

Together

ESCA ANNUAL
REPORT 2017



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“It’s cancer.”

Hearing those words can change our lives forever. Maybe it’s genetic, maybe it’s lifestyle choice, perhaps it’s environmental, but often it’s just a large chunk of bad luck. And it can happen to anyone.



Jane Royston
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "JRoyston".

While our individual voyages may be different, they are similar in so many ways, and it is through this shared experience that we create an immense solidarity: we are in this together. We can learn and find comfort from each other. We can exchange experiences with those travelling the same path. It is reassuring to know what to expect, and it is rewarding to be able to help, to give back when we have successfully come out the other side of that long, dark tunnel.

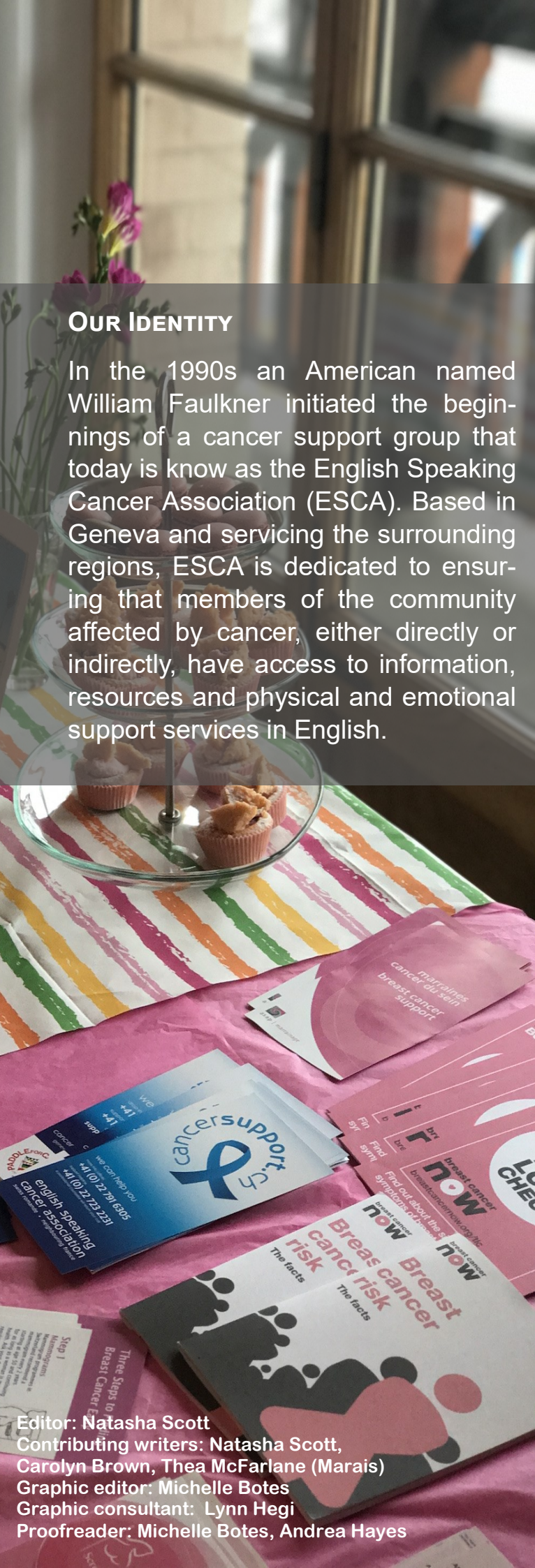
It is the giving back that makes ESCA so unique. With over 60 active volunteers, most of whom have been through the same voyage as our clients, ESCA’s presence in the community is unparalleled. Our volunteers’ commitment and knowledge is why patients and caregivers seek our help and why they return even after treatment.

