

ASOCIACIÓN GIRASOL NEWSLETTER



El cuidado paliativo
inmenso amor por la vida

WHY AG? – “A GREAT LOVE FOR LIFE”

As many of you know 4.5 years ago I was diagnosed with an aggressive form of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and 3.5 years ago with cancer of the colon. I am in remission, but that experience planted a seed and made me think about Palliative Care – a well established form of care in the UK that cares for terminally ill patients, their family members and carers and which encompasses, not only physical health

“Start by doing what is necessary, then do the possible, and before long you are doing the impossible” – St Francis

care, but also psychological, spiritual, and practical care: where the patient, family and carers are at the centre of care and NOT the illness.

In my work as interpreter I knew Dr Sara Martinez Membrilla who is the palliative care coordinator for SAS Basic North Area which includes the towns of: Alameda, Fuente de Piedra, Humilladero, and Mollina. The palliative care team based at Antequera Hospital comprises one doctor and one nurse who serve a population of 70.000, so with Sara's husband Juanjo we established AG whose objective is to support and improve the lives of terminally ill cancer patients, their families, and carers through various activities relating to health care, practical care, emotional care,

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material care, spiritual care and psychological care in the four mentioned villages. Thus AG became legally constituted in January 2011, and we embarked on an exciting, albeit difficult journey. By the way, Asociación Girasol means the Sunflower Association and as many of you know the Sunflower is the UK emblem for the hospice movement. – We would love you to join us on our journey by becoming members or volunteers.

Cath, Presidenta



VOLUNTEERS/MEMBERS

AG is made up of volunteers, members, supporters, sponsors etc. all of who play an important part in the development of the Association.

All Spanish charities comprise both volunteers and members, and we are often asked what the difference is. A member is a person who is listed in the membership book, and has the right to voice and vote at the Ordinary and Extraordinary Meetings, and as is custom and practice members usually pay a membership fee, and receive a membership card. This year we are building the register and there is no fee. At the end of 2012 for 2013 we will be

asking for a small subscription from all of our members.

A volunteer is a person who has specific tasks to do within the association and dedicates their time, effort, and expertise freely, on a set basis. You can either be a member, a volunteer or both.

Sympathizers or supporters are people who support us without any direct link to the association: i.e. you may donate bric-a-brac to the stall at Saydo, or attend an event. A sponsor is usually a company who donates funding to finance a specific item or project, eg: the pharmacies in Alameda, Fuente de Piedra, Humilladero and Molina sponsored our calendar this year, and Conexanet, Antequera designed our logo for free.

If you wish to become a member or volunteer, please contact us: info@asociaciongirasol.com

EVENTS



Friends and supporters of AG are continually organizing events to raise funds, and events for this year include:

Date	Event	Place	Organized by
11/4	Sweepstake Tickets	Saydo Market	Amigos de
12/4	Race Night	Mollina	Bar Margarita's
21/4	Gala Night	Chaquetas, FdeP	Amigos de
13/5	Romeria Raffle	FdeP	Amigos de
15/5	Romeria	Alameda	
26/5	Sangría y Tapas	FdeP	Amigos de
9/6	Gala	Mollina	La Viña

So put these dates in your diary. Keep up-to-date by referring to our web page, and

if you would like to hold an open event please let us know and we will advertise the event for you through our webpage, facebook, twitter, and our contacts list, and after the event please send us your photos.

SAYDO STALL EVERY WEDNESDAY



Our stall at Saydo was opened in January 2011, and is our only consistent form of funding. It is manned by over 25 volunteers who, on a rota basis, collect items for sale, ensure they are clean and in good condition, transport, set up and run the stall every Wednesday at Saydo. You can support us by donating: good quality old clothing, books, bric a brac, small electrical items, anything that you don't use anymore. So why not declutter and donate.?!.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Terminal cancer can affect any family at any time. Within our communities, a population of 17.000, there can be between 10 to 15 terminally ill cancer



patients at any one time. Many families will not require our help but for those who do, we

will simply do what we can. Building strong links with our town halls, and local communities is vitally important to AG, and AG involves itself in community events whenever possible.

2011 was our first full year of operation and what a year it was. Following our official registration in January 2011, the most important thing we did, of course, was to help in 3 cases. With very little structure, few resources, little expertise, and no experience we did what we could to make life a little easier, for patients, family members and carers in 3 of our 4 villages.

