

across the spectrum

for the people, families and communities of Spectrum Care



Issue: 63 – Autumn 2009

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Having a ball at the Ball – Fantasyland 2008

The Spectrum Care annual ball (held at the Ellerslie Event Centre on Saturday 18 October 2008) turned fantasy into reality for over 500 people. Staff and service users alike arrived ready to party, dressed in a dazzling array of costumes ranging from superheroes and royalty to rappers and fairies. After a sumptuous buffet, the crowd rock 'n' rolled the night away to the 'White Sands' band.

Spectrum Care's CEO Chris 'the Sultan' Harris and Telecom's Sponsorship Manager Alex 'Batman' Milne awarded the prizes on the night.

'Best of Best Costumes' awards went to Kevin Webster from Fairview and Hannah Twyman from Ferndale. Kevin was impressive as a Red Indian Chief and Hannah looked beautiful, dressed as a very regal Princess Diana.

'Best Dancers' awards went to Jason Tofa from Prangley and Karen Toft from Olsen. Jason and Karen impressed the crowd and judges alike with their dance moves.

Spot prizes were also awarded throughout the evening.

We'd like to offer particular thanks to our sponsor, Telecom, for supporting the event. Staff and service users greatly appreciate Telecom's role in supporting Spectrum Care. We'd also like to thank all attendees for making the evening such a resounding success.



Cruising the information super highway

With significant input from families, people with disabilities and service providers, 'Life's for Living' (a trust in South Australia) has developed an on-line application specifically for children, young people and adults with disabilities, and their families.

'All I Want You to Know About Me' is designed to be a user-friendly web book which can be created and updated via a web browser by people with disabilities, along with their families or support people.

A wide range of information can be entered into the web book such as:

- Likes and dislikes
- Strengths and support needs
- Family and friends
- Medical and health needs
- Communication styles

'All I Want You to Know About Me' focuses on people's skills and abilities while also providing pages for parents, family members and support workers to upload specific information. With the permission of the author of the web book, this can be printed to share with health centres and teachers.



We believe 'All I Want You to Know About Me' will be a significant tool supporting individuals in their daily lives. As a result, Spectrum Care is currently piloting this product across a sample of families and service users. The pilot will allow us to evaluate how well 'All I Want You to Know About Me' meets the needs of disabled people and their families in New Zealand before offering the product to the wider disability community.

The art of giving back

Since its inception, Spectrum Care has benefited from legacies and bequests, and this tradition has continued to the present day.

By making a donation through a will, supporters of Spectrum Care's activities can be part of this tradition and play a key role in developing Spectrum Care's capacity as a world-class service provider to the disability sector.

You'll also be making a significant contribution toward the lives of people with disabilities now and in the future. Bequest donations directly assist the people we serve by providing resources and supporting initiatives to ensure that Spectrum Care continues to help people with disabilities live great lives.

A bequest or endowed gift keeps giving forever and even modest gifts can provide lasting benefits.

Bequests can take a variety of forms:

- Specific bequest – This is a gift of a fixed sum of money, property, shares and/or valuables of various descriptions.
- Percentage of estate – As the title would suggest, this is a gift of a specific percentage of your estate.
- Residual bequest – This type of gift involves leaving all or a portion of the remaining assets of your estate after all debts, taxes, fees and other bequests have been paid.
- Deferred bequest – This is a gift that provides for any relatives or friends during their lifetimes, but also benefits Spectrum Care after their deaths.

Making a bequest is a powerful way of supporting Spectrum Care, often at a level not possible during your lifetime.

Leave a legacy that lasts – make a difference; make a bequest.

If you'd like additional information about bequests or would prefer to meet with a representative, please contact Heather Saunderson at (09) 634 9789 or email Heather.Saunderson@spectrumcare.org.nz.

Events calendar

Spectrum Care's 'Showcase' Talent Quest Grand Final will be held from 1pm-4pm on Friday 31 July 2009 at the Freeman's Bay Community Hall. Regional heats will be held throughout June, with the finalists from each region then going through to the Grand Final.

Spectrum Care's annual Ball will be held on Saturday 17 October 2009 at the Ellerslie Convention Centre. Don't forget to put it in your diaries – it's always a great night out! The theme for this year's Ball is yet to be decided, but more details will be available closer to the date.

The Spectrum Care Art Exhibition will be held here at The Hub (270 Neilson Street, Onehunga) from Wednesday to Friday, 26-28 August 2009. This year's categories are Sunflower, Abstract, Still life, Portrait, Open Photography, Open Craft and Wooden Art. It's a fantastic event and is open to all our people to exhibit their work in all mediums.

