

## Support for English-speaking people touched by cancer in France

The Newsletter of Cancer Support France — Association N° W163000037

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We remember our Founding President,  
Linda Shepherd 1953-2017



### WOW!

Well, what a brilliant, bumper edition to start off 2020. In all the years since I started producing/editing Touchlines, I have never had such a huge amount of submissions. So, a massive **THANK YOU** to all of the Presidents, Vice-Presidents, PR people and guest contributors; you have made this a truly enjoyable issue to work on.

On behalf of every Association within CSF, thank you to everyone who has put their all into making Cancer Support France the wonderful success that it is but most importantly, for fulfilling the brief, '*Support for English-speaking people touched by cancer in France*', in so many ways. I am personally, really proud to be able to continue to do my 'bit' from down here in sunny Spain.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

Margaret York, Editor

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## **PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS... a few words from Pat Lockett, National President**

We woke this morning to our first blue skies, such a relief after so many days of rain. So much in fact, that a message from SAUR tells us that our drinking water is compromised and we are on bottled water until the level of the Lot reduces.

I wonder if anyone can tell me where 2019 has gone to? Yesterday I put the 2020 pages into my diary and found it hard to believe we are nearly at the end of 2019.

Since the last edition of Touchlines, the National committee has been far from idle. We are pressing ahead with a number of projects aimed to ensure we can help our client support volunteers in the work they undertake. The Active Listener Handbook is approaching completion and the *Demarches Sociales 2018* (Cancer and Welfare Services) has been translated. The latter will be freely available to all CSF volunteers and will be shared with our partner organisations, such as *La Ligue contre le cancer*. You will be able to download it from our website, [www.cancersupportfrance.org](http://www.cancersupportfrance.org)

We continue to explore how we can best support cancer survivors and are currently considering three HOPE programmes developed in the UK by Macmillan Cancer Support in conjunction with Coventry University. We know cancer survival rates are, thankfully, increasing but the long term effects of the disease or its treatments have the potential to compromise quality of life. We feel we will be able to better support this group of clients with a dedicated programme of support.

In November, we again came together at *IUCT Oncopole* in Toulouse. Training for Trainers, a National Trainers' Conference, Helplines Conference and National Conseil meeting took place over four days. We are all very good at keeping things going at a distance through email and internet conferencing but nothing can beat actually sitting around a table together, so much is achieved.

The date for the Annual General Meeting has been agreed and will take place in Limoges during the afternoon of Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Finally my very best wishes to you for a happy festive time and the healthiest 2020 possible.

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## **NEW PRESIDENT FOR LA LIGUE CONTRE LE CANCER - submitted by the Editor**

“At the 2019 *Assemblée générale* of *La Ligue contre le cancer* in Toulouse, Professor Axel Kahn was elected President. He succeeds Professor Jacqueline Godet – President since 2012 who had chosen not to be re-elected.

Professor Axel Kahn has been involved with *La Ligue* since 1990, firstly as Vice-President of the Scientific Council. He then created, and presided over from 2004 to date, *La Ligue's* Ethics Group.

Cancer Support France works closely with *La Ligue* at both national and local levels.”



## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

### CHARENTE-MARITIME - submitted by Dick Smith, President

A huge thank you goes out to everyone who attended our October Rose event last night at *Le Relais* in Boutenac-Touvent. The evening was a great success, new friendships were made and great fun was had, dancing the night away.



OCTOBER ROSE EVENING

### CHARENTE PLUS - submitted by Mo Woolner, PR and Media Co-ordinator

#### Charity Race Night with Fish and Chip meal

A Great night with lovely fish and chips was had at the CSF Charente Plus Charity Race Night with a fantastic **320€** being raised. A big thank you to Nicky and her team at *Cafe Clemence* in Chabanais for hosting, and to Christine and Mike Ellingham for giving up their time to present the event, with best dressed man going to Paul White.

#### Les Amis coffee mornings donation

A huge thank you to *Les Amis* at Saint-Agneau, who have donated all the monies raised from their Coffee Mornings - a fantastic **550€**. Our treasurer, Vivien Clarkson, is pictured receiving the cheque from Lynda, we had a lovely morning Thank you *Les Amis*.

#### Night of Dance

Another huge thank you to Sue Hendy and Janet Taylor for organising our Night of Dance at *Chabanais Salle de Fête* in support of CSF France Charente Plus; **506€** was raised on the night - a fantastic response and a great night for a great cause!

