

MERCY MATTERS

MAY 2023



Highlights this month

Compassion, connection and the Aspen Tree

Denise Bianchi remembers care from both sides of the equator.

Empowering Communities

New community-based initiative Honohono Tātou Katoa wants to give everyone a healthy end of life

What's Under the Hat, Aunty?

Update from Frances Te Weehi and our March fundraising appeal



**Mercy
Hospice**

Te Korowai Atawhai

Compassion, connection and the Aspen Tree

At the beginning of June last year, Malcolm Bianchi was admitted to Mercy Hospice with stage 4 lung cancer. Surrounded by his loving family, Malcolm died within 36 hours. Looking back at this special time and the three months of community support they received, Malcolm's wife Denise Bianchi shares how her family's experience of care was something she will always be grateful for.

Originally from Dagenham and Manor Park, East London, Malcolm and Denise moved to Auckland in 1987 with daughters Gina, Emma, and Leanne. Their two eldest daughters moved back to the UK in 1996 and 1998, and this led to a tradition of annual return visits. During these trips, Malcolm relished connecting with friends at a pub local to where one of his daughters lived, the Aspen Tree.

"His relationship grew with that community over the years. Whatever we did there was usually a pub involved, and the Aspen Tree was a very important part of his life whilst visiting his two eldest daughters, family and friends in the UK."

"He'd go in and give them some New Zealand

mussels. He was very generous like that, and they'd sit and put the world to rights in the afternoons, as English people do. His relationship grew with that community over the years. Whatever we did there was usually a pub involved, and the Aspen Tree was a very important part of his life whilst visiting his two eldest daughters, family and friends in the UK."

So deep was Malcom's connection with the Aspen Tree community, that on hearing about his death, Andy, his father Bert, Martin and a host of other friends from the Aspen Tree promptly sold over £200 worth (NZ\$500) of raffle tickets. The sale of which provided Denise and the Aspen Tree community with a way to express their collective gratitude to Mercy Hospice.

This enabled Denise to bring together two hemispheres of care that wrapped themselves so lovingly around Malcolm.

Throughout Malcolm's home support from the Community Palliative Care team to being cared in the Inpatient Unit at 61 College Hill on June 7th, 2022, Denise was blown away by the way staff engaged with them.



“Reagan (Clinical Nurse Specialist) was phenomenal. Absolutely phenomenal. The family enveloped her as part of ours. We could not have asked for better care whilst Malcolm was at home. She was bright and bubbly and Malcolm loved her Dr Marten’s Boots, but it was the compassion she had, not just for Malcolm but the whole family that made what she did so unbelievable. We would also like to thank Karen who was equally as amazing in her care and support of Malcolm and our family.”

“We were desperate to keep him with us at home. Caring for Malcolm took its toll on us all physically and emotionally. We knew the time had come and when a decision needed to be made she knelt down by the side of the bed on the Tuesday and said, ‘Malcolm, what do you want?. Malcolm lay there and said ‘I just want to be somewhere I don’t feel so poorly’. And that was it, we said, right let’s make the arrangements (to move to hospice). After that he just looked so relaxed. He looked like the weight of the world had been taken off his shoulders.”

“I couldn’t have got through any of it without the support of the hospice.”

“We really couldn’t have asked for better care at Mercy. My family have connections with the Tongan community, the Filipino community, the Samoan community, any community where there’s a church, all these prayers were being said. Malcolm wasn’t a religious man, but he said ‘Look, I’ll take whatever’s going’. He knew his time was limited. We just didn’t realise how little time he had. He loved that people were thinking of him at this time, and that they were thinking of me and the girls. I couldn’t have got through any of it without the support of the hospice.”

During our chat with Denise, she shared her thoughts about death, which for many people can be a difficult subject to talk about, especially if your family of origin and culture has pulled you away from having such conversations. Fortunately for Malcolm’s family however, talking about such things came very naturally.

“We’ve always talked about life and death as a family. It’s never been a taboo subject. I know some people find it hard. But we’ve always been very open.

I lost four people that were extremely close to me within a seven-week period a couple

of years before I lost Malcolm, one of which was my mum. I was also the last person to see my friend, Maureen alive. Death happens



to everyone, it doesn’t frighten me but that doesn’t make it any less sad.

