



Gort Cancer Support

Supporting People affected by Cancer

DECEMBER 2024

ISSUE 17



Welcome to the December 2024 edition of our newsletter.

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with immense gratitude for your unwavering support and generosity. Your contributions, whether through direct donations, participating in our annual raffle, supporting the Hollyblue Gift Shop or organizing fundraisers, have made a significant impact on our community. The entire team at Hollyblue House extends a heartfelt thank you for your kindness.

Your support is more crucial than ever. With the increasing number of families affected by cancer, the services provided by Hollyblue House are a beacon of hope and comfort for many in South Galway and North Clare. Your generosity enables us to continue offering life-changing support to those in need. We cannot overstate the importance of your contributions, they truly make a difference in countless lives.

As we rapidly approach the end of 2024, we reflect on the incredible impact we have made together in supporting those affected by cancer. Thanks to your generosity and support, we were able to provide a wide range of essential services and activities throughout the year. These included over 240 counselling sessions, offering emotional support and guidance to help individuals and families navigate their cancer journey. We provided over 300 complementary therapy treatments, providing holistic care to enhance well-being and alleviate the side effects of cancer treatment. We also provided over 75 manual lymph drainage treatments, helping to reduce pain and swelling as well as improving comfort for those experiencing lymphedema as well as 120 drives to oncology appointments and treatments, ensuring that patients have reliable transportation to receive the care they need, to mention just a few.

Over 900 supportive activities were participated in, such as peer support, yoga, tai chi, art with Mavis, arts and crafts, meditation and singing group. Your contributions have made a significant difference in the lives of many and we are deeply grateful for your continued support. Together, we are making a positive impact and offering hope to those in need. Thank you for being a vital part of our community.

Moments of the Year



Hollyblue 5K Your Way

We had a lovely morning at the “5K Your Way” walk/run at Coole Park in early October. The weather was perfect, a welcome change after the heavy rain the day before, making the event even more enjoyable.

A big thank you to everyone who participated and made the event such a success. Your enthusiasm and energy were truly inspiring.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Sinead Flanagan and her team for their dedication and hard work in organizing this event. Their meticulous planning and commitment were invaluable and we deeply appreciate everything Sinead did to ensure the event ran smoothly.

Thank you all for making this event memorable and fun!



Sinead is pictured here presenting the trophies to the winners. Well done to Noel Diviney & Michelle Mullaney, who were the first male & female runners home.

Hollyblue Christmas Cards

We have Christmas cards for sale again this year, building on the success of last year's Christmas cards.

The artwork for these cards was created in our weekly art classes on Tuesday afternoons.

Each pack includes 12 cards, with 2 each of 6 unique designs, and is priced at €12 per pack.



Christmas Pop-Up Shop

We are thrilled to share the success of our Christmas Pop-Up Shop, which took place at Hollyblue House on Thursday, 28th November and Friday, 29th November. The event was a wonderful opportunity for our community to come together, browse a delightful selection of gifts and support a great cause.

Our shop featured a wonderful selection of Christmas decorations, including gnomes and snowmen handcrafted in our Thursday morning arts & crafts class. Additionally, we offered a range of Christmas candles available in our Hollyblue Gift Shop.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated items for the shop and to those who purchased Christmas gifts. Your generosity and support have made a significant impact, helping to fund the vital services provided by the Gort Cancer Support Centre.

Thank you for making this event a success and for your continued support!



Galway People of the Year Awards

The Galway People of the Year Awards, established in 1995, aim to publicly honour individuals who have made significant contributions to their communities, either locally or internationally, through their leadership, involvement, bravery or accomplishments. These awards are now considered one of the most prestigious honours in the county. Each awardee is selected by the people of Galway through a nomination process, with the final decision made by an independent panel.

We had a fantastic experience at their Awards Ceremony on Friday 22nd November. It was truly an honour to be chosen as one of the featured charities for this event, alongside the Galway Parkinson's Association. We wish to extend our gratitude to our dedicated committee members and staff who represented us with such enthusiasm and professionalism. Their efforts made our participation memorable and impactful.



