

# LIFTING LIVES OF CANCER PATIENTS

## SUE BAILEY

THREE women confronted by cancer have united to try to improve the lives of others with the disease.

Hayley Baker had five children under 12 when she was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer in 2014.

The same year Kath Cooper's mother Dawn died after her breast cancer returned.

Jay Chipman was a young mother when she was diagnosed with cancer in 2014 and set up Homely Retreats in 2018 to help hundreds of Tasmanians with cancer and their families.

Hayley and Kath decided to fundraise to help others and already have raised more than \$72,000 and hope their Girls Afternoon Out this month will raise more to help Homely Retreats.

"It was confronting and challenging in both our lives," Hayley and Kath said.

"The idea to fundraise came about in 2019 when catching up over lunch and toasting Dawn and celebrating Hayley's five-year cancer-free milestone.

"Cancer has deeply touched both our lives but also many people we know and the broader community - we simply felt the timing was right to do something small that might support others through a tough time."

They wanted the money they raised to help Tasmanian families and a chance meeting with Jay led them to support Homely Retreats. Hayley said the "shock and challenges" of dealing with cancer while raising five children was difficult. "At that time there were no respite services of this nature," she said.

Jay is "incredibly grateful" for their fundraising efforts. She said people could choose a weekend respite, pre-cooked meals, or home cleaning/gardening.

"Most choose the family break together ... making precious memories, a break from stress, a moment to reconnect with their loved ones. For some families, Homely Retreats respite service is a 'glimmer of hope' and something positive to look forward to on a long, stressful journey. For others it is one of their final family memories."

The Girls Afternoon Out will be held on October 30 at Crowne Plaza.



Kath Cooper and Hayley Baker raise funding for from Homely Retreats which helps families of cancer sufferers.  
Picture: Linda Higginson