



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2017



Dilys' 70th birthday party with Johnno, Ann, Dilys, James, Will and Jan. Photo: Ann Campbell

Ann Campbell has shared some reflections about the last few weeks of her Mum's life. Dilys Oxley died in August, 2016. She was 87 years old.

Mum had five children. She dedicated her adult life to being our Mum. I was the elder daughter. We were very close and I always said when she needed me I would be there.

I lived in Scotland with my husband. Mum loved coming to see us on a regular basis. Although always fit and active, Mum was plagued with skin cancers. She was often getting bits chopped out, taking herself off for stressful procedures on her own.

So when I was able to retire at 55 we came back to Australia. Not long after our return Mum was diagnosed with oral cancer. She underwent extensive surgery and a prolonged treatment of brutal radiotherapy. In the recovery period we decided together that she should come up to live with us. A studio was built for her in our garden so that she could retain her independence but we were there when she needed us.

Mum had five happy, active years in her studio. Then she was dealt a shocking blow. The oral cancer came back! We could not believe it after all the treatment that she had been through, and because of all the previous treatments palliative care was the only option this time.

Fortunately we have a wonderful GP who came to see Mum soon after the diagnosis, and she referred us to Cittamani.

Before we knew it one of their nurses was sitting with us calmly and professionally explaining that they would be there with us

along the way. They were always one step ahead, ensuring that we were prepared for every eventuality. Without taking control, they provided support and care enabling Mum to achieve her final wish to die in comfort in her own home.

They also provided support and reassurance to us as carers. We knew that they were always at the end of the phone and would come if we needed them. We did not get the chance to meet the whole team, but everyone that we did meet was caring and highly professional. We could not have managed to provide the level of care that we wanted for Mum without them.

*"Everyone who needs it should have access to such a caring, quality service...
Thank you Cittamani."*

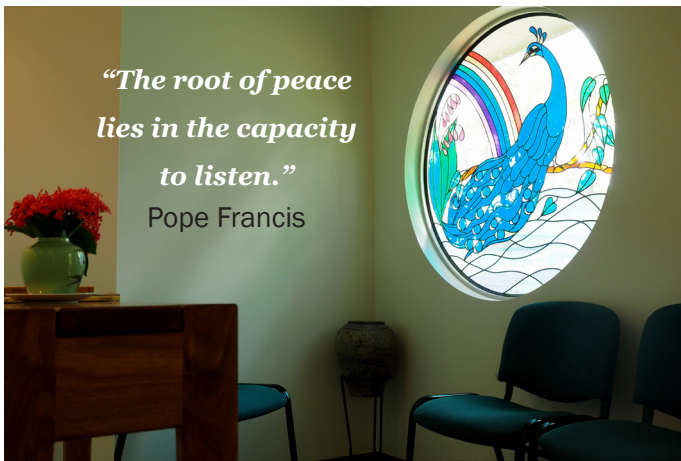
Cittamani provides the whole package, spiritual as well as physical care. We requested a visit from their Buddhist nun. She quietly helped us to tap into our inner strengths. Although I think Mum had already come to terms with what she faced she helped instill in me a confidence to face up to my fear.

Death is part of life's journey. We only had one month from the diagnosis to Mum's death. Although I am still raw from losing Mum, her journey at the end was not fearful. It was a period of numbness, but also lots of love and laughter and family coming together. The Cittamani nurses blended into all that and helped us all to cope. We are forever grateful.



"When we feel love and kindness toward others, it not only makes others feel loved and cared for, but it helps us also to develop inner happiness and peace."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Our reception area is much more welcoming, and it highlights our beautiful stained glass window which is part of the original house.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Lots has been happening at Cittamani since our last newsletter. I realise that I always say that, but as you read my report you will see that I am not exaggerating.

With the help of creative graphic designer Nahum Szumer from **Working Planet**, we now have a new website that we are very happy with. Please go online and have a look:

www.cittamanihospice.com.au

We have been renovating our building which has been a challenge, as renovations always are. However, we are thrilled with the results. We have a much more welcoming and functional reception, a larger and more useful education/meeting room, and a new accessible toilet thanks to grants from **Stronger Communities Programme** and **The Whitehouse Foundation**.

