



Touchlines

Support for English-speaking people touched by cancer in France

The Newsletter of Cancer Support France — Association N° W163000037

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CSF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT’S WINTER PONDERINGS

Submitted by Pat Lockett

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Watching the blossom popping on the Judas tree and the lambs in the neighbour’s field, encourages thoughts of emerging from, what for many of us, has been the toughest winter ever for so many reasons. Life throws all kinds of challenges our way but dealing with the restrictions caused by Covid-19 makes everything difficult.

Throughout the health emergency CSF Associations have, of course, continued to provide excellent support for their clients, largely but not exclusively, at a distance. Other activities and events are still on the grid just waiting for the green light to open up again; we are hopeful this will happen soon. In the meantime many Associations have looked to innovation to bring clients, members and volunteers together, such as virtual coffee mornings, training events and online fund raising.

CSF National has also not been idle. The project team looking to refresh the CSF website has made good progress and many suggestions for improvements are being considered. We now have a new advertisement running in the Connexion newspaper and are hopeful that those who need us can find us easily.

Members of the National committee were looking forward to being together for the Annual General Meeting later this month. We were to have been hosted by CSF Sud de France at a venue in Carcassonne but instead, it will be a business-only online meeting on Wednesday 7th April. However, there is always a plan ‘B’ and we are committed to coming together as soon as we can. There is nothing like meeting in person around a table to explore the potential for the future development of CSF.

Finally, I want to wish you a Happy Easter! Fingers here are all crossed for warm spring sunshine and plenty of good chocolate.



HAPPY EASTER EVERYONE

CSF continues to offer free confidential support to English-speakers in France affected by the current health emergency and to those needing guidance in relation to Brexit.

REGIONAL ROUND-UP

CHARENTE MARITIME - Submitted by Dick Smith

At the AGM of the Charente-Maritime Association held on March 16th, a new President was elected. I have stepped down as President after five and a half years and Sue Smith (no relation) has taken over from me.

CHARENTE-PLUS - Submitted by Mo Woolner

Great News!

The CSF Charity Shop in Chabanais will **re-open** for its two days a week as from: -

Tuesday, March 9th March 2021. Opening hours will be as before 10am to 4pm

We at CSF Charente Plus, look forward to seeing you all as soon as you are able to make your way to us but please remember...

Face Masks must be worn at all times and hand sanitiser for customers to use will be available on entrance to shop.

DORDOGNE NORD PLUS (formerly DODOGNE RIBÉRAC) Submitted by Nicola Bishop

CSF Dordogne Nord Plus has recently trained several new volunteers as Active Listeners so even through the pandemic, we are here to help.

We are busy working on our marketing strategy and would like to invite readers to like and follow our new Facebook page.

We will be regularly posting interesting new content, that should appeal directly to those who have been touched by cancer. We also plan to run fund-raising campaigns and non-cancer related posts that will be uplifting, topical and socially interactive and aimed at all local people.

<https://www.facebook.com/CancerSupportFranceDordogneNordPlus>

We are also working hard to find possible new venues for our future drop-in centres in the North Dordogne and South Charente area.

Exciting new times ahead for CSF Dordogne Nord Plus!

Pat Turner in St Severin is seeking donations of old ties for her sewing group, Sewing Sisters, to make quilts and other craft things to sell at at charity fetes to raise money for CSF. If you can help, contact Pat on: -

patriciaturner453@gmail.com

DORDOGNE SUD - Submitted by Bob Kennedy

Dordogne South solve a Christmas problem or three.

Christmas Fairs solve three problems by: - providing a source of presents, raising money for the Association and creating awareness of CSF.

This year, however, there were no Fairs which left the problem of no solutions. One answer came from a friend in Edinburgh who had a quantity of really good 'gifted' items that she could not sell as her usual outlets were closed. With a few items added to increase the range, there was enough stock to open a small shop in a spare bedroom.