Even now, the girls know exactly what I want even though they may not necessarily agree. They know how I feel. At one point Malcolm said he wanted his ashes to be buried with his mum in Newcastle in the UK, so we’ve agreed that’s what we will do. Anyway, I’ve decided that I’m going up in a firework! So that every time someone sees a firework, they’ll think of me!”

In addition to her gratitude for the immense compassion they felt at Mercy, Denise also wanted to acknowledge the role that relationship and connection played between Malcolm and the staff the family got to know so well. And in particular, the value the family experienced around hearing regional accents.

“I do want to mention Jan, one of the nurses at Mercy. She’s a lovely Geordie lady (from Newcastle in the UK). Malcolm’s parents were from Newcastle, Jan took Malcolm and settled him in, she gave him a lovely massage with essential oils to help him relax. She sounded

just like his mum. And then there was Michael, the night nurse. He was a tall Welsh guy. And Malcom's best mates in New Zealand and in the UK are both Welsh! Michael sounded just like them too."

They were two accents that were perfect for Malcolm. It was like he was with the people he needed to be with. Their accents gave him comfort.

"Jan said this was the stars aligning, which helped him to settle. They were two accents that were perfect for Malcolm. It was like he was with the people he needed to be with. Their accents gave him comfort, he heard these accents, and he trusted them. Michael was phenomenal. He said I'm just going to pop out and get him something. And when he came back, I said Malcolm's gone. It was just so quick. But you know, it was the compassion, real genuine compassion that Michael showed".

When Malcolm finally passed away on 9 June it was the end of a long journey. Denise recalls with much fondness what she experienced when it was time to leave the hospice.

It was love for somebody from many people we didn't really know but it was given so beautifully and genuinely. There was no urgency, everything was calm.

"One of the biggest things was when all the staff and nurses sang a Waiata when the funeral home came to collect him. I've never seen anything like that. Somehow or another it had been recorded, so I have it on my phone and I showed my sister in the UK and she just fell apart. She said, 'how amazing is that!' It's like they were giving him permission. It wasn't like he just left in a hearse. It was like the hospice was saying to him it's ok for you to go and move on. It's hard to describe. It was almost like a rite of passage, and it just seemed right. It was love for somebody from many people we didn't really know but it was given so beautifully and genuinely. There was no urgency, everything was calm. Everyone who cared for Malcolm got to know him and we got to know them".

Life after the death of a loved one can often feel strange and daunting. This was no different for Denise, who shared:

"The hardest thing is not having anyone to hug and kiss goodnight. That's the hardest thing and you can't explain it to anybody unless



they're in a loving relationship. But at the same time, the best thing is I still feel connected to Malcolm. He's here and always will be. I told him about his old chair the other day, the one that has springs sticking out and poking you. I said I'm getting rid of your old chair. I'm sorry I said, and I swear the house shook! And when the cyclone was coming, I said look I'm really scared, so I brought him close to me. And afterwards I just thanked him for helping me get through it."

Thank you Denise for sharing your story. This year will be 36 years living in New Zealand and is also Denise and Malcolm's 50th wedding anniversary. Congratulations. Sending much love to you and your family as you remember and celebrate the connections you have made both here and in the UK.



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loving relationship.***

***But at the same time, the best
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HONOHONO TĀTOU KATOĀ
Creating Compassionate Communities

Empowering Communities

to give everyone a chance to live their lives fully to the end

You may already know the value of receiving the highest quality palliative care. Sadly, however, the same cannot be said for everyone in the community. To address this imbalance and meet the growing demand of total projected deaths and total number of people needing hospice care over the next 20 years, a solution must be found. The answer will come about through collaboration and creating compassionate communities.

Coinciding with the start of Hospice Awareness Week on May 15, a new initiative called Honohono Tātou Katoa will begin drawing together health and community-based organisations to boost community-wide provision of palliative care support.

Honohono Tātou Katoa stands for equal access to the highest levels of compassion, dignity,

and expert palliative care. As a result, it will address inequity of access to palliative care that currently exists among such groups as ethnic minorities, belief-based groups, those living with disability, those managing mental health challenges, the homeless, those identifying as LGBTQ+, and more.

