



# Gort Cancer Support

*Supporting People affected by Cancer*

March 2023

Issue 10

## Welcome to the March 2023 edition of our newsletter

The first quarter of 2023 has seen a huge increase in the demand of our services. After 3 tumultuous years helping to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals have resumed normal services and are now dealing with the post pandemic backlog. The results of which can be seen as the numbers attending our support centre have quadrupled since the beginning of January.

A diagnosis of cancer profoundly changes a person's life. Many people feel alone, isolated and afraid. Some people keep their fears to themselves in order not to cause further trauma to their families. Others have no one to share their fears with. By adopting a holistic approach and providing a range of supportive services and activities, here in Hollyblue House, we try to enhance people's wellbeing and coping skills.



**Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.**

**~ Ralph Waldo Emerson**



## New General Manager

As most are aware, Gort Cancer Support have operated entirely on a volunteer basis since its formation almost 16 years ago. Sadly however, due to the ever-increasing number of clients, it is no longer possible to function efficiently and effectively without the support of a full-time manager.

Following an intensive recruitment drive and interview process, we are delighted to welcome Cara Brady to her new role as General Manager at Hollyblue House. Cara is already a very familiar face at our support centre as she has been working here in a voluntary capacity for the past 4 years, as well as being a member of our committee.

We wish Cara the very best in her new role and are confident that the centre will continue to go from strength to strength under her management.

## Activator Pole Walking

Our Activator Pole Walking group, facilitated by Martin Nestor, resumed on Thursday 12th January following the Christmas break.

A growing body of research suggests regular use of walking poles can improve posture and gait, reduce joint impact (especially ankles, knees and hips), develop range of motion of the shoulders and spine, increase muscle strength in the upper body (especially arms and core) and enhance stability and reduce fear of falling.

They may also be of benefit to those affected by lymphoedema. This is a very popular activity which is run on a regular basis.





## Chair Yoga

Chair Yoga classes with Siobhan Moylan are continuing on Monday afternoons from 2-3pm.

Yoga is an ancient practice that has been around for over 2,000 years. It is a form of low-impact exercise that involves the practice of movements, postures and deep breathing to promote a calm, clear mind and a state of relaxation. For those undergoing cancer treatments, cancer survivors, and their loved ones, yoga can provide a number of benefits to both the mind and body. Yoga is proven to be beneficial for many cancer patients as it improves circulation in the body and promotes

relaxation. Although yoga cannot treat the disease, it can improve quality of life for cancer patients by helping them manage the side effects of treatment, including insomnia, pain and fatigue. It can also help with emotional and mental aspects of treatment, such as depression and anxiety.

Yoga also helps the healing process by reducing stress. Stress can inhibit healing by keeping the body in a state of alarm and crisis readiness. In this stressed state, some of the body's systems (such as the immune, digestive, and reproductive systems) are suppressed. When we relax, the body's systems return to efficient functioning. Meditation, as a part of most yoga classes, can help the body return to this relaxed state.

## Wedding Showcase

We were delighted to be given the opportunity to attend the Wedding Showcase on Sunday Jan 15th in The Lady Gregory Hotel. It was a wonderful event to display our wedding Favour Cards and explain how, in lieu of favours, couples can make a donation to our Support Centre to help people affected by cancer.





## Art Classes

Creating art can be a therapeutic experience during times of health-related crisis. The creative process can often reduce stress and loneliness, while providing an outlet for people with cancer to express themselves.

Our regular artists were delighted with the donation of new table easels and a supply of different sized canvases, all thanks to Let's Fund It. We really appreciate them donating these supplies to our charity.

## Gardening Workshop

We were thrilled to welcome Tom Stewart of Keane's Garden Centre in Kilcolgan to our Studio on Wednesday 1st March. Tom hosted a gardening workshop which was very interesting & informative.

Tom brought along a great selection of trees, plants & seeds. He also spent loads of time answering questions. We are hoping to have Tom back with us for another talk in the next few months.

**"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow"**

~Audrey Hepburn



## St Patrick's Day Parade

As the theme for this year's parade was FRIENDSHIP, we were delighted to take part in the parade and showcase our driving service where we offer the hand of friendship to people in need of this service.

It is available for chemotherapy, radiotherapy and oncology appointments to those who are unable to provide their own travel arrangements. This service is provided by volunteer drivers and can be arranged by contacting our support centre.





It was wonderful to welcome back Margaret Heffernan from Look Good Feel Better for another skincare and make-up workshop in our studio on 22nd March with the assistance of Mary Lee and Eilish Moran.