Carefully invited customers, well spaced out, were eager to buy and the word quickly got around. Whether this was strictly legal we are not sure but difficult times call for difficult solutions and we were careful not to put anyone in danger. The result was **€1,300** in sales and a clear profit of over **€1,000**, thanks to most of the stock being donated.

CSF LANGUEDOC - Submitted by Hilary Galea, Cat Hartley and Kate LeMestre

AGM

CSF-Languedoc's Annual General Meeting was held on line via Zoom on February 18th.

During the well-attended meeting, the existing Bureau was re-elected: - Jen Glayzer, President; Jackie Keefe, Secretary and Tony Orsman, Treasurer.

In her opening remarks, Jen Glayzer paid tribute to Jenny Guest, a stalwart supporter and former Secretary of CSF-Languedoc who sadly died in December 2020. She also thanked the Bureau, Council and all CSF-Languedoc members for their support over the past challenging year.

FRENCH NATIONAL CANCER PLAN 2021-2030

On February 4th, World Cancer Day, CSF-Languedoc members, Cat Hartley and Kate LeMestre, attended a video conference organised by the National Cancer Institute (INCa) and chaired by the journalist Estelle MARTIN, on the subject of the French National Cancer Plan 2021-2030.

Their report on this conference follows below: -

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

The President of INCa, Professor Norbert IFRAH, opened the debate stating that the previous plans had shown there to be a great deal already achieved in terms of cancer prevention and improved quality of screening, which has meant that over the previous five years, the outcome for cancer patients has improved. However, there was much still to be done, in particular in after-care, to help people living with cancer. In France, 4 million people now have or have previously had a cancer.

A short film was shown with witness statements from four people who had been diagnosed and treated with various forms of cancer.

An American cancer specialist, Dr Douglas LOWRY, stated that France had an outstanding record for cancer research, particularly in terms of fundamental research and immunology. The nationally coordinated system of cancer care and research was, he said, exceptional.

A panel of 4 specialists and representatives of a patients association contributed to the opening discussion.

Professor IFRAH stressed the importance of this nationwide interaction throughout France, with the creation of research institutes, cancer-poles, centres of excellence for treatment and early detection centres. Associations also

play a major role.

Gilles BLOCH, Director-general of the National Institute of Health and Medical Research, (*Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale*) said that France was in the top 5 of world research, with centres throughout the whole of France, he cited Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier etc.

Isabelle SALVET, President of the Committee for Health Democracy at the Institute of Cancer, said that research must now include patients and their concerns, looking at prevention, screening and the sequels of cancer treatments. Professor André BARUCHEL, onco-haematologist, explained how international research was integrated with clinical treatments, particularly, important for the rarer cancers.

Professor Frederique PENAULT-LLORCA, Director-General of the Jean-Perrin Centre for Cancer Research at Clermont-Ferrand stressed the importance of working with vulnerable people in precarious situations, analysing their environment, as well as genetic factors.

Questions were received from participants by messaging: -

WHY ARE 40% OF CANCERS AVOIDABLE?

There needs to be more awareness of risk factors, especially tobacco and alcohol consumption, poor nutrition and lack of physical exercise.

Prevention should start as early as possible, with school-age children who can often influence their parents' behaviours. Targeting awareness to teenagers is targeting too late.

Increased use for example, of the Papillomavirus vaccination to prevent cervical and uterine cancers. In Australia and Scandinavia, infections by HPV have virtually disappeared. Health screening should be made available for all young women at 25 years, looking also at nutritional problems and obesity.

WHY ARE SOME CANCERS LEFT UNTREATED?

Professor IFRAH said that all cancers were treated but some cannot be cured at present.

All agreed that the patient must be involved in the treatment and his / her enlightened / informed opinion must be taken into account. There must also be greater attention given to carers.

WHY HAS THE COVID-19 VACCINE BEEN DEVELOPED SO RAPIDLY?

Research on Messenger ARN has been developed over the past 15 years; it was a lucky chance that this worked against the genome of SARS-COV2. Cancer research is more complex since it is not just one illness but a family of illnesses.

