

ASOCIACIÓN GIRASOL NEWSLETTER



El cuidado paliativo
inmenso amor por la vida

AG ENTERS ITS 3RD YEAR



How time flies. It is hard to believe that already AG has entered its third year. Where has the time gone and what have we done? Well, our short-term, 2 year objectives were to raise awareness of palliative care, establish AG as a

serious charity and to fundraise, and we have done all of these things through carrying out different activities.

To raise awareness of palliative care and AG, our leaflets are now available in the Health Centres, pharmacies, and all four town halls, as well as in Antequera Hospital. Our web page has been updated. We now have over 800 facebook friends, our newsletter is issued twice a year, we have been mentioned in five articles in La Crónica, adverts have appeared on our community TV channels, courses have been run, and we now open our information point, in Casa de la Cultura, Alameda, every Monday, for anyone at any stage of their cancer journey to come for a chat, advice and guidance.

"Love the life that you live, and live the life that you love".

Bob Marley 1945-1981

Edition 3, Spring/Summer, 2013

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We have also attended meetings with outside entities, such as, Cudeca, our Town Halls, and Antequera Hospital. We have taken part in events, e.g Charities Fair, Fuente de Piedra, International Day, Alameda etc etc., and have received invitations from organizations such as the Lions Club, and the Volunteer Platform, Antequera. We have also attended a couple of conferences: Cudeca's 20th Anniversary Scientific Conference and The Andaluz Society of Palliative Care Conference, held in Antequera.

Fundraising is vital to any charity, and we cannot say a big enough thank you to those of you who have worked hard to put on events (public/private), our volunteers who run the Saydo Stall, and supporters who donate items to sell. We also thank our private donors and sponsors, and especially Amigos de Girasol, Fuente de Piedra who have been a constant source of energy, ideas and who work unrelentingly in their community raising awareness about AG and fundraising.

Hence we progress, and as we enter this very important third year, all our efforts are concentrated on offering the service we set out to offer – to improve the life of patients, family and carers facing non-curable cancer and life-threatening illnesses.

WELCOME – NEW MEMBERS

At our AGM on 23rd February we were delighted to welcome members of the board who had been co-opted during the year to take up their full positions. AG is now run by a board of trustees, who all have their specific

roles, and areas of responsibility, and many of whom will be known to you personally. They also come from, or have connections with our four towns.



AGM February 2013

We welcome: Inma Velasco Cebrián (Alameda/Mollina) as our Secretary, Antonio Torres de la Piedra (Alameda), psychologist and trustee, who works with our families and carers in post bereavement situations and runs training courses. Augusto Aguilera López (Humilladero), trustee, intensive-care unit nurse, and recipient of the AG scholarship to train in PC. Augusto is responsible for home care assessment. Other members of the Board continue in their previous roles: Steve Burton (Alameda), Treasurer, controls our book-keeping, and accounts, Hilary Cohen (Fuente de Piedra), trustee, fundraiser, and responsible for the stall at Saydo, Clive Smith (Fuente de Piedra), trustee, manages our web-page, and sorts out IT problems, Ana Llamas (Humilladero), Vice-president, is responsible for volunteer insurance, presenting applications for subsidies, and legal aspects of the association, and Cath Groome (Alameda) who, as president, pulls it all together.

We are still seeking a Volunteer Coordinator. If you would like to join a good team, and help others please contact us.

Like many of you, we are all volunteers giving our spare time, effort, experience, and energy to a cause in which we truly believe.



Since our last newsletter in October 2012, lots of fundraising or awareness raising events have taken place. One event that is particularly close to our hearts is The Playback Party held in December in La Posada. This event was the first ever fundraiser held for AG,

at the end of 2010, and we must thank Cathy Landon and everyone involved for their dedication, motivation, and hard work which raised €1.000 last year. It is wonderful to see how the event has grown and how communities have integrated.



Playback Party Dec 2012

Some events are not fundraisers but serve to raise awareness. Future events include:

Date	Event	Place	Organized by
30/3	Raffle	Saydo	Male Voice Choir
23/4	Tea – cultural week	FdeP	Amigos de Girasol
24/5	Tea (private)	FdeP	Cristina/Ma Paz
25/26/5	Associations' Fair	FdeP	Town Hall FdeP
8/6	Intercultural Day	Alameda	Alameda Town Hall
29/6	Cheese/Wine (Tickets only)	FdeP	Marion/Clive Smith



Keep up-to-date by referring to our web page calendar, and facebook, and if you would like to hold an open event let us know and we will advertise the event for you through our webpage, facebook, and our contacts list, and after the event please send us your

photos to include in our album.

