The importance of the Beatson Translational Research Centre

In this edition the Director of the Institute of Cancer Sciences, Professor Jeff Evans, gives us his thoughts on the impending completion of the TRC.

Professor Jeff Evans is Professor of Translational Cancer Research at the University of Glasgow. A specialist in pancreatic cancer, his work spans the clinical and research fields, meaning that as well as conducting research in the laboratory to understand the development of the disease at a basic level, he also looks after patients with cancer, developing new treatments through clinical trials.

To him, this translational approach, and the opportunities presented by the new centre are vital in the fight against cancer. “We will only make progress in treating patients with cancer by increasing our understanding of the biology of cancer development and progression - and then exploiting that knowledge to develop better tools to detect the disease earlier and to develop better treatments for advanced disease,” he explains. “This new investment in Glasgow will be a significant contribution to the international efforts in making this happen.”

While building work on the centre is due to complete in the autumn of 2012, a range of other key preparations are taking place.

Teamwork is key to success

To improve the quality of life for patients of cancer, says Professor Evans, “is a question of teamwork. It’s teamwork at the hospital across a range of clinical disciplines – surgeons, pathologists, oncologists, radiologists, allied health professionals, nutritionists – and also teamwork in the laboratory, where we have a range of scientific expertise.”

This means that in addition to building a team of new recruits, existing university researchers will be relocated to the new Centre to build critical mass in key areas of strength, such as investigating how cancer cells respond to treatment, and developing better biomarkers capable of predicting how patients might benefit from existing treatments.

The Glasgow Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre

An existing facility that will relocate to the translational research centre is the Glasgow Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre (ECMC). Recently, the ECMC has won a competitive five-year renewal funding process from Cancer Research UK and the Department of Health.

Earmarked for drug development, this five-year funding package, totaling £2 million pays testament to the exceptional quality and standard of research already taking place in Glasgow in these difficult economic times.

To make a donation to the Beatson Pebble Appeal please complete the form on page 3-4 of this newsletter. Alternatively, to give a single or regular gift online, visit www.beatsonpebbleappeal.org

The final deadline for donations to obtain an inscription on the donor wall is Friday 29 June 2012.

For further information visit the Beatson Pebble Appeal website, e-mail office@beatsonpebbleappeal.org or call 0141 330 3000.

The College of MVLS is making progress on the appointment of strategic posts in the translational research centre, all of whom are being recruited from an international field. It is anticipated that the Director’s post will be filled in the autumn of 2012.

Two principal investigator posts have also been appointed: scientist Stephen Tait, who will work on the biology of cancer at a cellular level and clinician Nicola Valeri, a bowel cancer specialist who works with biomarkers, which are biological molecules found in blood or other body fluids or tissues that can be used to see how well the body responds to a treatment for disease.
**Zip Slide**

Chivas employees

The hottest weekend of the year so far was the setting for our 2012 Zip Slide. 60 participants took part in the event on 24th and 25th March, along with fourteen other local charities and our supporters who chose to contribute to the Beatson Pebble Appeal at the Paul O’Gorman Leukaemia Research Centre.

Overall we have raised £14,000 from the event and are holding another Zip Slide in September.

If you're interested in taking part on Saturday 15th September please contact the events team by email: daoevents@glasgow.ac.uk or by telephone: 0141 330 3593. But be quick, the places will be going fast!

**Dressing Down for the Appeal**

Laura chose the Appeal as a good friend of hers’ son was diagnosed with cancer in 2005 at the age of twenty. She says “The Beatson Oncology Centre made what was a very scary time so much less daunting for him and his family. Sadly he lost his battle in May 2008 but I could never think of him as a ‘sufferer’ as he always looked so cheery even when going through chemotherapy.

In my view, the Beatson played a big part in the positive attitude he had. Laura added “Cancer is one of the scariest words and can send your world crashing down at its very mention, but having somewhere that can make you forget for even an hour the suffering and more importantly somewhere that uses all possible means and treatments for this disease is essential to helping those suffering to beat cancer”.

Laura’s brave colleague, Jade Whitekaw, decided she would like to go one step further in raising funds and took part in a bungee jump, raising £160 to put towards their overall target. After only two months, HBJ Claims Solutions staff have raised over £500 and will continue to have their dress down days throughout 2012. Watch this space for an updated total!

**Raising funds in memory of Karen**

Glasgow City Council Health and Safety Group have been raising money for the Beatson Pebble Appeal in memory of their colleague, Karen McManus, who sadly died from breast cancer last year aged 39.

Catherine and Michelle have been organising a variety of events, the biggest of which will be a Charity Night on 16th June in Rutherglen which will be attended by over 150 people.

The tickets have been selling quickly and it promises to be an entertaining night with music, bingo and games.

When Karen’s parents, Victor and Agnes McManus, and John, Karen’s partner, heard what Catherine and Michelle were doing, they naturally wanted to get involved so they recruited their friends and relatives to help them reach their £5,000 target.

Olivia, Karen’s five year old daughter is taking part in a sponsored cycle ride and has raised an impressive £30 already! Darney Playgroup have been organising other sponsored events, as has Darney Primary School and John is running the 10k in September. Karen’s brother, Robert, lives in Canada but has also organised his own fundraising events.

In addition to this, there will be a weekend of discos, raffles and bingo at a relative’s caravan site in Dumfries and supporters have been selling cupcakes, tablet and pin badges to raise funds.

Victor and Agnes have been overwhelmed with the support they and Karen’s colleagues have received. They said “this shows how well-known and loved Karen was that so many people want to raise funds in her memory. We are very grateful to everyone who has been so involved, it means so much to us”. If you would like more information about any of the events Karen’s family and colleagues are organising please get in touch with us at office@beatsonpebbleappeal.org or call 0141 330 3000.