**CHARENTE PLUS - continued...**



**NIGHT OF DANCE**



**LYNDA PRESENTING LES AMIS' COFFEE MORNINGS DONATION CHEQUE TO OUR TREASURER, VIVIEN CLARKSON**



**RACE NIGHT HORSE AND RIDER, MIKE ELLINGHAM WHO PRESENTED THE EVENING WITH PAUL WHITE, AKA, 'BEST DRESSED MAN'**

**DORDOGNE EST & LOT - submitted by Jo Treanor, Vice President and PR**

**Dordogne Est & Lot and the Oncology Department in Cahors hospital**

We at CSF Dordogne Est & Lot are delighted to report that, as a result of some years of contact with the Oncology Team at Cahors hospital, we have been granted full access to the department. This comes as a result of a meeting between President, Heather Moorhead, Client Co-Ordinator, Philippe Mika and the head of Oncology at Cahors, Dr Lavasseur. CSF is now recognised as a positive source of help and support to both the doctors and nurses, as we are able to ease communications between medical staff and English-speaking patients. We very much hope that this new development leads to our being able to support many more cancer patients.

**Where Do We Want To Be?**

During this year, our Association put in place a 5-year development plan so that we can continue to improve our support for those affected by cancer and move forward with awareness-raising and events that reach a wider community. Greater awareness and improvements in treatments mean that some of the support we have offered previously, may no longer be such a priority and we may need to develop and provide other avenues of support.

## ***DORDOGNE EST & LOT - continued...***

Although in its early stages, we have already established an approach to quality assurance so that we can establish if what we provide is successful and meets required needs. The first of a series of Cancer Discussion Groups was also recently held.

### **Prostate discussion group - men only**

A group of 13 men attended this session with 8 participants sending emails with reflections on the afternoon; suggestions were also included for our Association to consider in the future. A few had no current symptoms, some had possible symptoms and others, after diagnosis, had undergone treatment. All appreciated the opportunity to discuss this subject, to find out more about symptoms, diagnostic tests as well as the various treatment options available. The size of the group afforded everyone the opportunity to speak and to ask questions.

The **MAIN MESSAGE** from this afternoon to all you gentlemen was of: -

### **THE NEED TO BE VIGILANT WITH POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS AND TO HAVE AN ANNUAL PSA TEST**

### **Training**

In October, 2 colleagues undertook the two-day Active Listener Training in another CSF area. They completed their third day of training with our own Association on November 19<sup>th</sup>. We are delighted to welcome Letitia Evans and Allison Clark to our team of Active Listeners. Both are seen here with our President, Heather Moorhead.



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## ***HAUTE-VIENNE - submitted by Sue Ware***

As 2019 draws to a close, the year for Cancer Support France Haute-Vienne has been a very busy and enjoyable time. We have rejoined National and 3 candidates have taken part in two different lots of training in the Lot and Toulouse. Our two trainers went to the Trainers' Training and conference in Toulouse in November and our Patron, Dr Cornelia Wilson, was one of the guest speakers at the conference.

We have supported over 14 clients during this year having started the year rather concerned that we were, as some of the other Associations, rather quiet. We have certainly made up for that now.

We had our 2019 calendar selling well at the beginning of the year and plan to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021 with another one again, supported by Etcetera magazine.

We look forward to the New Year and all that it brings. And wish all Touchlines readers a peaceful one.

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## ***LANGUEDOC - submitted by Hilary Galea, Publicity***

### **Strengthening links with Oncodoc**

To further cement the links between CSF-Languedoc and regional French healthcare services, Client Support Coordinator, Theodora Platings, met with the *Director Adjoint* and other members of **Oncodoc** in Béziers on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

*Oncodoc* is a radiotherapy and oncology centre set up in Béziers 10 years ago. It offers radiotherapy treatment and consultations on site and accompanying chemotherapy treatments at the nearby *Polyclinique Saint Privat*.

*Oncodoc* were keen to discuss how it might work together with CSF-Languedoc in future. To that end, the following collaborative measures were agreed: -

## **LANGUEDOC - continued...**

- CSF-Languedoc would supply *Oncodoc* with posters and information about their services
- *Oncodoc* will provide a synopsis of CSF's services in English on their new website, together with links to CSF Websites - both regional and national
- *Oncodoc* will publicise CSF-Languedoc's future fund-raising events
- Active Listeners accompanying clients for radiotherapy at *Oncodoc* will be allowed (if the client wishes) into the treatment room prior to the commencement of radiotherapy
- With CSF's help, *Oncodoc* will prepare translations into English of simple phrases that might be needed by the technician during the treatment (eg: "lie still", "hold your breath", etc.)

