban Eatery (Oderings Garden Centre), 92 Stourbridge Street, Spreydon Christchurch

**Blenheim:** Monday 17 April 10.30-12.00pm @ venue to be confirmed

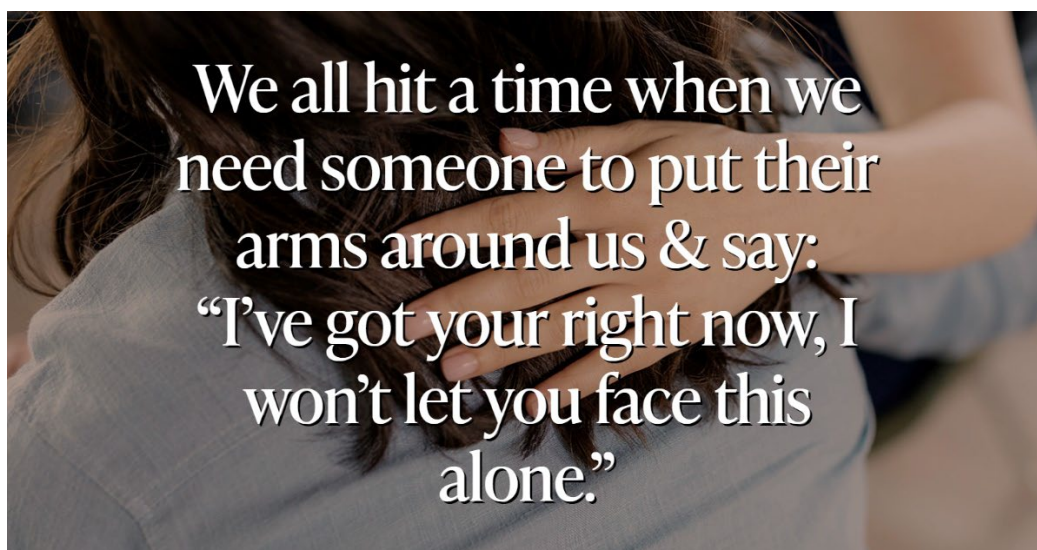
**Nelson:** Tuesday 16 May 10.30-12.00pm @ Melrose House Café 26 Brougham Street Nelson

## DUNEDIN & LOWER SOUTH ISLAND

RSVP to Mel on 021 229 5272 or 0800 11 22 77 or email on [mel.gaffaney@sweetlouisie.co.nz](mailto:mel.gaffaney@sweetlouisie.co.nz)

**Dunedin:** Wednesday 12 April, 10 May, 7 June 1030am @ Ironic Café & Bar, 9 Anzac Ave

**Invercargill:** Thursday 6 April, 11 May, 1 June 12pm @ Industry, 33 Arena Ave



With warmest wishes,

***The Sweet Louise Support Coordinator Team: Lorraine, Angela, Angela, Ashleigh, Chrissy, Kendra, Mel & Nadine***