

Thinking Differently

The quarterly newsletter of *Autism New Zealand Inc.*



Harcourts to boost our funding *...but we can't do it without your help!*

In addition to this newsletter, you should have received a letter introducing our new partnership with **Harcourts**, New Zealand's number one Real Estate company.

This partnership has the potential to mean a huge amount to Autism NZ at a local and regional level – potentially adding thousands of dollars to our funding each year, but we need your help to make the vision a reality.

Harcourts have offered to support Autism NZ financially by referring 10% of any full commission they receive from selling a property for any of our members or their family or friends. This could make a huge difference to our ability to offer services and help to our members and people with ASD in New Zealand. They've also provided a special arrangement for property investors who choose Harcourts as property managers.

Harcourts have a long history supporting communities and charities since its inception in 1888. "Yes we sell houses, but our greater purpose is to provide support that helps to grow and enrich our communities," explains Jo-Anne Clifford, Chief Operating Officer at Harcourts.

"Harcourts have built a solid relationship with Autism NZ over the last two years. Over that time we have had many enjoyable conversations about the needs of the association, what Autism is and how it affects

families and those with it. Our question was always how could we help this worthy cause?"

"We will never understand what it is really like for those families who live with Autism," Jo-Anne continues. "We are in the line of business that can provide opportunities for a more suitable, more enjoyable and happier environment if need be – it's what we do best. We deal with hundreds of transactions a day and see many happy families sell their property and relocate."

"The 10% referral from our Sales Consultants resulting from any full commission they receive from selling a property for Autism NZ members, family or friends will undoubtedly help to maintain and provide many useful resources and services for the future."

So, how can you help? It's quite simple, really. If you're planning on selling a house, or you have an investment property that you require a property manager for, make sure you factor Harcourts into your considerations.

All you need to do is to call **0800 harcourts** or email referral@harcourts.co.nz when you decide that you would like to sell your property. Tell them that you want to support Autism NZ and Harcourts will then record that you are wanting 10% of your full commission to be given to us and will have a local agent contact you.



Ask the politicians

With just over two months to the next General Election, we believe it's important that we're all asking the hard questions of our local candidates to ensure they're going to be able to support the ASD community throughout New Zealand.

In order to help you make your voting decisions, we approached all the main parties with four questions about their position on ASD, and funding, three times since April. At the time of going to press with this newsletter, National, Labour and Act had not replied to us at all. In fact, we only heard back from the Green Party and the Maori Party, and we include their responses on page three.

We are quite disappointed with this lack of response from the major parties and will publish any responses we do get on our website for your use. We also suggest you contact your local candidates and ask them about what they can do to help ASD. If you get any interesting responses, we'd love to hear them!



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Welcome

A lot has been happening here over the last three months so there is plenty to talk to you about.

We have had some difficult financial times that we are working through in accordance with our strategic plan. Unfortunately however we have had to put our Waikato branch into recess for a short

time as there were just not enough funds to keep it going. We are working very hard on getting this re-opened as soon as possible.

Other branches are also working hard on a number of ventures to raise the ever important untapped funding pool which allows us to develop and deliver services which are not funded by anybody else and which will contribute to the financial strength of the organisation.

There are a couple of national projects that are also contributing. The first and most exciting being the new relationship with Harcourts which is detailed in this issue. This is exciting because Harcourts are offering to provide us with the sort of financial support that is vital to ensure that we can continue to offer services during very difficult financial times. If members get behind this campaign then we hope to be able to make enough money to offer new and better services throughout the country. Please read the article as every single sale will support Autism NZ in a significant way.

We have recently started a very exciting project to develop an Autism Toolkit for every school in New Zealand. This will initially be a two year project and will provide a resource to schools which will help teachers identify and understand autism and enable students on the autism spectrum to be more fully included in a way that benefits all children and the schools. We are very pleased to have the support of Pub Charity and the Ministry of Education without which we would not be able to undertake this project.

We have had a good media profile lately with the Sunday programme and the 9 to Noon programme highlighting the need for respite care and the Breakfast show discussing the toolkit. There have also been a number of other articles in newspapers around the country and of course the Cornelius Arie Smith case continues to generate awareness about ASD and the need for greater knowledge amongst professionals.

