

There are so many people that I owe thanks to for the success of the Little Angels fundraising event. My partner, Barry Padolsky who is on graphic duty and on the lookout for skiers from December to February. My friends who return my phone calls in December and January, even though they know they are about to be recruited. The people from the Keskinada Loppet have always been there to help.

This event represents to me what the healing process is all about: a group of people working together to help others. I feel so fortunate to be part of it.

If you are interested in skiing in the Keskinada Loppet and raising funds for Little Angels, please call Evelyn, 613-232-7795.



Lymphoma Support Group now in its sixth season

By Evelyn Stone

In February 2000 I attended a Lymphoma Information session co-ordinated by Dr. Isabelle Bence-Bruckler, Blood and Marrow Transplant Team, Ottawa Hospital.

At the end of the session, the social worker, Dominique LeMay, asked for volunteers to start a Lymphoma Support Group.

Two people volunteered, Mariam Sussman and myself, and our goal was to have the first meeting by October 2000.

Mariam, Dominique and I did our research and met frequently. We tried to imagine how this sup-

port group would work. Christine Penn from the Ninon Bourque library provided valuable information about other support groups.

Seven people attended the first meeting at the Ottawa General Hospital, and as they say, the rest is history.

Now there can be as many as 35 or 40 people attending each meeting.

We are very excited about the Lymphoma Support Group. It helps fill a void in a patient's treatment by providing individuals diagnosed with Lymphoma the opportunity to speak with one another and to learn about the disease.

Lymphedema often under-diagnosed

By Louise Haley

Lymphedema is an abnormal accumulation of lymphatic fluid in the tissue that causes swelling most often in the arm or leg but can develop anywhere in the body.

Lymphedema occurs in individuals who have undergone surgery with node dissection and radiation for the treatment of various cancers such as breast, ovarian, prostate, testicular, bladder, colon, head and neck, as well as melanoma.

The affected limb or area may feel tight and heavy, and there may be pain due to associated nerve injuries, obstruction of veins, and strain on ligaments from the weight of the increased limb. Lymphedema can occur immediately post-operatively, within a few months, or years after cancer treatment.

If left untreated, there is a risk of loss of limb function or infection. In addition to the physical effects caused

by lymphedema it can cause psychological distress for the individual, which has a profound effect on their quality of life.

As survival rates for cancer increase, lymphedema has become the most common complication affecting approximately 30 per cent of individuals who have undergone node dissection with radiation. Unfortunately, it is often under-diagnosed and not treated because of the lack of research and awareness among health care professionals, perhaps due to the fact that treatment therapies are physical therapies rather than drugs or surgery.

Combined Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is a gentle form of massage treatment, provided by a specially-trained health professional, which reduces swollen body parts to normal or near normal size. When lymphedema is diagnosed promptly and CDT is begun early, patients can enjoy productive lives with few complications and little or no lifestyle restrictions.

Ask your physician about seeing a

Vodder certified lymphedema physiotherapist if you think you are at risk for developing lymphedema.



Louise Haley, BScPT, BScN is a Vodder Certified Lymphedema Physiotherapist who opened Haley Rehab, a clinic specializing in the treatment of oncology patients at The Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus.