

Bone Marrow Cancer Trust

Lew Mclvor – Bio

Lew is a true community champion and, even though he'll tell you he's just a small cog in the works, the Bone Marrow Cancer Trust would not be what it is today without him.

It was Lew's ties with Rotary that led him to us. In 1989, as president of the Christchurch Rotary Club, Lew was asked by Doctor Michael Beard and Allison Nicol to help raise one million dollars for a Bone Marrow Transplant Unit. Lew did not hesitate. He was in and the fundraising began.

The Bone Marrow Cancer Trust was formed in 1990, with Lew one of the first Trustees. He has remained on the Trust for the last 32 years, serving five of those years as Chairperson.

Right from day one Lew knew that the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit was not enough. People would need a place to stay.

Lew was involved in the negotiations to purchase what is now Big Ranui and was instrumental in securing the site where the Ranui Apartments are being built.

The story goes that he actually wanted to buy the land for himself. But Lew, who says you've always got to be looking 10 years ahead, told Allison the Trust needed this land for the future. They bought it for what Lew says was a bargain price just before the Christchurch earthquakes. Lew refers to what happened next as a "genius move". The earthquakes struck leaving the houses on the land condemned, which meant the Trust was left with land, money in the bank and a vision for the future.

If Lew had a highlights reel of his time with the Trust, a few fundraisers would make their way onto it. He fondly remembers overseeing the breeding and delivery of 20-thousand 'Jennifer' roses, a rose bred for the Trust. Another highlight was in 1992, when Lew and a team of volunteers descended upon the old post office building in Hereford Street. They set up telephone booths, opened phone books and rang everyone in the South Island to raise money for Ranui House. One weekend, thousands of phone calls, half a million dollars raised. Spectacular!

Over the years we've had to share Lew with his numerous other passions. He owned his own grocery store, ran a South Island newspaper distribution business, and established a wholesale book company. He has been on the Christchurch Sister City Committee, has sat on numerous voluntary boards and committees and, in 2011, was made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to diabetes research.

So, what drives Lew to be such champion for the health sector? His passion comes from a personal tragedy – the death of his wife from melanoma at 31 years of age, leaving Lew with three children. Lew says he was inspired to channel that tragedy in a positive way and supporting the health sector became his passion.

Lew says the Bone Marrow Cancer Trust has been the most joyous project he could have wished to have been associated with. He also says he simply tries to enjoy every minute, of every day, of every bit of life. Lew – you are one of our most loved and cherished family members. Thank you for giving so much of your life to us.