### **Macmillan/CSF-Languedoc Coffee Morning**

On the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> October, the sun shone and people flocked to the village of Neffiès to attend a coffee morning held to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support and CSF-Languedoc.

Coffee, tea and a wonderful selection of homemade cakes were enjoyed by all, whilst CSF-Languedoc volunteers manned book, bric-a-brac and second-hand clothes tables, organised a guess-the-number-of-marbles game, and provided information about CSF-Languedoc for those that didn't know about us.

The event raised a fabulous **1,075€**, which was shared between Macmillan and CSF-Languedoc. Our thanks go to Suzanne Fitzgerald for, once again, hosting this popular coffee morning.

### **Active Listener Training**

As part of an on-going training programme, 19 Active Listeners attended an excellent refresher day organised by Karen Powell on 19<sup>th</sup> November. During the training day, a professional psychotherapist gave a fascinating presentation and engaged in an interactive session with attendees.

### **CSF-Languedoc at the Cracker Fair**

Despite a less than favourable weather forecast for the weekend, a record-breaking 7000+ visitors headed to the beautiful *Abbaye de Valmagne* near Montagnac on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November to stock up on Christmas goodies and soak up the festive atmosphere. In prime position, just inside the massive doors to the stunning 13<sup>th</sup> century abbey, CSF-Languedoc's two stalls presented a warm welcome to all.

The first stall housed the tombola and lucky dip and was loaded with prizes so tantalising, that people were queuing up to buy tickets!

The second stall, strikingly decked out in CSF blue, was dedicated to awareness raising. We were delighted with the interest shown from visitors; 58 new contacts requested to receive our newsletter and one bi-lingual visitor voiced their interest in training to become an Active Listener/Translator.

Some very moving stories were shared with our volunteers over the course of the weekend and, even if we have helped just one person feel less isolated, then the whole event has been worthwhile.

A huge amount of work goes into preparing for this event, which is an annual highlight in CSF-Languedoc's calendar. Heartfelt thanks go to the team of 21 volunteers who manned the stalls under the able leadership of Josje Hunnisett, Carole Lavergne, Diana Ryan and Jenny Guest.

The combined funds raised from all the games and activities on the stalls over the weekend totalled a fantastic **2,503€** – a record in our history at The Cracker Fair!



THEO PLATINGS (RIGHT) WITH ANTONIA DOMINGUEZ OF ONCODOC OUTSIDE THE ONCODOC BUILDING (ABOVE)



CSF-LANGUEDOC AT THE 2019 CRACKER FAIR (3 X ON THE LEFT)



MACMILLAN / CSF-LANGUEDOC COFFEE MORNING, 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER (BELOW)



**LOT-et-GARONNE – submitted by Kate Thomson, Vice-President (Admin.)**

Here, in the Lot-et-Garonne it has been a very busy month for Cindy and her team of Active Listeners as unfortunately, there has been an increase in the number of clients. The positive side of this is that more people know of the work done by the local CSF group to support those in need in our area.

In September Mal and Mick Brown held a fund-raiser at their lovely home. One of the ladies present, Chris, had her head shaved to raise awareness and to support her friend who is, sadly, going through treatment here in France. One of our Active Listeners, Maria, who would normally have been helping is also receiving treatment for cancer in England. Our thoughts are with them both at this difficult time. The money raised thanks to Mal and Mick's generosity was split between CSF Lot-et-Garonne and the Macmillan Annual Appeal.

At the end of October Anne Walsh held a presentation afternoon in Montastruc to update Active Listeners on the different types of cancer.

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November, our annual *Marché de Noël* was held at Monteton and as usual, was very successful. This was well attended despite the weather being rather cold and miserable. The 32 stall-holders attracted people from far and wide who were offered a superb choice of Christmas gifts to buy. Again, it was an opportunity to spread the word of the work of CSF and approximately **2000€** was raised to help with our administrative costs.

**LOT-et-GARONNE - continued...**

On November 24<sup>th</sup>, Judy Chapman held a very impromptu quiz and afternoon tea, raising an amazing **800€** to support people in the Lot-et-Garonne. Thank you and well done , and your team.

Also in November, Cindy, our President, with Kate’s help gave a talk to a ladies’ craft circle in Allemans–du-Dropt to raise awareness for CSF Lot-et-Garonne.

Our first event for 2020 is a *Happiness Day* to be held in Montastruc on the 10<sup>th</sup> February and run by Eve Warner-Howard. A fund-raising beetle drive and a sponsored bicycle ride are also being planned for 2020.