To mark the launch of Honohono Tātou Katoa, two community information evenings will be held on **Monday MAY 15: 10.30am - 12pm at Ponsonby Community Centre, 20 Ponsonby Terrace and Saturday MAY 20: 2pm - 3:30pm at Mt Roskill Library, 546 Mount Albert Road, Three Kings**. Here, caring individuals, community and health-based organisations will have the opportunity to become active partners and learn more about the initiative, ask questions, and move towards the shared goal of creating compassionate communities.

PARTNERSHIP WITH HONOHONO TĀTOU KATOĀ MEANS



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE TO LIVE THEIR LIVES FULLY TO THE END

To live every moment. Palliative care is so much more about living than dying.



INCLUSIVITY & DIVERSITY

Founded on aroha (compassion), whakanui (respect) and tapu o te tangata (dignity) within every community.



GREATER IMPACT TOGETHER

When we stand together in partnership we are stronger.



RESOURCEFULNESS & RESILIENCE

Together, we share our network of connections and problems, and find solutions informed by our collective wisdom.



SEEING CHANGE

Seeing whānau getting the care they need, when they need it.

For more information about Honohono Tātou Katoa and to register your interest in attending the information evenings, please contact our Project Manager & Community Liaison on 09 956 0490. Visit www.honohono.net to find out more.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Mercy Matters recently caught up with our Learning and Development Manager, Tania Gulliver to hear how the team is supporting Mercy staff to become more skilled at culturally safe practice when working with communities that currently don't access palliative care services.



"Our reason for focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion this year is twofold.

Firstly, and to give you some context, Mercy Hospice is in the process of developing a community-wide engagement initiative called Honohono Tātou Katoa. The objectives here are to increase palliative care access to sections of our society that are currently under-served, meet the increasing demand for palliative care by

engaging and resourcing a range of health and community-based organisations, and lastly, enhance palliative care experiences. Focussing on diversity, equity, and inclusion is therefore at the heart of Mercy's community engagement which will come about through the establishment of caring communities.

Secondly, the Ministry of Health has refreshed its Nga Paerewa Standards. These centre on inclusive and equitable care for Māori and are in place to ensure the patient's experience remains at the centre of our practice and is seen through the lens of Māori. It's important that Mercy demonstrates compliance with these updated standards, and this sits alongside the work currently in process with our Pacifica community and the Asi Asi Pasifika Engagement Model in particular.

The impact for Mercy staff (clinical and non-clinical) and ultimately, the patients and their families, is that Mercy will be more culturally safe with these communities. This

is an important shift from being culturally competent towards being culturally safe. Cultural competency reflects our knowledge and understanding of diverse ethnic backgrounds, whereas cultural safety is about applying what we know and how we are able to view the impact of treatment from the patient's perspective.

A useful analogy is that when you understand the value of knowing your own whakapapa or ancestry and especially understand what it means to lose it, you can get closer to feeling the importance of whakapapa to Māori and other ethnic groups whose ancestry is an integral part of their identity and world view.

So, we'll be taking a two-part approach in terms of learning and development with staff. Firstly, it will be about ensuring there is cultural competency and knowledge around Ao Māori, and then secondly, having a focus on how to apply or use this knowledge so this becomes instinctive.

We are still at the very early planning stages and in the throes of pulling our resources together, however the initial stage is to systematically weave greater emphasis of cultural safety into all our existing learning courses delivered both in person and online, such as the Fundamentals of Palliative Care. Then, to strengthen the cloth we have woven, to extend the metaphor, we are looking to add further learning resources, in the form of information, reflective learning or inviting relevant people to talk with our staff. This could be for example, listening to an expert talk about traditional Rongoa Māori (traditional healing) and then providing an environment where the whānau of patients are comfortable to include it in the care of their loved one. This is something I am in the process of investigating and planning right now."



It's so exciting to hear how Mercy is living out its values by moving towards greater cultural safety, and ultimately, helping diverse communities, families and patients feel more included.

