

Autumn 2020

LivOn!

A large, semi-transparent photograph of a woman with blonde hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a green top and large hoop earrings. A small dog is nestled in her arms, looking towards the camera. In the background, there are other people and what appears to be a bookshelf or display.

**A chance at life -
thanks to YOU**

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**Understanding
chemo brain**

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**You helped raise
\$1.1 million!**

Page 8



**Olivia
Newton-John**
Cancer Wellness & Research Centre

Together we are stronger



Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.



Thank you for coming out in the thousands to join me for the Wellness Walk and Research Run in October last year. Together as a community we made it the biggest one ever and thanks to you \$1.1 million was raised to help people with cancer.

I am so grateful for your support and hope to see you again this year.

Another special thank you to everybody who donated at Christmas time to support the Wellness Gym. Thanks to you more people can now access the incredible benefits of exercise during their treatment to give them the best chance to win over cancer.

Our Australian community has needed help in other ways this summer.

I'm so touched by the generosity of the people from Australia and around the world in the wake of the devastating Australian bushfires. I was honoured to perform at the Fire Fight Australia concert to help these communities who are beginning the long road to rebuilding their lives.

Looking after each other is so important. It is an honour to share this issue of *Liv On* with you, my ONJ Cancer Centre community. The stories within are your stories and only made possible thanks to you.

*love + light
Olivia*

Participant Spotlight

At the 2019 Wellness Walk and Research Run, Elle Bullen led Team Bullen who raised an outstanding \$19,840. Diagnosed with cancer in 2018 while pregnant, Elle saw the event as an empowering way to take control of her situation.

"My cancer diagnosis and being eight months pregnant wasn't going to stop me attending. It was such a great feeling crossing the finish line and it gave me a way to have control over a situation I felt I had little control over," says Elle.

Elle recently gave birth to a healthy little girl called Mabel, a little sister for her two year-old daughter Beatrix. Congratulations Elle!



Top Wellness Walk and Research Run fundraiser Elle, with her beautiful baby Mabel.

Look what you made possible!

Last Christmas we asked for your help to give patients a chance at life – through exercise. **THANK YOU FOR SAYING YES!**

ONJ Exercise Physiologist Kirsty McRae explained how exercise in the Wellness Gym can be life-changing for patients undergoing cancer treatment. Thanks to your outpouring of support, the Wellness Gym will stay open in 2020 for every patient in need including the specialised exercise program!

By supporting the Wellness Gym, you help patients complete their treatment, improve their quality of life and decrease their chance of cancer recurrence. Simply amazing.

"THANK YOU! Because of the community's generosity, we opened the Wellness Gym last year, offering the leading specialist exercise program for people with cancer in Victoria, helping more than 300 patients. And, because of your wonderful donations, we'll be able to help even more people with cancer in 2020." — Kirsty

Without you, this would not be possible. Thank you.



Exercise Physiologists Lachlan and Kirsty in the Wellness Gym, made possible because of YOU!



Lori (right) and her partner Jo at the Wellness Centre.

We have an exciting update! Following Lori's stem cell transplant and with continued exercise, she's decreased the necessity for tablets from over 30 a day to less than a handful. If you're at the Wellness Centre, chances are you'll find this inspiring couple creating art, expressing themselves through music and often, maintaining Lori's mental resolve and physical strength with Kirsty and Lachlan in the Wellness Gym, made possible together with YOU.

How you helped a young mother...

A busy working single mother of three boys aged 12, 10 and 8, Meredith Holmes was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017. Facing diagnosis and treatment alone, the art therapy you help support stepped in as Meredith's life began to unravel.



"The impact of art therapy for me has been amazing," says Meredith. "It helped clear my mind of thoughts about the cancer coming back and where I'd go from there. It was good to put my emotions into something other than words."

"Art therapy gave me a chance to do something for myself – not for my kids but for me. It allowed me to talk about my experience, process it and reflect on what was the longest six months of my life." — Meredith

Art therapist Fiona Scottney is deeply grateful for your support of this vital program.

"When patients and carers come into the ONJ Cancer Centre they are often anxious, scared and isolated," she says. "Through art therapy, people with cancer are able to find a safe space during what is often a confronting life experience." — Fiona

Thanks to you, art therapy is open to every patient at the ONJ Cancer Centre.

Without you, this wouldn't happen. Thank you.

"The impact of art therapy for me has been amazing." — Meredith

Nurses lead the way, thanks to you

For years people with cancer have worried about and been frustrated by the mental cloudiness they sometimes notice before, during and after cancer treatment. Even though its exact cause isn't known, and it can happen at any time when you have cancer, this mental fog is commonly called chemo brain.