Research has continued despite the lockdown, especially into questions such as why the immune system shuts down and how to mobilise it against cancer cells.

There are also many innovations in new medication, especially targeted chemotherapy, personalising screening for at-risk populations, work-related risks etc.

PRESENTATION BY PRESIDENT MACRON OF THE NEW 10-YEAR STRATEGIC CANCER PLAN

In a filmed presentation, President Macron outlined the strategic ambitions over the next 10 years: -

- greater research innovation
- 20% more finance (€1,74 billion over 10 years to be rapidly available over the next 5 years)
- objectives to reduce deaths from 150,000 to 100,000 per year (there are currently 380,000 new cancer cases every year)

This would be achieved by: -

- **INCREASED PREVENTION; 40%** of all cancers can be avoided but prevention is one of the weak points in the French system. Tobacco accounts for 70,000 new cases of cancer each year. Excessive alcohol consumption accounts for 1/5 cases. We need to develop more hygienic lifestyles, including improved nutrition (using, for example, the Nutriscore labels on food products) and increased physical activity, especially at school, and improvements to the air that we breathe (7 new low-emissions zones being developed).
- **BETTER SCREENING;** especially for colorectal cancers which are under used (7 out of 10 people eligible for colorectal screening do not do the test); inventing and improving tomorrow's screening tests, for example, for lung and prostate cancers; the use of big data to analyse results from large numbers of patients, for example, the reading of diagnostic scans using artificial intelligence.
- **IMPROVED SUPPORT FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES DURING AND AFTER CANCER;** faster implementation of research results and greater awareness of the long-term effects of living with cancer. More research and acceleration of the use of biotherapies, immunotherapies and genome therapies which cause less long-term collateral damage
- **THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF CANCER.** Living a long time with the after-effects of cancer must be taken into account. The '*droit à l'oubli*' (right to forget) has been a major step but does not go far enough; 20% of cancer patients do not get their jobs back.

The fight against cancer is a European fight, with all forces united to achieve progress. Special funding will be allocated to children's cancers where the cure rate is now 80%, with 1,700 new cases in France every year. He stressed the importance that cancer treatments are free in France and thanked all those involved in treatment, care and research.

DEBATE ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Another panel of experts and a patient representative welcomed the 10-year plan. There was general agreement that this was an ambitious project, which had resulted from two citizens' consultations and many consultations with researchers, clinicians and patients.

Thierry BRETON, Director General of INCa, stressed the importance of the financial effort. Other experts reiterated aspects of the plan, stressing the importance of prevention from an early age; the ethical questions involved, particularly the importance of the 'right to forget' after treatment so that ex-patients can, for example, find work again and obtain mortgages. The statute of the 'patient-expert' was evoked briefly by the representative of patient associations.

They said, however, that there is still a need to improve cancer care throughout the country as there are large discrepancies between areas. The overall objectives are ambitious, with 234 new measures to be undertaken, including 1 million new cancer screenings every year, reducing by 60 000 the number of new treatable cancer cases throughout metropolitan France and its overseas territories.

Cancer Awareness May & June 2021



8th May
Ovarian Cancer Day



May
Melanoma Skin
Cancer Month



May
Bladder Cancer Month



June
Kidney Cancer Month

CSF LOT (formerly DORDOGNE LOT & EST) - Submitted by Anna Shackelford

At our AGM in January 2021 we formally changed our name to CSF Lot; this to more accurately reflect the focus of our work but we continue to welcome clients, members and friends from our neighbouring *départements*, as appropriate.

As with every other Association, face-to-face activities are still severely limited here in the Lot but we are planning another Step Out for CSF series of walks in the Spring; we will be encouraging members to participate throughout April and May when the weather is more conducive to outdoor activities.

Plans are also progressing to set up a monthly art group / drop-in centre which we will launch as soon as Covid-19 restrictions allow. A local tutor will offer a range of art and textile-based activities to include painting and collages, knitting, patchwork and appliqué. Those, like me, without an artistic bone in their body, can simply come along to admire others' skills and share coffee and biscuits with fellow members, visitors and Active Listeners.