Stay tuned for more updates on this important area as they unfold.



Riding for Jim and living every moment



In February 17, amid the turbulent weather so many had to contend with, Andrew Trevelyan and Steve Cassidy started their grand cycle of New Zealand, the Tour

Aotearoa, in memory of their friend, Jim Swanson, who passed away at Mercy Hospice on September 17, 2022.

This epic cycle was also a fundraiser for Mercy Hospice and a wonderful way to express thanks for the palliative care their friend and his wife Vicki received. Andrew and Steve's hope is that even more Aucklanders can experience the same quality of care.

The intrepid cyclists' plan was to sprinkle some of Jim's ashes in Cape Reinga and take a small amount of ashes the length of the country. This way they can say that Jim came along for the ride. Vicki kindly had this to say:

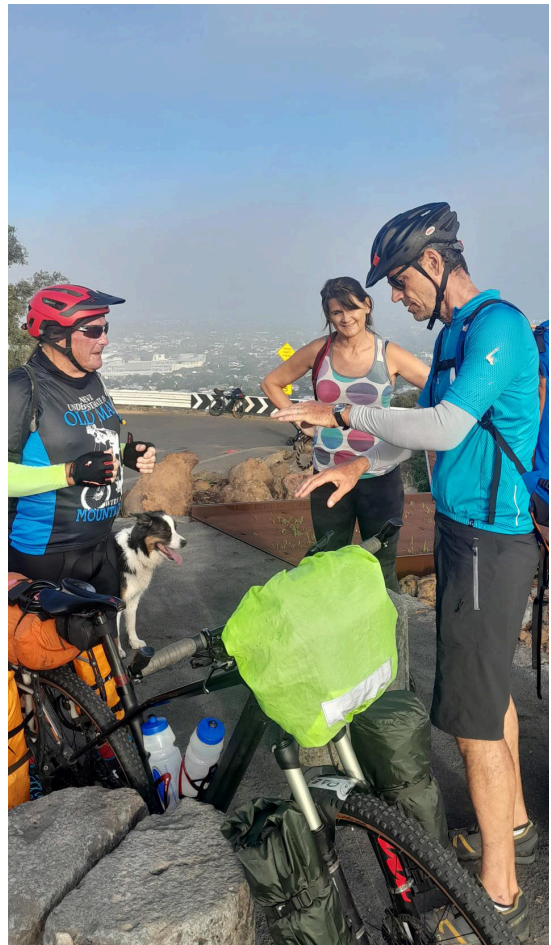
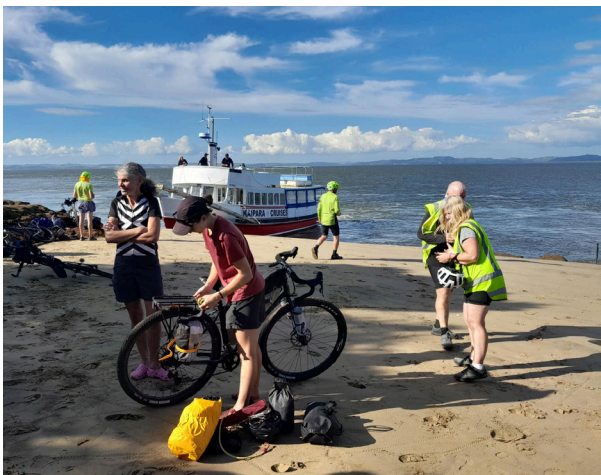
"I will continue to support your amazing facility, in whatever way I can, and for as long as I can. I still don't have the words to express my respect for you all, and, of course, my gratitude for your care of my fabulous husband."

Thank you so much Vicki, and of course Andrew and Steve for such a wonderful way to pay tribute to Jim. To date, they have raised almost \$7,000, smashing their original \$5,000 target! A superb result and an inspirational way to show love for Jim and their community.

Congratulations to fellow cyclist Allan Postance

Allan Postance also completed his second Tour Aotearoa in memory of his mother, herself a Mercy supporter and patient. Thank you, Allan, for being such a courageous and inspirational fundraiser!

"The Tour itself was great and presented a whole lot of different challenges to my 2019 one." Allan Postance.