The new draft constitution is now on-line for consultation and feedback and will be presented to the AGM on 5th November including any feedback we receive.

I am looking forward to the end of winter!

- Alison Molloy, CE Autism NZ

Meet the Team: Jane Woodhouse

Jane Woodhouse joined our team as Finance Manager around 18 months ago and we reckon she's an invaluable part of the team.

It's her job to corral the finances of our complex not-for-profit organisation and make sure the bills are all paid and the money's going to the right people! It's a challenging job and one we think she does magnificently well.

Whilst Jane hadn't heard of Autism NZ before joining our team, she was excited about the opportunity to learn about something new for her.

"I knew nothing about autism before I started here and was amazed that it had completely passed me by until now. The position I hold does not directly work with people with ASD (other than my colleagues who are on the spectrum), but by seeing what our staff are doing with the funds made available to them and how hard it is at times to get funding, I can see a difference is definitely being made for those affected by autism," Jane explains.

Not-for-profit organisations are not new to Jane, however. She has two grown daughters, which saw her get involved as a volunteer at her local Pony Club – something she has kept doing, even though her daughters have left home.

"I like to go out and help with events – mainly scorekeeping, because I get to stay inside out of the weather!"

In her rare and precious spare time, Jane loves to travel and visit new places. She's also fond of going to the movies and theatre shows. But don't let that genteel accountant façade fool you; Jane's also keen on a bit of adventure, having just taken her first helicopter ride and she's even eyeing up the huge flying fox near Taihape!

"I'm a keen sports fan, and I'm really looking forward to watching the Rugby World Cup this month – I'm attending my first-ever All Blacks game. I'm also an avid Aussie Rules fan – you can't live in Victoria for 25 years without catching the bug. Go the Saints!"



Notice of AGM

Autism NZ's Annual General Meeting is to be held between 4.00 and 5.00pm on Saturday, 5 November at Mercure Hotel, Wellington, 345 The Terrace.

Voting papers have been included with this newsletter.

The politician's answers...



Under your party, when will ALL teachers be trained in special needs education as part of their training?

Despite positive moves in the right direction in recent years, many children with special needs are still unable to access their right to education in their local school in practice. The Green Party has long advocated mandatory training about disability issues, needs, and rights (including ASD) as part of all teacher education. We understand that the Government intends to begin training all teachers in special needs education in 2012. We support this.

Such training will need to be developed carefully, and the new training would need to be streamlined with the existing teacher training curriculum.

The Green Party also has concerns about the new National Standards and their application to children with ASD. We are concerned that the standards are not helping children with ASD to reach their full potential.

Children with ASD seem to miss out on funding in both education and health as their needs are not as visible as some others. When will this change?

The Green Party believes disability funding should be needs-based, regardless of how "visible" the impairment is, or its cause.

With individual funding capped, children with moderate needs often miss out, and may rely on the goodwill of schools and other agencies to meet their needs.

We support individualised funding for all people living with impairments and their families who wish to choose this option. Individualised funding bypasses the complex bureaucracy that has evolved, and gives control back to individuals and their families.

We would start by introducing needs-based funding for children with impairments and aim to double the percentage receiving individual funding and we would review the Child Disability Allowance with a view to increasing it.

What supports are politicians going to put in place for adults with ASD?

We have a wide range of policies to support people living with impairments including ASD. Some that may be of particular interest for adults with ASD, but there are many more in our full Disability Policy, which is

available at www.greens.org.nz/policy/disability.

How will your party ensure and maintain the rights of all disabled people (including people with ASD) in the current recessionary environment?

There are a number of steps we would take to enhance the rights of disabled people to ensure that they enjoy the same rights as all citizens both in theory and in practice. They include legislating to ensure that people with impairments who are in employment have the same employment rights as all other workers.

We endorse the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the New Zealand Disability Strategy and would work proactively to ensure their continued implementation in New Zealand.

We endorse the New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline and would like to see it widely applied.

We are concerned about the impact of the recommendations of the Welfare Working Group on disabled people.

Please feel free to outline any other policies relevant to people with ASD and their families.

We acknowledge the challenges of successfully parenting children with ASD and other impairments. Two policies of interest to people with ASD and their families involve greater support for parents of children with ASD and other special needs: we would reinstate the Parent Advocacy phone line and provide further support for families struggling to cope with children with high needs and difficult behaviours.