PARIS & ÎLE DE FRANCE - Submitted by Pam Combastet

We welcome Pam Combastet as the new President of Paris & Île de France.

Pam has asked for a re-run of the piece about the raffle for the beautiful quilt. The raffle will be drawn on **April 15th**.

A HEALING QUILT - One of our members, Nan de Laubadère, has created a special quilt '*straight from the heart*' to benefit our organisation. All the proceeds from the raffle will go to support National in their wonderful work and dedication.

Quilts hold a cherished place in the history of crafts. They protect, they warm, they celebrate and, they can heal. Guided by this tradition and having lost both parents to cancer, Nan chose exceptionally beautiful designer fabrics, working them into a design that will enhance any interior.

This masterpiece will be at home anywhere. Please purchase your raffle tickets here: - <http://bit.ly/2KMF7cG> and consider selling two (or ten!) to your *entourage*. In these difficult times, let's have a fundraising beam of light shine on CSF National!



This is the QR code which should take you direct to the purchase form



Nan's Quilt - the centre shows the reverse

COVID-19 PLEA FROM A SUD de FRANCE MEMBER

I am sure I am preaching to the already converted but if this only changes the habits of 2 people, it is worth it.

We are all wearing those wonderful face mask accessories at the moment and probably will still be doing so far into the future. **PLEASE...** before disposing of them, snip the elastic loops holding them snugly in place over your ears. So much damage is caused to so many innocent creatures who happen to scavenge our waste tips or swim in our polluted seas.

I could go on and lament the amount of plastic in those blue medical masks but I won't this time. **FIRST things FIRST.**

SUD de FRANCE (ARIÈGE) - Submitted by Mac and May

BOOKSALES IN 2021 IN SUD de FRANCE - ARIÈGE

As M. Macron said, booksales are a necessary part of French culture. In the Ariège, we have been trying to keep up that tradition by holding our open-air booksales at the covered market in *Bastide sur l'Hers* since November 2020.

Our numbers at first were very small but it did give some people the opportunity to get out of the house, have a distanced but communal get together and to meet other faces, albeit behind a mask. In the interest of keeping the germs at bay, Liz and Martin have been assiduous in disinfecting the one bag of books that we allow people to donate to each booksale. Both Martin and Mac have collected larger donations from people's homes, which are then quarantined.

As you can see from the photos, it wasn't such a nice day on the first Saturday of this month (March 2021). Normally, you would see a tree-covered mountain a couple of kilometres away; however, the weather didn't dim the enthusiasm of people to grab some much needed reading matter (as you can also see) and make a contribution to CSF Sud's funds.

The Ariègois are hardy souls and we will be there, regulations permitting, on the first Saturday of each month from 1100 until 1300.



VIENNE - Submitted by Jacquie Kelly

WANTED: NEW BUREAU MEMBERS

Cancer Support France Vienne would like to say a huge thank you to 3 of the Bureau members who have resigned for a variety of reasons...

ROB has moved back to the UK. He was an Active Listener and supported our fund-raising by sourcing and distributing collection boxes across the area.

JAN, also an Active Listener, has had a corneal transplant and has decided to take things a bit easier. She helped with fund-raising - particularly with raffles.

LINDA, our secretary, is moving to Greece. She has been instrumental in CSF, planning the implementation of the HOPE (Help To Overcome Problems Effectively) programme. Linda attended this programme in the UK run by Macmillan Cancer Support and found it of great benefit during her cancer journey.

If you have time on your hands, are enthusiastic, passionate and have great ideas to promote our organisation, we would love to hear from you. We need people with marketing, IT skills, social media, fund-raising, event organising and secretarial skills, and anything else you may have to offer. In order to maintain the high standard of work that the organisation provides to support local English-speaking people touched by cancer, the Bureau needs to recruit a secretary and some new bureau members immediately. The Bureau meets 3 times a year, discussing plans, national CSF initiatives and fund raising projects. The remaining Bureau members are friendly and relaxed and very supportive of each other and new members. If you have time on your hands, are passionate about the Association, we would love to hear from you.