Look Good Feel Better provide free skincare and make-up workshops to women receiving cancer treatment delivered by professional beauty therapists and make-up artists.

Finding out you have cancer can be daunting and life-changing. The added stress of the appearance related side effects of treatment can be demoralising and very hard to cope with. This can have a serious effect on self-esteem and confidence, at a time when a positive attitude is very important. Cancer can rob a woman of her energy and strength, but with the support of Look Good Feel Better it need not take away her self-confidence.

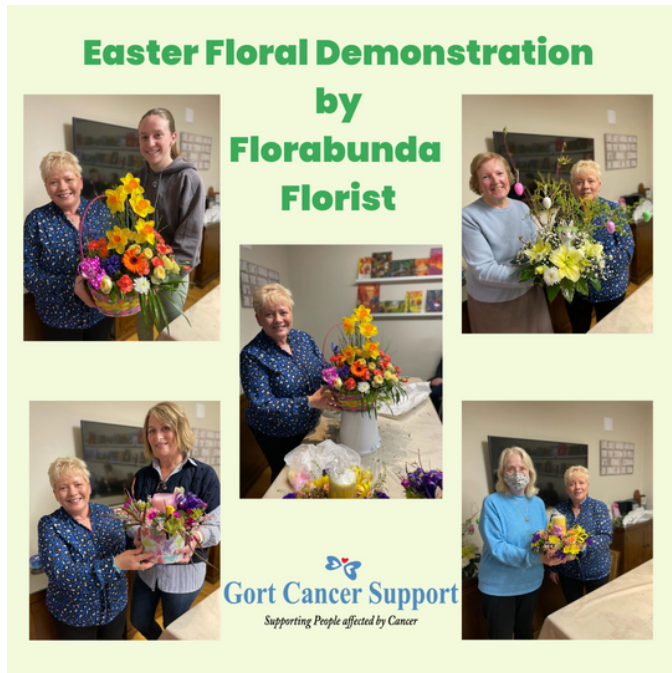
## Table Quiz

A great evening was had by all who attended our table quiz in Sullivan's on Thursday 23rd March. We were grateful for all the support and the number of tables exceeded our expectations. Thanks to everyone who supported this event. Congratulations to the winning team of Michael Mahon, Joseph Keehan, Diarmuid Diviney & Tony Diviney. After a tie-breaker, 2nd prize went the team of Paul O'Donnell, Gerard O'Rourke & Michael Joyce. Well done everybody.



We want to thank our excellent quizmaster, Tom Prior, for preparing all the questions and overseeing events last night. Thank you also to Mary Flanagan & the team in Sullivan's Hotel for their help in relation to this event. Thank you to Áine Kelly, Bridie Willers, Anne McInerney, Regina Monaghan and PJ Downey for correcting all the papers & correlating all the scores. Thank you to anyone who donated a prize for the event & thank you also to the members of our committee & volunteers who helped on the evening.

Watch this space as we hope to host another quiz in the Autumn – we'll need to get Tom working on more questions!



### Easter Flower Arrangement

Spring was definitely in the air in the studio of Hollyblue House on Thursday evening, 30th March, where an Easter floral demonstration was held by Mary Cannon of Florabunda Florist, Loughrea.

Over 20 people were treated to a professional display of the intricacies of different designs in shape, colour, and seasonal association. Mary completed four fabulous Easter Arrangements which were raffled on the night. The four lucky winners were delighted with their prizes.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to Mary for her time, expertise and advice and also to everyone who supported the event.

### Hollyblue Gifts Shop

As Gort Cancer Support receive no state funding, one means of generating an income is through our Pop Up Shops and our recent new look Hollyblue Gifts shop located here at Hollyblue House.

We are always looking for donations of unwanted/unopened gifts and presents for Hollyblue Gifts.

Have you quality gifts lurking in the attic or at the back of presses, such as crystal, china, handbags, scarves, jewellery, perfume, toiletries, candles, photo frames, etc.

Why not put them to good use and donate to Gort Cancer Support. Donations can be dropped off to our support centre during opening hours Monday to Friday. Follow us on <https://www.facebook.com/gortcancersupporthollybluegifts.ie/> to keep an eye out for a bargain.



## Thank You

Finally, we wish to thank everyone who supports our centre, whether by making annual or monthly donations, organising or supporting fundraisers or donating to our shop, We could not provide support and assistance to people affected by cancer without the support of people like you.