At a more general level, we see a role for greater disability advocacy at the highest level. We would still like to see a permanent, stand-alone Disability Issues Commission to provide the leadership needed to ensure that disability services become more responsive, flexible and empowering.



The Maori Party supports proper recognition of disabled people and their families in the context of whanau ora. We believe that disabled persons have the right to participate in the decision-making, be protected by law and have control of their lives.

Under your party, when will ALL teachers be trained in special needs education as part of their training?

We supported a review of the funding and contracting model for special needs in schools as we believed the current provision is uneven and inequitable. The government intends to make all NZ schools inclusive by 2014. Within this we support the NZ Teachers Council that special education needs become a core competency of all teacher training programmes.

Children with ASD seem to miss out on funding in both education and health as their needs are not as visible as some others. When will this change?

We know that when we look at respite care or parents of children with autism, parents have told us they want a menu for families to mix and match according to their needs – such as individualised funding options alongside in-home or shared care.

What supports are politicians going to put in place for adults with ASD?

We support individualized funding and are committed to seeing how we can improve the coordination and access to information for disabled people and their families, including a consumer information booklet.

How will your party ensure and maintain the rights of all disabled people (including people with ASD) in the current recessionary environment?

We promote Government working in partnership with whanau to develop a framework for information distribution and flexible support. Hon Tariana Turia has led a number of initiatives as Minister of Disability Issues including "Circle of Friends; a new model for disability support" and has accorded priority for implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Please feel free to outline any other policies relevant to people with ASD and their families.

We are aware that a survey conducted by a coalition of disability organisations in 2010, reported that discriminatory attitudes toward disabled people are the biggest barrier to the equal rights of disabled people in New Zealand. Minister Turia announced as part of Budget 2010 that Government will invest \$3 million over the next three years to address attitudes and behaviour that will limit opportunities for disabled people. We are proud of this investment, as we believe that changing negative attitudes will help reduce discriminatory behaviour and ensure that disabled people can live ordinary lives on an equal basis with others.



Adults on the spectrum: *Your Stories*

Traditionally, organisations dedicated to supporting people with ASD tend to focus on children. It's certainly been true of Autism NZ, and this newsletter has been typically skewed towards addressing the needs of children with ASD and their families. This focus on children is understandable – the cold, hard reality of the way funding is allocated highlights the bias towards kids on the spectrum.

But what about the adults in our community on the spectrum? We know you don't grow out of ASD, and we believe it's important to continue to support people with ASD throughout their entire lives, not just their childhood years.

We're hoping to make a change in the way our funders see adults on the spectrum, and our recent investigations into respite care services for people over the age of 16 is a small example of how we are drawing attention to the lifelong needs of people with ASD. Check out our story (over page) on our application to the Ministry of Social Development's Make a Difference Fund for a project to help adults with ASD develop resilience and self-esteem. It's all part of our efforts to include young people and adults in everything we do here.

Living with ASD is a life-long adventure, with plenty of highs and lows – just like everyone else. We spoke to four adults with ASD and asked them to tell us their experience of life on the spectrum. Here, we share their inspirational stories.

No need for a diagnosis

Chris is from Cambridge, England. His mother is a Kiwi who met and married Chris's British father while she was on her OE in the 70's. Like lots of Kiwis on their travels, she took a long time coming home – returning with her husband to the South Island permanently in 2003. Chris decided to come along as well.

"I'd visited New Zealand a number of times growing up and it seemed like a good thing to do. It hasn't felt like a strange place," says Chris.

Chris recently relocated to Wellington from Auckland to take up a significant new actuarial role in a large corporate environment. He's also studying towards becoming an actuary, which is quite an intensive programme of both work experience and study.

His experience of ASD is fairly typical of many high-functioning adults. He's never been officially diagnosed with ASD, but he certainly identifies with the autism spectrum and is sure it is part of who he is.

"My parents certainly asked the doctors about it when I was young – but there was such a negative stigma about it back then that they didn't push too hard. I recognise a number of the typical ASD traits in myself – I struggle with friendships and relationships in particular. I've also suffered from debilitating bouts of depression for the last ten years, but I do force myself to get up and carry on," Chris explains.

