

Randal the cancer slayer | Support Crew in real life



Life changing event | health related

Stage IV colorectal cancer with metastasis in the liver.

Meet Randal & Kelly

Randal was diagnosed with colorectal cancer in July 2015. Since that time Randal and Kelly, his Support Chief, have navigated chemo, radiation and five surgeries to deal to the cancer and three recurrences in his liver.

It was in September 2017 that Randal and Kelly discovered that another pesky tumour had turned up uninvited in Randal's liver. The plan of attack was to cut out approximately a third of his liver with a major operation at MercyAscot Hospital in Epsom, Auckland.

What did Randal & Kelly need help with the most?

After Randal's surgery, it was anticipated that he would be in hospital for one day in the Intensive Care Unit, and then between 4 or 5 days in another ward of the hospital.

Because it was Randal's fifth surgery and time in hospital, Kelly knew what she would need help with so she set-up 'need requests' for:

- 1) **dinner** for herself and her Mum (Kelly's Support Chief!) after long days at the hospital with Randal
- 2) **someone to come and sit with Randal** when he got home so that Kelly could pop out to go for a walk or have some time out.

Kelly also knew that Support Crew would be great for:

- 1) sharing and communicating updates with the large number of people that wanted to know how Randal was doing
- 2) managing Randal's visitors whilst he was in hospital
- 3) receiving messages of support in one place
- 4) thanking people for the amazing emotional and practical support that was provided
- 5) asking for help without actually feeling like she was asking.

How was the Support Page set-up?

Kelly set-up the Support Page, 'Randal's a Cancer Slayer' and invited her friends, family, colleagues and neighbours - a total of 54 Support Crew members. She did this by easily sending the link via an automated email invitation on the platform. Kelly was also able to selectively invite people to join the Support Page via text message and privately in Facebook Messenger.

To help manage Randal's Support Page, Kelly chose to add her good friend Janine and her Mum as 'admins' to the page. That was so that during the times Kelly was feeling overwhelmed Janine and her Mum could:

- invite Support Crew members
- add 'need requests'
- post updates
- manage visitors
- communicate updates

When things don't go to plan

This turned out to be super helpful as Randal struggled to recover from his surgery and his stay in hospital was longer than expected. Having Janine as admin meant that Janine could add additional dinner requests to the Support Page (as dinner requests had only been added for the first five days of Randal's stay in hospital). This meant that within two hours of adding more requests for help with dinner, dinner had been sorted for the rest of the week for Kelly and her Mum.

Kelly was also able to easily manage and communicate to all potential visitors whilst Randal was in hospital. She did this on the platform by turning the visitors button to 'off' and adding a note that said, 'Randal's not doing so well after his surgery so unfortunately at this stage he's not able to receive any visitors'.

How did Randal & Kelly's friends and family help?

Once they had joined the page, Randal and Kelly's friends and family were able to see the calendar of 'need request's' for dinners and companionship that had been added to the page by Kelly and Janine. They could then 'accept' anything that they could help with to let everyone know they would take care of it.

Then, whoever had accepted the dinner for example had a couple of options. They could:

- 1) make a meal themselves and pop around with it; or
- 2) arrange for a meal to be delivered from either a paid meal provider on the platform, or by arranging for a meal to be delivered themselves.

The great thing about Support Crew is that members of Randal and Kelly's Support Crew could help no matter where in the world they were. Kelly had dinner provided for her from her neighbours; her Aunt in London; her Aunt in Whakatane; and her friends in Nelson, Cambridge and Auckland. How awesome is that! And for the first time, those that didn't live nearby could help support Kelly and Randal with the practical things like providing a meal!

Support Crew members of the page could also post messages of support and pictures on the to let Randal and Kelly know they were thinking of them.

How did Support Crew help?

25 needs taken care of



Meals



Companionship



54 Support Crew
members



3 weeks

The Support Page did more than just help out with meals and companionship, it also:

- allowed Kelly and her Mum to focus on the big stuff – like helping Randal to recovery from his major surgery, by having meals taken care of
- provided an ability for those that didn't live nearby to help
- provided an ability for those that didn't live nearby to feel connected to Kelly and Randal and be a part of their journey
- allowed friends/family to know *exactly* how to help Kelly and Randal
- provided a huge amount of love and care for Randal and Kelly with the messages of support
- provided one place for Kelly to communicate and update a large number of people and to get the support she needed.

