

The recent passing of young mother **SINÉAD McGOVERN HYNES** was reported in this paper two weeks ago - but Sinéad's husband, Glen, and her sisters Lisa and Emer wanted to paint a positive picture of Sinéad, her brave battle and her determination to increase awareness of triple-negative breast cancer.



# Sinéad – our inspirational warrior

■ Family's tribute to brave mum who fought valiant battle against cancer

BREAST cancer didn't define our Sinéad. Raising awareness; promoting positivity, wellbeing and happiness; embracing life; going the extra mile, helping people to do something to better their own or someone else's lives - that was her mission through her life and through her illness.

During that illness, she shared many of her thoughts and mantras on life with us. When people would say to her that she was such an inspiration she would say to Glen "What exactly have I inspired?"... She wanted people to actually take something from her journey and not just say the words.

And that's the picture we want to paint of our beloved wife, mother and sister - someone who also wanted to explore all treatments and exhaust all options, and who wanted to raise awareness, particularly among young mothers even as she battled her own breast cancer.

Sinéad was born and grew up in Carnmore, she attended Carnmore National School, Taylor's Hill Secondary School and NUIG.

She moved to Kildare after college where she and Glen - who was also born and grew up in Carnmore - settled, and both worked for Intel Ireland. Sinéad went on to work for Fidelity Investments Ireland. Her main passions in life were being a mom to Ella and creativity expressed through millinery with her sister Emer, known as Designs by Shimmer.

The full detail of Sinéad's diagnosis and the course of treatments she followed are available to read on our Facebook page "In Memory of Sinéad McGovern Hynes".

Triple-negative breast cancer (sometimes abbreviated TNBC) refers to any breast cancer that does not express the genes for estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2.

This makes it more difficult to treat since most hormone therapies target one of the three receptors, so triple-negative cancers often require combination therapies.

Depending on the stage of its diagnosis, triple negative breast cancer can be particularly aggressive, and more likely to recur than other subtypes of breast cancer.

When Sinéad first presented to a GP in Co. Kildare with a lump in her armpit, it was believed to be a blocked milk duct related to breast feeding her nine month old baby.

She was referred for further investigation but it was three months before she was called for her breast check appointment. A biopsy at that time confirmed a diagnosis of triple negative breast cancer.

As there was a family history of breast cancer, genetic testing was completed but no BRCA gene mutation was detected.

During her journey, Sinéad met four other women in the same age bracket as her who all had a young child and had been recently diagnosed with the same TNBC.

With such similarities between each of their stories, Sinéad felt strongly that this was more than a coincidence.

Sinéad wanted to raise awareness of this to other young mothers and encourage them to be vigilant and continue to carry out breast checks even while breast feeding. She wanted to stress the importance of pushing for early investigation if concerned about any health issues.

During her two year battle, Sinéad faced many ups and downs but she never gave up hope that one of the combination treatments she tried would work.

She was continuously researching treatment options and discussing any possible clinical trials and future therapies that were currently at research level with her consultants.

Unfortunately for Sinéad she was not eligible to enter any current trials due to the extent of her disease and the treatment courses she had already completed.

She had also carried out extensive research on clinics overseas and after exhausting all chemotherapy options



Family ties...the late Sinéad McGovern Hynes with her husband Glen and their daughter Ella.



Tribute...Sinéad McGovern Hynes.

here in Ireland she decided to begin treatment at a clinic in Istanbul. This clinic offered a combination of chemotherapies along with alternative treatments not available in Ireland.

While receiving treatment in Istanbul, many of Sinéad's extended family and friends contacted her husband Glen wishing to offer their support as

each ten-day trip was costing approximately €12,500.

Reluctantly Sinéad agreed to setup a fundraising page to assist with the costs of this treatment but more importantly to raise awareness of her story in the hope that it may help someone else.

A fundraising page and Facebook page were setup and the response re-

ceived was phenomenal. Within 24 hours the fundraising target was exceeded and the outpouring of support, positive thoughts and prayers were a huge boost to Sinéad, Glen and their families.

Local community fundraisers organised by Sinéad's friends and family took place in Galway, Kildare and Cavan and she was delighted to see the community spirit and reconnection of old friendships that took place as a result of these events.

After three ten-day trips to Istanbul and enduring gruelling treatments Sinéad was devastated when a scan revealed that the cancer had continued to progress.

She was not willing to give up and with the financial support received on her fundraising page she could now consider funding immunotherapy which had been discussed with her consultant.

While waiting for suitable trialled immunotherapies that were not yet available worldwide as standard treatment, Sinéad tried an alternative class of immunotherapy which unfortunately failed to halt the progression of her cancer.

Sinéad became unwell and was admitted to St James's hospital on February 5 where further scans revealed tumours on her brain and spine.

While receiving radiotherapy for these tumours, Sinéad remained hopeful as always that she could continue with her treatment path towards recovery.

Sadly despite Sinéad's positivity and determination she passed away peacefully on February 23, surrounded by her family.

In Sinéad's memory, her family will continue to support the ongoing research of triple negative breast cancer in the hope that new targeted treatment options will become available in the near future.

The remainder of the money raised which was not used for Sinéad's treatment will be donated to assist with this research.