

Survivors empowered at retreat

By [Yana O'Gorman](#) | on April 10, 2018

A group of burns survivors attended Castaways resort for a retreat last week. The Burns Support Group Charitable Trust supported the camp for seven women who left feeling pampered and empowered.

It is only the second year the retreat has been held and it was met with huge success. “Last year was a “guinea pig” of sorts. It was successful and we decided to do it again,” said organiser Michele Henry. The women arrived on Tuesday 3 April and spent the next few days doing activities, hearing from speakers and networking.

Delwyn Breslau established the Burn Support Group Charitable Trust in Auckland in 1986. “My son was burned and there was nothing (no support groups) available, so I started the group.” Since then, she has been ‘humbled’ to see the group grow from strength to strength and reach those who need it. “It’s important that people know we’re here. That’s the main message,” she said.

For burns survivor Judy, the retreat has been an encouragement. “I always looked for people like me,” she said. “I’ll leave knowing that I’m not alone. I feel so special and so beautiful.” She said the group has been a place where you belong. “People accept you for who you are and not what you look like.”

Donna from Hamilton, has been involved in the group for several years, but this was her first retreat. “It has been amazing. I’ve enjoyed meeting new people. Hearing their stories, seeing them blossom, it’s lovely. I never wanted to do a retreat before. I thought they were too ‘in-depth’, but we’ve had so much fun. I can’t wait to do the next one.” “It has definitely made me step outside my comfort zone, but the camaraderie is incredible.”

Delwyn said the retreat has brought the group closer together. “Getting together is vital for recovery,” she said. “It accelerates transformational healing. Quite frequently burns survivors feel alone, but this is all about knowing you’re not alone.”

The retreat was all funded through various fundraisers and sponsors like Constellation Brands. “A huge thanks to Castaways. Their staff have bent over backwards for us,” Michele said.

For more information on the trust, the retreats and camps they offer, go to www.burns.org.nz or find them on Facebook.



The group enjoyed an afternoon with art lessons during their retreat at Castaways Resort.