The remodelling of our entrance and carpark is about to begin too. This will create a safer, more accessible entry, meet Council



Work has begun to upgrade the entry to Cittamani to make it safer for staff, volunteers, and visiting community members. The driveway will be considerably wider, and will be concrete sealed to avoid all the deep ruts caused by wet season downpours.

requirements, and is a precursor to our long planned for building extension. The need for additional office space continues to be acutely felt as staff and volunteers play musical desks. The planned extension will enable us to better meet the growing need for our service, and we invite you to join us in making this important community resource a reality.

We are also in the process of digitising our client files (i.e. putting all of our files onto computer) using a program called *Palcare*. This program was designed with a lot of input from people working in the area of palliative care, and is used by many services across Australia and New Zealand. It is proving to be a great improvement on our old paper-based system, and means that our nurses and social workers can access relevant and much needed information when they are out on the road visiting clients. It will also be a huge benefit to our nurses when they are called after hours to have the latest client information at their fingertips. Given that we often have up to fifty clients at any one time, it was impossible in the past for nurses to have everyone's latest information at hand.

We continue to receive amazing support from you, our community, for which we are most grateful. However to continue to grow and develop our service to meet growing needs we rely on your on-going support. To this end, we have discovered some new resources that may make supporting our service easier.

Would your business or employer be interested in supporting Cittamani? Cittamani is now registered with *Good2Give*. This is a not-for-profit organization committed to building a more giving society. They advise businesses on how to engage with charitable organisations, and provide technology and tax effective solutions to securely process company and employee donations across Australia and New Zealand.

Cittamani is also registered with *My Cause Gift Fund*. This is a Public Ancillary Fund which is a platform that enables fundraisers and donors to raise funds for a wide range of Australian charities.

And when you check out our new website, you'll see that donating through this portal is secure and easy to do as well.

Alex Moore

Director, Cittamani Hospice Service

WISH LIST

- Fridge to fit under the bench in our new Meeting Room. Hisense 120L Stainless Steel Bar Fridge (approx \$260)
- Sponsor for new Palcare Program for 6 or 12 months (computerised patient charts)
- Table (approx 2m long) for our Meeting Room. New or near new. Needs to be reasonably lightweight, or able to remove top, to get it in and out of the room.

Please contact Jo Newman — 5445 0822
email: jo.cittamani@gmail.com

THE YEAR OF LIVING MINDFULLY

"Mindfulness makes the life enjoyable... and fascinating." Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Cittamani staff and volunteers declared 2016 'The Year of Living Mindfully' thanks to ongoing classes on mindfulness taught by TY Alexander. The year's classes culminated in a one-day retreat in February this year attended by over 20 staff and volunteers.

TY has been a student of Buddhism since 1974. She spent many years studying in India and Nepal and was an ordained Buddhist nun for about 9 years. She currently leads retreats and courses in Buddhism and has a particular interest in mindfulness meditation.

TY explains that "Mindfulness is a naturally abiding quality of the mind. We are all mindful to a greater or lesser degree throughout all our waking hours.

It is those moments of a 'lesser degree' that generate problems in life – the lapse in concentration when you run a red light, the harsh words that are out of your mouth before you have considered the consequences, and many other brief, slight moments of mindlessness that occur throughout the day. We all recognize them after they occur, but have a great deal of difficulty preventing them.

This is not the only problem that a lack of mindfulness creates for us. On an internal level, within ourselves, there is a stressful abundance of anxiety and agitation in our minds that we seem unable to subdue or still.

The stresses of life will keep coming internally and externally. Through the practice of meditation we can learn to let go and develop a healthy relationship with the inevitable emotions, distractions and attitudes that colour our experience and drive our actions and speech. We can develop our innate wisdom and talents for a more satisfying life within the space that mindfulness can create. Because mindfulness is a naturally abiding quality, we can develop it, strengthen it and refine it to become more at ease, and productive, in every aspect of our lives. Meditation is the key."