It’s cancer, and suddenly life takes on a new dimension: living it to the fullest, appreciating each moment, and recognizing each day as a gift. We care, we cry, we laugh. In the spirit of ESCA, we are in this together.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank everyone in ESCA, particularly our volunteers for their remarkable dedication to helping others. I cannot say it enough—without you ESCA would simply not be ESCA. You are our heart and soul.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Jane



OUR IDENTITY

In the 1990s an American named William Faulkner initiated the beginnings of a cancer support group that today is known as the English Speaking Cancer Association (ESCA). Based in Geneva and servicing the surrounding regions, ESCA is dedicated to ensuring that members of the community affected by cancer, either directly or indirectly, have access to information, resources and physical and emotional support services in English.

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Our Vision

To provide a friendly environment that is supportive, non-judgmental and confidential, and to become well integrated within the region's medical community.

Our Mission

To have a positive impact on the lives of those affected by cancer by providing emotional support, practical help and information in English within Geneva, Vaud and neighbouring France.

Editor: Natasha Scott
Contributing writers: Natasha Scott, Carolyn Brown, Thea McFarlane (Marais)
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The Year in Review

"On your darkest day, when despair weighs heavily on you and hope is but a dream, you walk through a door with the letters ESCA written on it. Those two steps will change your life forever...from despair to possibilities, to believing and then to the reality, I will survive."

- Jodie Cole



World Cancer Day

In February the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) launched a social media campaign to bring awareness to World Cancer Day. Karin De Lamarter gave a well-received presentation on Support Through Sport at the *HUG Associations Forum* to a group of over 100 people, including oncologists and nurses.



Paddle for Cancer

A new website for Paddle for Cancer was launched in February to make it easier for participants to register for our biggest event of the year and to track their fundraising progress.



HUG Ovarian Cancer Awareness

Every September the *Hôpital Universitaire de Genève* organizes an Ovarian Cancer Week to raise awareness about this disease: detection, treatment and prevention. For two days, ESCA was onsite to support the initiative and offer information on our support services.



Super Tuesday Coffee

In October ESCA was invited to the American International Woman's Club of Geneva coffee hour to give a presentation on our organization, our cancer support services and volunteer opportunities.



Beaulieu Prostate Cancer Centre
Movember campaign to promote men's health.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

ESCA was seen around the city participating in various outreach programs for the month of October. These included Pink Night with the Geneva Servette Hockey Club, organised by *Réseau Cancer du Sein*, and at MParc la Praille with the *Fondation genevoise pour le dépistage du cancer*.



Reaching Out to Tomorrow's Future

Campus Des Nations held a community fair in October. ESCA was present with an information stand, encouraging and showing students how they can make a positive impact in their community.



Look Good, Feel Better

In November, in collaboration with Look Good Feel Better, ESCA welcomed eight women to the Drop-in Centre to learn about skin care and makeup techniques, specifically to address issues arising from cancer treatment.



Escalade and Terry Fox

In September ESCA participated in the Terry Fox Run for Hope, in support of the *Ligue genevoise contre le cancer*. In December ESCA was also present at the Escalade walk.

welcome to ESCA

DROP-IN CENTRE

For the last thirteen years the ESCA Drop-in Centre has been welcoming patients and family members facing cancer. Situated on the outskirts of Geneva and manned by an alternating staff of some 30 volunteers, the Drop-in Centre offers a warm, confidential atmosphere and makes available information on support services and activities as well as an excellent, up-to-date resource centre. Along with hosting private support group meetings and volunteer training sessions, the centre provides visitors the opportunity to interact. It reflects the kindness, support, reassurance, and expertise at the heart of all of ESCA's services. With at least one peer supporter present, in 2017 the Drop-in Centre was open for a total of 400 hours, providing assistance to at least 70 newcomers.

A photograph of a door with a sign that reads "800 VOLUNTEER HOURS". The sign is white with black text. The number "800" is large and bold. Below it, "VOLUNTEER" and "HOURS" are also in large, bold, black capital letters. To the left of the door, there is a yellow sticky note with some text. To the right, there is a blue and white sign with a logo and some text. The door is light-colored wood.

