

ONCOLOGIST VALUES OZANAM HOUSE ROLE

Oncologist Dr Alain Hocepiéd says in the two years he has been working at Palmerston North Base Hospital, he has never heard anything but positive feedback about Ozanam House. "Patients don't want to be alone, and Ozanam House provides a place where they and their supporters can stay close to the treatment. I would say that Ozanam House reduces the stress of the situation," says Dr Hocepiéd. His patients, who come from all around the region, enjoy staying at Ozanam House. "I think people find Ozanam House a very positive and supportive environment which helps them cope with the treatment," says Dr Hocepiéd.

FROM THE HEART

In the weeks people stay at Ozanam House, some very special friendships and memories are made. Whatever they take away, many want to leave something behind and one way they do this is through messages written in a book kept by Eileen Day.

The following are some of the treasures; the poetry may not win any prizes, but the sentiments are pure gold.

*I was here at Ozanam House
But now I've gone
So I've left my name here in the book
To turn youse all on
Those who have met me here, really know me good
And all those who didn't really wished they would.
The moral of this story is go ahead and meet everyone here
in your time
'Cos it's never going to come around again folks*

*Meet new friends
But keep the old
Because when new ones turn to silver
The old ones turn to gold.*

*Zap 'em all
And make 'em well
'cos tomorrow
You never can tell.*

*I came to Ozanam House because I was unwell
Stayed here for eight weeks
Yeah, quite a spell.
Met many, many people
Who I called my friend
But it was always on my mind
That I'll never see them again
So I just lived for today
Because tomorrow was a gem
And I have in the memory
I'd never forget any of them.*

INCREASED TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION FUNDING

People staying at Ozanam House do so thanks to the Ministry of Health's National Travel Assistance Scheme that came into effect on 1 January 2006. More funding is now available to subsidise patients who need to travel long distances for treatment, or who travel frequently. Contracts Manager for the Mid Central District Health Board, Bob Phillips, was a member of the reference group that helped shape the new Scheme. He says that the changes create greater parity for patients across the country. "Funding entitlement is based on distance travelled for treatment, frequency of treatment, and whether the patient has a community services card. People staying at Ozanam House usually have travelled a long way to be there, so may be entitled to financial assistance," says Bob. Patients are eligible to claim

assistance for travel if they: travel more than 350km one way per visit (80km for a child) visit a specialist more than 25 times a month in six months visit a specialist more than five times and travel more than 50km one way per visit (25km for a child) have a Community Services Card and travel more than 80 km one way per visit (25km for a child). Accommodation assistance is generally available only when travel assistance has been approved and the treatment centre is 100km or more away from the patient's home. The Ministry of Health has published a brochure outlining the changes and this is available from healthcare providers and Ozanam House. Information is also available on the Ministry of Health's website [HYPERLINK "http://www.moh.govt.nz/travelassistance"](http://www.moh.govt.nz/travelassistance)

OZANAM HOUSE update



Autumn 2006



WHAT OZANAM HOUSE MEANS TO THE PEOPLE WHO STAY HERE

Taranaki. In the evenings everyone congregates in the kitchen, dining room and lounge areas, so you get to know heaps of people that way."

Hamuera from New Plymouth

"I'm a musician and while I was at Ozanam House a group of us got together at least once a week to perform and get people singing and dancing. We had just about everyone taking part. We also organised farewell gifts for every person who was leaving. As a result of this I was made Mayor of Ozanam House and presented with a Mayoral badge and chain. I also did a bit of gardening, trimmed the hedge and cleared the spouting. You form strong ties with people at Ozanam House, and I still keep in contact with many of those I met during my stay."

Stu from Hastings

"My wife and I have been down to Ozanam House several times and we like to work in the garden as our way of helping out. We take plants down with us, mainly annuals and some perennials, to brighten up the garden for others to enjoy. We revamped the flower bed by Williams House six months ago. "Ozanam House's gardener

Norm is a volunteer and does a wonderful job, but there's always plenty of work weeding, planting and preparing the ground and I'd encourage others who enjoy gardening to give him a hand too."



Pauline from Napier

"Ozanam House is a marvellous facility. It removes the stress of finding and paying for accommodation close to the hospital. Eileen and Margaret are wonderful people - very approachable and supportive. They even find time to run people up to the hospital who can't walk there. For me the kitchen is one of the best places at Ozanam House. It's like a camping ground with everyone cooking food at the same time - really friendly."

It is nearly 40 years since Ozanam House was conceived by the Palmerston North St Vincent de Paul Society as a place where out-of-town patients and their families could stay while undergoing cancer treatment. Since 1967 when a four-bedroom home was bought just a few hundred metres from Palmerston North hospital, many thousands of people - both patients and their families, have benefited from the facility in all kinds of ways. Here's what just a few recent residents have to say about what Ozanam House means to them.

Sarah (16) from New Plymouth

"I was just amazed the first time I arrived at Ozanam House. I couldn't believe that such a service existed. The place is always so fresh looking - clean and tidy." I stay at Ozanam House with my Mum every three months now and each time we get to know new people. We always check the chalk board when we arrive to see who is staying from New Plymouth and

"Ozanam House is a marvellous facility.."