We at CSF Lot-et-Garonne would like to extend our very best wishes for 2020 to all our colleagues in CSF France.



CHARLES MISKIN PRESENTING CHEQUE TO CINDY FOR THE MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING (ABOVE)  
 CHRIS HAVING HER HEAD SHAVED (ABOVE CENTRE)  
 LORRAINE, KATE, CAROL AND JULIA AT MONTETON (ABOVE RIGHT)  
 NELL AND ROSIE ENJOYING SOME MULLED WINE AT MONTETON (BOTTOM RIGHT)  
 ANNE WALSH GIVING PRESENTATION (CENTRE BOTTOM LEFT)

**NORD - submitted by Christine Fox, Events Co-ordinator**

On Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December, Cancer Support France, held a ‘Curry & Quiz’ evening at the *Salle de Fête*, Notre-Dame-du-Touchet.

The event was a sell-out and a huge success! Special thanks must go to Chris and Nick Prescott and the team of volunteers who provided a splendid meal and service. A grand total of **2600€** (before expenses) was raised through ticket sales, bar and a raffle.

Our next event is the Christmas Concert in the Church at Notre-Dame-du-Touchet on 13<sup>th</sup> December at 7.15pm. Entrance is free.



CURRY AND QUIZ NIGHT, NOVEMBER 2019

### **Christmas Drop-In**

Every Drop-In at CSF Provence Gard, held on the first Monday of the month at the home of the President Tim Forster and his wife Pippa, is an event Clients look forward to.

The house offers space and beautiful views, and Clients can have access to services like Reiki for further relaxation. The Christmas Drop-In clearly is always a special occasion; so it was this year.

A super lunch, a fashion show for second hand clothes of *Biba Boutique* graciously modelled by lady volunteers, special raffles and finally, first class entertainment by singer/guitarist Tim Broadbent, all contributed to make this day a memorable one.

### **Provence Gard and La Ligue**

CSF Provence Gard has a close relationship with *la Ligue contre le cancer du Gard, Vaucluse et Bouches-du-Rhône* and meets with them regularly.

There is agreement with all 3 *La Ligue* associations to actively promote awareness of CSF Provence Gard with Anglophones by referring them to us and by leaving behind CSF Provence Gard leaflets when visiting medical centres.

In the *Gard La Ligue*, volunteers do the rounds of all medical staff (doctors, physios, chemists etc.) at least once a year to leave behind CSF Provence Gard leaflets, together with their own leaflets.

*La Ligue contre le cancer* can be, and is, being used as an intermediary to allow *Anglophone* residents touched by cancer to access the same services and get the same benefits as the *Francophone* residents.

A touristic car rally was developed with *La Ligue Gard* and held on 13<sup>th</sup> October as a joint fund-raising event and outside proof of our close relationship. Some 'Old-timers' joined the rally, among them a lovely 1936 MG. Participants had a great time exploring the *Gorges du Gardon* and searching for answers to questions given at the start. Typically, some of the villages had to be explored to find those answers; a pleasant day all participants will remember fondly.



TOP PHOTOS (LEFT) TIM STILES, ORGANISER OF THE RALLY, ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS, TOGETHER WITH TIM FORSTER, PRESIDENT CSFPG, AND DR. MATTHIEU, SECRETARY GENERAL LA LIGUE 30; (CENTRE) THE BEAUTIFUL 1936 MG; (RIGHT) TIM BROADBENT BUSY ENTERTAINING ALL ATTENDEES; (BELOW) MANY PEOPLE ATTENDING THE CHRISTMAS DROP-IN



**CSF Christmas book and gift sale Montolieu, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

It all started with the chance comment from a friend who wanted to downsize her book collection, and the seed of a book sale was planted. The location of the event is crucial to attract visitors, and the spacious *Cave in the Maison de Textile in Montolieu*, the pretty 'book village' north-west of Carcassonne, was ideal. It is owned by Derek and Monique Wright who regularly host concerts, cinema evenings, exhibitions etc. as part of their *Club de la Soie*.

With friend Janet on board and Pam Mercer to guide us, we harassed friends for books, unwanted gifts plus anything else which could be donated and sold. A Christmas theme developed and a dear Dutch friend, Louis de Koning, was invited to entertain on the day with his joyous playing on the grand piano in the *Cave*. Posters were distributed around the neighbouring towns and countless emails sent the information far and wide, bringing in even more offers of books etc. The enthusiastic bakers amongst us were cajoled into cake making, with mince pies and superb Dutch sausage rolls (with grateful thanks to Nico) and a huge pot of mulled wine added to the festive spirit.