**> 100
HOURS OF
TRAINING**

— Ruth H.

LIBRARY

The ESCA library collection has some 400 books and is an integral part of the warm and inviting atmosphere of the Drop-in Centre. Visitors can settle down with a cup of tea or coffee and browse or borrow books on a variety of topics.

Each year at least 30 new publications are added to the shelves next to some 100 informational brochures from Macmillan Cancer Support, one of Britain's largest charitable cancer organizations. The ESCA library helps clients and their families face all aspect of their new life situation and aids volunteers, peer supporters, and counsellors as they strive to carry out their roles more effectively and with more understanding.

coping with cancer •
caregiving •
nutrition • self-help •
grieving • life stories

connect with us

SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2017 ESCA strengthened its accessibility in the community by expanding its website links and increasing its social media presence on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. ESCA started a social media campaign at the beginning of the year, focusing on nutrition, exercise, and sun protection. A Bosom Pals Facebook group, a Resources and Bosom Pals webpage; and an English translation of HUG oncology pamphlets are now available online.

IN THE NEWS

Paddle for Cancer Festival (October)
The Courier

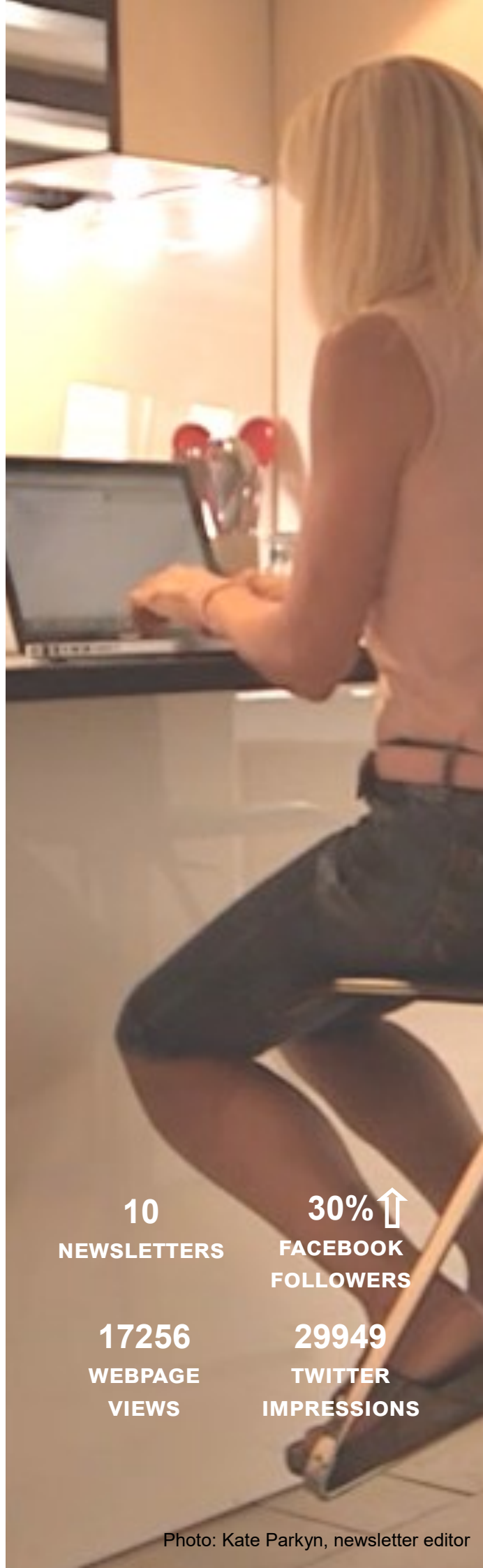
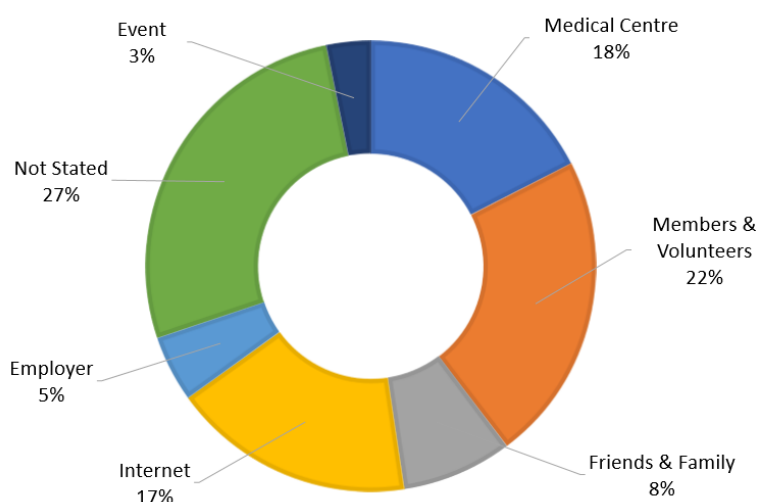
Guided Walks for Cancer Survivors (June)
Dragonboat Racing and Raising Money for ESCA (September)
Cancer Awareness Month (October)
World Radio Switzerland: Health Matters

