

Life Force Foundation is a non-profit organisation providing emotional/psychosocial support for people dealing with the experience of cancer, through group therapy and meditation, counselling, special workshops and retreats.

# Life Force Foundation

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EASTERN SUBURBS

NORTHERN SUBURBS

INNER WEST

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# NEWSLETTER

## Healing

Corroboree 2000 is about healing. A former LFF group member, Dr Neville Yeomans, a leading member of the eastern area reconciliation group (ESORA), spoke to me a year ago about the Life Force Foundation message and philosophy of healing being exactly what reconciliation is all about. Since then, that word - healing - and all that it means has become used more and more to explain what all of us as human beings need in this process.

We need to acknowledge the wrongs done to, and the grief suffered by, indigenous Australians. When we witness the suffering of others, and say "I hear you and I am sorry", when someone else gets it how we feel, that's the healing part. And that's what we were all saying as we walked across the Harbour Bridge. We hear you, we hear your pain, and this connects us all as human beings on a heart level.

Healing can only take place when the hurt and the pain are acknowledged. Then we can move forward.

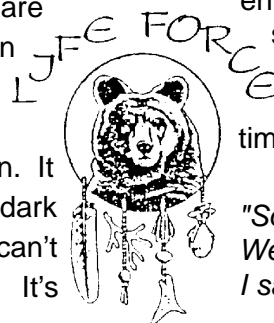
This is true for all emotional pain. It is important to talk about the dark side of our experiences. You can't have the light without the dark. It's

the flip side of the same coin. To only talk about the so-called positive aspects is to deny the whole of the experience and to endeavour to shut down and push away those aspects that are painful. But putting the lid on them does not make them go away. On the contrary, they can then become potentially harmful and lead to emotional disorders further down the track.

Acknowledging the pain as well as the good things leads to healing. Reconciliation is a way for our society to recognise the importance and the value of this process in all our lives.

### Jilly

Post script: I have just learned that our dear friend Neville Yeomans died last Tuesday in Brisbane. He will always be remembered by those LFF members who knew him with great love and admiration. We were privileged to share part of his journey, and his honesty, enthusiasm and great spirit will stay with us and help to guide us on our way. We send all our love to his family at this time of sorrow.



*"Somos el barco, somos el mar"  
We are the boat, we are the sea  
I sail in you, you sail in me.*

June  
2000

Please do not throw this newsletter in the bin. Pass it on to someone who may benefit from it, or give it to your doctor, dentist or other health professionals. You may wish to put the support group information up on a noticeboard. In this way you may be able to help someone in need. Thankyou.

# The Benefits of Visualisation

*"Cancer patients can gear up their immune systems merely by imagining their bodies waging war on the disease, psychologists said yesterday. The dramatic finding emerged from a study in which women with breast cancer were asked to visualise white blood cells destroying tumour cells. Researchers found that the patients had higher numbers of T-cells - specialised white blood cells that play a vital role in fighting disease - while "killer" cells, which destroy cancerous cells, became more active.*

*Four previous studies had suggested that psycho-social intervention not only enhances quality of life but also prolongs cancer survival. But the scientists could not say whether the immunological changes they observed would have any effect on recovery or survival. Professor Leslie Walker, from the University of Hull in England, who led the study, said: " Our results show that relaxation and guided imagery can bring about measurable changes in the body's own immunological defences."*

*(Article which appeared in The Sun-Herald, April 16, 2000)*

Research, such as that mentioned in the newspaper article above, as well as that done by David Kissane in Melbourne and many other studies, confirm the value of relaxation therapy, meditation and guided imagery in supporting the immune system. Caro Jonas has worked with Life Force Foundation since its inception seven years ago, as our meditation teacher.

There is something profound, even sacred, about our ability to visualise, to imagine. We take this faculty for granted, of course, as we do everything else. When we go on a picnic we have to visualise many things before we actually manifest at the park with the blanket and the food. The mental world is prior to the physical world. Without our "seeing" into this inner mental world we couldn't even begin to "do". We see what we'll cook, who we'll ask, where we'll gather and how to get there. As we "see" these possibilities, we arrive at what we "desire most" and eliminate the others. We evaluate all the alternatives and make a choice. We weigh their different value in the light of our goal. We do this with our feelings. We develop then a "plan of action" in a most remarkable way using intellect and feelings. We see and we value. Then we do.

