

Founder of cancer support network encourages friendships

Calling out to some buddy

Name: Jan Rutter

Age: 56

From: Selsdon

Occupation: CEO and founder of Cancer Buddies Network, which began in 2006

What is CBN?

It's a private website where people living with cancer – whether they are patients, family or friends – can find someone in a similar situation and even in the same part of the world so they can share their experiences.

They can search for someone, maybe with the same type of cancer, or age, or sex, who they can form a friendship with and relate to, and empathise, with what they're going through.

We have over 3,700 members who come from all over the globe.

Why did you start it?

I had breast cancer in 2001 and met a woman called Carol who had the same condition and treatment as I did, so we walked through the experience hand-in-hand, as it were. It was so comforting to talk to someone who can understand what you're



going through physically and mentally, and I decided to create a forum where people can meet others in a similar situation. Cancer need not be a lonely experience.

What are the advantages of your site?

It can be very frightening when you go on to the internet and see what people write about cancer,

and it can be difficult finding on large sites where the forums are to discuss things.

Our site encourages people to buddy up, so they can have a proper friend to chat to, to support and be supported. We solely concentrate on the forum side of things, where people can chat openly about what they're going through. Some people don't want to talk to their family or friends about how they feel because they don't want to frighten them, so this can be a great relief.

What are your plans for the site?

I'd like for it to keep growing – I want it to be as big as Macmillan Cancer Support, but in our area. I don't want anyone to think they have to suffer alone because they can find someone to share their experience here and it can make the experience a lot easier when you have a buddy to talk to.

■ For more information visit www.cancerbuddiesnetwork.org.

Interview by Anna Edwards



CARE: Jan Rutter has established an organisation through which sufferers can help each other CRPM20101230C

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