What's Under the Hat Aunty? UPDATE

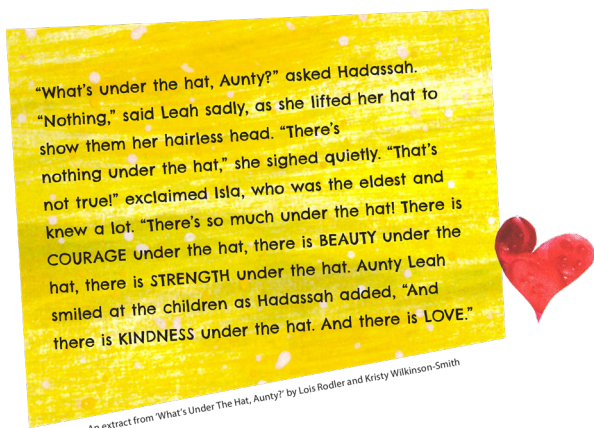


Earlier in March, you may have seen our fundraising appeal that told the story of Frances Te Weehi, whose daughter, Leah died at Mercy in 2016 after losing her battle with lung cancer. Frances explains how at one point during her treatment, Leah's nieces and nephews noticed how she started wearing a hat to cover the hair loss that resulted from chemotherapy.

Frances is forever grateful for the care and support they received at Mercy Hospice, and the community of health professionals that made them feel so welcomed and loved.

Frances has since told us that Isla, Leah's niece mentioned in the extract above, now in Year 13, has developed a similar passion for a career in health and is intending to qualify as an Ophthalmologist.

Thank you to everyone who donated in response to this mailing. **To date, you have raised over \$90,000!** A staggering result, which will help even more families to experience the same quality of care as Frances and Leah.



This is such a wonderful, positive way to reframe those times when illness dominates and blinds us from seeing our enduring qualities. And how fabulous that it took the young people who adored Leah to point it out.



The Best Round the Bays Ever!!

Incredible feats of kindness

In March, fundraisers raised just over \$46,000 to care for people facing life-limiting illnesses and their families. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

This beats previous years by a huge margin and meant that Mercy Hospice fundraisers raised the most out of the 81 charities raising funds. Phenomenal! And it all came about through incredible teams and individuals who chose to convert their kindness into action.

Heartfelt thanks to Claires' Team, BNI All in for Hospice, Family Support Wacky Races, ACG College Parnell and all our individual fundraisers. Heaps of fun was had at the post-race function at Madill's Farm. Thanks also to our incredible Round the Bays sponsors New World Franklin Road who supplied the lovely post-race refreshments and MOTAT who supplied Family Passes for the **top 5 fundraisers.**

Claires' Team, who were our top fundraising team, participated in honour of Dr Claire McIntock and the work Mercy Hospice does. Claire spent the last week of her life at Mercy Hospice last December, where both her, and her family and friends were provided an outstanding level of care and comfort from the staff.



Upcoming Events

Hospice Awareness Week (15 – 21 May)



The theme for this year's Hospice Awareness Week is OK: "Ok to ask for help, ok to be yourself, ok to laugh, ok to cry and that hospice is about living every moment in a way that matters to you". During this week you'll find more insights into the enduring impact of palliative care through a focus on whānau and patient stories. You'll also notice compassionate volunteers out in the community shaking collection buckets. **And there's still time for you to get involved!**



New World Remuera

18 May



New World Stonefields

18, 19, 20 May



Pak & Save Mount Albert

19, 20 May



New World Victoria Park

18, 19, 20 May

To register for one of these slots, simply visit www.mercyhospice.org.nz or contact getinvolved@mh.org.nz



Leap for Life (7 October)

Pull on your goggles, tighten your straps. Leap for Life is back with another chance for you to fly through the clouds at over 200km/h all in the name of helping Aucklanders facing life-limiting illnesses. A tandem skydive is yours for free when you raise just \$800 for Mercy Hospice. Sign up for Leap for Life by visiting www.mercyhospice.org.nz



Auckland Marathon (29 October)

Raise vital funds for Mercy Hospice in New Zealand's biggest, most iconic, colourful, cultural running celebration. You can run the full marathon, half marathon, 11km traverse, family 5km, or kids' marathon. Register today and set up your fundraising page by visiting the Events page on the Mercy Hospice website (under Support Mercy). Not a runner? No worries, you can jog or walk and sign up either as an individual or as part of a team. Contact us at getinvolved@mh.org.nz

Thank you!

