

Cancertalk

Helping you deal with cancer in the school community/ Primary/ Spring 09

Join The Big
Sports Day

Fitness lesson
plans

Sally's story



SPRING INTO
ACTION

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



Hello and welcome to the spring 2009 edition of *Cancertalk*.

With the dark winter nights firmly behind us and the promise of spring ahead, now's a great time to act on those new year's resolutions. So, get active and involve your class or youth group in fun activities to help them reduce the risk of developing cancer in later life. Check out our lesson plan at the back for some inspiring ideas.

Our feature focus this issue concentrates on introducing cancer related issues in the classroom. We provide plenty of tips on how to talk about cancer using a straightforward approach and who to contact for extra help.

On page 4, you can read about our fantastic new fundraising event for schools: The Big Sports Day. Dust off those running shoes, mow the school field and get ready to host your own Macmillan race as part of your sports day activities. It's simple to register and Macmillan will fully support you. There's even a special race for teachers. So, what are you waiting for? Get training and help raise money to support the two million people living with cancer in the UK.

On page 6, you can read our interview with Sally Nicholls, a brilliant young author whose debut novel, *Ways to Live Forever*, has just been published. She tells us why she decided to write a story about an 11-year-old with terminal leukaemia.

Our brand new *Keep healthy, be active* teaching pack can support your lessons and activities all year round – as can our *Cancertalk* teaching pack, which comes complete with a DVD, lesson plans and resource sheets. To order your free copies, call 0845 601 1716 quoting SCHL or register at www.cancertalk.org.uk

With every best wish for a happy and healthy 2009.

*Katherine
Donaghy*

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TALKING PEOPLE



TO YOUNG ABOUT CANCER

Wondering how to broach the subject of cancer with your pupils? Looking to introduce some lessons on cancer, its effects and treatment as part of your PSHE and Citizenship lessons? Perhaps you're teaching about healthy and active lifestyles, or looking to do some fundraising?

There's an ever increasing demand from schools for presentations on cancer and Macmillan fundraising opportunities. Naturally, Macmillan Cancer Support is keen to help. How? By offering schools the chance to have a quality assembly or lesson led by one of a team of volunteers.

School presenters scheme

During summer 2008, Macmillan piloted a school presenters scheme in a wide range of schools across London and Hertfordshire. We're now conducting a comprehensive evaluation with a view to launching the scheme nationally in 2010.

Samantha O'Reilly, Head of PSHE and Drama at Coombe Boys' School in New Malden, asked for a talk on cancer and its treatments for her Year 8 pupils. So Volunteer Amish Patel led a session at the school which was a huge success.

Raising awareness, reducing fear

Amish was delighted to open up the conversation about cancer: 'I've had cancer myself, so I was keen to raise awareness while reducing fear of the illness. I feel I got the balance right because so many of the boys gave me good feedback afterwards. The presentation proves to me that we need to branch out to more schools

and talk about cancer in a positive way to reduce the risk.'

Samantha comments, 'Amish enabled a session that, like the philosophy of the school's PSHE programme, created a safe and secure environment for pupils to discuss difficult topics. After all, cancer is something people don't usually talk about openly. One of the key things from Amish's visit for us was that well over 60% of our students had had cancer affect their lives in some way – be that through relatives or friends. We had no idea about this until the visit, when students actually opened up – some for the first time – about their experiences.'

Difficult questions

Pupils can ask some challenging questions. They might ask, 'can I catch cancer?' (No, cancer is not contagious, meaning you can't catch it from someone else.) Another common question is, 'do you always die from cancer?' (No – there are currently two million people living with cancer in the UK. Treatments are much more successful now and many people fully recover. Early diagnosis and treatment greatly increase survival rates.)

Working with one of our school presenters will create the perfect platform for pupils to air their concerns and receive accurate information. A Macmillan presentation not only helps dispel the myths and misconceptions that surround the disease, but also helps us create a more sensitive and cancer aware society.

Follow up

Don't let your work on cancer awareness finish after the presentation. Macmillan has a range of teaching materials and resources to support any further work you do with your class. Our *Cancertalk* teaching pack contains clearly structured lesson plans, resource sheets, a DVD and background notes for KS2, 3 and 4. And our new teaching pack – *Keep healthy, be active* – focuses on reducing the risk, raising awareness of the importance of combining a healthy diet with exercise.

To order your free copies, register at www.cancertalk.org.uk or call 0845 601 1716 quoting SCHL.

Visit our *Cancertalk* website for more information on hosting your own Macmillan presentation: www.cancertalk.org.uk

Further information

Why Bother?

www.whybother.org.uk

Macmillan's site for young people with cancer facts, treatments and other tips and advice. Download our brand new video clips of a day in the life of a Macmillan nurse, an interview with a child cancer patient and general facts about Macmillan.

Cancertalk

www.cancertalk.org.uk

A site for teachers and youth group leaders with essential cancer facts, downloadable lesson plans, and fundraising advice.

THIS SPORTS DAY EVERYBODY WINS



We've got a great way to raise money for people with cancer, boost pupils' cancer awareness and inspire them to get fit... the Big Sports Day, Macmillan's brand new event for schools.

Getting involved couldn't be easier. Just hold your sports day as usual – the only difference being that you ask each pupil to bring along a suggested donation. It could be as little as £1 after all, every penny will help change lives.

Kids love to see teachers letting their hair down – so we think they'll dig deep to sponsor a teachers' race. To reward the best athlete in the staffroom, we'll even include a cut-out Macmillan Cup in your event pack: perfect for posing with.

Teaching materials

We've also developed a full range of National Curriculum linked teaching materials to support you with your work on cancer and wise lifestyle choices. So don't let the Big Sports Day be a one off event. Visit our *Cancertalk* website to order your two free teaching packs and DVDs today: www.cancertalk.org.uk



Register today

For more information and to register, visit www.macmillan.org.uk/bigsportsday or call 0845 601 1716, quoting SCHL.





**BLUE SKIES. GREEN
GRASS. RED
CHEEKS.**

Why not also get involved in our other fun and active events this summer?

Longest Day Golf Challenge

Are you up for the ultimate golf challenge this summer? Our Longest Day Golf Challenge is the perfect opportunity to get some exercise, improve your handicap and raise money to help the two million people with cancer in the UK.

All you need to do is play 72 holes in one day and get people to sponsor you for your marathon efforts. Why not get a team together with friends, colleagues or family to take on the challenge? (Under 18s can enter the event, though there must be at least one adult in each team.)

Alternatively, why not take the challenge on your games console or local crazy golf course?

The top four teams will compete in the finals for the Longest Day Golf Challenge Trophy. Remember, there are some fantastic money-can't-buy prizes on offer.

Swing into action

To register your interest, please visit

www.macmillan.org.uk/golf
or call 020 7840 4614.

Walk with Macmillan

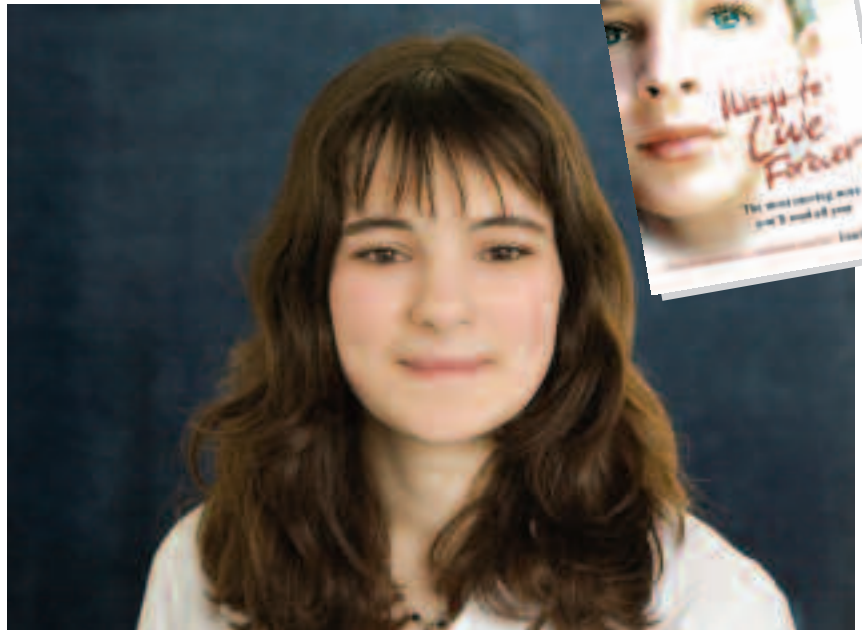
This summer, you can stretch your legs on one of our organised walks around the country. Or we can even help you organise your own. Simply get family and friends to join you on a walk, get sponsored and step to it.

Join in

To register your interest, or to find out if there is a walk near you, visit www.macmillan.org.uk/walking

WAYS TO LIVE FOREVER

'My name is Sam. I am 11 years old. I collect stories and fantastic facts. By the time you read this, I will probably be dead' ... So begins Sally Nicholls' debut novel, *Ways to Live Forever*. Here she tells us about her award-winning book, and what inspired her to write from the perspective of a boy with terminal leukaemia.