Paddling for Cancer: Reaching out with Success (October)
Global Geneva

Thank You to Care Givers (September)
Know-it-all passport

900 People in Dragonboats (September)
Paddle for Cancer (May)
Geneva Business News

HOW NEW CLIENTS HEARD ABOUT ESCA



10
NEWSLETTERS

17256
WEBPAGE
VIEWS

30% ↑
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

29949
TWITTER
IMPRESSIONS

counselling

Ripples

Will we ever know
How far the ripples flow
When we take a stand
or give someone a hand?

How often do we give
ourselves time to reflect
To notice this or that effect
To sit back and watch them
grow
Wherever they may choose
to flow?

We never know how far the
ripples will go
or who will benefit and grow
from a few kind words or a
hand held out
Isn't that what counselling is
about?

Some years ago I was counselling a man with a relatively rare type of cancer. I saw him only twice, as his cancer was already advanced, but he was vibrant, enthusiastic, and fully committed to life. He had a young family and wanted to watch his children grow into adulthood. But there were limited treatment choices. He spent the time he had contributing to research for new treatment options for a cancer that would eventually take his life. Our last visit was in the hospital, where today new treatment for this type of cancer is being delivered.

Our role as counsellors is to *be* with our clients, to accompany them through the anxiety, through biopsies or tests, sometimes before a diagnosis and other times to assist them in processing the results. We may see clients once or many times, through the various phases of diagnosis and treatment and every so often through the final stages of life, always ready to support them and their families. Each experience is unique and each client touches us differently.

As counsellors often do, I wrote to this client's widow shortly after his death and offered assistance. She said she was fine and a year later she contacted me to say she wanted to do something to benefit others. She wanted to sponsor a four-day walking trip for the bereaved.

So during a wild, wet, and windy September eight participants and two guides set off to walk part of the West Highland Way in Scotland. The weather was certainly not pleasant or conducive to hiking but the warm dormitory-style accommodation allowed the group to get to know each other, to bond and support each other not just for the remainder of the hike but in some cases later when further losses happened.

I joined ESCA in 2003 and there have been many times when I, as a counsellor, helped people stand up for themselves, seeing choices when there seemed like none. Sometimes we counsellors are immediately aware of our impact on patients, family, or friends but often we are not. But as with my client's generosity and thoughtfulness, and those of his wife, and for all the work ESCA has done assisting people with cancer and their families over the last 15 years, I have witnessed the ripples of kindness and I know how far they can go.

Thea McFarlane (previously Marais) ran a cancer and HIV/AIDS centre before joining ESCA, providing individual and group counselling to clients and family members.



support services

COUNSELLING AND PEER SUPPORT

Client support and confidentiality are at the heart of ESCA. Help is delivered through peer supporters, individual and group counselling, information and support meetings, practical resources, and physical and emotional health-promoting support activities.

