

News Telegraph Comment Five Minutes Appeal launch

MOST of you know us. In fact as staff at a local paper, we build relationships with our readers, advertisers and people across the community.

You probably don't know that – much the same as virtually everybody else – we have all been touched by cancer.

And this week, we're launching an appeal to fight against this devastating disease.

Last year reporter Natalie Wakefield lost her granddad, Stan, who died in January. Her Auntie Sue passed away in October leaving two grown-up sons and a 12-year-old daughter.

Receptionist Grace Hazeldine was just nine when her mum, Patricia, lost her battle with breast cancer aged 39. She also lost her two step-grandparents to the disease.

Amanda Payne works in advertising for the News Telegraph. Her dad, Jack Wagland, died aged 71. He, his brothers Leonard and Terrance and sister Audrey all died from cancer. She also lost her uncle Alan Coy and his wife, Lilian to the disease.

Judy Smith also works in advertising. Her mother-in-law, Margaret, died after a battle with cancer.

Receptionist Karen Fearn grew up with her grandparents in Alstonefield and loved her uncle, Tony Griffiths, like a brother. He died aged 50.

Geoff Merryweather has worked for the town's newspaper for more than 10 years. For the last five, his father, Mike, has been fighting cancer.

Receptionist Debbie Swann has friends and family all waging war on cancer right this minute.

And our editor, Stephen Sinfield, is currently caring for his wife, Katherine, 32, who was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia shortly after Easter.

Katherine's illness is a terrible blow to us all and comes not long after she lost her mum and Steve lost his sister to cancer.

For a short while it seemed the leukaemia could be controlled with drugs, but over the last couple of weeks finding a bone marrow donor for Katherine has become increasingly urgent.

Now the hunt is on for a match.

Which is why we are launching our Take Five Minutes campaign.

All we're asking is that you take five minutes out of your day to get online and search for 'bone marrow donation'.

It takes five minutes to look through the information and think about whether you could potentially save someone's life.

A blood donation slot is just five minutes. And that's all we're asking.

Take five minutes to think about whether you could save someone's life.

And then take another five to go and do it.



We give blood to kick start appeal

By Natalie Wakefield

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TODAY sees the launch of the News Telegraph's new Take Five Minutes appeal.

And to kick-start our campaign against cancer, staff at the News Telegraph have donated their blood, signed up to the British Bone Marrow register and started fund-raising.

Just after Easter, News Telegraph editor Stephen Sinfield and his wife Katherine

were given the devastating news that Katherine had chronic myeloid leukaemia.

After several weeks controlling the illness with drugs, Katherine's condition has moved into the blast crisis phase, which means donated blood platelets and chemotherapy are needed daily while the hunt is on for a bone marrow donor.

Now, the News Telegraph team is launching a campaign to raise

awareness of the benefits of giving blood and the many ways that we, as ordinary people, can help save the lives of so many others.

Natalie Wakefield, Debbie Swann, Karen Fearn, and Andrew Wakefield, Tim Fearn and Morag Johnson have already signed up to give blood or join the register, while the rest of the team will be donating soon and helping with fund-raising.

MUM SAVES A LIFE AFTER NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TO SIGN UP TO REGISTER

By Natalie Wakefield

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A NEW Year's resolution has helped a woman from the Ashbourne area save the life of a complete stranger.

Gail Barke, 41, joined the Anthony Nolan Trust register in January 2012, after seeing a television appeal for the blood cancer charity.

Just 10 months later she was found to be a match and travelled to Sheffield to donate life-saving stem cells from her bloodstream.

Mrs Barke, who lives at Shirley with her husband and children, said: "It started many years ago when I'd seen some publicity on the television.

"I just thought it was something I could do, so I made a New Year's resolution and put my name down.

"When I got the call to say I was a potential match I was quite excited, but I kept it quiet until it was confirmed that I was a definite match.

"I was so excited when I found out that I was a match for someone and so were all my friends and family. They all thought it



'It was quite an experience for me, because I've never given anything back like that before. It was an honour in a way'

– Gail Barke

was a really positive thing to do."

Mrs Barke travelled to Sheffield with her husband to donate stem cells after a course of injections to stimulate blood production.

She said: "The doctors and nurses were all really professional and really good.

"They kept me up-to-date with lots of information and they were lovely.

"What I did was only a small part of it. The doctors and nurses do a lot more for the patient than I did – I just gave up a couple of days.

"I would do it again. I'm retained for this person in case they need me for the next two years and then I will go back on the register.

"I think people should look at it and carefully consider if it could be for them. I was happy to put my name down and if they are happy to do that then they should go ahead and do it."

Ann O'Leary is head of register development at Anthony Nolan. She said: "The vast majority of donors donate in the same way as Gail, via a process that's very similar to giving blood.

"Too many people think that bone marrow donation is painful or time-consuming, which is why stories like Gail's are so important – because it helps people understand how easy and straightforward it is."

Our reason to give and keep on giving...



ALL IN IT TOGETHER... (left) the Ashbourne News Telegraph team and (above) Stephen and Katherine Sinfield.

EDITING the Ashbourne News Telegraph has been Steve Sinfield's job for more than five years.

Just before Christmas Steve moved across to the Ashbourne office and, for the first time, got the chance to get involved in the community.

For the majority of his time editing the paper, Steve was also working as a sub-editor for the Burton Mail and writing and editing the Weekender section, a lifestyle supplement for the Mail's Saturday edition.

This year, Steve worked his first Shrovetide and helped produce our best ever Shrovetide Souvenir.

So when, after the Easter break, he broke the news that his wife had been diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia, we were all devastated.

Understandably, Steve and his wife, Katherine, have been fighting this private battle without a great deal of fanfare.

But now Katherine is urgently in need of a bone marrow donor and we at the News Telegraph are doing what little we can to help.

Steve said: "I still remember the exact moment when Katherine was diagnosed with leukaemia. The shock and trauma of such news hit me like a train and I broke down in A&E.

"Katherine took the news much better."

Katherine said: "After overcoming the initial shock of being diagnosed with leukaemia, my aim has always been to get home as soon as possible.

"The search is on for a bone marrow donor as I will need a transplant after my various rounds of chemotherapy.

"I am eternally grateful for all those people who have volunteered to undergo testing as I know the process for the donor can mean a couple of days in hospital.

"Every day is a constant cycle of tablets, injections or blood transfusions and although the next few months are going to be a challenge as I lose my hair and suffer the side effects of the chemo, I am looking forward to the day when I am discharged, clear of leukaemia."



Cartoon corner



I'm not stammering, duck. I just said I wish I was a duck, duck.



Learn more about Stephen and Katherine and their ongoing fight by heading online to ashbournenewstelegraph.co.uk