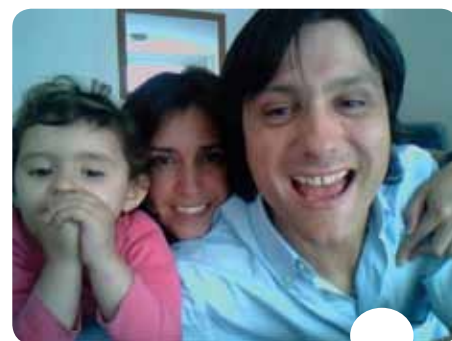
"I certainly identify with ASD, and I find people on the spectrum easier to get on with. Over the years, I've gotten better at hiding the 'symptoms' from non-ASD people – especially at work. In fact, one of the main reasons I've been reluctant to get a diagnosis is because I don't want to have something I'm obliged to disclose on work application forms, etc. This way, I feel like I'm not forced to disclose anything because I don't officially know that I'm on the spectrum."

The move from Auckland to Wellington was a tough one for Chris and he very nearly turned the job offer down, but is glad he didn't now. "It was really scary because I'd almost forgotten about the job when they called to offer it to me. I panicked a bit, to be honest but I did need a change and the role was a good one for me. I think that this line of work attracts people on the spectrum. It suits the way I think, and I'm pretty sure there's one guy I work with who also has ASD."

Now that he's settled into Wellington, Chris is grateful he made the change. He attends an ASD support group and is slowly making new friends. "I believe Wellington is a lot more accessible for people on the spectrum than Auckland – it's smaller and easier to get around and public transport is a lot better. People here seem very tolerant of diversity, which is a good thing!"

Coffee and World Cup Rugby

Carlos Herrera hails from Argentina, moving here with his wife, Marina, six years ago. He came on his honeymoon and pretty much stayed. They settled in Wellington and love it because "it's lovely living in a small town".



Like Duncan, Carlos has only recently been diagnosed with ADHD and ASD. It's been a liberating experience for him. The road to diagnosis was an interesting one for Carlos.

"About three years ago, I began drinking more and more coffee, but it wasn't keeping me awake and alert – in fact, it was making me sleepy and drowsy. So I asked a friend about this unusual reaction and they said it could be my thyroid, or it could be ADHD. So I looked up the symptoms for both and as I read the ADHD ones, it was like they were talking about me – it was like I had written that page."

"So I thought, 'this is a bit serious, you need to find out more about this. If you can do something about this, your life will be easier'. So I made some basic changes, like using a calendar, taking notes, being aware of the way my brain works, etc. And I went to see Duncan at his support group. It was there that I found out about the ADD Centre and I went to see them for a formal diagnosis. They confirmed the ADHD, but also suggested I had high-functioning ASD."

Carlos was a bit thrown by the ASD diagnosis and is still exploring what that means for him. He recognizes a few ASD-like symptoms – he's reluctant to be social and struggles to make eye contact with people. And it's symptoms like these that make his current job at the Argentinian Embassy a significant challenge.

"I'm working on event management projects for the embassy – focusing on events around the Rugby World Cup. It's completely different from my old job of accounts and IT at the embassy. Some parts of it come easily to me, but when the parameters shift, or I have to speak in public – I'm outside my comfort zone at those times."

Carlos' contract finishes in December and he plans on going back to study IT next year. It will also allow him to spend more time with his three-year-old daughter, Lorencia. For now though, he's just grateful he's been able to understand himself a lot better.

"Having a diagnosis has helped 1,000 percent. It's great just knowing the reasons for the way I think and the way I act. It's good knowing you're not a freak, but that your mind just works differently to other people," he says.



The AWESOMENESS! of ASD

Karleigh Jones is 18. Unlike Chris, Duncan and Carlos, she's known she has Asperger's Syndrome since she was a child. She's embraced her differences and is a passionate advocate for ASD – she's even created her own Facebook page to chronicle her life with autism and encourage acceptance and equality.

Karleigh is also at the beginning of what she hopes will be a fulfilling career in IT. After graduating high school in Tauranga last year, she began a level 5 diploma in applied computing at Bay of Plenty Polytech, and she plans on moving on to the University of Waikato to do a Bachelor of Science in Applied Computing when she graduates.

