

YourLife

healthy living

# Sanctuary a place of love and care

By GAYLE BUTLER

**W**HEN it comes to living with cancer, 18-year-old Adem Crosby has walked the walk.

But he's done so in his striking red sneakers.

They stand out on a visit to Buderim's Bloomhill Cancer Help where the Sunshine Coast lad is receiving ongoing treatment.

Fittingly, the shoes reflect his nature – bright, happy and comfortable, despite him having acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

Sitting in the gardens of the Ballinger Rd complex, surrounded by towering trees, Adem is in his sanctuary.

Here, he reveals that being in touch with the simple things in life now bring him the greatest joy.

He is incredibly calm and happy as he names his top four loves – food, family and friends, fresh air and the warm sun.

Having grown up on the Coast, Adem often passed Bloomhill without a thought, or shopped in one of the op shops without realising the importance of the cancer support services and how intimately he would become involved with them.

He talks of the difference these services have made to his life.

Adem says being told he had cancer felt surreal and always at the back of his mind was the question "why?"

Even with the best of medical care, he still asked himself "why?"

Adem admitted to being hesitant and a little uncomfortable coming to Bloomhill for the first time, saying, "I

## BLOOMHILL SERVICES

- Assessment and ongoing support by registered nurses
  - Counselling and arts therapy for adults and children
  - Group support for patients, carers and children
  - Meditation and relaxation groups
  - Motivational morning teas with inspirational guest speakers
  - Respite care by volunteers
  - Buddy support for patients and carers by volunteers
  - Transport for patients to and from medical appointments and Bloomhill
  - Massage, reflexology and reiki
  - Art and craft groups
  - Comprehensive library (inc DVDs, videos, tapes, CDs and books)
  - Equipment loans
  - Health and fitness – for example, walking group and yoga
  - Retreats for clients and carers
  - Regular newsletter
- What you can do:** Donate your time, money and any goods to the op shops. The Bloomhill Op Shops provide 80% of the annual operating costs. Call 5445 6858 or drop your donations into a local Bloomhill store.

didn't know what to expect, but as soon as we arrived, the sense of comfort and ease was instant".

His first appointment was



with Bloomhill massage therapist Debbie Myers and he described that meeting as "a revelation", "euphoric" and "life-changing".

"Why" was no longer important.

He attributed that shift in mindset to the massage and how intuitively Debbie was able to tap into a sense of wellbeing.

Adem is happy to talk about his experience with Bloomhill because as he says, "it was incredible to come home (from hospital) and discover something so wonderful right beneath your nose".

Specialist oncology massage is one of the multi-disciplinary services Bloomhill offers and is tailored to each client.

The not-for-profit Sunshine Coast organisation has helped thousands of cancer patients, survivors and their support networks who have walked through the doors over the past 15 years. Adem's message is that the Sunshine Coast needs to support Bloomhill because he wants others to experience the same love and care that he has encountered.

And just like Adem and his red sneakers, Bloomhill's staff and volunteers are there for each client, every step of the way.



**CARE AND SUPPORT:** Cancer patient Adem Crosby is overwhelmed by the support of Bloomhill's Kerry Mahony, Anne Braeten-Pow and Debbie Myers. PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON