

Pair honoured for service

Dorothy Shea and Lima Watson laugh when talking about being called living treasures, but after a combined total of more than 80 years volunteering in the Porirua community, it is a fitting epithet.

Dorothy, 95, and Lima, 85, have been made lifetime members of the Cancer Society – an honour which until now has been reserved for executives of the organisation. The women are the first volunteers to be so rewarded.

Early members of the Kapi-Mana auxiliary of the Cancer Society, Dorothy began shaking her tin in Porirua in 1968 and Lima joined her in 1970.

Despite many accolades during the years, Dorothy said she felt humbled to receive a celebratory afternoon tea at her home at Summerset Aotea retirement village on November 16.

“It wasn’t a one-man band; we worked in a wonderful team,” she said.

The group started in 1968 as the Porirua Auxiliary and was renamed in 1986 to reflect its members hailing from Paekakariki to Titahi Bay. It disbanded in 2008.

In those 40 years Lima and Dorothy took on all the roles from treasurer to secretary, and finished up alternating between president and vice-president. Dorothy said the community was new when the auxiliary first started and she watched it grow into quite a different place.

“We made a lot of friends and got a lot of fun out of it,” she said.

Their favoured method of fundraising became known as “painless extraction”. The women organised concerts featuring the Golden Girls of Titahi Bay and held annual movie events at Porirua Little Theatre, where Lima was an active member.

Lima said she could also remember great afternoon

teas at Porirua’s Black and White lounge, and evening soirees where husbands would be dragged along.

“We used to pack places out,” Lima said.

“It’s such a special community.”

The auxiliary was active in the nation’s first annual Daffodil Day in 1969. Both Dorothy and Lima continue to take part in the day.

Dorothy practised her “painless art of extraction” on the Summerset residents this year, while Lima took to the beach at Paraparaumu to where she moved from Titahi Bay four years ago.

She has since reconsidered her beach-collecting and will be back at North City shopping centre, a regular Daffodil Day haunt for both women, next Daffodil Day.

“It was a bit lonely wearing my yellow and trudging up and down the beach with my

tin,” she said.

Cancer Society volunteering manager Ann Hodson said the auxiliary collected “tens of thousands that was dispersed locally” over its tenure.

“It’s their spirit of volunteering that is being acknowledged. They’ve always been a duo; it’s been a team effort. And they are still raising the profile of the Cancer Society in the area.”



In the pink: Dorothy Shea and Lima Watson surrounded by Cancer Society members and supporters. Both women have been honoured for 40 years voluntary service.