We are oblivious, mostly, to this miracle. We just do it. We are, if you like, unconscious to it.

Carl Jung's therapeutic use of the imagination is well documented. He distinguished imagination from fantasy which he saw as ordinary passive imagination. He introduced a practice called active imagination. This involved conscious participation in

our inner world of images. He encouraged people to actively work with the imagination so as to engage the unconscious with the ego.

Aboriginal healers or medicine men, as part of their training, worked hard to develop what they called a "strong eye". This refers to this same conscious focus just mentioned. There's a relationship being cultivated between the conscious mind of the "shaman" and an unconscious flow of images. As they more strongly see and hold these images then the more they relate to them, learn from them and receive inspiration from them. They must also learn to handle the good and the bad - to be discerning. That is, they assimilate them and therefore expand and empower themselves.

Ancient hunters visualised the hunt. They saw the prey and felt the triumph of the successful kill, perhaps in a series of rituals well before the event. Similarly today sportspeople increasingly practise this "old" technique. They run the race or fight the bout in their minds. They see victory and they feel the joy of winning before they actually do it in time.

It's a remarkably beautiful thing to do - to see within ourselves a quiet place, for example, or a healing stream which calms us or cleans us of unnecessary worries or to see a wise and loving sage to guide us in some way or to offer us hidden support. The possibilities are endless. This in itself is a freeing notion and can help relieve the stress of a sometimes overly restricting material world. We also create an alternative, somewhere else to go. But in addition, as we develop our imagination actively, as we relate to a loving animal or strong warrior within or as we allow a flower to open, to blossom in our hearts, we are relating in fact to parts of ourselves. We expand and we deepen. We include the forgotten. We become more. We become more complete.

Furthermore, as we practise and develop a "strong eye" we can strengthen and increase the capacity for our imagination and then employ it in a more constructive way. A way, for example, described in the article above (white cells attacking and destroying tumour cells).

Great things can be achieved. We can attain great personal growth. We can make great discoveries about each of our creative potentials. These potentials are great and yet in most of us lie undiscovered.

Importantly, especially if modern science is beginning to see that results can be gained by these techniques, then it empowers the individual who is sick and largely in the hands of others, to be active in their struggle for health in a most beautiful and creative way. ■

# Growing through adversity

How people learn and grow through adversity and use their grief in a positive and creative way. Cary Giezekamp, Life Force Foundation Director and benefactor, tells his story. ....

I was talking to Jilly today and reflecting on how many years I have been associated with Life Force. We worked it out to be approximately seven years, and don't the years just fly past.

My passion for the Life Force Foundation stems from the death of my mum through cancer, which you are all aware creeps up not only on you but on your whole family and then turns your world upside down as it did to mine.

My mum Sandra Giezekamp died of cancer on the 8th November, 1985, aged 45 at the time of my life I was dealing not only with the pressure of being school captain, studying for my HSC, battling with the breakup of my girlfriend, and if that wasn't enough, dealing with mum's battle with cancer, all at the tender age of 17...a very emotional time of my life.

During my mum's cancer which lasted approximately seven years, my two brothers and myself with respective ages 12,13 and 15 rode from Sydney to Melbourne, 1058 kms for the "Ride Against Cancer" raising \$2,500.00. My mum and dad were strict and I don't know to this day, how they allowed us to ride to Melbourne but I guess they knew everything would be ok. Unbelievable as it may seem, we rode with no backup support, just pushbikes and gear, 5.00am to 5.00pm stopping every 150 kms at a Flag Inn. The ride took seven days and still to this day I know the layout, all the hills and turns and especially all the pain we went through but this was our opportunity to help our mum in our own special way.

On the day before my mother's death, was my brother's birthday and mum was using goals and special occasions to stay alive a little longer but it was obvious that mum was running out of time. I recall my father saying "Tell your mother that you have finished the HSC". Even though there were two weeks to go, I walked into the bedroom and said Mum I have

finished my exams" and with that she nodded her head.