Our involvement included:

- * providing volunteer companionship
 - * running errands * collecting medication
 - * dog walking *listening *hairdressing
 - * providing transport/driver *interpreting
 - * accompanying in emergency * liaising with funeral directors
 - * arranging lymphatic massage/physiotherapists (through AECC)
 - * practical post-bereavement help
- all helping to relieve the every day pressure of living with a terminal illness and bringing a bit of normally to a stressful situation.



Early in 2011 as part of a fact-finding exercise we visited Cudeca, Benalmadena, St Joseph's Hospice, London, and Garden House Hospice, Letchworth where we learned from others experiences and listened intently to the advice we were given.

AG's stall at Saydo was opened.

In March 2011, Alameda Town Hall donated premises, located in the old library in the Casa de la Cultura, Alameda, which we share with the Disabled Children's Charity. They have recently installed internet access for us. At the moment we

use the office for our monthly Board meetings, a computer is installed, and we were donated a Volunteer's database by La Caixa which will be up-and-running this month. We also joined the Volunteer Platform in Antequera which is an association to which most charities belong. They offer training course for volunteers and promote volunteer activity. Our logo, was designed and donated by Conexanet, a media company in Antequera. We also started to make formal presentations to our communities, and several fund raising events were carried out by supporters.

During 2011 the Board attended various courses, both medical and operational and Asociación Girasol developed its own blog, facebook and twitter pages, as a means of communicating and raising awareness of both palliative care and AG. Posts are in English and/or Spanish, and are updated regularly.

In September, we held our first public presentations in Spanish in all four towns. These resulted in the donation of a warehousing facility to store Saydo stall equipment and medical equipment, by Fuente de Piedra Town Hall, and several volunteers and members joined us. A half-page article appeared in La Crónica newspaper.

For Christmas we produced our first calendar which was sponsored by the pharmacies in each town, and 100 copies sold out in advance.

Our final act in 2011 was to have a Christmas Market Stall in Eroski for 3 weeks over Christmas, which involved over 30 volunteers and many months of knitting, sewing, and collecting items to sell. The funds raised were in excess of €800 and again a big thank you has to go to all of you who helped us move a little closer to the vision of providing a home-care service for terminally ill cancer patients, their families and carers.

FINANCES

AG follows a policy of total financial transparency. That means that our accounts will be published on a periodical basis, or should anyone wish to see them they are made available. For many people

these are times of financial hardship and AG is firmly committed to caring and using all our resources wisely (financial/human). 80% of our income is destined directly or indirectly to the care of patients, family members or carers. Income for 2011 was approx €12.500 being raised from private and company donations, events, and the Saydo stall. Expenditure for 2011 included set up costs, printing material and easy-slide sheets for patients and summed little more than €1175.

THE FUTURE

2012 The beginning of 2012 saw a change and expansion of the Board of Trustees which now comprises:

Cath Groome: President, Ana Llamas: Vice-president, Georgina Mociornita: Secretary, Steve Burton: Treasurer, Hilary Cohen: Fundraising, David Cursons: Fundraising, Margaret Magnell: Home Care, Steph Mitchell: Training, Clive Smith: IT, and with varying skills, expertise, and energy will lead AG into phase 2 of its development.



The Future

The aims for 2012 are to develop our home-care service, continue to raise

awareness of palliative care and AG amongst our communities, to increase our membership and volunteer bases, to improve our working structure, to continue to fundraise, to enhance community relations, to start training volunteers, and to open the office as an information point/drop-in centre. If you would like to help, just let us know.

FOR MORE NEWS, VISIT US ON:

www.asociaciongirasol.com



and read our blogs and articles in English and/or Spanish. If you would like to receive information by email, contact us on:

info@asociaciongirasol.com

We hope you have enjoyed our first newsletter, and if you would like to contribute in anyway please contact us on:

952710323 or info@asociaciongirasol.com

We aim to use our resources carefully, please let us know if you DO NOT wish to receive this newsletter.

AG simply would not exist if it wasn't for you, so:

THANK YOU to our volunteers our members, our followers, our supporters, our sponsors, and our communities:



Remember: From small sunflower seeds big sunflowers grow!

Registered office: c/Castillejo 11, Alameda 29530, Malaga.

Charity registration number: 9341

Inland Revenue reference: G93098721

Bank Account: 2100 5442 88 02000 28998