In 2017, our peer supporters—trained volunteers who have been affected by cancer—had five supervision meetings, helping them improve skills and provide an advanced level of support. Help includes pre- and postsurgical assistance. ESCA currently has some 30 peer supporters.

Counsellors continued to participate in professional development, offering two Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy sessions in 2017. An art therapy class was held in January, and supervised Bosom Pals coffee mornings continue to be hosted the last Friday of every month for women who have experienced breast cancer.

**312**

NUMBER OF TIMES
SERVICES USED

**57**

PHONE AND EMAIL
SUPPORT REQUESTS

**16%**

INCREASE IN CLIENTS



“ ESCA, toujours
disponible et
efficace. ”

— Dr. Bernard Exquis,
Geneva Oncologist

1 HOUR

AVERAGE TIME
CALLS RETURNED

quality of life

ORGANIZED WALKS

In April the ESCA Walking Group updated their name to *Walk 'n Talk* and, through rain and shine, organized 10 walks around the left and right bank of the Rhone river. In May a professionally guided hike around the Jura mountains was facilitated by SheZone.



FITNESS CLASS


In 2017 ESCA offered 60 gym classes designed for patients who had finished treatments, potentially experiencing long-term side effects like neuropathy, lymphedema, joint pains, osteoporosis, fatigue and depression. Classes are also open to caregivers and volunteers. Each week ESCA offers a gym class for both sexes, and one specifically for women with experience with breast cancer. Both classes are a place to have fun, improve fitness, endurance, health and general well-being. But they also provide an exchange of information, shared experiences and group support.

YOGA

In 2017, the ESCA yoga classes doubled, offering gentle yoga for people in treatment and a Yoga for Recovery and Healing class for clients post-treatment. The ESCA yoga classes are the only classes in Geneva specifically for people with cancer. They can improve sleep quality, pain management, and reduce anxiety. Using gentle movements and breathing in order to relieve tension, stiffness and aches, participants feel empowered through sharing, knowing they are in a safe and supportive environment so necessary for healing and recovery.

“...it's much more than a yoga class, there is lots of mutual support, after yoga teas and friendships. And last but not least, our teacher, Sari, is not only an excellent yoga teacher but also a wonderful person, who cares about our well-being far beyond her classes. Very grateful to her and ESCA for offering these special classes!”

– E. B.



“Karin’s gym lessons are not only an excellent physical workout...but also provide an important emotional support. Thursday mornings are a very important part of my life.”

– Sonia

MEET CAROLYN BROWN

After a decade hiatus from competitive synchronized swimming, 27-year-old Carolyn Brown and her long-time teammates reunited in the summer of 2016 to compete in the Masters World Championships in Budapest. That September while putting on sunscreen Carolyn discovered a lump above her collar bone. She was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system that directly affects the immune system.

"My world turned upside down. I was not allowed to go near a pool because of my low immune system from chemo, and my physical appearance and capabilities were about to take a good beating."



Initially it was assumed two cycles of chemotherapy were all she needed but after the first scan Carolyn required two more rounds of much stronger treatment, needing longer days at the hospital and several days for each treatment. But despite the chemotherapy, her goal to compete in Budapest never changed.

"Fueling my body was essential...if I didn't like [the meal] I would try it cooked in a different way...Thank goodness for my mum who cooked several different meals each time..

"I kept quite active: running, cycling, lots of walks, and yoga. I was slow. The day my sister overtook me, casually passing me with her city bike, I knew that chemo was really taking its toll. Within a couple of weeks all my hair had gone and my energy levels had plummeted. My biggest fear was looking ill. I could deal with being ill but I hated looking ill. Make-up saved the day. I did have a wig although I preferred scarves.

"Some days I would be so weak I would take a shower and have to take a nap... But the walks with my family and friends were some of the best times.



My teammates and I would create the choreographies. They would send over videos to learn and keep me up to date."

