



Maureen is a devoted caregiver to her husband Russell but it is a role she admits that she “fell into” rather than chose. Both are in their seventies, and although Russell was diagnosed with dementia a couple of years ago, Maureen had friends and family with experience of dementia and she started to pick the signs at least a year before that time.

Before she realised what was happening to her childhood sweetheart, she became a little impatient with his forgetfulness and not attending to detail, but when she realised that he was ill, all of that changed. Her top priority now is to make sure that he maintains his dignity.

Maureen admits that getting a diagnosis was still difficult. “I was shattered,” she said. “My head knew it was coming but my heart wasn’t ready to accept it.” She and her husband cried in the car after they received the news. Since then, Maureen has been busy managing day to day affairs, watching the small daily changes with sadness, but also with a wry sense of humour. She gets the same

Falling into Caregiving

questions repeatedly hour after hour, day after day, and generally she will answer them with patience and good humour. She talks to friends and family. “Just talking about it helps, even if we can’t solve anything.” However, it’s a lonely journey when the man you love is leaving you even though he is still alive.

*“My head knew it was coming
but my heart wasn’t ready to accept it.”*

One of the district nurses recommended that Russell had his biography recorded by a Hospice Mid Canterbury volunteer, and this proved to be a rewarding experience for both of them, with Russell remembering much of his early working life at Haast, Benmore and in the Yemen.

Hospice also wanted to support Maureen as a caregiver and she took advantage of massage with Rebecca Perkins, finding that it relaxed and calmed her. She also makes sure that she gets to the gym three times a week, early in the morning, so that she can maintain her fitness and strength. It’s a good chance for her to socialise with others and do something for herself. When Hospice started up their Armchair Travel programme, both

Maureen and Russell were keen to come. Russell was always a keen traveller and he enjoys the company and the “travel” to different countries. Maureen is always quick to RSVP so she can get the “best seats”.

Very recently, Maureen has had to make the difficult decision for Russell to go into care. With the pressures of Covid-19 lockdown, it became clear that more help was required than Maureen could give. “Hopefully now I can be more of a wife than a caregiver,” Maureen says.

There are still tears in the shower (“It’s all water,” she says) but with the help of friends, family and Hospice, she gets through difficult days, usually with a smile. Nowadays, it’s all about enjoying special moments when they happen.



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New General Manager, Debbie Mackle

We are delighted to introduce Debbie Mackle, our newly appointed General Manager. Debbie comes to us from the role of Regional Hub Manager at Vetlife where she has led her teams through challenges and change. Debbie and her husband live on a farm at Winchmore and as well as having a wide range of financial and management skills, she has a keen interest in natural therapies, having completed courses in massage, Reiki, reflexology and

mental wellness. Debbie feels strongly about Hospice as an organisation, having had personal experience with it. "Hospice aligns with who I am as a person," says Debbie. She plans to get to know the team better and build on the wonderful work already done.

We are thrilled to have someone of Debbie's calibre stepping in to grow and strengthen our service and our team.



Thank you, Jane Wright - outgoing General Manager



Jane is stepping down as general manager, a position she has held in a voluntary capacity since the service was established in 2014. However her wisdom and vision will not be lost to Hospice Mid Canterbury as she will be continuing in her role as trustee.

One of the key drivers motivating Jane to establish the service was the experience of her father's palliative care journey. She experienced for herself how bewildering the whole situation can be and wondered how it must

be for anyone as a client or carer if they didn't have family around to support them. "I made a pledge to myself at that time that I would do everything I could to help get hospice support established in the district." In mid-2013, she started to have conversations with various people in the district to gauge the need and the Hospice journey began.

The Hospice Mid Canterbury Trust was set up in 2014 with the founding trustees Brendon Adam, Christine Dean, Karen Hall, Penny Holdaway and Jane.

It hasn't been a straightforward journey, with more opposition in the early days than Jane could ever have envisaged. But, as Jane has said, "We have taken our time, and focused on the needs in the community, to build a strong, credible foundation."

Jane is always very modest about her contribution to Hospice Mid Canterbury, but her voluntary contribution serving on the board as well as filling the General

Manager's role has been huge. This voluntary work was required until the Trust was in a sustainable position to be able to appoint a paid General Manager. Now that this has been done, Jane feels it is time for her to step back.