We were able to set up on the Saturday afternoon before the event, which was just well as it took almost 4 hours! However, with the great organisation skills of Pam, Phil and Nigel, all was made ready for Sunday's 10am opening, complete with Santa hats for us all.

The day arrived with great anticipation and the busy morning got us off to a good start. Janet and a visiting friend had organised a tombola with many prizes for the matching tickets, and the 'Name the Christmas Bear' competition was popular, as were the refreshments. Many visitors enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere whilst leafing through books. Although it quietened in the afternoon, there was a frenzy of visitors during the last hour which helped raise the total of just over **700€!**

More importantly, many people found out about the work of the CSF for the first time.

Janet and I are proud to have been involved in the event, which we couldn't have done without the help and support of the CSF team, Derek and Monique and, of course, friends and strangers who kindly donated the items for sale.

Perhaps this could become an annual event with other attractions...



## SUD DE FRANCE (AUDE) - submitted by Pam Mercer

### First Bien-Être day in the Aude

After 6 months in the planning, frustrations, tears, people dropping out of planned events, loads of publicity and shouting, "I will never do this again", September 14<sup>th</sup> finally arrived to grey skies and rain! What else could happen? We arrived at *Les Marguerites* in Alet-les-Bains at 9am, just as the last *Chambre d'hôte's* guests were leaving. We started putting up the CSF tables, gazebo, books and information needed for the event; then the therapists started to arrive and then the rain had stopped by this time too. But all the chairs and tables to be used by 50 people for lunch needed drying. Lots of people arrived at the opening time and allocating them to the therapists was very difficult to manage. Nevertheless, over 70 people came and enjoyed the day. The sun came out, a wonderful healthy lunch was served, we had the *Aude Shanty Men* singing, and even some therapists working through lunch to cope with the demand. All in all, a fantastic day was had by everyone. It was a very successful awareness-raising exercise for CSF Sud de France, with around half of the attendees being non-members. I said "never again", but watch this space for 2020!



## SUD DE FRANCE (PYRÉNÉES-ORIENTALES) - submitted by Maggie Longworth

On Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, a very successful Quiz Night was held in the *Maison des Temps Libre* in Eus where we had a full house. Our questions were in French and English delivered by our quiz master, Jan West and her husband, Ray, adjudicated. There was a cold finger-buffet provided by Lizzie Smith, helped by Claude. Many others helped before, during and after the event. We had a very successful team; thanks to them all. We made **754€** for CSF. From the tombola /bottle stall, half the profits (**161€**) went to *Les Blouses Roses* - <https://www.lesblousesroses.asso.fr/en>

### Activity for Life 2019 at Maureillas Las Illas - submitted by Lynn Hall and Penny Parkinson

An amazing 67 people (and a dozen well-behaved dogs) took part in this, our third, Activity for Life. After a very hot summer, the day was indeed bright and sunny but thankfully, not too hot for the walkers. The two walks, led by Ian

## SUD DE FRANCE (PYRÉNÉES-ORIENTALES) - continued...

and Tom with Paula and Ginny looking after the stragglers, took advantage of shade and 28, including our President and his wife, opted for the 11km, 3 hour climb through woodland paths; 27 other participants took the less strenuous 5km route. Our 12 petanquists took it easy with a relaxed game or two of boules.

The bottle stall was busy (a walker won both bottles of cava and wouldn't donate one back!) as was the bar with its Nespresso coffee, tea, beer and wine. Our kitchen team, led by Pixi, served 76 lunch plates of quiche, sausages and salad plus homemade cake to finish and there was extra cake and quiche on sale for those who brought their own picnic.

Lunch took place in a lovely musical ambiance provided by 'Gospels of Maureillas' and '2 partout' with Maurice on saxophone and Rosie on keyboard.

Not only was it a wonderful and happy day but, after sharing the registration fees with our local *La Ligue*, we also made a healthy profit.

A huge thank you to the musicians and to all of our helpers who ran the bar, sold books and tombola tickets, baked quiches and cakes, humped tables and with a special mention to Janet who washed up! And finally, of course, thanks to the 67 who took part, without whom it could not have been such a memorable day.



## SUD DE FRANCE (TARN) - submitted by Denise Copley

### Monestiés Christmas fête

On the 8<sup>th</sup> December, Monestiés held its annual Christmas *Fête*. The village was alive with music, street food and, people. The *Fête* is based in three venues in the village, the *Salle de Fête* hosted the *Professional Creatures*, the Ancient *moulin* was home to the amateur *ateliers*, whilst the *Salle de Mairie* held the voluntary associations. The CSF stall was well received, raising 135€ just from the sale of Christmas cards and mince pies. Father Christmas distributed sweeties to the local children, and a festive atmosphere pervaded the whole village.