Our aim is to have another art exhibition later in the year, with more details available closer to the date.



Spectrum Care in 2009 – reflections from the leadership team

The Spectrum Care Trust Board enters its 15th year of service with excitement and enthusiasm. There are many new initiatives underway which will support service improvement, better communication and improved outcomes. We are on track to build an environment of improved responsiveness through enhancements to our IT systems and an assertive focus on staff training, aimed at person-centred outcomes and active support for the people who use our services.

There has been considerable reflection on how Spectrum Care can re-position itself to meet new challenges in the future. We are serving many generations of expectations, from the people who use Spectrum Care services as well as their families. For some people, the experience has been an important post-institutional opportunity to live, as closely as possible, a normal life in the community – albeit in group residential settings. At the other end of the spectrum, we're focusing our efforts on working with families to enhance the supported-living potential of young individuals for whom disability is not the key defining characteristic in their lives.

This is not a situation of 'one size fits all'. Each family and individual service user has a unique set of aspirations and expectations, and Spectrum Care must constantly innovate and challenge itself to honour, respect, respond to and promote that uniqueness.

To that end, Spectrum Care has been actively working on a vision for service delivery five years hence. The vision recognises the need for relationships with families which clearly reflect integrity and responsiveness as we embrace new opportunities for community integration and improved outcomes for service user. It recognises the need for promoting and supporting greater capacity for self advocacy amongst service users. It also anticipates the need for greater choice and transparency in the range and quality of services which improve life outcomes.

Visions are not achieved overnight and the current economic environment would suggest prudence rather than rapid change. Spectrum Care will need to become more efficient and budget conscious, but not at the expense of service quality. The Spectrum way to improve quality will be in the areas of collaboration and engagement to ensure that staff, service users and families (as well as funders and fellow provider organisations) are working well together to achieve positive outcomes.

Effective collaboration requires positive regard, mutual respect and goodwill, as well as a significant degree of trust to work through issues of mutual interest or endeavour. To build that environment within Spectrum Care, there will need to be some shift in the current organisational culture and some staff attitudes. This will be part of Spectrum's journey towards 'Business Excellence' and we hope this edition of *Across the Spectrum* will set the scene for a future that is filled with optimism, enthusiasm and excitement going forward in 2009.

Alan's story

My name is Alan Brewer and I live at Olsen house in Hillsborough. I came to Spectrum Care from another organisation called Matea Trust in June 2008.

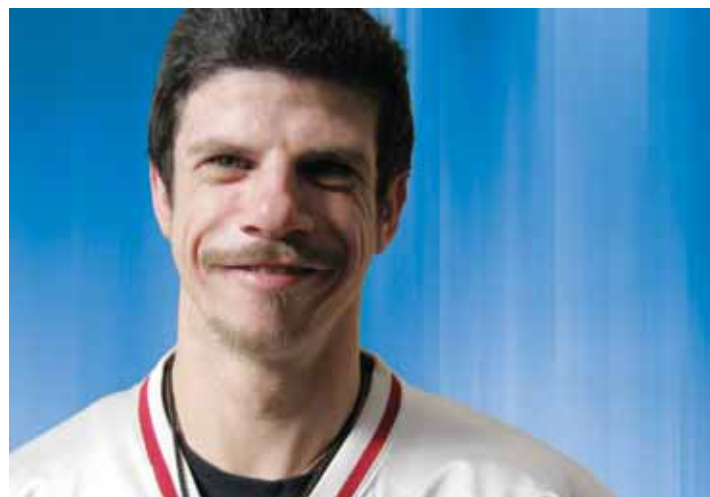
I live with four other people and have shared duties in the house like vacuuming and hanging out the washing.

I work five days a week. I spend two days a week at Workforce¹ untangling the headphones for airlines, so you can all listen to your movies when you fly overseas. The other three days, I attend The Mall where I learn work skills. I enjoy keeping busy and earning money so that I can spend it on things like magazines and lollies.

I have other hobbies like listening to my stereo and I have a huge collection of CDs. I also have an interest in Maori culture and often listen to my Maori CDs.

I get books from the library about bone and jade carving and, one day, I'd like to learn to do this for myself. My dream is to get a ta moko on my shoulder, once my Mum is happy with that idea!

I'm very close to my family and it's a big one. I spend a lot of time with my Mum and stepdad, and I stay with them (and my sister Megan and brother Conin) on weekends. Last weekend, we went to an Elvis concert at Tui Glen Park which was awesome. In a couple of weeks' time, my Mum and I will be going to a camp for people with Williams Syndrome² in Ngaruwahia. The camp is a chance to catch up and have fun with people who have similar experiences and skills as my own – I can't wait!



