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**Breast Cancer Haven: An update on recent activities, September 2016**

**Finding comfort through peer support**

Sourcing help and support through the internet is becoming increasingly common. It is also a great way to promote our free breast cancer support services to the many thousands of women affected by the disease each year. So we are delighted to have teamed up with a peer support forum, [Healthunlocked](https://healthunlocked.com/breastcancer-haven?popup=1&exit=0&utm_source=thehaven.org.uk&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=breastcancer-haven) which is endorsed by the UK’s National Health Service. Healthunlocked is where you can go to discuss common topics in a safe online environment and connect with other people in a similar situation.

**We help families too**

Not everyone knows that our free support extends to our beneficiaries’ partners and children too. A cancer diagnosis will affect the whole family and we can help them cope better by offering free counselling. Read Daniel’s story below.

 **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

With breast cancer being responsible for the most deaths of women worldwide keeping awareness levels high about the disease will always be a priority for charities working in the field. So that’s why October is always a very busy time for us as it is the global Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

During the month, which is fast approaching, we will be holding several events to tell people about what we do but also to gain as much support as possible to enable us to fulfill our mission of improving the quality of life for those affected by this terrible disease. Our wonderful supporters will be helping to raise money by undertaking daredevil challenges including a skydive or zipwiring across Bournemouth Pier!

To help put our cause under a spotlight, literally, the world famous fountain in London’s Trafalgar Square will be glowing pink for us on 6 October.

**Mum’s the word**

One little boy in Hampshire wanted to show his appreciation of how much Breast Cancer Haven had helped his mother during her battle with breast cancer. Archie Hill, eight, pulled off, what would seem to most people, the impossible, a sponsored 15 minute silence in his school. All the students got behind their friend and helped him raise over $5,000 for the charity.

His mother, Sally, said: “I am so proud of Archie. The way he has dealt with my diagnosis is unbelievable. The children were so quiet you and you wouldn’t believe it how seriously they took it. The day was quite an emotional experience but it was absolutely fantastic.”

 **Daniel’s story**



Victoria and I have been together since we were 17 and married for six years and although we both had demanding careers, we were at the point of really settling down and starting a family. It all started when my wife Victoria mentioned that something didn’t feel right in her left breast. Our doctor quickly referred us to a consultant who immediately sent Victoria for a scan and a biopsy. We were both called back into the consultant’s office and I noticed that a breast care nurse was also present. The doctor told us that they had seen something they didn’t like and this made me feel frightened as you know when they use a phrase like this they are often trying to soften bad news. When the results of the biopsy came in they confirmed breast cancer and when I heard this my whole world fell apart, I was shocked and surprised and didn’t know what to feel.

I wondered how I was going to help Victoria, I simply had no idea. They told us that they wanted to carry out an operation to examine Victoria’s lymph nodes first, then she would undertake chemotherapy to shrink the tumour before having surgery to remove it. Before she started her chemotherapy course Victoria and I went shopping for a wig and we tried to make it fun but I must admit that I really didn’t think that I would be doing something like this at our age.

Victoria took the chemotherapy well, the after effects would hit her 24 hours later but she said with one of the treatments it was just like having flu with aching limbs. I felt terrible for her but she was remarkably sanguine and it was during this period, that we started visiting The Haven. Victoria benefitted from a whole range of therapies and for me the counselling gave me a chance to open up and expose my emotions. I think it’s a guy thing not to show emotion and although I was very close to and well supported by my parents, I didn’t want to upset them.

After Victoria had her breast surgery, the doctor told us we were free to get on with our lives. I was over the moon at this news. Going through something like breast cancer does put a huge strain on your relationship; you have to put things like ambition and dreams for the future on hold.

The Haven offers you a chance to release your emotions and however much you think you may not need that at least give it a try. I was sceptical before I came but the counselling was fantastic and at the time you don’t realise how mentally draining going through something like this is. Don’t be afraid to let out your emotions and look after yourself so that you can look after your partner. The Haven helped us to support each other much better. I would say to anyone who may be the partner of someone going through breast cancer, don’t be afraid to ask for help especially as The Haven really understands what you are going through and offer invaluable support.