Doncaster mum starts drop-in brain tumour support group after losing husband

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Mother of two Janet Graves, 59 from Sprotbrough, lost her husband Alastair in 2013 to an aggressive brain tumour.

Ever since, Janet and her family and friends have tirelessly fundraised for Yorkshire's Brain Tumour Charity, the region's leading charity dedicated to funding life-changing research and patient support. Her children have climbed Kilimanjaro, skydived and completed the Great North Run, while Janet regularly organises successful charity balls, cricket days and New Year parties. In total, Janet has helped raise over £30,000 for the charity to date.

Janet was determined to raise funds "not only to support research but also to provide practical help for those going through the same difficulties as we did – not just for the person with the brain tumour but for those around them caring and trying to keep going."

This year, Janet is helping out the charity and its supporters in a new way. Instead of organising a party or running a marathon, she will be leading a Drop-In Café for patients, carers and loved ones in the Doncaster area.

The Drop-In Café will afford patients and their relatives and friends a chance to chat, ask questions, enjoy refreshments and meet others in a similar situation. Sprotbrough Cricket Club has kindly offered free use of their venue to help Janet and the charity run the monthly group.

Speaking about why she decided to run the drop-in, Janet said: "My family experienced the shock and devastation of losing my husband and father to our two children. Alastair suddenly was unable to continue working in the NHS when the grade 4 glioma became evident. I drove Alistair daily to Sheffield for medical interventions, but the emotional and practical support was not always there as we did not live close to the central services which were so precious and limited.

"It was an unreal experience even for us as NHS professionals. I was only too aware that not everyone is able to ask questions and know the 'pathways' and minefields that face you. I wanted to do something to ease that for others.

"I was so excited when I heard about the idea of the drop-in café because it gives an opportunity to meet up with others locally going through journeys of their own; it could provide a sound board, support network, advice; even just giving a reason to go out and socialise. I hope the groups evolve in a way that the members want them to and am very pleased that I can help."

The Doncaster Drop-In Café will take place at Sprotbrough Cricket Club on the last Friday of the month from 1-3pm, with the first session on Friday 28th January. For more information, go to yorksbtc.org.uk/drop-in-cafes

Yorkshire's Brain Tumour Charity also offers a specific fortnightly bereavement support group, as well as monthly support meetups for patients and loved ones in the South Yorkshire area, wellbeing walks, patient grants and much more. For more information on the types of support available, go to yorksbtc.org.uk/support

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