Notes:

¹Workforce Personnel is the Supported Employment division of Workforce Auckland Incorporated is an enterprise and provides employment options for disabled Aucklanders. Workforce Personnel assesses people to determine their work skill ability then will develop individualised programmes of supported employment, taking people with an intellectual disability into the ordinary workforce.

²Williams syndrome is a rare neurodevelopmental disorder estimated to occur in 1/7500 births. It is characterised by a distinctive, 'elfin' facial appearance, along with a low nasal bridge; an unusually cheerful demeanour and ease with strangers; learning disability coupled with unusual language skills; a love for music; and cardiovascular problems, such as supravulvar aortic stenosis and transient hypercalcaemia.

Climbing Mt Everest

Organisations, like people, use techniques, processes and experience to guide their decision making and work practices. Sometimes, however, what worked in the past doesn't work in the present, despite being a 'tried and tested' technique.

Both people and organisations are often uncomfortable with change and can feel pressured to stick with the 'status quo', even if it's seen to be sub optimal. It can feel deeply unsettling to move away from established, comfortable patterns – particularly where they're historically successful – and easier to simply stick to what we know, even if it leads to stagnation.

Accreditation is an area in which Spectrum Care has excelled in recent years, but more recently we've come to feel that the accreditation process used by the Health Auditor fails to sufficiently challenge us as an organisation. Our desire to succeed at an international level has driven Spectrum Care to reach beyond the status quo and seek greater challenges in this area.

Though it's been a commendable achievement to attain three years' accreditation for two consecutive terms (indeed, it's something that all New Zealand health providers strive for), Spectrum Care has for some time felt a degree of discomfort with our accreditation process.

The fact is that some people and organisations want to engage in more challenging situations, lift the bar on their own performance and really test themselves in a harder, more exacting environment. Some people want to climb Everest; others are happy with less lofty ambitions.

However, the excitement of climbing Everest must be tempered by the risk of finding out that we might not be as good as we hope or believe. But we're driven to know if we are.



Last year, Spectrum Care handed back its 'Accreditation Certificate' to the auditing agency and turned to face Everest. We felt the need to test ourselves against other high-performing global organisations (be they car manufacturers, hospitals or training organisations) via an internationally recognised benchmarking or accreditation body.

We've turned our eyes upward and are now rising to the challenge we've set ourselves. We've chosen to test ourselves against the best in the world, using more demanding, more rigorous and more sophisticated global criteria for performance excellence. For this purpose, we've chosen the 'Business Excellence' model, based upon the international 'Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence'. In the world of accreditation, this is the highest, most challenging mountain we could find.

Our early work has given us new insights into how we can improve our services – insights we were unlikely to have found had we stayed where we were.

Why is this important to you? Because when we build a better organisation, we build better systems, better work practices and better staff. This leads us to our primary objective, to deliver better life experiences to the people we support.

Climbing this mountain lets us help our people create, believe in and conquer their own Everest – and that, after all, is why we're here.

To find out more about Baldrige criteria visit www.baldrige.com.

Speaking out

What is an 'advocate'? An advocate is defined as "one who speaks for another; one who pleads a cause; to plead for; to speak in favour of". In essence, an advocate ensures that the rights of another are being upheld, while also supporting and encouraging them to advocate for themselves.

One of the most important aspects of advocacy is in the provision of information. An advocate can (and should) provide a range of information to the individuals who seek their assistance, from rights and entitlements to where and how to seek help.

Communication is difficult for many people who access Spectrum Care services because of a limited ability to verbalise what they want or need. As a result, understanding and identifying an individual's needs and aspirations is crucial in providing our service users with a rewarding life. This is why, within our organisation, an advocate's role is so important.

The four points below outline essential facts which ensure the rights of the people supported by Spectrum Care are upheld.

1. The Spectrum Care house is the service user's "home".
2. A parent ceases to be the legal guardian once the service user reaches 18 years.

3. Welfare guardians must consult with the service user, regardless of their mental and/or physical disability. Decisions should always be made in the best interests of the service user and decisions should not be made about the service user's personal property.
4. Service users should be encouraged to be as independent as possible and will be given opportunities to voice their concerns. To this end, service users can attend 'Consumer Group' meetings and 'People First' meetings. Concerns can also be voiced through an external advocate or by contacting the Advocacy Service within Spectrum Care.

Any questions regarding welfare guardians, property managers, Advocacy Services or disability services and groups can be directed to the coordinator of Advocacy Services at Spectrum Care at (09) 634 3790 ext 312 or (0274) 757 577.

