

JODI LEE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE 28-YEAR-OLD SOUTH AUSTRALIA YOUTH AMBASSADOR DAHLIA

The Jodi Lee Foundation is proud to announce their newest South Australian-based Youth Ambassador, Dahlia Matkovic, who joins the Foundation to raise awareness of bowel cancer prevention in younger people.

On 11 October 2018, Dahlia was diagnosed with bowel cancer at only 27 years old. When she was diagnosed, she was the healthiest she had ever been. On 1 October, a week after passing blood in her stool for the first time, she noticed her stool had become pure blood and she went to the doctor immediately. The doctor ultimately saved her life, recommending she have a colonoscopy straightaway. It was then that Dahlia found out she had bowel cancer.

Dahlia, who turns 28 on 24 May, the day she was expected to complete her twelve rounds of chemotherapy, says that she wants to encourage people, no matter their age, that if there is something not quite right to seek medical help.

“I hope to achieve awareness and comfortability for people that are diagnosed with bowel cancer. If they end up with an ileostomy/colostomy bag or have to go through IVF or chemotherapy, I want to be able to support those people and help them and their families. Becoming a Youth Ambassador and telling my story will help me do this.”

“Being a Jodi Lee Foundation Youth Ambassador feels productive. It feels purposeful. It makes me feel like what I’m going through with bowel cancer has more purpose because I can help other people going through it,” Dahlia concluded.

Jodi Lee Foundation CEO, Kathryn Quintel said, “Dahlia is such an inspiring young woman. Her courage, humour and positive nature throughout her treatment is a testament to her bravery. Through working with Dahlia, we want to raise awareness that bowel cancer isn’t just an older person’s disease, and can affect anyone.

“We hope through raising awareness of bowel cancer we can encourage people to take the time, take the test as it might just save their life,” Kathryn continued.

“Bowel cancer can be prevented through early detection and screening, but for many people it’s not even on their radar and the Jodi Lee Foundation aims to change that,” Kathryn concluded.

Dahlia joins fellow youth ambassador, Australian Army Captain Hugo Toovey, in raising awareness of bowel cancer. At age 26, Hugo was diagnosed with bowel cancer resulting in three weeks in hospital and two major operations – which included having his colon removed which was riddled with cancer. Like Dahlia, if it wasn’t for early detection Hugo’s chance of survival would have been very different.

To follow Dahlia’s story, visit her Instagram page @dahlia.com.au where she is on a mission to connect with fellow young bowel cancer patients around the world with ‘Chemo Themeo’ documenting her chemotherapy treatments, dressing up as Marilyn Monroe, Evil Chem-Evil, a belly dancer and a lifesaver to help bring good humour and smiles whilst undergoing treatment. She regularly posts photos showing her ileostomy bag to educate, break the stigma and normalise her life.

Dahlia is expected to finish her last dose of chemotherapy on 29 May and is keen to connect with and be a support for those going through cancer, to help them focus on positive mental health and wellbeing.

ABOUT JODI LEE FOUNDATION

Jodi Lee Foundation was established in honour of Jodi Lee, who lost her battle with bowel cancer at age 41. The Foundation’s mission is to empower people to take active steps to prevent bowel cancer and live healthy lives. Money raised by Jodi Lee Foundation is used to raise awareness about bowel cancer prevention nationally through a number of events and initiatives; run its Workplace Prevention Program; and develop tools to aid the early detection of bowel cancer.