Six months after diagnosis, Carolyn had her last chemotherapy treatment. Three weeks later she ran the 10 km race in Lausanne. In May 2017, she started radiotherapy and two weeks later returned to the pool. With reduced lung capacity, she began retraining several times a week, focusing on holding her breath and getting her muscles back.

"For my first few training sessions I had to wear a float to help me tread water as I didn't have enough energy to hold myself up. My immune system was still low and I was training outside. I developed asthmatic bronchitis."

Once again Carolyn had to leave the pool and only managed to return a week before the competition. Less than three months after her last radiotherapy treatment, Carolyn and her team headed to Budapest, performed at the Masters World Championships and came home with a bronze and silver medal.

"If I can give any recommendations to people going through chemo they would be, don't give up, have a goal and don't let go. Eat as much healthy food as you can...and make sure you keep exercising. A walk a day is what got me through the worst of the treatment, fresh air is a lifesaver. Meditation and mindfulness exercises that I had learned thanks to **ESCA**, helped me a lot during the many sleepless nights and yoga is a great form of gentle exercise. Finally, during chemo sessions make sure you are surrounded by friends and family... just having people around made me feel much better. I was very lucky! Without the help and support of my family and friends I would never have made as quick and good a recovery. The people around me were amazing and I can't ever thank them enough."

meet ESCA

The strength of ESCA is founded on the people who offer their time and skills to help others. In 2017 over 60 volunteers participated in cancer awareness programs, fundraisers, fitness activities, publications, and publicity. Volunteers organized a total of five evening seminars that included topics ranging from healthy lifestyle choices to doctor-patient relations.

CLIENT SUPPORT

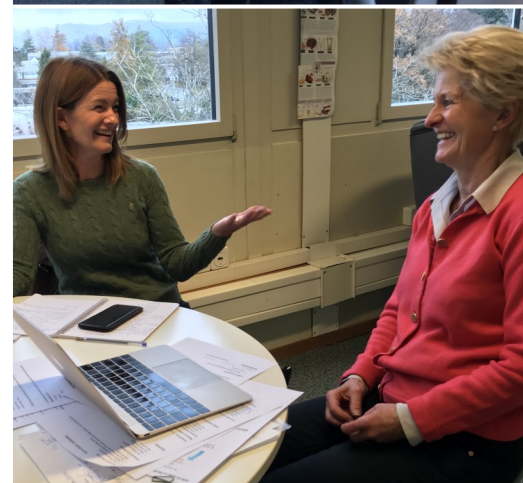
Peer supporters provide exceptional and highly valued services that include accompanying patients to medical appointments, offering caregivers respite, and helping with household tasks.

OUTREACH

In addition to patient and family support, volunteers help connect ESCA to the medical community. Thanks to volunteers, ESCA was present at Health Rights Day, Soins en Oncologie Suisse conference, the HUG Associations Forum and the CHUV symposium on Sexuality, Fertility and Cancer. In 2017 presentations were given at the HUG, AIWC, Genolier and Sitex.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

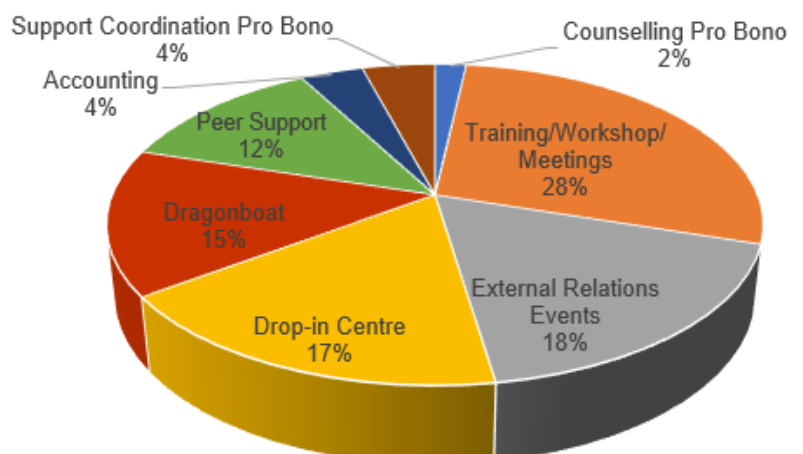
Regular email notices are sent to volunteers to keep them updated on ESCA events and in September a small survey was sent out to access volunteer needs. A volunteer refresher course was held on 5 December to address updates and provide volunteers with an opportunity to get together and eat cake! In December a volunteer appreciation night was held at The Club House.



