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Newsletter 53 July, 2019

Welcome to the 53rd edition of the GCRA+ Newsletter!

1. CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN:

In the months since New Year we have lost three long term members of the Turriff classes, two of whom were members of our original class in 2002. All three were popular members of our classes who enjoyed the exercise and friendship with other class members. One of the families thought so well of GCRA that they donated the funeral church collection to GCRA+ which was a considerable sum for a charity of our size.

When we started GCRA back in 2002 our goal was to bring cardiac rehabilitation exercise to all NHS patients who wanted and needed it in the region. Now, in 2019, we have 40 classes with a current membership of over 800 and have had over 2,000 members in the last 17 years. This achievement is down to the hard work of the management boards, the exercise instructors the administrators and, in the last two years, the coordinators, but that is not all. The class members who attend and help to run the classes on a week to week basis and find many ways of raising funds for our charity are the backbone of our operation.

Please continue to help run our classes so that we can maintain and improve our fellow members' health, wellbeing and quality of life, now and into the future. Thank you all for supporting GCRA+ to have a positive difference in our communities and long may it continue.

Robert Paton

Chairman of the Grampian Cardiac Rehabilitation Association Plus.

2. GCRA+ UPDATES:

GCRA+ has been working incredibly hard over the last 18 months to consolidate the fantastic work undertaken by our incredible team of exercise instructors.

Former GCRA+ exercise instructors Liz Innes, Elaine Buchan and David Powney have moved onto other ventures and GCRA+ wishes them well with their future endeavours and thanks them all for their hard work during their time with GCRA+.

GCRA+ has built on its success by recruiting and training an additional 10 new exercise instructors, with a view to increasing the number of GCRA+ specialist exercise classes throughout Aberdeenshire & Aberdeen City, so more people with cardiac and long-term health conditions can gain the benefits from GCRA's ethos of 'Fun, Fitness & Friendship'.

GCRA+ funded two courses of training last year, at a cost of around £15,000, in order to ensure that the existing and new exercise instructors have the optimal knowledge to support all GCRA+ members to exercise with a wide range of cardiac and long-term health conditions.

3. FUNDRAISING:

GCRA+ is very lucky to have such wonderful support throughout the communities in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, in which our team of specially qualified and highly experienced exercise instructors lead specialist exercise classes for people with cardiac and a range of long-term health conditions.

GCRA+ is a registered charity and receives no government funding and is heavily reliant on the generosity of its members, the public, local businesses, trusts and foundations, in order to continue delivering high quality exercise classes.

The weekly contributions and annual membership fees of the GCRA+ members helps to cover a significant portion of the direct costs associated with running the exercise classes.

However, given the substantial financial investment GCRA+ has made in terms of training a new intake of exercise instructors and that needed to expand the number of GCRA+ exercise classes throughout Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire to meet an increasing demand for this wonderful service, GCRA+ needs to focus on raising funds through a range of fundraising initiatives over the next year.

a) Donate to GCRA+ through Amazon Smile:

GCRA+ is registered on Amazon Smile as one of the charities you can nominate to receive 0.5% of the cost of purchases (excluding VAT, shipping fees and returns) in donations when items are bought via <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/>.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support a charity of your choice every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/>, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as amazon.co.uk, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your selected charity.

By purchasing your Amazon products through the Amazon Smile website, you can enjoy shopping whilst raising money for a good cause in the process – win win! You use the same account on amazon.co.uk and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

On your first visit to <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/> you need to select a charitable organisation to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. We will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/> will result in a donation. If you would like to nominate GCRA+ to receive donations whilst you shop for Amazon products, then type the full name of the charity – ‘**Grampian Cardiac Rehabilitation Association**’ and select it as your chosen charity.

b) Volunteer for GCRA+ at community events:

GCRA+ will be attending the following community events to raise funds and awareness of GCRA+ and need volunteers to help out:

Event Details	Volunteers Needed
Celebrate Aberdeen Parade – 24 th August, 2019 (Starts: 11am; Music & Entertainment in Union Terrace Gardens throughout afternoon)	As large a team as possible to take part in the parade down Union Street to raise awareness of GCRA+ & celebrate the fantastic work of GCRA+ & the charity sector in Aberdeen City. (Around 150 charities taking part).
GCRA+ Huntly Coffee Morning – 6 th September, 2019 (9am-1pm)	20 volunteers to help set up and tidy away, hostess, do washing up, man bottle tombola stall and bake sale stall and sell raffle tickets.
Alford Community Fair & KT Bike Run – 14 th September, 2019 (10am-4pm)	2 volunteers needed 10am-1pm & 2 volunteers needed 1pm-4pm.

GCRA+ are in the process of organising further fundraising events throughout the year, which need to be finalised and details will be sent by email and/or via the GCRA+ exercise instructors.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering at any of the above events, can contact Suzi Will (Development Coordinator) – suzi.will@gcra.org.uk.

c) Fundraise for GCRA+:

GCRA+ has been incredibly lucky to have such strong support from GCRA+ members and wider community groups who have organised their own fundraising ventures to raise funds for GCRA+ over the years.