Sally Nicholls and her debut novel

'Two years ago, my friend's mum died of cancer. I was amazed at how one day, she was there and the next, she'd just vanished into nowhere. It got me thinking: where do we come from and where do we go? The book was my way of exploring important questions like this, questions that people often shy away from.

Unanswered questions

'There's so much information about death available for adults, but there's hardly anything out there for children. I think people are reluctant to explain the issue to children for fear of upsetting them. But the way I see it, if a child is old enough to ask a question about death, they're old enough to hear an answer. That's what inspired me to write a novel that allows children to look death straight in the eye and make up their own minds.

'I was careful not to talk down to my readers. After all, children feel grief, guilt, joy – all the complex emotions that adults do. They just

might not have the vocabulary to express these emotions. The sad fact is, most children will come into contact with cancer at some point in their lives. So, the more they understand about it now, the easier it's going to be for them later.

Laughter and tears

'*Ways to Live Forever* is the diary that Sam writes during the last few months of his life. While his parents find it difficult to cope with him, he has a home tutor who is a fantastic support. People do say that the book makes them cry, but that was almost accidental. I tried hard to keep it uplifting – there's a lot of humour in the novel.

'I wrote the book for children aged 10 or above. It is used in lots of schools, and teachers often send me positive emails saying they really enjoy teaching it. Of course, teachers need to be sensitive about introducing the book in a classroom situation. But I definitely think it should be available in school libraries. If you let children

read it when they're ready, then it can be an amazing resource.

Numerous awards

'I finished the novel two years ago, when I was 23. I'm delighted to say that it has picked up a number of awards, including the Waterstone's Children's Book Prize 2008.'

We have five copies of *Ways to Live Forever* to give away.

For your chance to win, all you have to do is challenge your pupils to draw an alternative front cover image for the book (no larger than A4). Send your entries to Schools and Youth, Macmillan Cancer Support, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ by Friday March 27. Winners will be announced in the summer edition.

Further information

***Ways to Live Forever* is published by Marion Lloyd Books at Scholastic Children's Books. To order your copy, visit www.waystoliveforever.co.uk**

LEUKAEMIA: THE FACTS

What is leukaemia?

Leukaemia is the most common childhood cancer. It's a disease of the white blood cells and is often called cancer of the blood. When someone has leukaemia, large numbers of abnormal white blood cells are produced in their bone marrow. These abnormal cells crowd the bone marrow and flood into the bloodstream – they can't perform their proper role of protecting the body from disease.

Leukaemia is described as either acute, when it develops suddenly and progresses quickly, or chronic, when it develops and progresses slowly. The types of leukaemia most likely to occur in children and teens are acute lymphocytic leukaemia (ALL) and acute myelogenous leukaemia (AML).

Key facts

- Although we tend to hear more about children having leukaemia, far more adults are diagnosed.
- About 7,200 people are diagnosed with leukaemia in the UK each year.
- Survival rates for children with leukaemia are high. Eight out of ten children diagnosed with leukaemia are still alive five years later.
- We don't know what causes leukaemia. But smoking, exposure to radiation and certain genetic conditions may increase your risk.

What are the symptoms?

- having an unusual amount of fevers or infections
- looking pale, due to a lack of red blood cells (anaemia)
- experiencing nose bleeds often
- bruising and bleeding very easily.



Get symptoms checked early

These symptoms may not be serious, in which case there's nothing to be lost and everything to gain in getting them checked out at an early stage.

Treatment

Treatment for leukaemia includes one or more of the following:

- **radiotherapy**
High-energy rays are used to shrink tumours and keep cancer cells from growing. This may be used along with chemotherapy for high-risk patients.
- **chemotherapy**
The main treatment for leukaemia – drugs are given through a catheter.
- **bone marrow transplant**
This is a complicated procedure. It involves fresh bone marrow (usually from family members) being introduced into the bloodstream through an

intravenous drip. The marrow travels through the bloodstream to the bones, where it begins to make normal blood cells. This procedure is carried out as well as, or instead of chemotherapy.

Further information

Why Bother?

www.whybother.org.uk

Teen info on cancer

www.click4tic.org.uk

Macmillan's websites for young people and teenagers affected by cancer.

Teenage Cancer Trust

www.teenagecancertrust.org

A charity devoted to improving the lives of teenagers and young adults with cancer.

Clic Sargent

www.clicsargent.org.uk

Information and support for children and young people with cancer and their families.

