

O Z A N A M H O U S E

Update



SUMMER 2001

Going up in the World

There's been a swarm of builders hard at work at Ozanam House over the past few months.

The ever-growing demands for the facility, which for the past 35 years has provided free accommodation to cancer patients and their carers, meant more room was needed.

"We were short of room and it was going to be very costly to pull the Summers Wing down and rebuild, resulting in only six rooms," Ozanam House Trust Secretary Tony Finnigan says.

So Ozanam House is going up in the world with a second storey being added to the Summers Wing.

The \$650,000 project will result in an additional 4 double bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms and complete

upgrading of the whole building which has been gutted. The finished wing will have a total of 10 bedrooms, two lounges, library, laundry, kitchen and dining room.

It is hoped to have the project completed by Christmas.

Tony Finnigan says a fund raising programme will be undertaken to cover the costs of the developments.

"We'll be approaching various trusts and the Lottery Grants Board, and of course, people who have stayed at Ozanam House and know how valuable the service is, are always very generous."

The \$650,000 refurbishment of the Summers Wing will be completed by Christmas.



O Z A N A M H O U S E N E W S L E T T E R

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There's Nothing Like Day Care

No-one who has spent any time at Ozanam House could ever forget the inimitable manager Eileen Day.

Over the past nine years, she has welcomed, mothered, cuddled, encouraged, joked with, cried with and enjoyed literally thousands of patients and their carers. It's her own special brand of Day Care.

Eileen has enormous respect and admiration for Ozanam House's ever changing residents.

"For us, it's our work. For them, it's a whole new ball game living with strangers, adapting to a new environment for six weeks and all the while undergoing hospital treatment."

She finds it wonderful to observe the way they interact with each other and the level of close relationships they develop. "No-one, unless they stay here, can appreciate the bond they share - not even those of us who work here.

"We have a chef in the Ryan Wing at the moment and last week he and the others in the wing got together and cooked a big roast dinner. Residents often share their skills and talents - one patient turned the cloth on the billiard table, another undertook carpentry repairs, and many hands tend to weeds in the gardens."



Melbourne Cup Day at Ozanam House means sweepstakes and hat making competitions. Eileen Day and Margaret Campbell show how it's done

Recently Eileen was invited to speak at the Gisborne Cancer Society where more than 100 former Ozanam House residents gathered for a pot luck dinner.

"It was great to see them well. Many of them had kept up with Ozanam House news and like other past residents, feel a strong bond for the facility."

NO ONE TURNED AWAY AT OZANAM HOUSE

The service provided by Ozanam House in accommodating cancer patients and their carers while undergoing treatment at Palmerston North Hospital has played a big part in the growth of the Manawatu Radiation Treatment Centre says oncology specialist Dr Percy Bydder.

Dr Bydder, who has worked with the treatment centre and been an Ozanam House trustee since the early 1970s, says Ozanam House makes coming for treatment to Palmerston North accessible and acceptable for those patients who have to travel from outlying cities such as Gisborne and New Plymouth.

Two thirds of patients treated at Palmerston North are from outside the Manawatu.

"We have a population reservoir of 500,000, making us similar in size to the treatment centres in Christchurch and Waikato. We're bigger than Wellington and Dunedin," Dr Bydder says.

Ozanam House has played a big role in the treatment centre's development.

"People can come and stay here with their carers, have their cancers treated in their early stages with success."

Waiting lists have been making the headlines in all New Zealand radiation treatment centres and Palmerston North is no exception. It's not because of lack of equipment, says Dr Bydder, but lack of trained people.

"Sending people to Australia for treatment is not the answer. We are simply going to have to bite the bullet to stop the outflow of trained people. We need to compete with the international market if we are to retain the newly qualified specialists coming on to the market."

No patient's cancer treatment would ever be delayed because Ozanam House was full.

Dr Bydder says if the accommodation were all allocated, the Trust had a policy of providing accommodation at nearby motels at no cost to the patient.

"It is a stressful enough experience have to leave home for cancer treatment without having the additional worry of finding, and affording, accommodation for up to six weeks."

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Residents of Ozanam House are often overwhelmed by the quality of the accommodations into which they are welcomed.

However, there is no question in the minds of most of the people who stay at Ozanam House that it's the people who work there who make the difference.

On the other hand, the staff at Ozanam House say they choose to do so because of the wonderful people they meet on the job.

