



## A note from the editors!

Hello again to all of you in our liver transplant community! We hope everyone is doing as well as possible. For those who have had a transplant we hope you are going from strength to strength, and for those waiting, we hope you are keeping well and holding on to that hope of a new beginning.

The LTU remains as busy as always! We have now transplanted 1,147 patients; 974 adults and 173 children! The first liver transplant was in June 1988 so in 2018 we will be celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! We have recently performed our fifth intestinal transplant for Steph Dundas (pictured right). She had a liver transplant eight years ago, and she has now had another liver transplant, as well as kidney, intestine and pancreas. This is a huge achievement by not only the team, but by Steph and her family who show tremendous courage and strength every single day. Congrats Steph, you are an inspiration.

We are as committed as we were 30 years ago and we continue to strive for excellence while working with our patients and their loved ones. We wish you health as we enter winter and please don't forget your flu vaccine!



Pictured above: Steph Dundas, up and about after her multi-visceral transplant. Well done Steph!

## Pre Transplant

### Upcoming Pre Transplant Support Groups:

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July, 10.30am – 12.30pm, Level 4 Austin Tower, Room 4.4. Topic: Special meeting for children who have a parent, grandparent, sibling or special person on the waiting list. *Please note: This will be held only if sufficient numbers.*

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August, 10.30am – 12.30pm, Level 4 Austin Tower, Room 4.1. Topic: Organ Donation, viewing of documentary *The Dinner Party* conversations with liver recipients.

## Post Transplant

### Post Transplant Education Sessions 2017:

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017, 10am – 1.30pm, Level 4 Austin Tower, Room 4.4

Post Transplant Christmas Party is on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017, 10- 12pm, Level 4, Austin Tower, Room 4.5

### A reminder about travel...

If you are considering travelling overseas, please speak/ring the coordinators to organise a referral to travel clinic at the Austin- they deal with vaccinations that may be required before travel. This needs to be done at least six weeks prior to travel. Travel needs to be discussed with the medical staff at clinic appointments- this is so we can write on your travel letter that you have been reviewed and are cleared to travel. We can provide letters to alert customs that you are carrying medication. Please ensure that you have enough medication to take with you when you come to your clinic appointment prior to travelling.

## Spiritual Care in LTU

The term 'spiritual' is often that awkward part of the conversation that emerges when someone asks us 'so what do you believe?' It's often fused with religion, misunderstood as rigid and simply something that happens on a Sunday morning. Rather, spirituality is a general term, which encompasses the meaningful aspects of a person's life. For most people, their spirituality includes relationships in family, community, the sacred, religion, nature, art and music.

For liver transplant patients the process of transplant brings life into focus and we begin to think about meaning, purpose and connections. My colleague (Angie Mok) and I (Luke Bowen) are the Spiritual Care Workers (formerly Pastoral Care) for the LTU. We provide spiritual care to patients, families and staff. We counsel those facing or in the midst of transplantation, offering support and care as part of the patient journey.

We also provide education in mindfulness - the practice of remaining in the 'present moment.' Often we find our minds replaying memories, worrying about what might happen in the future, or becoming lost in our pain or suffering. When we engage in mindfulness our awareness comes back to the body, our current experience and state of being. Mindful meditation decreases stress and anxiety, encourages healthy sleeping habits and helps us approach situations differently; a new way of handling stress is cultivated. Breathing techniques, slowly enjoying food, walking and meditation are forms of mindfulness and we can provide information and education in how this may support you, particularly those moments in the middle of the night when you need some sleep!

*"The essence of mindfulness is always compassion and compassion is about relating. We are always in relationship to something, somebody. Right now you are in relationship to these words, to the chair you are sitting. At other times you are in relationship with your thoughts and feelings; often these can be painful. In other moments you are in relationship to other people – family, friends, work colleagues, even strangers. It is the quality of our relationships that determines the quality of our lives."* -The Happy Buddha

Please do not hesitate to contact myself or Angie if you would like to chat, meditate, sit, cry or laugh.

~ Luke

Spiritual Care Manager, Ph: 9496 5000

## Notices

### Acknowledging Our Donors

Donate Life's Service of Remembrance held on the last weekend of May each year provides an opportunity for donor families and organ recipients to come together to remember donors and acknowledge their extraordinary gift of life. This year over 30 liver transplant recipients and family members attended.

At last year's service, I had the pleasure of meeting Pam, whose daughter was a young doctor who donated 5 organs when she unexpectedly passed away.

Each year Pam had thought about attending the service but had found it too challenging. She said she would love to know how those who received her daughter's organs were going. She wished to pass onto transplant recipients that donor families get great comfort from hearing from recipients and mentioned the following:

- don't worry about not being 100% well before writing
- don't worry about upsetting the donor family at Christmas or on the anniversary of their loved one's passing, they'll be upset anyway
- don't underestimate the importance of acknowledgement, no matter how far down the track

Two young transplant recipients who joined our conversation embraced Pam saying they were thrilled to meet her and that while they were unable to personally thank their donor family they could thank Pam and her daughter; it was a special moment that I felt privileged to be part of.

Cath Bradley SW

### JP Document Signing Centre

The Austin now has a Justice of the Peace Document Signing Centre 10am - 2pm Monday to Friday, room 4.2, Education Centre, level 4, Austin Tower.

A JP can assist with witnessing Statutory Declarations, certifying a person's identity or a true copy of an original document, witnessing an affidavit for use in court or attesting the execution of a document. No appointment necessary.