Thank you to all our Mercy Hospice supporters including our volunteers. You're making all the difference.



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 **QUEST**
APARTMENT HOTELS

Continuing the impact

A better quality of life is possible for Central Auckland's palliative care patients, and there are lots of ways you or your organisation can make this happen when you turn your compassion into action:

Give a regular gift

A monthly donation provides reassurance to whānau that their loved ones will receive the highest level of care during these uncertain times. You can make your monthly gift via direct debit, from your bank account, or through payroll giving. Visit mercyhospice.org.nz or call 0800 888 474 to donate today.

Give a one-off gift

You can make a one-off donation from your debit or credit card at mercyhospice.org.nz. Call 0800 888 474 or email donate@mh.org.nz to discuss other ways to donate.

Leave a gift in your will

After taking care of your family, please consider leaving a portion of your estate to Mercy Hospice. No matter the size, your gift will ensure that those in our community needing palliative care receive it with the utmost professional skill and respect. To find out more, please contact Renee Pickering on 021 226 2798 or rpickering@mh.org.nz

Volunteer

There are a variety of ways to donate your time to Mercy Hospice, including: providing transport, offering companionship, making phone calls, massage, writing life stories or working in one of our retail shops. Call 09 376 7574 or email volunteer@mh.org.nz to find out more.

Fundraise for Mercy

A fun way to support Mercy is to run your own fundraising event or get sponsored to take part in a challenge. Call 0800 888 474 or email getinvolved@mh.org.nz to find out more.

Support through your business or workplace

There are many ways to support Mercy through your business or workplace; sponsorship, funding critical services and medical equipment, volunteering, payroll giving and much more. Call 0800 888 474 or email getinvolved@mh.org.nz to find out more.

Join Mercy's online communities

Facebook

[@mercyhospiceakld](https://www.facebook.com/mercyhospiceakld)
[@Mercyhospiceshopnz](https://www.facebook.com/Mercyhospiceshopnz)

Instagram

[@mercyhospiceakld](https://www.instagram.com/mercyhospiceakld)
[@Mercyhospiceshopnz](https://www.instagram.com/Mercyhospiceshopnz)

LinkedIn [@company/mercyhospice](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mercyhospice)

To find out more about how you can support Mercy Hospice visit mercyhospice.org.nz

2023 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Get involved with Mercy Hospice!

www.mercyhospice.org.nz/events

May 15 - 21	Hospice Awareness Week
Jun 11	10 - A Celebration of Tastes
October 7	Leap for Life
October 29	Auckland Marathon
November 1	Remembrance He Wa Maumahara
November	Tennis for Mercy
December	Lights to Remember

You are receiving this newsletter because of your previous support of Mercy Hospice. If you don't want to receive it in the future or you would prefer to receive a digital version, please contact the fundraising team on getinvolved@mh.org.nz to update your preferences.

Yes, I want every patient to feel safe and receive the highest quality palliative care.

I would like to donate: \$

Payment methods

MM - May 2023

First Name:

Last Name:

Phone:

☐ Credit card - Please debit my:

☐ Visa

☐ Mastercard

☐ AMEX

Card number:

Expiry date:

/

CVC:

(required)

Name on card:

Signature:

☐ Directly into Mercy Hospice Auckland's bank account:

BNZ: 02 0100 0815020 00

Particulars:

Code:

Reference:

I would like to receive my receipt by:

☐ Post

☐ Email (Please confirm)

☐ I would like to make this a monthly gift.

☐ Please contact me about leaving a gift in my Will.

Please return this form in the enclosed freepost envelope, or send to

Mercy Hospice, P O Box 47693, Ponsonby, Auckland 1101

If you have any questions, please call 0800 888 474 or email hello@mh.org.nz

Thank you for your generosity and for your continued support of Mercy Hospice.