## SUD DE FRANCE (TARN) - continued...



DANCING FUN



CHRISTMAS FAIR AT  
MONESTIÉS, IN THE TARN



## VIENNE - submitted by Jacquie Kelly

### Traditional Irish Pie and Mash night

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the launch of 'Sláinte', a new local Irish group. Fi and Kev from *Chez Keona chambres et table d'hôtes*, Le Vigeant, organised a fantastic evening in our local *salle des fêtes*. The event was very successful, catering to over 80 locals who all enjoyed both the meal and the entertainment. The group added a nice touch by performing a number of French songs during the *entr'acte*; this was provided by Joël on guitar, Fran on accordion and Dominique was the very talented singer.

We have been invited by *Réseau Onco-Nouvelle-Aquitaine* to take part in an event in April describing the journey of a cancer biopsy. This is to help people understand how important a biopsy is and how decisions about treatment are made from this tiny piece of tissue. It is going to be done in an amusing way using actors to help get the message across.

Frances, one of our language support members, is undertaking the translation of some information sheets for patients receiving chemotherapy at *CHU Poitiers*. The CSF logo and contact details will be included on the bottom of each page.

### Liglet Group D'Art (from Valerie Penny-Stewart posted on Facebook)

387€ was raised at our afternoon tea and tombola. We are only a small art group so we are pleased with the number of people, French, English, Irish, Dutch and Russian who joined us for a nice cuppa and delicious cakes. We also organised two *vide greniers* selling second-hand books.



(TOP, CENTRE AND LEFT) LIGLET GROUP D'ART

(RIGHT) - IRISH NIGHT REVELLERS

**KILIMANJARO CLIMB - 'ONE STEP AT A TIME' (KILIMANJARO FEB 2020) - submitted by Pat Lockett (CSF President) and Dave Wilson (National PR)**

Three people are starting work on the challenge of a lifetime to help Cancer Support France. Tan and John Forsyth, and Julie Jarvis, plan to climb Kilimanjaro next February. They are all working hard with their training, getting all their gear in order and sorting out the necessary arrangements.

Julie Jarvis commented: - *"This is a life-changing challenge for us but we also wanted every step to count for others too. So we are seeking sponsorship to raise as much money as possible for Cancer Support France, who provide an incredible support and guidance service for those suffering with cancer who are non-nationals and living in France. We hope you will help encourage us and support this worthy cause."*

Any donation, large or small will all go directly to Cancer Support France and will be processed through *Alvarum* (a French version of 'Just Giving') which makes it easy and 100% secure. Please go to: -

<https://www.alvarum.com/julietanjohn> to support them.

**Kilimanjaro Climb by Julie Jarvis, Tan and John Forsyth for Cancer Support France**

"When asked why we want to climb Kilimanjaro, it is difficult to give a clear and logical answer. We knew we wanted to get fitter (although there are easier ways!) and were ready to take on a life-changing mental and physical challenge. We were also aware that we didn't want any regrets for not having the courage to go for it whilst we still can.

## **KILIMANJARO CLIMB - continued...**

So here we are, on the verge of one of the biggest challenges of our lives, climbing Kilimanjaro (20,000 feet/6,000m). Reaching the highest peak on the African Continent and summiting the highest free-standing mountain in the world, is both thrilling, and a privilege.

However, at times the reality and seriousness of it hits home; it's going to be oh-so-cold at the top of 'Kili', sleeping an inch from the ground with only a thin tent between us and the mountain elements seems totally illogical, especially at our age and, it's not worth talking about the toilet facilities! (Don't go there!). The altitude alone will leave us gasping for oxygen every step of the way but we are determined to take it on with a positive mindset and to complete it with the help of our guides, of each other and hopefully, with your encouragement too.

We are totally committed and we want all our hard work and training to count for something worthwhile. So we have decided to make our climb dedicated to CSF (Cancer Support France). We all know friends and family who have been affected by cancer and when living abroad it can be even more necessary to have someone help navigate the difficult and scary path. This is where CSF really is a godsend. By making a donation and kindly sponsoring us, we can all help to ensure CSF can continue to help those in need. We are grateful for any donation, large or small, and all of which will go directly to CSF. Donations are processed through *Alvarum* (*Alvarum* the French version of 'Just Giving') which makes it easy and 100% secure.