Karleigh loves computers. She's really excited about how computers can be used to help people – especially people with disabilities or learning difficulties. Finding ways to improve people's lives through computers is her long-term plan as she completes her studies.

"I love helping people and I love working with computers, so it makes sense to mix the two things together," she says.

Karleigh is very involved with her local Autism NZ branch, and regularly attends their Teens and Young People group for outings and events. She recently moved into a flat with two others and has been helped through that process by her support workers. One of her support workers is Marcia who plays in the Bay of Plenty's local roller derby league. Through Marcia, Karleigh has taken up skating herself and is working towards becoming a member of the team.

"Roller derby has been so good for me," explains Karleigh. "I'm still learning, but everyone tells me they're amazed at how far I've come in the last few months. What I really like about roller derby is that they know I have a disability but they know it's not a big deal in the wider scheme of things. Both the skating and their acceptance has been really good for my confidence."

Because it's helped my confidence, I'm now prepared to try new things and I'm less anxious about the unknown than I used to be. It's also given me the confidence to become more of an advocate for ASD. I believe that if I can change one person's attitude to ASD then I've achieved something great. I'm out there and showing people that ASD can be awesome!

To visit Karleigh's Facebook page, *The Awesomeness of ASD*, go to this link: www.facebook.com/awesomenessofasd.

From IT to biomedical science: how a diagnosis changed everything

Another British ex-pat, Duncan Wilkins moved to NZ four years ago after coming here for a holiday. He settled in Wellington, met his partner and worked in IT, which is what he'd "fallen into" back in the UK.

"I'm quite a natural IT person – it suits the way I think – but it's never been my passion and I never felt fulfilled by my IT career," explains Duncan. "Whereas, all my life I've been passionate about life science, disease and biology. I even used to read medical textbooks when I



was young. I still do, in fact."

It wasn't until he was diagnosed with ADHD and ASD two years ago that Duncan was able to make the decision to go to university and change his career. "I'd suffered from depression for a while and was seeing a psychologist for that back in the UK but it wasn't until I came here and started seeing a psychologist here, that I discovered there are very good reasons for being the way that I am," says Duncan.

Initially, Duncan was diagnosed with ADHD, but his doctor also suggested that he appeared to be on the autism spectrum. "I was in denial about the ASD to begin with – so I focused my attention on the ADHD, but after getting on top of those symptoms, I realised there were other things about me that could be ASD, so I started to embrace it."

"If I had been diagnosed as a child, they would have called it Asperger's Syndrome, but you can't be diagnosed as an adult with AS. So they call it 'high functioning' ASD instead. I'm not a particular fan of that word – because it implies a lot of negativity around being 'lower functioning', but it is the easiest phrase to use."

Once he'd embraced his conditions, Duncan went on to establish a support group for adults with ASD or ADHD in Wellington, which still meets every fortnight. Both Chris and Carlos (featured in this article) have attended the group.

Duncan's diagnosis marked a significant change in his life. He has decided to pursue his passion for medical science and is studying a Bachelor of Biomedical Science at Victoria University. He intends to complete a PhD, probably in infectious diseases or virology.

"Study has been incredibly challenging for me, but I'm glad I've made the change. It's very rewarding, and I get a lot of support through the university's disabilities programme so I can learn in my own way. I'm absolutely sure I wouldn't have done this without a diagnosis. It's changed my life."

Resilience and Self Esteem: an application to the Making a Difference Fund.

Autism New Zealand is applying to the Ministry of Social Development's 'Making A Difference Fund' for funding for a project to assist adults on the spectrum. The project's main focus will be on examining resilience and self-esteem in adults with ASD.

The project aims to provide practical life skills, such as socialising and confidence, as well as helping adults to explore job and leisure possibilities. We believe this is an area that's been significantly under-explored here in New Zealand and Autism NZ is keen to make some inroads into ways we can better help adults with ASD.

We want to make this project as useful as possible for our members, so we'd love it if you would tell us what you need in terms of support around resilience and self-esteem and we will endeavour to incorporate your suggestions.

Please email any suggestions or comments you might have to Matt Frost via email, matt.frost@autismnz.co.nz



Community support for adults with ASD



The truth is that the vast majority of the funding available for support services for people living with ASD goes towards children and young people under the age of 16. It's just the simple fact that this is what our funders want us to spend the money on and often adults with ASD are left to manage in their communities on their own.