HALL OF FAME

See more at www.cancertalk.org.uk



Pupils at Bromsgrove Preparatory School raised a whopping £8,716 for Macmillan as part of their charity week of fundraising activities. Here they are putting on a production of Hoodwinked. (Bravo, Bromsgrove!)



Youngsters at Reynald's Cross School, Solihull baked up many a sweet treat to sell at their coffee morning in September. (Apparently their hot cakes went down like... well, hot cakes.)



Pupils at Alva Academy in Clackmannanshire donned fancy dress to celebrate their coffee morning efforts. They raised a fantastic £7,437.50. (Not bad for one day of cakeiness!)

YouthLine

If you know any young people affected by cancer who need information or advice, they can call Macmillan's YouthLine free on 0808 808 0800, Monday to Friday 9am-9pm.

Video clips

Download our brand new video clips today. The four extracts focus on 'All about Macmillan', 'Anna's story', 'A day in the life of a Macmillan nurse' and 'Fundraising at school'. The clips are narrated using straight-talking language and are accompanied by fun animations. www.whybother.org.uk



Send us your stories

If you want your school to be featured in the Hall of fame, email your stories and pictures to kdonaghy@macmillan.org.uk or post them to: The Schools and Youth team, Macmillan Cancer Support, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ

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FITNESS

Collect our series of lessons on healthy living. Below is an extract from the new *Keep healthy, be active* teaching pack. To order your copy, register at www.cancertalk.org.uk or call 0845 601 1716 quoting SCHL.

Key question

How do I become fit and healthy?

National Curriculum links

PSHE and Citizenship: 3a
Science: Sc2.2h
Mathematics 4: 1f, 1g, 2a, 2b, 2c
ICT: 2a

You can also make links to the *Every Child Matters* government programme for young people.

Starter

Ask pupils the following question: other than a balanced diet, what else can keep you fit and healthy? Discuss and list answers. Someone should mention exercise. Ask pupils to state their favourite method of exercise and do a class count of what the favourite sport is. Record a tally on the board.

Main

Ask pupils to construct a bar graph to illustrate the data, reminding them of graph conventions (eg title, labelling the axes, key etc).

Ask your pupils: why is physical activity good for you? Come up with a class list including: strengthening the heart, expanding the lungs, boosting energy, improving fitness, lowering the risk of obesity, boosting the immune system etc.

The government encourages children to do at least an hour of moderate activity per day. Ask the questions: why do you think children aren't doing enough exercise and what could be

done to persuade them? Discuss and come up with a list eg lack of PE time at school, fewer opportunities to play outside, boring etc.

Now show the resource sheet to your pupils as an example of persuasive text. Ask pupils to identify the following features: introductory statement, back up argument (third paragraph), reiteration (last paragraph), using logical connectives (eg 'this shows', 'however', 'because') and putting forward one point of view.

Ask pupils to produce their own promotional leaflet to encourage more children to exercise (and remember that household chores, walking to school etc all count as exercise). They should include the aforementioned features in their writing as well as diagrams and pictures. Can they think of a catchy slogan for their campaign?

Plenary

Check the leaflets and have pupils read out extracts. Have they managed to write a persuasive piece of text? What could they do to improve it?

Further information

Why Bother?
www.whybother.org.uk/lifestyle/exercise.html
Information for young people on the importance of keeping fit.

Sport England/ Scotland/ Northern Ireland/ Wales
www.sportengland.org
www.sportscotland.org.uk
www.sportni.net
www.sports-council-wales.org.uk
Information on sporting programmes across the UK.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES ARE GOOD FOR YOU

Fruit and vegetables are an important part of a healthy and balanced diet. This is because they are packed full of vitamins, minerals and fibre that help protect the body from illness.

Eating lots of fruit and vegetables helps keep you at a healthy weight and will mean you are less likely to become overweight when you are an adult.

The government suggests we eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day to reduce the risk of getting illnesses like cancer and heart disease. Eating lots of different fruit and vegetables could reduce your risk of developing such illnesses by up to 20%.

And the good news is that it couldn't be easier to get your five portions. For example, you could top your wholegrain toast with mashed banana at breakfast or you could have a mixed fruit smoothie as a mid-morning drink. How about swapping your bag of crisps for carrot sticks at lunch and instead of a chocolate bar from the tuck shop, try a handful of dried fruit? And for dinner, why not include a portion of salad with your lasagne, instead of garlic bread? It really is as simple as that.

Remember, fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and bottled fruit and vegetables all count as one of your portions, so there are no excuses.

So, what are you waiting for? Start packing your body full of nutritious vitamins and minerals today and reduce your risk of developing diet related diseases.