The next day I was sitting doing my HSC and I think it was 3 unit Economics and I felt her presence and that's when I knew she had died leaving behind her husband (Bob) and seven children Robert 22, Suzanne 21, Cary 17, David 15, Philip 14, Peter 10, Bettina 8.

My mother demanded to live her last days at home so she could have her family close by, and on the morning of her death and because she was allowed to stay there all day, we all had time to say goodbye, some took photos, others kissed her, we all cried.

Although it was the saddest day of my life, it was also my most positive. As I reflect 16 years on with my mother's battle with cancer, and all the things she accomplished, one of those which comes to mind was the formation of the St George Cancer Group and the meetings which were held in our home. It shows me just how much spirit one person can have.

I draw so many positive thoughts and although you may not realise through the sadness, you will too, as time moves on. You will learn goal setting, how to cope with multiple adversities and the realisation that material possessions are not that important, but learning how the human body and mind can fight cancer, and the value of friendships.

Today I use everything I have learned through my mum's battle with cancer to run my Real Estate office in Annandale and I realise Callaghers is only a vehicle to raise money for Life Force Foundation.

I know if my mother didn't have cancer and I didn't overcome such obstacles as I did, I wouldn't be half the person I am today. I would be an awful, egotistical, self centred person, who doesn't value the small things in life.

I just hope I can keep under control! By the way, I do talk to mum most weeks and she is as close as ever.

Thanks mum. ■

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**S O S ... S O S ... S O S ...**

We urgently need extra admin. support at the Life Force office.

If anyone can help out, please telephone **9389 3834** ASAP. Thanks.

If you would like to become a part of the extended family, and help the foundation, you can send any donations to:

**Life Force Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 1663**  
**Bondi Junction 1355**

*Donations are tax deductible.*



# Powerful Medicine

At Life Force we often talk about survival kits and medicine bundles - they are the things we use to help us move forward on our new journey, to help us navigate a path through some very difficult terrain, the things we need to enhance our quality of life. None of them requires a prescription. While we are grateful for the medical interventions which deal with our illness on a physical level, we realise that our recovery depends to a great extent on our emotional and psychological adjustment.

When Shirley Leckie looked at some of the things in her personal survival kit/medicine bundle, she was surprised to find that 99% of the things she was doing to help herself get through this experience in the best possible way, were non-medical. They were ways of helping herself heal emotionally and psychologically, and of generally enhancing her sense of wellbeing.

*Here's Shirley's story .....*

## "MY 27 STEP (and growing) WELLNESS PROGRAM"

I looked forward to my first visit to the Life Force Foundation Support Group, however, I had a little concern at perhaps being asked for the first time to publicly tell my story of cancer 3 months after diagnosis. Almost before running out of the door, I decided that I would jot down what I was doing to make myself well rather than how it all happened, both in some mental preparation and on a positive rather than negative note.

Amazingly, I was almost at the end of writing the listing when I realised 99% of my steps were to address my emotional and psychological wellbeing, rather than medical treatments.

Meditation, Self Affirmations, Diet, Reiki, Distance Healing, Positive Thinking, Letting go of pre-conditioned thinking, relaxation techniques, setting short, medium and long terms goals, lots of laughter, personal journal, guardian angel, visualisation/imagery, moderate exercise, fresh air, support groups, Medium (emotional healing), Naturopath, learning all about cancer, reading inspirational cancer stories, traditional medical treatments, internet pal with similar cancer, rest, peace, support from partner, family and friends, extended leave from the office, parenting myself !.....

The medical treatments are just 1 step, albeit a BIG and important step however, I am certain aside from the cancer, the me inside this body, would not have coped thus far without opening my mind to alternatives to make myself well, taking the time to reconsider my values, beliefs and the way I live my new life to the full each day going forward free from the fear of the cancer.

I have been fortunate in having some very special friends who have helped in my journey of emotional and psychological recovery, which are key to my complete recovery, not just from the cancer.