But it's not all bad news, and whilst we are furiously advocating for increased funding and availability of support services for adults with ASD, there are definitely some services out there for adults.

What's available will depend on where you live, but nationally, many adults with ASD may be eligible for help from Supported Independent Living Services in their region. Supported Independent Living services provide a means of supporting a person who wishes to live in their own home or in a flat by themselves or with others. The person usually needs a level of support or supervision that is beyond what is provided by personal support and household management services.

The best way to contact Supported Independent Living services in your region is to contact your local Autism NZ Branch – they'll point you in the right direction.

For adults who don't need this level of support, many of our branches offer Adult ASD support groups that meet regularly for social gatherings and mutual support. Contact your local Autism NZ branch for more information on adult support groups in your area - and if there currently isn't one available, perhaps you could follow Duncan's example (see story on P x) and start one yourself!

How a little support got me my independence

Here's a short piece from a young adult connected with our Canterbury branch. She tells her story about how she gained her independence:

I am a young woman with Asperger's Syndrome, who has found my own way of living independently within the community. This was achieved by an initial needs assessment with Lifelinks and Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC) while I was still living at home.

It was then followed by a referral to Insight's Supported Living team (SL) who met with me and my family and devised a

support plan. Kim is my community support worker (CSW) who assists and continues to support me in my daily life. There was a period of time allocated for me to learn life skills that I would need to develop to live independently. I learned to cook for myself, making curries and stir fries, which are the types of food I like to cook. Sometimes they don't always turn out how I expect and one of my casseroles boiled over in the oven and I had to clean it up, I was very annoyed with this at the time but slowly learned that it's all part of the learning process.

I have learned to do my own supermarket shopping, by writing a shopping list. Budgeting and planning meals makes this task a little easier. I also do my own laundry, there was a small problem when I bought the wrong laundry powder but no harm was done.

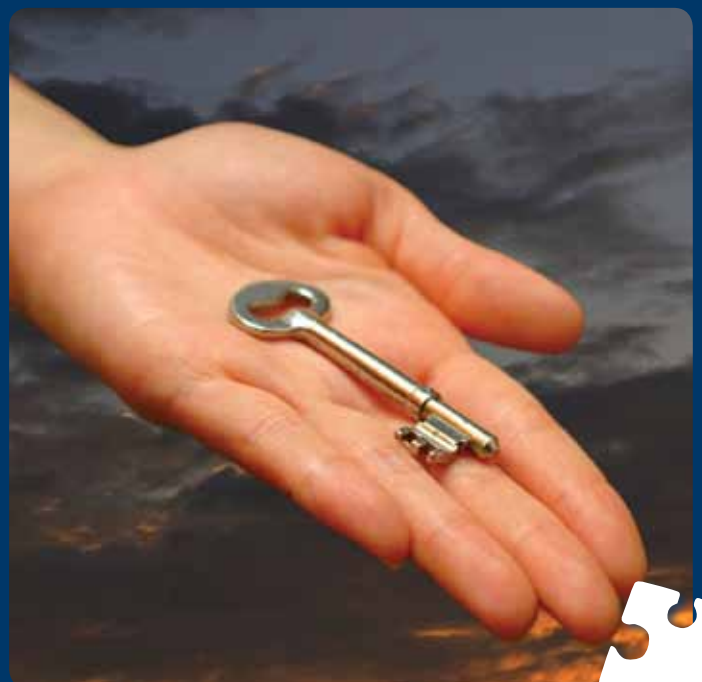
There are times that I get frustrated when I can't do things but that's life. Kim helped me to find a flat in the community when I was ready to move out of my parent's home after 28 years. We had meetings at WINZ to ask for additional financial support to pay my rent and to purchase household items. I was very nervous about moving out of home but with the support of my family and Kim I had belief in myself that I could do it.

It was a bit boring in the beginning living on my own, but now I have learned to enjoy my own space and time. Sometimes I go for a walk and also I joined a gym, I have the internet, and I belong to some community groups which interest me. I have attended university for a semester and achieved credits towards my BA at the University of Canterbury.

I am hoping to find part time employment in the future and am working towards this goal. There is another agency for supported employment that helps me look for work.

