



BP NEWS

Vol 5 No 1

Bosom Pals

*... those who know so well
where you've been, accept so
well who you've become, and so
gently invite you to grow*

diary dates

22 January

Introduction to our Physical activity programme, 19h30 at the YWCA House, Ancienne Route, Grand Saconnex.

27 February

Cross-country ski day at La Vattay, (see over)



March

We will have a "colour event" - something a little more sedentary after all that exercise! Details will be emailed to you very shortly and will be posted on our website.

*The Bosom Pals
Committee wishes all BPs
a happy and healthy
New Year !*

ESCALADIES

We walked!

It felt much too early to be setting out on a winter Saturday morning and there were even drops of - no, that can't possibly be snow! - in the air. It wasn't - just a warning spot or two of rain! A group of hardy Bosom Pals had responded to the rendez-vous at



Cornavin train station where we boarded the number 8 bus for Veyrier. Luckily we got on there, as numerous other would-be walkers had the same idea and, as we lumbered along the Geneva streets, every bus stop had a dozen or more hopeful passengers who squeezed in until even the famous tin of sardines would have appeared half-empty in comparison!

Once arrived in Veyrier we joined the hundreds (well, over a thousand actually!) of other walkers, met up with the rest of our team, were issued with our dossards and lovely pink T-shirts with the BP logo to wear over our winter walking gear. There was much fun and games with safety pins and suchlike and endless loudspeaker commentaries, most of which were hard to hear, until at 8.30 "Falco", the

famous Escalade cannon, fired the starting shot and we were off!

Keen Nordic walkers, together with the seriously fit, had taken up positions well down the assembly road and shot off at high speed while the rest of us set out with a will, but only in second or third gear until we had negotiated the sticks and boots of those whose pace was slightly slower than our own and the "field" panned out more comfortably. The route had

been carefully planned to avoid as much traffic as possible and in those spots where the walking trail had to cross road, marshalls in yellow jackets held the cars back for us to cross in groups. The rain, which had drizzled slightly upon us at the assembly point, stopped once we started walking and we were able to complete the 8.3 kilometers without needing to put up hoods or open umbrellas and we walked merrily along

at a goodly pace, but still able to chat as we forged ahead, re-grouping with different walking companions, until we had come down from the relative heights of Veyrier, crossed the Arve three times as it curved its way into Geneva, and finally passed under the arrival arch set up in the Parc des Bastions - at which point the heavens opened! We were glad of the hot spiced tea on offer to competitors (along with organic buns and bananas!). Our average walking time was 1hour 31 minutes and we all received a fun electric clock as our trophy! Some walkers went on to a joint lunch together later on while others had shopping to do, but we all felt it had been worthwhile taking part and "showing the flag" for ESCA.

Bosom Pals are Busting Out!

In the spring, Bosom Pals is offering a physical activity programme, led by a physical therapist. The programme, specifically designed for post-treatment women and their special issues, addresses physical conditions and side effects resulting from breast cancer surgery and reconstruction, chemotherapy, radiation and hormone therapy. Being physically active has a multitude of physical and psychological benefits, some especially important to those women who have experienced a breast cancer diagnosis. In addition, a growing body of research in breast cancer suggests that regular physical activity may increase a woman's chances of living disease free. A presentation on **Thursday, 22 January at 7:30** in our usual meeting place at the YWCA house on Ancienne Route, Grand Saconnex) will introduce the programme and will highlight physical activity. This will be our next monthly event so come and find out more.....!

Having heard about the benefits of physical activity you will have another chance to indulge in some healthy fun on **Friday February 27** when Annabel will lead us on a cross-country skiing day at La Vattay in the Jura. La Vattay offers a variety of trails, rental facilities, easy access by car, a bus connection from Geneva and a nice restaurant for lunch. We will start off in the morning. In case of poor weather,

the event will be postponed to Friday, March 6, 2009. For more details check our website and to sign up, contact Annabel on 079 462 8654 or 021 807 1404 or email her on pulcrano@sefanet.ch



Bosom Pals Structured Support Group

The Bosom Pals Structured Support group met from September to December, and had six bi-weekly sessions in total. The topics touched on included coping strategies, self-image, sexuality, relationships, communication with medical professionals, complementary therapies, work-life balance, existential issues, and spirituality. The group was also able to discuss other issues of concern during the sessions.

Despite some initial apprehensions about participating in such a group, all the participants found the group experience helpful. The participants liked the structured approach to the meetings, but felt it was also important to be able to freely discuss other issues and concerns. Some would have liked the option of continuing for more sessions. The group decided to continue to meet on their own to keep the newly found friendships going.

The participants felt that a simi-

lar support group format would be beneficial as a regular ESCA support service. A testimonial from one of the group members: "I found this group excellent and would recommend it for anyone experiencing cancer."

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Recent studies in the US have shown that 37% of a 1,200 sample of breast cancer patients had not been diagnosed with lymphedema in spite of suffering the typical arm-swelling symptoms. They had not been warned of the possibility of this condition affecting those who had had axillary lymph nodes removed during breast cancer surgery. Today, "sentinel node biopsy," examines far fewer nodes and separate research suggests those women are far less likely to get later lymphedema — possibly as low as 5%.

Dr Paskett, an epidemiologist at Ohio State University is leading research into possible preventive steps and recommends wearing elastic sleeves to counter temporary swelling during airplane flight or heavy lifting, and doing special exercises with light weights designed to help keep open the lymph channels that allow fluid to drain through the body. "The theory is building up muscles in your arm acts as a natural pneumatic pump to move the fluid," explains Paskett, herself a breast cancer survivor who developed lymphedema. Early care is key, so cancer groups advise:

Be alert for subtle swelling.

Don't ignore a tight ring or watch, or clothes suddenly not fitting.

See a certified lymphedema specialist, who has proper training in fitting compression garments and proper use of decongestive therapy.

Obesity and arm injuries are additional risk factors, so watch your weight; avoid injections in the affected arm; clean cuts and seek care for infections promptly; wear gardening gloves and oven mitts; and avoid temperature extremes, such as hot tubs.

KEEP ABREAST

of breast cancer news and the Bosom Pals at ESCA programme via our website:- www.cancersupport.ch or for general information call +41 22 791 63 05 or email us on bosompals@cancersupport.ch


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