If you would like to join us or to discuss a role more fully, please get in touch with Jacquie Kelly, the President of Cancer Support France Vienne via email: -

jacquieannkelly@gmail.com or phone **05 49 84 08 74**

CYCLE FOR LIFE 2021

Cycle for Life 2021 - Thursday 22nd Sept - Sunday 26th Sept Carbonne to Fronsac

Its time to start your planning, as we are, for the 2021 edition of Cycle for Life - **the GARONNE CHALLENGE**

This year we are travelling from Carbonne 31390, Occitanie at lunchtime on the 22nd and finishing in Fronsac 31199 in the South West of France, travelling through St Julien Sur Garonne, BousSENS, Estancarbon and Gourden-Polignan.

There is something for everyone, from shorter flat cycle rides, to longer day rides or even a circular walk taking place on the Saturday before the final push to the end. You can even visit the grottos at: -

<https://grottesdegargas.fr/> or <https://grottesdegargas.fr/le-paleo/>

Fancy joining us and raising some money for a fantastic cause... then watch this space!



GENETIC TESTING FOR CANCER RISK

The TV channel ITV has recently aired a documentary 'DNA Family Secrets'. Apart from tracing peoples' ancestral background, the programme also featured people seeking to find out what risk they may have of medical issues being passed down via a hereditary gene from their parents and the possibility of them, themselves, then passing it on to their children. Nowadays, DNA has become an almost positive tried and tested method of establishing if they have a gene mutation, relative to various health risks. One lady whose mother had ovarian cancer had her DNA tested for the BRACA gene. The results were negative which showed that she did not have the gene which carried the risk of breast and/or ovarian cancers.

Approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) in August 2018, here is a brief article published by Cancer.Net: -

Genetic testing helps estimate your chance of developing cancer in your lifetime. It does this by searching for specific changes in your genes, chromosomes, or proteins. These changes are called mutations.

Genetic tests are available for some types of cancer. These include: -

Breast cancer; Ovarian cancer; Colon cancer; Thyroid cancer; Prostate cancer; Pancreatic cancer; Melanoma; Sarcoma; Kidney cancer; Stomach cancer.

Genetic testing may help: -

- Predict your risk of a particular disease
- Find if you have genes that may pass increased cancer risk to your children
- Provide information to guide your health care

No genetic test can say if you will develop cancer for sure. But it can tell you if you have a higher risk than most people. Only some people with a gene mutation will develop cancer. What does this mean? A woman may have a 45% to 65% chance of breast cancer. But she may never develop the disease. Meanwhile, a woman with a 25% chance may develop breast cancer.

RISK FACTORS FOR HEREDITARY CANCER

A hereditary cancer is any cancer caused by an inherited gene mutation. An inherited gene means it is passed from parent to child within a family. The following factors suggest a possible increased risk for hereditary cancer: -

FAMILY HISTORY OF CANCER. Having 3 or more relatives on the same side of the family with the same or related forms of cancer.

CANCER AT AN EARLY AGE. Having 2 or more relatives diagnosed with cancer at an early age. This factor may differ depending on the type of cancer.

MULTIPLE CANCERS. When one relative develops 2 or more types of cancer.

RARE CANCERS. Some types of cancer, such as ovarian cancer, adrenocortical cancer, or sarcoma, are linked to inherited genetic mutations.

REASONS TO CONSIDER GENETIC TESTING FOR CANCER

Genetic testing is a personal decision made for different reasons. It is also a complex decision best made after talking with your family, health care team, and genetic counsellor.

ASCO recommends considering genetic testing in the following situations: -

- A personal or family history suggests a genetic cause of cancer.
- A test will clearly show a specific genetic change.
- The results will help with diagnosis or management of a condition. For example, you may take steps to lower your risk. Steps may include surgery, medication, frequent screening, or lifestyle changes.