Ozanam House has three long-serving cleaners, Lorna Wonnocott, Barbara Craw and Nancy Tawharu. Who agree they are there for much more than a job.

Lorna has been cleaning there for seven years and declares, "I come for the people, not the money".

She says, "I like the atmosphere here. I talk to the patients while I work, sharing a few jokes and laughs with them. I try not to get too close -you'd cry if you did. But it's great when people pop back in again to say hello when they're well."

Barbara, after three years, says, "I love it here; the people are lovely. It's not sad, because they're not sad people: They're positive and help each other."

Nancy appreciates the diverse range of people she has met over the past five years.

"You have to be people-oriented to work here. I find the oldies delightful; hearing the stories of what they have done in their lives.

"There's no negativity here. I always say Ozanam House is magic and I love to watch as that magic works."

Thefts Disappointing for Ozanam House

For Ozanam House Manager Eileen Day, one of the saddest parts of her job is an abuse of the service provided.

"In recent months we've had a spate of thefts - both patients' and Ozanam House's property.

"We always tell people to lock the doors to their rooms, but it's very disappointing that in a place like this, where we're all working towards getting people well, that there are those people who abuse our trust."



Manager Eileen Day (left) with Farmers representatives Isabel Williams and Mary McConway.

A HELPING HAND FROM FARMERS

Every year Farmers Trading Co staff are given money from their head office which they use to raise funds for a chosen charity.

This year staff in Palmerston North decided to put their efforts - several thousand from their sausage sizzles, bring and buy sales, scone days and clothing sales - towards the work of Ozanam House.

Farmers Helping Hand Group treasurer, Pat Parsons and president Isobel Williams asked how they could help. After some thought, it was decided the 10 flats which Ozanam House uses for family groups, could benefit greatly from new bedding and kitchenware.

"We are especially thrilled," says manager Eileen Day. "Because the people who stay here come from out of town, not locally. It is nice to be appreciated for what we do by Palmerston North people."

Other recent donations to Ozanam House include \$10,000 from a local business and funds raised by an annual Bowling Tournament in Hawkes Bay.

The tournament is arranged by Kevin Burns.

Lionesses in New Plymouth raised funds for the purchase of a new computer in the games room, which residents use for sending and receiving emails and playing electronic games.



New trustee, Dr Bernard Forde.

MANAWATU IDENTITY JOINS TRUST

Palmerston North City councillor for 27 years and deputy mayor for 13, Dr Bernard Forde became the Cancer Society

representative on the Ozanam House Trust earlier this year.

He joins Dr Percy Bydder, Mr Les Walden, Mr Cliff Craven on the management board with Mr Tony Finnigan Trust Secretary.

Dr Forde says he is pleased to be able to help on the Trust which is responsible for the development of Ozanam House policy.

"There's a growing need for the service with an estimated one in three New Zealanders affected by cancer in their lifetime. Ozanam House is a wonderful facility," Dr Forde said.

GOODBYE LLOYD MORGAN

Ozanam House trustees and staff were saddened by the death earlier this year of long-time friend of the facility, Mr Lloyd Morgan.

Mr Morgan, the only New Zealander ever to have been international president of Lions Clubs International (representing 1.4 million members), died in Tauranga in August aged 83.

Through the Lions Clubs, Mr Morgan was a huge supporter of Ozanam House, his personal contribution recognised in the naming of the Lloyd Morgan Wing.

Mr Morgan was guest of honour at the official opening of the wing in 1995 when Lions announced the launch of an Ozanam House fundraising appeal which went on to raise three-quarters of a million dollars for the facility.

THE OZANAM HOUSE WAY

Ozanam House is a facility which provides accommodation for cancer patients and their caregivers if required while undergoing treatment at Palmerston North's Base Hospital.

Many patients travelling from throughout the Lower North Island are treated on an "out-patients" basis and need accommodation for up to five to six weeks.

Ozanam house was started by the St Vincent de Paul Society in 1967 and has grown - along with the need for its services - from a four-bedroomed house to a facility which can accommodate up to 116 people at any one time.

Guests are encouraged to treat the house as their own home, with housework and cooking, as well as recreation, often being shared. There are no rules and no charge is made for people's stay, although donations are welcomed.

Shuttles operate from New Plymouth and Hawkes Bay, bringing patients without transport; while at Ozanam House, a regular shuttle take patients to and from hospital for treatments.



Hawkes Bay shuttle driver Graeme Bates takes patients to and from Ozanam House.