Thank you for helping to make our challenge count and giving us the additional encouragement we will no doubt need during our gruelling climb up Mount Kilimanjaro. Thank you from Tan, John and Julie xxx"



ONE STEP AT A TIME  
MT. KILIMANJARO  
& THE  
INTREPID CLIMBERS

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## **CYCLE FOR LIFE 2020 - submitted by Penny Parkinson**



**DO COME** and join Cancer Support France between **3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June**. In this 6th year, the route has moved away from the south and cyclists will be following *La Flow Vélo* route across the pretty Charente region and into the Dordogne. Starting on Wednesday lunchtime with a send off by CSF members at Rochefort, known for its 17<sup>th</sup> century maritime arsenal (*Arsenal de Rochefort*), cyclists will be enjoying a leisurely ride stopping at Saint-Savinien, Cognac, Angoulême, Nontron and ending on Sunday with a welcome lunch at Thiviers, famous for its ceramics. Have a look at our dedicated website at <https://csfcycleforlife.org> which will be updated regularly with more news.

This is the only fund-raising event for Cancer Support France National. As well as general help, CSF National funds the website and forum and email and telephone helplines, to name a few. Most importantly, it organises the training of our Active Listeners (who provide emotional, language and practical support to patients, their families and carers through 17 local Associations) and an annual Trainers' Conference.

If you are unable to participate then do sponsor a cyclist or make a donation. This will ensure that CSF can continue to provide free, confidential support to all *Anglophones* living in France and touched by cancer. If you are interested in taking part, contact Sasha on [admin@cancersupportfrance.org](mailto:admin@cancersupportfrance.org) - she will ensure that you are kept fully informed as planning progresses and answer any queries

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## **GENETICS AND HUMAN CANCERS - submitted by Sarah Valinsky CSF Paris & Île-de-France**

In the past decade, tremendous advancements have been made in the genetics of human cancers. For example, it has been found that genes, which function normally in the body, can be changed ('mutated') and that these genetic mutations may be associated with an increased risk for a variety of cancers.



Prominent among these are genetic mutations in the BRCA-1 and BRCA-2 genes. Under normal circumstances, the BRCA-1 and BRCA-2 genes are believed to control damage to DNA. But it has been shown that changes ('mutations') in these genes are highly associated with an increased risk of breast and ovarian cancers and that this increased risk may be heritable. Genetic tests for the presence of these mutations have become available and, under the guidance of genetic counsellors or physicians, genetic screening may be done for people who, because of family history or other factors, may be at increased risk for breast or ovarian cancers. Genetic testing may not be for everyone but for those who wish to have it done, there may be obstacles to getting access to testing depending on where they are, cost, current medical practice and even legal requirements.

This is illustrated by my own case. I'm Sarah Valinsky, member and treasurer of the Paris Association of Cancer Support France (CSF), and a breast cancer survivor. Last year, I wanted to be screened for the BRCA-1 and BRCA-2 mutations in Paris. I consulted an oncologist/genetic counsellor, described my own experience with breast cancer and discussed my family history and other risk factors. After an hour or so of discussion, the counsellor decided that she would not prescribe the test because I did not fall within a strict set of specific risk parameters. To say the least, this was frustrating and unsatisfying. However, I persisted, and was able to obtain both genetic counselling and testing for BRCA-1 and BRCA-2, as well as a large panel of cancer susceptibility genes, in New York.

I have been attending an annual conference on BRCA-1 and BRCA-2 held in Paris, as a representative of CSF. At this year's conference, Prof. Pascal Pujol, *Chef du Service d'Oncogénétique du CHU de Montpellier*, discussed this very issue, namely, access to genetic screening tests for breast and ovarian cancer risk. Prof. Pujol is a proponent of making testing more generally available to those who want it. I shared my experience with Prof. Pujol and our conversation, and Prof. Pujol's discussion of this issue, was broadcast recently on Antenne 2 (see link below).