SHUTTLE MAKES TRAVEL TO OZANAM HOUSE A BREEZE

Ozanam House accommodates people from throughout Taranaki, Hawkes Bay, Wanganui and the Wairarapa while they undergo treatment at Palmerston North's Base Hospital. To make the journey easier, free shuttles operate weekly from New Plymouth/Wanganui and Napier/Hastings, dropping patients at Ozanam House on Monday and taking them home on Friday. Special midweek shuttles are arranged for patients needing a shorter stay. Shuttle journeys are renowned for their entertainment value, with drivers Jenny Green (New Plymouth/Wanganui) and Stu McLachlan (Napier/Hastings) behind the wheel. Jenny has been driving patients from New Plymouth in her cheerful daffodil van for almost a year, taking over the role from John Bocock ("Beau") who founded the service and who has now retired. Jenny says the three-hour trip passes quickly with plenty of chatter along the way, and a stop at the Pickwick Parlour coffee shop in Wanganui. She loves her job and tries to make the trip relaxed and enjoyable with her own brand of easy conversation and sing-alongs. "I work hard at putting my passengers at ease so they can relax during the journey. When Beau set up the shuttle service, he wanted the journey to be fun

and I'm carrying on that tradition," says Jenny. Stu was a police officer for 32 years prior to starting as a shuttle driver last May. It is the people aspect of the role that appeals to him. Jenny worked for more than 16 years at a private radiology practice and has been part of the driving team for the last 8 years. She leapt at the opportunity to drive regularly as she enjoys driving and meeting people. Both drivers say the passengers create a very positive atmosphere. "Everyone is an equal on the shuttle," says Stu. "They have something in common which creates a bond even though they come from different walks of life. Some people are a bit apprehensive at the start of their first trip, but it doesn't take long for a positive mood to develop." According to Jenny, the key attributes of the job are being a good driver and a positive and happy person. She says her radiology background has helped too, because she is used to be around people having cancer treatment. "I try to make something unpleasant a bit more pleasant. Some of my passengers are feeling unwell and tired due to their treatment, so I go out of my way to make sure the journey is as comfortable as possible" says Jenny.

TRUST IN GOOD HEART SAYS NEW APPOINTEE

Chairman of the Manawatu Cancer Society, Bill Bly, joined the Ozanam House Trust late last year. The Trust has four members and comprises two representatives each from the Cancer Society and the St Vincent de Paul Society, with Tony Finnigan as Trust Secretary. Bill Bly says the Trust is in good heart thanks to the efforts of previous Trustees and the good management of Ozanam House. "During my tenure as Trustee I'm looking forward to assisting with the expansion of facilities and to continuing the close working relationship between the Cancer Society and Ozanam House," says Bill. The primary responsibility of the Trustees is to oversee the finances of the Trust, which does not receive funding from Central Government. "Ozanam House does not charge for accommodation, but gratefully accepts donations from patients and their carers. These donations are used by the Trust to maintain and expand Ozanam House's facilities," says Bill. Bill, along with Faye James, was instrumental in bringing the Relay for Life to New Zealand in 2000 as a major fund-raiser for the Cancer Society. He has been Chairman of the organising committee since it started and the annual event has raised more than \$1million to date. Bill Bly is a farmer living in Woodville and has been involved in local government and farming organisations for many years.

Many Acts of Kindness



One of the special things about Ozanam House that gives manager Eileen Day the most pleasure is the kindness that it brings out in people. For example, she says there's 84 year-old Bob Voss who every fortnight turns up at Ozanam on his motor scooter, bringing with him fresh farm eggs in a pouch. "He's a real character. He lives with his wife on a Tiritia farmlet. He's an old shearer and tells us his knees are 'buggered'!" Bob's faithful companion Willie has always accompanied him on his visits to Ozanam House. Ozanam House sends Bob condolences on the recent passing of his old friend. Country Women's Institute members regularly drop in jams and cookies. And then there's a woman in Napier, Eileen says, who every year makes and delivers a patchwork quilt to Ozanam House which is raffled to raise funds for making improvements around the property. The trust is always delighted to accept one-off offers of help and there's always something that needs doing. "At the moment we're hoping to get our full sized pool table recovered," Eileen says. "So if anyone can help out with this popular piece of equipment we'd love to hear from them."

Generosity appreciated



Ozanam House gratefully acknowledges the legacy given it by a very special member of the community who made an important contribution on many levels. An unobtrusive figure, William (Bill) Johnston lived a large part of his life in Palmerston North. He was a well loved and respected teacher and is well remembered at the Terrace End Rotary and Bowling Clubs. His love of the sea and water was reflected in his competitive rowing. Bill rose to the rank of Lieutenant Commander of the Royal New Zealand Navy. His competitive spirit saw him also play rugby at representative level. When Bill passed away, he made Ozanam House one of six charities to share in a substantial investment that has been left in perpetuity. Ozanam House secretary Tony Finnigan says the Trust's grateful thanks has been conveyed to Bill Johnston's family and a suitable record is being prepared and will be put on display at Ozanam House.