The sometimes vague yet distressing mental changes people with cancer notice are real, not imagined. They might last a short time, or they might go on for years. These changes can sometimes make people with cancer unable to go back to their everyday life.

Here at the ONJ Cancer Centre staff are continually asking questions and researching how they can do even more for people with cancer, such as conquering the mental fog of chemo brain. This includes Priscilla Gates, ONJ Cancer Centre Bone Marrow Transplant and Survivorship Nurse Consultant.



Generous hearts bring people together

Bringing people together for a good cause is something Paolo and Leila have been doing for many years. Their latest community event focused on bringing a taste of Italy to friends and family.

"We organised a dinner featuring traditional dishes and cultural references from Sicily. We called it 'Sicilian Soul,'" says Paolo. "We had a band and together with donated auction items, we raised \$19,000!"

Paolo's wife passed away seven years ago after a cancer diagnosis.

"That certainly triggered an additional commitment," says Paolo. "And when my son was lucky enough to do a medical internship at the ONJ Cancer Centre, we decided to show our support for the work being done here through our community fundraising event."

"We want to contribute to cancer research and the wellness of patients with cancer," says Leila. "Olivia even sent us a video with a touching personal message. Nobody can help but to smile along with her!"

Plans are well underway for their 2020 event.

Paolo Lavisci and partner Leila: Giving back through their community.

Community events are a wonderful way to come together and raise funds to help people with cancer. If you'd like to run your own community event, contact 03 9496 5753 or fundraising@onjcancercentre.org.



Priscilla is an inaugural recipient of the Austin Health Nursing Alumni Scholarship, made possible through your donations for nurses in 2018.

Because of your support, Priscilla is currently undertaking research to better understand chemo brain including when and how to best administer early screenings and then, building evidence based rehabilitation resources including brain training for patients.

"Chemo brain is a very distressing and disabling side effect of cancer treatments, affecting more than 30% of people with cancer," says Priscilla.

"Nurses are ideally placed to conduct early screenings and support yet there is little evidence about when and how it's best to do so. The scholarship means I'm able to conduct world leading research to better guide chemo brain treatment not only for patients with us at the ONJ Cancer Centre but also around the world." — Priscilla

Priscilla Gates is grateful for your part in helping patients with cognitive impairments, also called chemo brain.

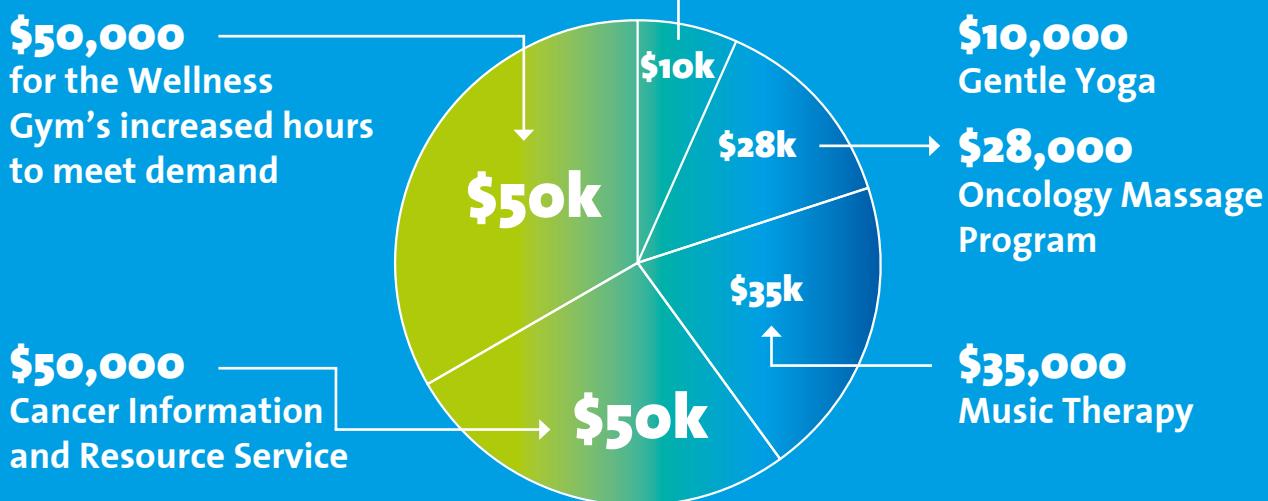
Dry July fundraising makes a life changing difference

Dry July encourages people to give up alcohol for the month of July and ask their friends and family to support by donating to wellness programs at the ONJ Cancer Centre.