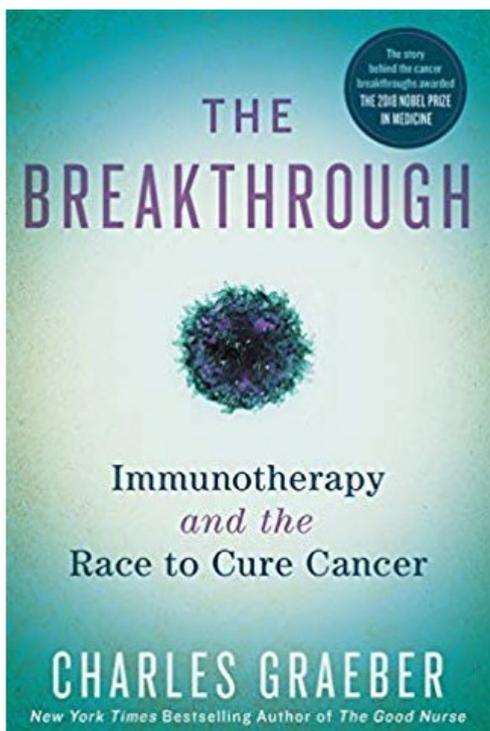
**[https://mobile.francetvinfo.fr/monde/usa/sante-faut-il-generaliser-les-tests-genetiques\\_3737509.html](https://mobile.francetvinfo.fr/monde/usa/sante-faut-il-generaliser-les-tests-genetiques_3737509.html)**

As noted, while genetic screening for cancer risk and susceptibility may not be for everyone, I think that more people will want access to testing, especially as the tests begin to cover more mutations, more cancers and become more accurate. This will require a re-assessment of who should have access to the tests, how personal choice weighs in, how the tests will be paid for and, most importantly, how results and their implications will be communicated.

## BOOK CORNER



The purpose of the Book Corner feature is to identify books that could be supportive to those affected by cancer. It is not intended as a review and in no way constitutes any endorsement by CSF. Most books featured are available on Amazon.



The question addressed in this book is: -

*“Why doesn't our immune system recognize and fight cancer the way it does other diseases, like the common cold?”* This has had scientists puzzled for decades.

Here, the Author guides readers through the revolutionary scientific research bringing immunotherapy out of the realm of the miraculous and into the forefront of twenty-first-century medical science.

*“Groundbreaking, riveting, and expertly told, THE BREAKTHROUGH is the story of the game-changing scientific discoveries that unleash our natural ability to recognize and defeat cancer, as told through the experiences of the patients, physicians, and cancer immunotherapy researchers who are on the front lines.”*

If you have read a book relating to cancer and think our readers might enjoy it too, please send the relevant information to the Editor as shown on the back page of this issue. Thank you. *Editor*

Also [Here](#) to Help...



[www.prostatecanceruk.org](http://www.prostatecanceruk.org)



[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)



[www.be.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.be.macmillan.org.uk)



[www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk](http://www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk)



Beating blood cancer since 1960

[www.bloodwise.org.uk](http://www.bloodwise.org.uk)



[www.breastcancersupport.org.uk](http://www.breastcancersupport.org.uk)



[www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk)



[www.thebraintumourcharity.org](http://www.thebraintumourcharity.org)



[www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk](http://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk)

If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact your regional CSF branch. All telephone numbers and email addresses can be found on the back page of TOUCHLINES. *Ed.*

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Association Siège Social

Mairie  
Le Bourg  
16350 BENEST

National HELPLINE

Telephone: 0800 240 200 (FREE from a landline)

*(Your call is taken on an answerphone and is free from a landline - there is a short message in English - we will reply to you as soon as possible and normally within 24 hours)*

### Useful Contacts

President: Patricia Lockett  
[president@cancersupportfrance.org](mailto:president@cancersupportfrance.org)

Treasurer: Jean Winter  
[treasurer@cancersupportfrance.org](mailto:treasurer@cancersupportfrance.org)

E-mail: [helpline@cancersupportfrance.org](mailto:helpline@cancersupportfrance.org)

Website: [www.cancersupportfrance.org](http://www.cancersupportfrance.org)

[forum.cancersupportfrance.org](http://forum.cancersupportfrance.org)

**CSF FORUM** - Visit the CSF website and take a look at the FORUM, packed full of information and interesting conversations - maybe even meet new friends...

## REGIONAL GROUPS

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Paris & Ile-de-France (75, 77, 78, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95 )	Deborah Lillian	0800 240 200	<a href="mailto:paris-idfpresident@cancersupportfrance.org">paris-idfpresident@cancersupportfrance.org</a>
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Vienne (86)	Jacque Kelly	0800 240 200	<a href="mailto:vienne-president@cancersupportfrance.org">vienne-president@cancersupportfrance.org</a>

### Touchlines

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**Items for inclusion should be sent to the Editor: Margaret York - email:**

**[touchlines@cancersupportfrance.org](mailto:touchlines@cancersupportfrance.org)**

**Please send photographs as separate JPG files - NOT embedded in your editorial. Thank you.**