What does Kelly have to say about Support Crew?

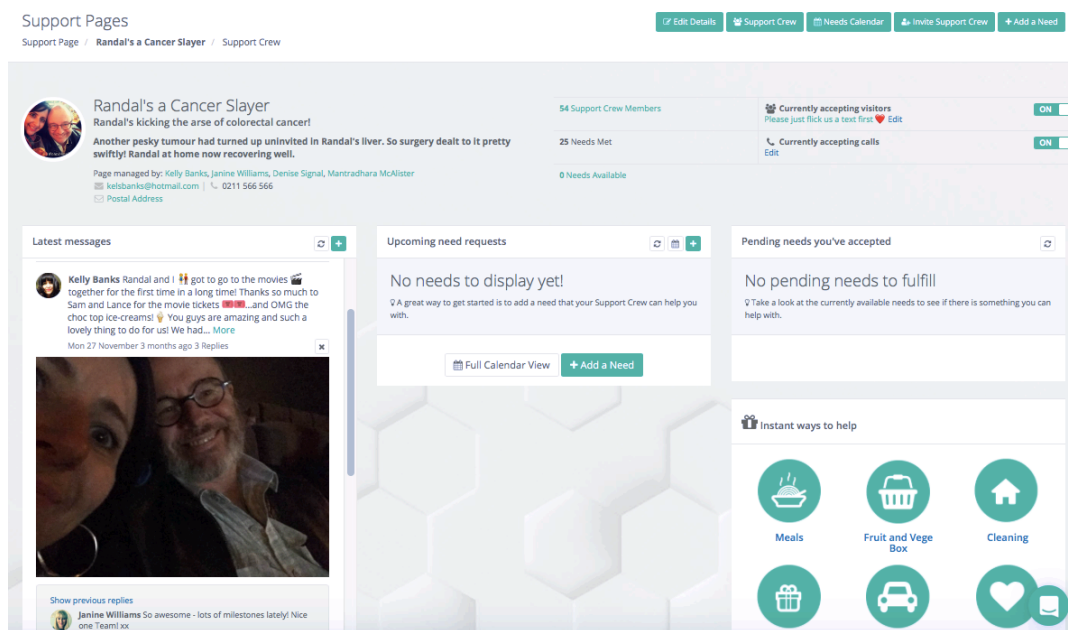
“Well we're five surgeries down now, and I don't know how I managed through the other four surgeries without Support Crew! There's been three massive advantages to being able to use Support Crew this time around.

The first is, that it was a super easy way of asking for the *exact* help that I needed without actually feeling like I was asking. Because asking for help isn't easy and it's something that I really struggled with during the other surgeries and during chemo and radiation. And having meals sorted at the end of a long day in hospital on top of the daily commute was the most welcome relief!!

The second great thing is that it enabled me to communicate with everyone in one place - versus heaps of phone calls, text messages, emails and Facebook messages. It just made such a difference and saved me a lot of time and energy during a really stressful and overwhelming time.

The third massive advantage to using Support Crew is that it really helped me to thank and acknowledge the people that had supported us by posting messages on our page. And we had wonderful friends who give us movie vouchers, and I posted a picture of Randal and I at the movies and it felt great to be able to show them how grateful we were for their amazing gesture.

The other major thing I noticed this time around was the difference in our Crew. I really felt their sense of relief - that they finally knew exactly how they could help us. And I also sensed that those that didn't live nearby finally felt connected to us, and that they were a part of our journey because they were finally able to help."



If you know someone dealing with cancer, or any other difficult time for that matter, why not chat to them about setting-up a Support Page for them? Or just get them started here:

[Start a Support Page](#)

If you need a hand getting set-up, contact our Founders Kelly and Janine on:

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www.supportcrew.co.nz

<https://www.facebook.com/supportcrew>