Well done to Bernice Forde Carolan, one of our volunteer drivers, who was presented with her award on the night. Since returning to Gort 6 years ago, Bernice has become involved with many local organisations. As well as volunteering her time with our charity, Bernice is involved with Gort Credit Union Ltd., Gort Tidy Towns, Gort Welcomes Ukraine, Gort Town Team, the local Tourist Office run by Burren Lowlands and the Family Resource Centre's Food Cloud initiative.

A well deserved award, Bernice, for your ongoing commitment to helping your community.

Volunteer Ireland Awards

Mary Nolan was shortlisted for a Volunteer Ireland Award for her incredible work with Gort Cancer Support. Her dedication over many years has made a profound impact on countless lives.

While Mary may not have taken home the award in the Health & Wellbeing category, we couldn't be prouder of her incredible contribution to our community.

A huge congratulations to Billy O'Rourke of Suicide or Survive Dublin who won this category as well as all the other deserving winners at the Volunteer Ireland Awards on the 8th December 2024. Your dedication & passion inspire us all.



"Mary has channelled her empathy and experience into providing compassionate care and assistance to individuals and families navigating the complexities of a cancer diagnosis. Her commitment to this cause is a testament to her resilience and unwavering desire to make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by cancer" - writes her nominator."



Annual Christmas Raffle

Our Annual Christmas raffle took place on Monday December 9th.

Massive thank you to everyone who bought tickets & supported the raffle. Your generosity & participation make all the difference & this raffle is one of our most important fundraisers of the year. We couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you again to all the individuals & businesses who generously donated the prizes. We are so grateful to you all for helping make this event a success.

Congratulations! Well done to all our Christmas Raffle winners!



Christmas Floral Demonstration

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Mary Cannon of Florabunda Florist in Loughrea for her incredible Christmas Floral Demonstration on Monday 9th December, at the Lady Gregory Hotel. The event was a tremendous success and all of Mary's stunning floral arrangements were raffled off at the end of the night, much to the delight of the attendees.

Mary's expert tips and breathtaking arrangements truly captured the essence and spirit of the holiday season. Her creativity and skill were evident in every piece she crafted.

We are deeply grateful to Mary for taking the time to share her talent with us, especially during such a busy time of year.

We'd also like to extend our thanks to everyone who took the time to attend

Congratulations to our seven lucky raffle winners, who are pictured here with Mary Cannon. Well done to *Margaret Brady, Vera Killeen, Áine Gillespie, Sharon Kelly, Brid O'Donnell & Bernie Caulfield with Annmarie Crean.*



Geraldine's Story

In life's journey there are moments that change us forever.

For me one such moment was the day I heard those words not once but three times "you have cancer".

The journey that followed marked by chemotherapy, surgery and radiotherapy has been a testament to the human spirit and its unwavering support of those around us in this regard.

Gort Cancer Support was a great help to me during my visits there, I found the centre so full of hope, faith and understanding of what I was going through. Your words of encouragement and unwavering support was something I will cherish forever. To the fellow survivors I met along the way reminded me that I was not alone in this battle. I must also acknowledge the countless well-wishers, the acquaintances and strangers who sent prayers, positive thoughts and good vibes my way.

Upon reflecting on this challenging chapter of my life, I have come to realize that cancer as formidable as it is, has also brought me a precious gift, the gift of profound gratitude. The immense love and support that I found in Gort Cancer Support was tremendous.

As I step into this new phase of life, and carry with me the scars of battles fought, but also the warmth of love and unity that I found in Gort Cancer Support, cancer may have touched my life but it did not define it with the support I received I have emerged more stronger and grateful than ever before.

So, to everyone in Gort Cancer Support who played a part in my journey, together we have shown that love, resilience and gratitude can conquer even the most daunting challenges life throws our way. Thank you for being my silver lining in the storm clouds of life.



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Appreciation Day

We had such a lovely time for our appreciation day on Friday 13th. A special shout-out to those who baked for the event – your delicious treats added a sweet touch to the day and were enjoyed by everyone.

We couldn't function without the unwavering support of our volunteers, committee members and therapists. Your dedication and hard work are the backbone of our organization. Together, we are making a difference and creating a supportive community.



***We hope this Christmas brings you Peace,
Health & Happiness in the company of family
and friends,***

from all the team in Hollyblue House.

***"Christmas is a season for kindling the fire for
hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of
charity in the heart."***

~ Washington Irving