Thanks to our dedicated fundraising community of Dry July'ers, combined with Dry July Foundation grants, we're excited to give a progress report on how these funds are making a difference!



Life changing difference



Suan, whose welcoming face you may have seen at the Wellness Centre, witnesses first-hand the enormous impact wellness programs have on patients and families. She's filled with gratitude for our amazing Dry July supporters.

“Every day I see how patients and families are supported by our wellness programs. Dry July'ers really are making a life changing difference for the well-being of patients, families and carers. Thank you.” — Suan

Join Dry July 2020 to support people with cancer and their families!

Register your interest at onjcancercentre.org/dryjuly.

“Every day I see how patients and families are supported by our wellness programs.” — Suan



Run Melbourne team shows extraordinary dedication

A family unite and give back by participating in Run Melbourne after losing their father, best mate and community volunteer, Gus.

Maree Royston and the Westwood family put on their walking shoes for Run Melbourne last year to walk for a cause close to their heart; supporting people with cancer and in memory of their father and husband, Gary (best known as Gus Westwood). The team of 24 quickly gained incredible support raising over \$9,000!

Gus sadly passed away at the ONJ Cancer Centre in 2018 after a shock cancer diagnosis that within three months turned the family's world upside down. Maree said, "We couldn't have made it through without the incredible support and care from the staff at the ONJ Cancer Centre."

Gus was known as a caring, passionate man and a fanatic Collingwood fan who had many friends. For more than thirty years he also volunteered at the Montmorency Football Club.

"Taking part in Run Melbourne was our way to do something to honour Dad and give back to the Centre that cared so much for him. Raising money was easy knowing it would help people with cancer and their families facing the challenges of cancer."

Maree confesses Run Melbourne was her first fundraising event but it is safe to say the whole team explored every avenue to raise the most they could!

"We told everyone we knew about Run Melbourne and shared our team page on Facebook constantly. We also had t-shirts made and asked businesses to sponsor us for \$500 and put their logo on the back. Our team received a lot of support this way."

Well done Maree and all the members of Team Gus!

Are you ready to dust off your running or walking shoes this year? Be our Hero by participating in Run Melbourne 2020 and create a lasting impact for your health and our patients. **Sign up today at onjcancercentre.org/runmelbourne!**



"Taking part in Run Melbourne was our way to do something to honour Dad and give back to the Centre that cared so much for him." — Maree with Team Gus



Be our Hero.

At this year's Run Melbourne — do it for your health and your hospital! You'll be helping people win over and live better with cancer.

Fundraise for a Department or Ward of your choice

5K, 10K or 21.1K options | Walk or Run

Sunday 26 July

Sign up now and join Team ONJ Cancer Centre, onjcancercentre.org/runmelbourne

Yes, I want to help people with cancer and their families!

Title: Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms (please circle)

Name _____

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Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode _____

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Please accept my tax-deductible donation of:

- \$35 \$50 \$75 \$150 My choice _____
 One Time OR Monthly and join Olivia's Circle!

Payment details

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Card number _____

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Expiry date _____ / _____

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

I would like to find out more about:

- Leaving a gift in my Will to the ONJ Cancer Centre OR
 I have already included the ONJ Cancer Centre in my Will



Locked Bag 25, Heidelberg VIC 3084

Ph (03) 9496 5753

Email fundraising@onjcancercentre.org

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We did it!



THE
WELLNESS
WALK AND
RESEARCH
RUN

You helped raise an incredible \$1.1 million, thank you!

On Sunday 6 October 2019 we had record numbers attend our annual Wellness Walk and Research Run (WWRR). Our dedicated fundraisers (with their dogs) walked, jogged and ran around the Tan Track and enjoyed festivities of the event village. Incredible appearances from James Reyne and the Chantoozies added to the buzz as well!

“This is the first time we raised this much money for the Centre. I just want to thank you from someone who has been touched by cancer a couple of times now, thank you so much from the bottom of my heart.” — Olivia



Did you know WWRR is also a global event? Dedicated fundraisers from around the world organised their events while friends and family supported the cause. Our overseas friends collectively raised more than \$40,000!



**Join WWRR 2020!
Tickets nearly sold out last year.
Sign up to be notified the minute tickets go on sale -
wellnesswalkresearchrun.com.au!**



Funds raised support wellness programs at the ONJ Cancer Centre and help fund breakthrough cancer research.



“Community is everything. My family are my biggest supporters.” — Olivia



**A big thank you to our incredible 2019 Event Sponsors and Partners –
Channel 9, Broadspectrum, IGA, PETstock and La Trobe University.**