**Shirley Leckie**

## The Tree

How beautiful you are mighty Spruce, tall and majestic with sweeping branches draped in blue/green needles and amber-like clumps of your life-juice tracing patterns on your trunk.

Your solid body holds the weight of your many branches and reaches down into Mother Earth's heart, where your roots seek the sustenance that nourishes you.

My life is like a tree, as I reach ever upwards towards the light of understanding, but to gain insight sometimes I have to dig into the sediment of my inner being.

If I never explore the dark, moist places of my soul, how can I experience the light? I must know the pain, fear and sorrow before I can see and feel true Joy.

**Jane Gillespie**  
May 2000

## A little message from Jennie Tate...

Dear Jilly,

Just a note. It is always so wonderful to get your newsletter and feel the support and inspiration that the newsletter brings. I belong to a meditation group and that is in so many ways the sustenance and mainstay of my life but it is always wonderful to feel in contact with people who have shared a similar experience. When you read little snippets and see that your own ups and downs are shared by others, it is enormously nourishing and always great to hear from the Dalai Lama of course. It is great work that you are doing. my love to you all.

**Jennie**

## Telephone Counselling

In addition to our regular telephone counselling service from 10am to 4pm daily on the Life Force office number - 9389 3834, we now can offer phone counselling **each Wednesday evening from 6pm to 10pm**. Georgina Guinness will be available during those hours to take calls on: **(02) 9569 0885**

Georgie, a registered nurse, is trained in telephone counselling, and has herself been a cancer patient and a former member of LFF's Inner West support group some years ago. Help is available at the end of the line. Do give Georgie a call.

## Focus Group

A chance for people living with cancer to have a voice. We need to inform you of the position of Life Force Foundation on the Consumer and Community Participation Implementation Group reporting to the NSW Health Dept. over the next six months. The purpose of this group is to attempt to implement the recommendations of two reports commissioned by NSW Health : the Sinclair Report and the Health Councils Report. In order to represent the needs of our consumers to this implementation group, Life Force Foundation is conducting a focus group made up of cancer patients and family members to identify issues of concern for our consumers and their families.

The focus group will be conducted by: Michael Parle and assistant

Held on: Thursday June 15 at 3pm

Venue: Annandale Neighbourhood Centre  
79 Johnston St Annandale

Anyone interested in participating may contact the Life Force office on: 9389 3834

## Get ready for our next fabulous event! . . . .

**LFF Angels for P&P Night:** Preparations for our next fundraising event are in full swing with the formation of the Life Force Angels, a team of great people who will be promoting our annual Evening of Poetry & Prose, to be held on Sunday July 23, at 6.30pm at the usual venue - The Wharf Theatre, with supper and drinks to follow once again at the Wharf Restaurant. You can all start recruiting people now for another wonderful night! We will be sending out invitations (and raffle tickets to sell) to you, as soon as our list of guest presenters is finalised.

So far we can tell you we have a great line-up of star presenters again this year, including **Ewan McGregor**, international movie actor of renown, and star of the upcoming Star Wars, and wellknown and well loved Australian actors **Arthur Dignam**, **Max Cullen** and **Leah Purcell** and more!!

The **Life Force Angels** have joined us to help LFF at many different levels and in many different ways, all bringing their own special talents to support our work in cancer care. **Thank you Angels!!** Your support and enthusiasm means a great deal to us all.

## Facing Death, Embracing Life Workshop

Weekend of June 17 & 18 at Annandale Neighbourhood Centre. This is a marvellous experience for anyone. It is of special benefit to health professionals, people with life threatening illnesses who have been forced to think about their mortality, but also for anyone interested in exploring the spiritual dimensions of living and dying. No need to be afraid of this workshop - it's great! Telephone the Life Force office: 9389 3834 for details.

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## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following people for their generous support of our work.