ASCO also recommends genetic counselling before and after genetic testing. Learn more about these recommendations on [genetic testing for cancer susceptibility](#) on a separate ASCO website (American Society of Clinical Oncology).



We remember our
Founding President,
Linda Shepherd
1953-2017

Also [Here](#) to Help...

Cancer Support France are proud to be in partnership, affiliated to or supported by the following associations and groups: -

In partnership with:

En partenariat avec:



www.prostatecanceruk.org



www.be.macmillan.org.uk



Beating blood cancer since 1960

www.bloodwise.org.uk



www.breastcancersupport.org.uk



www.thebraintumourcharity.org



www.cancerresearchuk.org



www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk



www.targetovariancancer.org.uk



www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk

If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact your regional CSF branch. All telephone numbers and email addresses can be found on the back page of TOUCHLINES. *Ed.*

USEFUL INFORMATION

Association Siège Social

**Espace Clément-Marot
Cancer Support France, Box 25
Place Bessières, 46000 Cahors**

National HELPLINE

Telephone: 0800 240 200 (FREE from a landline)

(Your call is taken on an answerphone and is free from a landline - there is a short message in English - we will reply to you as soon as possible and normally within 24 hours)

Useful Contacts

**President: Patricia Lockett
president@cancersupportfrance.org**

**Treasurer: Jean Winter
treasurer@cancersupportfrance.org**

E-mail: helpline@cancersupportfrance.org

Website: www.cancersupportfrance.org

forum.cancersupportfrance.org

CSF FORUM - Visit the CSF website and take a look at the FORUM, packed full of information and interesting conversations - maybe even meet new friends...

REGIONAL GROUPS

Alpes-Maritimes (06; 83)	Angela Anderson (Mobile)	07.68.38.74.70 06.48.50.36.46	cancersupport06@gmail.com
Bordeaux & Region (33)	Marissa Raymond	0800 240 200	bdx-helpline@cancersupportfrance.org
Charente-Maritime (17)	Sue Smith	06.79.16.60.83	csfcharentemaritime@gmail.com
Charente Plus (16)	Denise Bloom	06.45.35.32.30	csf.charenteplus@gmail.com
Deux-Sèvres (79)	Denise Langford	06.40.77.27.35	deux-sevres-president@cancersupportfrance.org
Dordogne Nord Plus (16; 24) (Formerly Dordogne Ribérac)	Paula Cragg (Helpline)	05.45.25.55.28 06.43.67.86.11	dnp-helpline@cancersupportfrance.org
Dordogne Sud (24; 33)	Bob Kennedy (Mobile)	05.53.23.29.17 06.03.39.24.33	dordsud-treas@cancersupportfrance.org
Gascony (31; 32; 65)	Jayne Ray (mobile)	05.62.31.63.40 06.27.69.62.28	gascony-contact@cancersupportfrance.org
Haute-Vienne (87; 23; 19; 36)	Sue Ware	0800 240 200	helpline@cshautevienne.org
Languedoc (12; 34)	Jen Glayzer Helpline	04.67.44.87.06	president.csflanguedoc@gmail.com
Lot (formerly Dordogne Est & Lot)	Anna Shackelford (24h Helpline)	06.33.26.89.75 0800 240 200	lot-president@cancersupportfrance.org
Lot-et-Garonne (47)	Cindy Sheppard	06.70.64.68.82	helpline@cancersupportfrance.org
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Paris & Ile-de-France (75, 77, 78, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95)	Pamela Combastet	0800 240 200	paris-idfpresident@cancersupportfrance.org
Provence Gard (13; 30; 84)	Graham Means	04.66.81.18.58	csfprovencegard@gmail.com
Sud de France (09; 11; 66; 81; 82)	Brian Thomas	09.82.43.91.53	sud-president@cancersupportfrance.org
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Touchlines

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