PHOTOS – PHOTOS – PHOTOS

We now have an extensive album of photos in our gallery on the web page, so take a look and see what has been happening: www.asociaciongirasol.com

TRAINING - Bereavement



On 24th November, AG's psychologist and trustee, Antonio Torres de la Piedra ran a course on bereavement

awareness, which was attended by over 20 people: professionals, carers, and family members. We are hoping to now run the course in English, so if you would like, or know anyone who would like to attend please let us know on: info@asociaciongirasol.com

Other courses – Two AG volunteers did an on-line course: Management of Quality, Charities, and Volunteers, and are busy putting what they learnt into practice.

AG ATTENDS COMMUNITY EVENTS

AG works within the community, and tries to build relationships. Hence we are invited to a lot of local events, and events with outside entities. Whenever possible we attend them.

We supported the Charity Against Domestic Violence, where we read a poem publicly and remembered the 43 victims of 2012.



Support for "Against domestic violence association"

AG volunteers helped coordinate the collection of food for the needy of Alameda, before Christmas, and attended the Living Nativity. In Fuente de Piedra AG volunteers and supporters were involved in the communal Christmas Carol singing.

AG was also asked to participate in the Kings' Procession in Antequera, but, unfortunately, we had to give it a miss.

The Current Situation Regarding Chronic, Non-curable Illnesses

Antonio J. Torres de la Piedra, Psychologist and AG Trustee

Currently, in our society there are many new types of illnesses which are chronic, and non-curable, of long duration, which progress slowly, and which cause premature death and a reduced quality of life. Amongst others, we are talking about illnesses such as cancer and certain cardiovascular conditions.

With the passing of time and the abundance of these problems, we are now aware of the

psychological, economical/material and social affects upon the families concerned and society in general. For this reason, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declares that the care of patients with these types of illnesses should be a total and active care. This means we must think about a system of care that goes beyond medical care: not only addressing symptom and pain control, but also considering the psychological, social and spiritual aspects which affect patient, family members, and carers.

It is not difficult to imagine how a person with a life-threatening or non-curable illness, knowing or sensing that he could die within a short time, suffers psychological problems: loss of sense to life, questions about the afterlife/spirituality, serious economic/material problems: for example, the loss of a salary to the household, and/or social problems: having once been an active member within the family, now assuming a passive role. These situations can sometimes be more difficult for the family to cope with than for the actual patient, as it is the family that has to manage the situation during the illness and following bereavement.

The idea of total active care has been introduced into the palliative care services of our Spanish hospitals, which try to give the



best quality of life to patients and their family members or carers. By quality of life we mean to provide the patient with the best possible conditions during the duration of his life, and not prolong life unduly if the patient is suffering chronic pain or is approaching death.



To treat these progressive, incurable illnesses, which do not respond to conventional treatment, and have multiple

symptoms (as many types of cancer) extensive medical training is required. However medical training does not cover the other facets as mentioned previously (psychological, social, economical/material and spiritual), and therein lies the problem. Doctors realise that they have to be trained beyond curative care and other professionals should form part of the palliative care team e.g. there would normally be a psychologist in the department. Although our laws recognise that these needs should be met, the social reality is that hospitals are finding it very difficult to provide these services, at all, or in time. With the current cutbacks in the health service the situation is even more complicated.

Many people are aware of this problem and charitable associations have sprung up to offer help. Asociación Girasol is one such charity which tries to fulfil the non-medical needs that patients and families/carers may have by offering support during the illness, and after bereavement.

Our service covers the town of Alameda, Fuente de Piedra, Humilladero and Mollina: small towns which should also have their needs met.

I hope this short article will help those of you who are interested in the subject to understand palliative care, and not to hesitate in asking for help if needed. I also hope it has helped you to understand more about Asociación Girasol and what we can do to help. A.T de la P.

WE CARE. During our first two years we did not expect to be able to offer help to anyone, as we had to get ourselves known, fundraise and build a structure, but we are delighted to have helped in 10 cases to date:

materially, psychologically, spiritually, and practically to a greater or lesser degree. But, of course what we have to do will always be work-in-progress, and we shall continue to learn. If you would like to become more involved please let us know.



Cases - 10



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

687089951 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 again to our volunteers our members, our followers, our supporters, our sponsors, and our communities:



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Charity registration number: 9341

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Bank Account: 2100 5442 88 02000 28998