Carol Segal,  
Denise Haylen,  
Inge Visser,  
Margaret Cody,  
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Yvonne Lohan,



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Trish Evans,  
Gabrielle Prentice,  
P. Murphy,  
MC & DE Traynor,  
Noeline Burke,  
Braeside Hospital,  
Dr. Mark Ryan,  
Maree D'Arcy,



Nyree Gillespie,  
Maria Ferla,  
Sue Simmonds,  
Trish Persson,  
Kerry Robertson,  
Joan de Carvalho,  
Dorothy Prentice,  
Paul Rosenrauch,  
Office Works Bondi Junction.

## *About Our Life Force Retreats...*

It is widely understood now that emotional wellbeing plays an important role in recovery, so our retreats are designed to introduce to people dealing with cancer a number of ways which can be helpful in achieving and maintaining a feeling of wellbeing in order to support the immune system and maximise healing potential.

Jilly has brought together a number of therapists to enhance the quality of life for patients.

Experience these life-affirming practices at delightful locations away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Too often people with cancer suffer from the lack of nurturing touch. They need the presence of caring people who understand their situation, and they need the chance to get away from the city and into a beautiful environment where they can experience the healing power of nature.

Therapists attending our next retreat include Jilly and her partner, meditation and visualisation teacher Caro, as well as yoga, massage and reiki therapists.

The retreats are designed to assist people living with cancer achieve and maintain a feeling of wellbeing, enhancing healing on all levels. Located in a charming

early colonial homestead, in a secluded valley setting, the retreats feature various activities such as vision quest, creativity workshop, massage, yoga and meditation, as well as delicious food and lots of fun.

You will experience a profound sense of healing, as you connect with the earth and the beauty of nature, and renew that sense of wonder that often seems to be missing in our modern urban life. Find out that another way of living is possible. Ancient but simple forms of healing take place in surroundings of great beauty.

**Winter Retreat mid-August. For bookings and inquiries please call the Life Force office on: (02) 9389 3834**

### *Advance Notice*

Saturday, October 14 2000

**"Making a difference in NSW 2000"**

The 2nd NSW Breast Cancer Consumer Forum.

Register early!

For details contact Liz Palmer (02) 9326 9328

### *Encore Program:*

Exercise support program for women who have had breast cancer. The next 8 week program will begin in **July 2000**.

For more info and details please call **Claire Treadgold** at The YWCA on: (02) **9285 6225**.

### *Breast Cancer Action Group*

Next Meeting of the BCAG will be held at 3.00 pm on the 25th June 2000 at the YWCA, 5-11 Wentworth Avenue, Sydney. An address by Prof. John Boyages of the Breast Care Unit, Westmead - "Multi-disciplinary Care, Models Practice and Results" - Is this the future look of breast care treatment?

## *Life Force Foundation Support Groups*

### **2000 Term Dates**

**Note:** It is important to register for all support groups, before turning up, in order to check on numbers and confirm that details are correct. Telephone the LFF number: **9389 3834**.

#### **Eastern Suburbs**

meets weekly at:

**St. Joseph's Parish Centre**  
**10 Albert St, Edgecliff**

Monday evenings: 5:45pm - 7:45pm

Term 3 July 17 to Sep 11 (8 weeks)

Term 4 Oct 16 to Dec 4 (8 weeks)

#### **Northern Suburbs**

meets weekly at:

**Chatswood Church of Christ Hall**  
**365 Victoria Ave, Chatswood**  
**Jane Gillespie: 9960 3213**

Friday mornings 10.30am - 12.30pm

Term 2 May 5 to Jun 23 (8 weeks)

Term 3 July 21 to Sep 8 (8 weeks)

Term 4 Oct 13 to Dec 1 (8 weeks)

#### **Inner West**

meets weekly at:

**Annandale Neighbourhood Centre**  
**79 Johnston St, Annandale**

Thursday evenings: 5:45pm - 7:45pm

Term 3 July 20 to Sep 7 (8 weeks)

Term 4 Oct 12 to Nov 30 (8 weeks)

#### **Family & Carers Group**

meets fortnightly at:

**Annandale Neighbourhood Centre**  
**79 Johnston St, Annandale**

Wednesdays: 11am - 1pm

The next series of sessions for family and carers will begin on **July 19**, subject to numbers.

Please call Life Force office on **9389 3834** for more info.