I believe I would have moved out of home at some stage however having a support worker enabled me to move out of home earlier than without one and I have on going support, encouragement and opportunities.

Source: Autism NZ's Canterbury Branch August 2011 Newsletter





Funding Success for Schools Toolkit

It's no secret that things have been tight in terms of money for the not-for-profit sector, and as Alison Molloy explained in her welcome note for this newsletter, Autism NZ has certainly felt the heat from the lack of funding available at the moment.

Which means we've got all the more reason to be very pleased with the recent launch of a project to help schools improve access to education for all children, and especially those on the autism spectrum.

"This project has been made possible by support from Pub Charity who have provided the funding to develop a toolkit and deliver it into every school in the country. Our big goals are to improve the opportunities for all New Zealand children to get the most they can from their education and to make our schools more inclusive," explains Alison.

It's a big project, and the funding is significant – more than \$750,000 over the next two years. It will take approximately 18-24 months, including follow up and support, and we are very excited about the chance we have to make a positive difference to the education of our children.

We believe that the toolkit will help school staff to manage the teaching challenges and difficulties that ASD presents and improve the quality of learning within New Zealand's classrooms by providing teachers, teacher aides and all school staff with the tools required to understand the Autism Spectrum and recognise the triggers that can lead to disruptive behaviour and then reduce their incidence. The positive benefits of the toolkit have been recognised by the Ministry of Education who are very interested in supporting this exciting project.

We'll bring you more information on this Toolkit as it develops over the coming months, but we do want to stress that the funding for this incredible project will have no impact on the everyday financial status of Autism NZ and its branches. This money has been supplied thanks to the vision and support of Pub Charity, but is earmarked for this specific project only.

Funding for ongoing day-to-day support for people with autism and their families remains a key issue for the autism community. Please keep doing all that you can to promote an awareness of autism in New Zealand – we need every bit of help we can get to achieve our ambitious strategic plan.

An update from our Library

One of the ways we support our members is through our library service and bookshop. Our library contains more than 480 books and 35 DVDs and we are adding to it all the time. These books and DVDs range from inspirational stories to teaching strategies and there is a goldmine of information for our members, parents, teachers and other professionals. The library is based in Christchurch and books are mailed out, so you can take advantage of the service no matter where you are located in NZ.

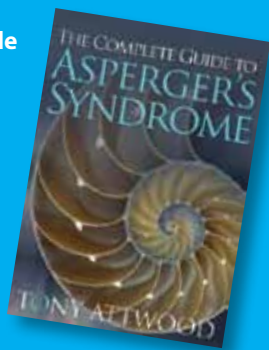
In addition to our extensive library, we also have an online bookshop full of useful resources available for purchase. You can access both our library and bookshop here: <http://www.autismnz.org.nz/shop> or call us on 0800 AUTISM.

Featured Book:

Tony Attwood – The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome.

The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome is the definitive handbook for anyone affected by Asperger's syndrome (AS). It brings together a wealth of information on all aspects of the syndrome for children through to adults. Drawing on case studies and personal accounts from Attwood's extensive clinical experience, and from his correspondence with individuals with AS, this book is both authoritative and extremely accessible. Essential reading for families and individuals affected by AS as well as teachers, professionals and employers coming in contact with people with AS, this book should be on the bookshelf of anyone who needs to know or is interested in this complex condition.

This book is available from our shop at NZ \$59.00, or can be borrowed from the library.



TRAINING UPDATE

We are still scheduling **help!** and **Earlybird** training courses throughout New Zealand for the next two terms. If we get the numbers to run a course in an area, we're more than happy to arrange one, so please don't hesitate to let us know if we can help.

To find out about a course near you, contact Pat at the Autism NZ office on 04 470 7616 or email pat.gluck@autismnz.org.nz.

help! courses

help! courses are available to parents and carers of school age children with a probable diagnosis of autism.

The course provides parents and carers with information, advice and support and helps to develop an understanding of autistic spectrum disorders and positive strategies, as well as knowledge of rights, benefits and of local support services.

EarlyBird courses

EarlyBird courses are available to parents and carers of children under five years old with a probable diagnosis of autism

The course will help parents and carers learn to understand their child's autism; to develop communication with their child and to manage their child's behaviour.