“The contact I have had with the volunteers has always been cheerful and encouraging... when one is feeling apprehensive...I have found their sensible and sympathetic approach extremely helpful...”

– Rosie B.

VOLUNTEER HOURS



11th Annual Paddle for Cancer

September 3rd marked the eleventh annual Paddle for Cancer Dragonboat festival at Lac de Joux. It was made an enormous success as usual by the loving and caring people that make up our community, including the 1600 hours of volunteer time given in preparation, operation, and closing of the festival; the 946 participants; and the many patrons of the Fundraisers Challenge.

For the fourth consecutive year the Corporate Fundraisers challenge champion was Trafigura with an amazing CHF 26,000 raised and matched by the Trafigura foundation. The Open Team Fundraisers Challenge was won by All in Sync with an amazing amount of just under CHF 20,000!

A tremendous team spirit was felt across the lake as adults and children paddled to the beat of the drum. A silent tribute was given to those we have lost and an open commitment was made to those who, for now and in the future, will need our support.

Paddle for Cancer is ESCA's main cancer awareness and fundraising activity. We depend on financial support to be able to offer our services for free. Raising cancer awareness also encourages people to TALK freely about cancer, making it more likely to be caught early and therefore more treatable.



RAISED
132'650
CHF



Additional funds raised:

Tombola	4'763
Bake Sale	1'232
Book Stand	783
Therapies	552
Kiddieland	512

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Since its inauguration, Paddle for Cancer festival has been a *tour de force* of Patsy Allen, past President of ESCA. Her outstanding achievement was marked at the festival with a celebratory poster and more than a few affecting words.

"This year marked my eleventh and final festival as the overall coordinator. I started with lots of help and it quickly became an integral part of my life and a real passion. I've worked with and met so many wonderfully kind and generous people and without them this festival would not have been the success it is. Rob Ireland, the technical coordinator, his lovely wife Jan who runs the Mini Regatta, were with me from the start. We did it! "



Winners

Dragonboat Races

Corporate Teams

Trafigura Tigers



Open Teams

ESCA Paddlers



All Female Teams

Omega HQ



Mini Dragonboat Team

The Incredibles



A CHF10,000 donation was made by ESCA to the Kanji Beads of Courage programme run by Zoe4Life and the *Ligue vaudoise contre le cancer*. Beads of courage are used to support children with cancer through treatments and procedures, telling their story and acknowledging their courage as they fight a life-threatening illness.

supporters

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU THANK YOU!

VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED

4,203

HOURS TO ESCA
AMAZING !

Individual contributors, corporations and organizations have donated their skills, their time and their money to sustain services that promote awareness and provide help to those affected by cancer. We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude for the generosity we received from all of our supporters. This kindness is a reflection of not only our community but of our future.

American International Women's
Club of Geneva
American International Club
Brappz
Centime collection
Expat Expo
Geneva Business
Geneva Global
Hello Switzerland

Hooping for a Cure
International School of Geneva
Know-it-all passport
Sue Hudson and Sue Montgomery
Swiss Gardening School
Webster University Geneva
World Radio Switzerland
YWCA

Paddle for Cancer Dragonboat Festival

Corporate Teams

Accuray International
Audemars Piguet
Barclays
BD Switzerland
Beckman Coulter
Bunge
Capital Group
Cargill Alvean
Caterpillar
CHUV / Nestle Health
Science
Eaton
Executive MBA HEC
Lausanne
Firmenich
HFW
IATA
IMD
INEOS
Intuitive Surgical