GCRA+ is looking to support anyone interested in fundraising to organise an event in their area, in order to raise funds and, also, to create social opportunities for GCRA+ members and supporters, e.g. coffee mornings, quiz nights, etc..

If you would like ideas about various fundraising activities you could get involved in to raise funds for GCRA+, then click on the CHSS link below, which will help you brainstorm:

<https://www.chss.org.uk/supportus/fundraise-for-us/>

Anyone who would like additional support, as regards organising their own or class-led fundraising ventures, can contact Suzi Will (Development Coordinator) – suzi.will@gcra.org.uk for further support.

d) Become a GCRA+ Ambassador:

The broad spread of GCRA+ classes throughout Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and a membership of over 800 GCRA+ members, means that the charity has many individuals who are in a great position to identify particular local initiatives that GCRA+ could be involved with, both in terms of fundraising for and raising awareness of GCRA+.

Particularly, GCRA+ are seeking opportunities to speak to local businesses about how they could establish corporate sponsorships with those who are interested in establishing partnerships with a local charity, e.g. Charity of the Year partnerships.

If you know of anyone who runs a local business or know of any other local fundraising and promotional opportunities GCRA+ could get involved in, then please contact Suzi Will (Development Coordinator) – suzi.will@gcra.org.uk.

e) Like & Follow the GCRA+ Facebook Page:

Like and follow GCRA+ via Facebook to find out about what the charity is getting up to and various events you can get involved in.

Click on the following link to 'Like' GCRA+: <https://www.facebook.com/GCRAcharity/>

4. Thank You For Your Generosity:

a) Kathleen Stephenson: A massive thank you to Kathleen, one of our GCRA+ ARI members, who raised a colossal amount of £1,150.00 at her Golden Wedding celebrations last summer!

b) GCRA+ Turriff Coffee Morning: Huge congratulations and thanks to all of the GCRA+ Turriff members and volunteers who were involved in organising a great Coffee Morning last September and raising £605.07 for GCRA+.

The GCRA+ Turriff Coffee morning is firmly established as a great annual GCRA+ community fundraising event and great social occasion!

- c) Elaine Anderson:** Thank you so much to Elaine, one of our GCRA+ Kippie Lodge members, for your wonderful generosity towards GCRA+ at your Golden Wedding celebrations in November last year. Your support and the huge generosity of your family and friends towards the charity led to £350.00 being raised for GCRA+.
- d) GCRA+ Ellon Class Members:** A huge thank you to the members of Velvet's GCRA+ Ellon classes for donating £82 to GCRA+ in lieu of sending Christmas cards.
- e) Alford KT Bike Run Committee:** Last autumn, GCRA+ were kindly invited to attend the Alford KT Bike Run and raised £80 from a bottle stall and were donated a further £50 by the Alford KT Bike Run Committee. This event was a great opportunity for GCRA+ to raise awareness, particularly of the GCRA+ Alford class, and raise much needed funds.
A huge thank you to Clive Marsden and the Alford KT Bike Run Committee for our invite and GCRA+ look forward to attending this event again this year.
- f) NHS Grampian Endowment Fund:** GCRA+ has been awarded £4,965 from the NHS Grampian Endowment Fund, which will be used to purchase 6 new defibrillators to equip 6 of the newly recruited GCRA+ exercise instructors with a potentially life-saving piece of equipment.
Sincere thanks to the NHS Grampian Endowment Fund for their support.
- g) Mr & Mrs Meiklejohn, Proprietors of the Castle Hotel, Huntly:** Thank you so much to Mr & Mrs Meiklejohn for generously donating a voucher for a Dinner for Two at the Castle Hotel, which will be one of the prizes at the GCRA+ Huntly Coffee Morning in the Stewart's Hall in September, 2019.
- h) Suzi Will (GCRA+ Development Coordinator):** Thank you for raising £300 for GCRA+ & £75 for CHSS by completing the Run Garioch Dandara 10km in March, 2019.
- i) Marks & Spencer – Inverurie Branch:** GCRA+ were incredibly fortunate to be nominated by one of the members to be the 'Charity of the Year' for the Marks and Spencer Inverurie branch 2017-2018.

A special thanks to Bert Lyon (GCRA+ Board of Director, Member & Fundraising Volunteer) for leading the coordination of the bag packing sessions and to Dod Mackie, a member of 12 years from the GCRA+ Inverurie Wednesday evening class, who volunteered at 22 bag packing sessions.

In total, £11,725 was raised for GCRA+ through this corporate partnership, which also involved staff at Marks & Spencer raising money for GCRA+ through their own ventures.

Without the dedication of Bert, Dod and the army of bag packing volunteers who donated their valuable time, it simply would not have been possible to raise such a huge amount of money for GCRA+, so a huge thank you to everyone who volunteered and to all the staff at Marks & Spencer Inverurie Branch.



Bag Packing Volunteers: Winnie De Jong, Bert Lyon, Dod Mackie & Ian Prince.

GCRA Ltd, Unit 6, Turriff Business Centre, Markethill Road, TURRIFF, AB53 4AG
Telephone: 01888 569160 – Email: info@gcra.org.uk – Website: www.gcra.org.uk
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