Jane regards her time developing and supporting Hospice Mid Canterbury as "an absolute privilege". She believes that the overwhelming strength of Hospice Mid Canterbury is the people who have become involved, whether it be as a volunteer, service provider, staff member, or trustee. Her mantra was always to "harness the capability in the community", but she could never have envisaged how successful that would be. "Hospice has drawn in the most amazing group of caring, competent people who are driven to make a difference to the lives of others."

Jane isn't quite sure what direction she and John will be heading in, but for the moment, she is going to continue as a Trustee and then see what opportunities arise.

Tony Todd's Ride

Hospice Mid Canterbury can thank the UK's Captain Tom for inspiring local Hospice ambassador Tony Todd to go on his own fundraising marathon. With Covid -19 making fundraising challenging, Tony decided to bike 73 kilometres around Ashburton on his 73rd birthday, May 20th.

With just 10 days to organise, facebook posts were set up and the media ran stories about his endeavour. Suddenly the calls and emails of support started flooding in and the fundraising venture was underway. Tony is well known and respected in the local community and many wanted to join him in his ride. With Covid restrictions, Tony



Tony riding past the Hospice base with other keen cyclists.

had to organise riders in groups of 10 for different laps, although a few hardy souls braved the foggy 8 degree start and were still there at

the end. Some Lions members also came on board and contributed their support, both on the bikes and financially. Donations came in from as far afield as the UK and Canada.

Tony has raised more than \$13,000 for Hospice Mid Canterbury. Although a number of Hospice services are provided by volunteers, specialised services such as counselling and complementary therapies are delivered by independent professionals who are contracted to the organisation. Fundraising efforts like Tony's mean these services are offered free of charge to anyone in the Ashburton district dealing with a life-limiting illness.



Tony at the finish line, cheered on by Barbara Redmond and Pam McCormick.

Thanks to all those who donated to Tony's ride

AJ & ER Quaid
Alison Grant
Anne Carr
Anne Scott
Ashburton County Lions
Ashburton Lions
Barbara Davidson
Barry Redmond
Bevan Rickerby
Bruce and Jacqui Welch
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Neil Brown
Nellie Burrows
Netherby Pharmacy
Nigel Dean
Niki Todd & Family
Nikola Murphy

Patricia Roy
Ray & Pam McCormick
Rod Green
Rodger & Clare Bradford
Roger and Jenny West
S Bennett
Sharon Ferriman
Sharon McQuarters
Shirley Harris
Steve Gielingh
T & C King
Val McDougall
Wendy & Mike Smith

Thanks also to

- DPI (T shirts)
- Harvey Signs
- Keen Energy
- Winsford Trust

Business Supporters Profile

AgriMagic is one of our Bronze sponsors. This is what Charlotte Glass, Director/Consultant for AgriMagic wrote about the company's support of Hospice.

"AgriMagic Ltd specialises in supporting farmers. We have agriculture in our blood - we see the world from a farmer's and farm business perspective.

Our technical knowledge and practical experience of farm systems and compliance issues means we are well placed to support farmers as they respond to the challenges of environmental and nutrient constraints. Our focus is on supporting farm owners and managers to maintain resilient farm businesses.

Although we work across many regions now, our consultancy business was born in Mid Canterbury. Our people are community minded. We live where we work and care deeply for our community because it is made up of our clients and our families.

Hospice Mid Canterbury resonates with us because it makes a difference

when people need it the most. AgriMagic proudly supports this great cause."



New therapist - Janet Hayes



We are very pleased that Janet Hayes, a local acupressure practitioner with over 20 years' experience, has joined the hospice team. Acupressure therapy (no needles) is a gentle way to restore balance to the body, helping to reduce pain, and encourage relaxation. Gentle finger pressure, applied over clothing to special points on the body, releases tensions and enhances well-being.

Donors & Supporters

Thanks to everyone who has given us their support through cash donations and providing their services. We are very grateful. Thanks especially to the following:

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If you wish to donate to Hospice Mid Canterbury, you may do so in a number of ways.

- Internet banking at ANZ 06-0837-0319291-00
- Cheque or cash to Hospice Mid Canterbury c/- Brophy Knight Ltd, PO Box 314 Ashburton 7740
- Drop off at the Hospice Base, 64 Park Street, Ashburton.

All donations over \$5 are tax-deductible.

Check out our website
www.hospicemc.nz

If you would prefer Hospice Mid Canterbury newsletters to be emailed to you, please email manager@hospicemc.nz and we'll put you on our data base.