

# Cartoons go viral as people get a taste of a world with cancer and COVID-19

A series of frank cartoons, powerfully illustrating what the COVID-19 pandemic means for children with cancer compared to that of a healthy child have gone viral on social media, after reaching close to a quarter of a million people in less than 48 hours.

Angus Olsen, whose daughter had cancer, has teamed up with Redkite, Australia's leading children's cancer support charity, to sketch what children and families must go through every day whilst facing cancer, not just during a pandemic. The cartoons have strongly resonated with people from around the world.

Angus, a former Disney cartoonist, who is also the author of popular cartoon books, 'I draw childhood cancer', said: "I hope that with these cartoons, everyone will be able to understand the seriousness COVID-19 poses to a child with cancer."

In his latest cartoon, a healthy child complains about being bored and not being able to see his friends. A child with cancer, who experiences the same situation every day during cancer treatment, says: "Welcome to my world."

"Yes, thank you for this. It validates so much how I feel," one commenter on social media wrote. "So accurate," another wrote, and: "It feels as though we'd only just re-emerged into the 'real world' after our daughter's treatment when COVID hit. As you were."

For Angus, these cartoons are especially meaningful as he and his family went through 52 weeks of cancer therapy after his daughter, Jane, was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma when she was just two years old.

"When we went through treatment there was no shortage of anything. Even when everyday life was 'normal' it was hell on earth. I cannot even imagine facing cancer therapy with a pandemic going on," Angus said.

Throughout Jane's treatment, Angus relied on Redkite, which provides counselling and financial assistance for families, for support.

"In the fog of having a child face cancer, I found myself stumbling in the dark. Redkite was always there with an outstretched arm to steady myself. Redkite is a charity that knows what we need as cancer families before we need it," Angus added. Jane, now six has been in remission since May 2017.

Redkite's CEO, Ms Monique Keighery, said that these raw cartoons speak the truth of what living through a pandemic is like for families facing cancer.

"Life is challenging for all of us at the moment, but it's even more challenging for families who are also facing the unimaginable pressures of childhood cancer," Ms Keighery said.

Ms Keighery said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents were being overwhelmed by concern for the health of their vulnerable and immunocompromised child, hit with job losses and business closures when they can least afford it, and stressed by being separated from their support networks like grandparents and friends.

"We've never seen such an increase in need for our services. In March alone, the number of support sessions delivered jumped by over 30% and financial support funding to families by 15% from the same time last year.

"These cartoons will make you laugh, and they'll make you cry, and we hope they make you pause to think what life would be like for a child with cancer during a pandemic. These kids and families need extra support at this time and for their communities to acknowledge and understand their unique challenges," Ms Keighery added.

You can view four more of his cartoons, with one released each week, on Redkite's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/redkitecharity/>

To ensure Redkite can continue providing essential counselling and financial assistance to families, and keep up with increased demand at this time, you can donate here: <https://www.redkite.org.au/donate>.

ENDS

To view these powerful cartoons and request a high-res photo of Angus and Jane, please email Ryan at [rfritz@redkite.org.au](mailto:rfritz@redkite.org.au).

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