Participants in the classes have commented that:

"Our meditation sessions have brought a new understanding and recognition of the workings of my mind."

"My hope is for my 'monkey mind' to quieten, even just a little, and that I learn more about the peaceful world inside."

"It helped me to let go of a couple of things."

"My health has been great and I don't think that's a coincidence."

CITTAMANI THANKS
THE JUNE CANAVAN FOUNDATION
FOR GENEROUS ONGOING SUPPORT



Some of the staff and volunteers who participated in TY's wonderful year of **Mindfulness Meditation**.

FUNDRAISING DAY FOR CITTAMANI

Allora Gardens Retirement Village

MAROOCHYDORE

SUNDAY 7TH MAY 8.00am – 12.30pm

• Cakes • Plants • Craft • White Elephant Stall •

MORNING TEA AVAILABLE



Sunshine Coast artist **Val Ross** held a very successful 'Clearing the Decks' exhibition last November to benefit Cittamani. **Thanks Val!**

CITTAMANI HOSPICE SERVICE APPRECIATES THE SUPPORT OF QUEENSLAND HEALTH

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Recently we welcomed a group of ten new people to our team of Respite Volunteers after they completed a three-day training course. It was quite extraordinary to see the commitment of the group who willingly participated in personal and group work, as well as practical skills needed when visiting families.

This group has now joined our wonderful Respite Volunteer Team, who provide families in the care of Cittamani with an opportunity to have a break, knowing their loved ones are cared for in their absence.

In addition to respite support, Cittamani is fortunate to have volunteers who support us with office assistance, maintenance and gardening, restocking medical kits, and most recently painting and repairs during our office refurbishment.

We are very grateful for all the dedicated hours and assistance our volunteers contribute, which enriches the service we are able to provide.



**CITTAMANI'S BEREAVEMENT GROUPS
ARE SPONSORED BY NAMBOUR RSL**

MY FIRST MONTHS AS A VOLUNTEER

It may be difficult for some to understand the benefits of volunteering in palliative care. For me it is an amazing experience. Some of the most wonderful people I know, both friends and acquaintances, I have met through palliative care. I have gained insights and learned many things. It has been a life changing experience.

I feel privileged to be welcomed into the lives of strangers, to share their vulnerability, their fears, and the wonderful stories of their lives.

For me, Cittamani is an enigma in the world of hospice care on the Sunshine Coast – the no frills, no fuss, quiet achiever. That is exactly how I have found Cittamani and its team to be.

The training provided an opportunity to get to know others, new and long-term staff and volunteers, future friends. While participating in the experiential and practical exercises, I gained new insights for ongoing reflection and contemplation. It gave me direct experience in the caring that Cittamani offers.

Since my training I have had the opportunity to contribute to the care, comfort and love provided by Cittamani. I have also received the wonderful support provided by Cittamani to ensure that my own needs and well-being are catered for. I look forward to enjoying more of the blessings that Cittamani offers.

Peter McGuirk
CITTAMANI VOLUNTEER

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY?

IT WILL HELP SAVE POSTAGE AND PAPER COSTS. IF SO, PLEASE EMAIL US AND LET US KNOW — news.cittamani@gmail.com



*I'd like to help fulfil someone's
wish to remain at home
in the last few months
of their life.*

MY GIFT OF \$ _____ IS ENCLOSED

Please tick preferred payment option

- ☐ **Cheque** payable to **Cittamani Hospice Service**
- ☐ Charge my **Credit Card** for the amount above,
or
- ☐ Deduct the **Regular Amount** of \$ _____
per month from my credit card.

*Cittamani Hospice Service Ltd is a registered charity.
All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POST CODE _____ PHONE _____

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card No. _____

Expiry Date _____ CCV _____

Signature _____

You can also donate online at Cittamani's secure
website: www.cittamanihospice.com.au
ABN 67 110 865 560