Lenz & Staehelin
Louis Dreyfus Company
Merck
Trafigura

Open and All Female Teams

All in Sync
All Nations
AlphaHQ
Cougars & Co
Dons & Divas
ESCA Paddlers
How Aboat It
La Côte Lions 1 & 2
Power's Armada
Sync or Swim
The Gorloks
The Sharks
Zoe4life
Birds of Paradise

Bosom Pals Paddlers
LDC No Buoys
OmegaHQ

Festival Partners

Centre Sportif Vallée de Joux
Commune de l'Abbaye
Vallée de Joux

Promo Sponsors

Dragonboatevents.ch
Addax Petroleum
APEC Diffusion
Chiquita
CAVJ
Dragon Boat Club
Divonne-Les-Bains
Hofstetter Sports
Hostellerie La Baie du Lac

HQCrossfit
Jour de Rêve
La Croisée de Joux
La Côte International
School Aubonne
La Semeuse
McDonald's
Mobitoil
Party Time
Patrick Location
Pomodoro Pasta
ProTent
Restaurant La Reunion
Riedel
Serve the City Geneva
Skinfit
Sport Quest
The Clubhouse
Vima Trophées

governance

As the needs of the community grow, so does our commitment to providing accessible and compassionate services. No one should have to face cancer alone. We are in this together.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice President	Annabel Pulcrano
Secretary	Sally Alderson
Treasurer	Daniel Avigdor
Members	Catherine Blanc Gary Buell Robert Leigh Dr. Michelle Wright James Bissell Huub Spierings

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Support Services Manager /Counsellor	Raynelle Arcaini
Support Services Coordinator /Counsellor	Antonia Calame
Counsellors	Thea Marais Patricia Matthews
Administration/ Outreach	Andrea Hayes
Paddle for Cancer Coordinator	Patsy Allen
Fundraising and Events Coordinator	Melania Dabran Quinn
Volunteer Coordinators	Leanne Lynch Nicola Bowers
Drop-in Centre Manager	Margaret Stourton
Communications Coordinators	Patsy Morgenstern Natasha Scott

“ESCA was the most holistic response to my needs after the diagnosis of cancer...I found at ESCA open-hearted and minded people...active listeners, caring, positive constructive, energizing, supportive.”

– Philip K.

FUTURE VISION

ESCA receives on average 70 new clients each year. Through cancer awareness and improved detection and treatment, the number of survivors increases. The future is bright.

Until cancer is eradicated, it is our goal to ensure that there is access to a variety of support services, in a language that is familiar, in an environment of compassionate people who understand what it means to have cancer and to care for someone who does.

In 2018 ESCA will be launching new awareness initiatives through various multimedia platforms and new support services, such as Pilates, the Common Thread Project and nutrition.

HELP US

ESCA is a not-for-profit association that relies entirely on donations. It is the only cancer support organization that offers services in English in the Leman region. Thanks to generous supporters, services are provided at no charge. We value every contribution.

Membership Fee: CHF 40 / year

DONATE TO:

English Speaking Cancer Association

UBS account number: 243-341674.01F

Clearing number: 243 (UBS Lausanne)

IBAN: CH24 0024 3243 3416 7401 F

BIC/SWIFT: UBSWCHZH12B

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG)

Centre hospitalier universitaire vaudois (CHUV)

Look Good Feel Better

Fondation genevoise pour le dépistage du cancer du sein

Ligue genevoise contre le cancer

Ligue vaudoise contre le cancer

Réseau Cancer du Sein

Association de soutien aux personnes touchées par le cancer de la prostate

American International Women's Club of Geneva

Resiliam

Vivre Comme Avant

Soins en Oncologie Suisse

Palliative Care Suisse

Réseau de sénologie et onco-gynécologie genevois (SONGe)



English Speaking Cancer Association (ESCA)

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