

raft news

WORKING TO HEAL PATIENTS THROUGH SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

SPRING 2011



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A message from the team

As we enter the New Year and say goodbye to 2010, we will certainly be celebrating our achievements whilst looking forward to the challenges we face this year. We are pleased with the positive progress that we are continuing to make despite the current economic climate.

Our team has expanded as we've welcomed new staff who share the same mutual emotion of wanting to transform the lives of patients suffering from skin disfiguring illnesses. A smile can say a thousand words, and this is something we want to give to those who have been scarred with burns and wounds.

As we have said on many occasions before, we are absolutely amazed at the support we receive, the activities organised by our supporters and all the time and effort every single person puts into making our vision a reality. Without you, our fantastic supporters, RAFT would not be what it is today- you are the reason we feel such commitment and passion to fight on.

The RAFT Team



Where are we now?



An Update on the Smart Matrix™

The idea of the Smart Matrix™ is to create an artificial material that will help rebuild lost skin. There are many different causes for skin loss wounds such as physical trauma - especially severe burn injuries - road traffic accidents or explosive blasts. Skin loss wounds can also happen due to long-term diseases which affect blood circulation. Another reason is surgical procedures which create a large wound or cavity which then needs to be repaired, this is especially common with the treatment of skin cancers.

The Smart Matrix™ idea arose from work at RAFT when trying to find effective ways of stimulating wound healing. An essential aspect of the idea was to be able to manufacture a solid material which could provide a three-dimensional framework for wound-healing cells from the body to grow – a 'Matrix'.

However, this idea would need a further element in order to be effective. The framework material would need to have biological features which cells could recognise as 'new territory' for growing into – the 'Smart' bit. Along this research journey it was discovered how effective the prototype Smart Matrix™ was for wound healing. The aim was the material should provide the right wound healing environment for blood capillaries to grow into. We found that these formed within the Smart Matrix™ at a far greater depth and speed than we thought possible.

More recently, we asked ourselves whether this process could be increased even more. Excitingly, we found that we could observe blood capillaries forming within three days of grafting the Smart Matrix™. This growth is fast enough to enable the full thickness of skin to be repaired in a single operation.

Because of these results we are now even busier at RAFT. Our primary goal is to go through the complex and demanding process of 'translating' the Smart Matrix™ to a manufactured clinical product.



What do our supporters say?



What drew me to RAFT was the fascinating research that they carry out. It is not until you actually come to RAFT that you appreciate just how unique the charity is. Not only because the research is carried out in the same building as the rest of the work, but also the fact that everyone shares the same innate attitude of working together as a team. From day one I can honestly say that I felt right at home here and this is a huge incentive to want to come and work for RAFT."

Hatty Turner (Fundraising Investigator Intern)

Intern Profile



"I first got involved with RAFT through my dad. Since then I have had my work published on the RAFT website and have organised a fundraising sponsored boys' leg wax. I have been a young supporter of RAFT since September 2010, and RAFT has really changed the way in which I react towards the sun and sunbathing. I hope to carry on fundraising for RAFT and spreading the word."

Nadia Faber

Our first DofE participant

RAFT is one of the very few charities selected to be an activity provider for young people wanting to do the Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award. Our first DofE participant, Riken Shah, and three of his friends, Akhil Gohil, Nikhil Patel and Jayaram Raghuvver, completed a 15 mile run starting at Northwood station and incorporating the area of Moor Park. Riken says:

"RAFT is very important to me and I believe strongly in their work and am extremely grateful and honoured to be given the opportunity to meet the RAFT team."

For more information on RAFT as an Approved Activity Provider for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award please visit www.raftdofe.com.

Walking for RAFT

Kim and Judy began walking for charity when a good friend was diagnosed with breast cancer and as a result were encouraged to take part in a charity walk raising money for Breakthrough Breast Cancer. Not wanting to "let the side down" on an organised walk they decided to do their own thing, favouring walks along the Grand Union Canal with varying distances of 20 or so miles over the last 6 years.

Five years ago Kim was diagnosed with skin cancer (malignant melanoma) and on leaving hospital after extensive upper arm surgery she enquired whether there was somewhere or someone they could now also help.

This was the first contact with the work of RAFT and they have since become involved in a personal way, attending seminars but also walking for RAFT. Kim and Judy have been giving at least half of the money they raise each year to support the work of RAFT. October 2010 saw them walking along the canal again from Cassiobury Park in Watford to Denham Country Park a distance of approximately 12 miles. The weather was perfect for walking and they have been able to donate £415 to RAFT this year through the generosity of their many friends and family. Very soon they will begin training again for this October's walk of 15 miles and ask that as they do this you will join them by doing whatever you are able to in support of the valuable work of RAFT.



We are delighted to announce our first joint fundraising event with The Douglas Bader Foundation in September 2011. The challenge involves tackling Italy's 3 iconic volcanoes; Vesuvius, Stromboli and Etna to raise funds for The Douglas Bader Foundation and RAFT.

Why not give this once in a lifetime opportunity a go? For further details or to sign up to this once in a life time expedition please contact Keith Delderfield, at The Douglas Bader Foundation douglasbaderfdn@btinternet.com 07831 596015.

Fiery 3 Challenge



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If you are a UK tax payer, may **RAFT** Gift Aid your donation? Yes No *giftaid it*

I understand that I must pay an amount of Income Tax/Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the amount RAFT claims on my donation in the appropriate tax year.

Name

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STANDING ORDER

To the manager (please insert bank name)

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Please pay: **RAFT** the amount of £ until further notice.

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My account number

Bank sort code

Starting on

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In my will I wish to leave a legacy to **RAFT**. This legacy will be:

A sum of money An object, or item or property

A residual part of my estate A conditional bequest.

Name

Address

Postcode Tel

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ONE-OFF DONATION

I would like to make a one-off payment and enclose a cheque made payable to **RAFT**.

If you are a UK tax payer, may **RAFT** Gift Aid your donation? Yes No *giftaid it*

Remember for every £1 you give, RAFT can claim back 25p (as at 6 April 08) from the taxman at no cost to yourself.

I want RAFT to treat all donations I have made for this tax year, the four years prior to the year of this declaration and all donations I make from the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid Donations*

*I understand that I must pay an amount of Income Tax/Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the amount RAFT claims on my donation in the appropriate year.

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