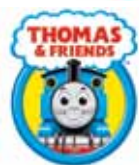
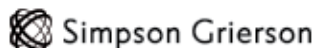
This photo was taken by Robyn Young from our Christchurch office after the impressive August snow dump!



Our Supporters

We are forever grateful to our supporters and funders, whose contributions go a long way towards making a difference to our members.

We'd like to say a special thanks to **Pub Charity**, the **Lottery Grants Board** and **Lion Foundation** for your funding support; and to **Y&R**, **Footprint Books**, **Simpson Grierson**, **Springfree Trampolines**, **MedicAlert**, **Haven Licensing**, **Angels for Children Charitable Trust**, **Sovereign Sunshine**, **Flicker Candles**, **Newsletters Ltd** and **Harcourts** for your ongoing assistance.



Sling Shot is 'Raising the Flag' for autism

Raising the Flag empowers Slingshot customers to choose to have a portion of their monthly bill donated to an Autism NZ Branch. Then each month, Slingshot will send us a cheque to help those affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

To join Slingshot for internet and tolls, visit www.slingshot.co.nz/autismnz or phone **0800 89 2000**.

If you are already a Slingshot customer, simply let them know you want to be part of this programme and they'll link your account.



Shine a light for autism

The official Autism Candle is made with 100% natural soy wax, a pure cotton wick and is infused with coconut and lime. It comes in a specially designed tin which is easy to post and makes for a great gift.

Created by the award-winning Candles of New Zealand and available from Stevens stores nationwide or Flicker Candle Emporium's boutique website: www.flickercandles.co.nz



\$8 from each candle sold is donated to Autism NZ

Our Branch information

Our branches have a lot more information to share than we are able to include in this newsletter, so please visit www.autismnz.org.nz to find out what is happening in your region.

Branch	Address
National Office 04 470 7616 info@autismnz.org.nz	PO Box 12599 Thorndon, Wellington Ground Floor, Molesworth House, 101 Molesworth Street, Wellington
Auckland 09 846 0913 auckland@autismnz.org.nz	PO Box 41420 65 Morningside Drive St Lukes Auckland 1025
Bay of Plenty 07 571 0003 0800 571 000 bayofplenty@autismnz.org.nz	PO Box 841 Tauranga 3140 Compass Community Village, 17th Avenue, Tauranga 3112
Canterbury/West Coast 03 343 2225 canterbury@autismnz.org.nz	PO Box 42014, Christchurch 8149 Level 1, Trevinos Building, 22 Riccarton Road, Riccarton, Christchurch 8011
Gisborne 06 868 8826 06 863 3380 gisborne@autismnz.org.nz	38 Childers Road, Gisborne Or C/O The Poverty Club, Cnr Childers Rd & Customhouse St, Gisborne
Hawkes Bay	Serviced by National Office
Manawatu 0800 AUTISM (288 476) manuwatu@autismnz.org.nz	PO Box 4624, Palmerston North 4422
Northland	Serviced by National Office
Nelson / Marlborough 03 539 0285 nelson-marlborough@autismnz.org.nz	PO Box 18, Upper Moutere 7144 197 Martin Road, Upper Moutere Nelson
Otago 03 474 9640 otago@autismnz.org.nz	PO Box 13102, Green Island Dunedin 9052 514 Great King Street, Dunedin 9016
Southland 03 216 5019 southland@autismnz.org.nz	C/O 153 Conyers St, Invercargill 9812
Taranaki 06 769 5958 taranaki@autismnz.org.nz	Communication House, 62 Powderham Street, New Plymouth 4310
Taupo 07 376 8272 taupo@autismnz.org.nz	20a Wheretia St, Taupo 3330
Waikato	Serviced by National Office
Wanganui 06 343 2082 wanganui@autismnz.org.nz	C/O 180 Upper Roberts Avenue, RD14, Wanganui 4584
Wairarapa	Serviced by National Office (opening soon)
Wellington 04 472 1007 Ext 810 wellington@autismnz.org.nz	PO Box 12599, Thorndon, Wellington Ground Floor, Molesworth House, 101 Molesworth Street, Wellington

Sell your home with Harcourts

If you or someone you know is planning on selling and choose Harcourts, they will donate 10% of the commission to Autism NZ. Conditions apply, so please see our story on the front page for more information.