Look at me now – Alofa’s story

Alofa Foalima was born in Samoa and immigrated with her mother to New Zealand at the age of 12. When her mother passed away, Alofa’s sister Siava undertook the supporting role, but Alofa was placed into care when Siava became ill.

When she was placed into care, Alofa was displaced from her family and spent many years living in different rest homes in the Hawke’s Bay. Four years ago, Siava arranged for Alofa to be transferred to a rest home in Auckland so that she could be close to her family.

Phyllis Trelease, who managed the rest home in Auckland, recognised that a rest home was not the right place for Alofa and felt Spectrum Care would provide her with improved opportunities and environment. Phyllis contacted Spectrum Care and the support networks were put in place to enable a successful transition for Alofa from the rest home to Bridge Haven home in Mangere. Her family was pleased to see Alofa move into Spectrum Care adult residential services, and this transition was recognised as the first step in Alofa’s personnel growth and development.

Living at Bridge Haven opened opportunities for Alofa to develop daily living skills. Alofa enjoyed living in the house, going shopping in the community and being around people. As her personality blossomed, Alofa displayed her love for Pacific music and dance, which became a regular feature in her home.

When she first arrived at Bridge Haven, Alofa was unable to do many things for herself and required a lot of active support with daily living skills and tasks about the home. Alofa would spend most of the day observing rather than participating and her communication was difficult to understand.

According to her family, Alofa had been very independent and helped her mother with the chores at home. She was also able to communicate well in Samoan, her native tongue. Over the time she was displaced from her family, Alofa had lost much of her independence and communication skills.

As Alofa settled in to life at Bridge Haven, her support workers were able to develop ‘Outcomes’-based goals that acknowledged her wants and desires, and worked towards achieving them. To enhance identification with her Samoan culture, support workers encouraged Alofa to visit Spectrum Care homes with people who had also come from Samoa. When visiting Malae Ola, Alofa met Talavou Tavita and she started speaking with him in Samoan. They would often be heard laughing together. Alofa was slowly regaining her language skills, her confidence and her independence. As Alofa’s support workers recognised the value of her friendship with Talavou, the friendship became one of her Outcomes goals. Alofa began visiting Talavou at Malae Ola weekly for lunch or dinner, and enjoyed the music and dance at the monthly culture nights they both attended.

When a vacancy arose at Malae Ola, Alofa was asked if she would like to move into the house permanently. Alofa chose to move in and her sister Siava supported her, so Alofa became part of the group living at Malae Ola. Alofa chose to live with people of similar ability, age, ethnic identity and with similar interests, which was an important milestone in her life.

It has been exciting for support workers to see Alofa regain her independence, make informed choices and achieve Outcomes’ goals. Alofa can now do many things for herself and has a valued social role within her home and community. She has gained confidence and recognition of who she is and what she wants, and will clearly indicate her needs, preferences and dislikes.

Alofa has joined the Cosy Club and regularly attends to socialise with friends. Ten-pin bowling and shopping are also favourites. Alofa belongs to the Cultural Pacific dance group where she attends weekly practise sessions. One of her new goals is to return to the rest home (where she lived for four years) with the Cultural Pacific dance group and perform for her friends there.

A highlight for Alofa in 2008 was attending the Spectrum Care ‘Fantasyland’ Ball, shopping for her outfit and the limousine ride to and from the ball.

Alofa and her family would like to acknowledge the following people: Masi Koneli (House Leader), Bridge Haven and Malae Ola Support Workers, Amerika Wilson (Service Manager), Vicki Quist (Service Coordinator), Louise Williams (Cultural Services), Geoff Pratt (Behaviour Support), Phyllis Trelease (Rest Home Manager), Taikura Trust and Spectrum Care Trust.



Spectrum Care

Vision:

People with Disabilities Living Great Lives

Mission:

Creating Opportunities to Achieve Positive Individual Outcomes

Values:

Person Centred / Innovation / Partnership / Commitment and Passion / Excellence

The night of 'stars'

The outstanding efforts and commitment displayed by Spectrum Care staff were formally acknowledged at the SOSCARS, our annual staff social and awards night, held last year on Thursday 20 November 2008. The number and quality of nominations for each SOSCARS category were impressive.

Spectrum Care's CEO, Chris Harris, opened the awards ceremony by confirming his appreciation for the tenacious team effort made over the previous year. Chris also recognised the contribution each individual has made toward Spectrum Care's ongoing success in helping people with disabilities live great lives. The nominations for each category were recognised and celebrated, with each winner or 'star' stepping into the spotlight to receive their SOSCARS and gift.

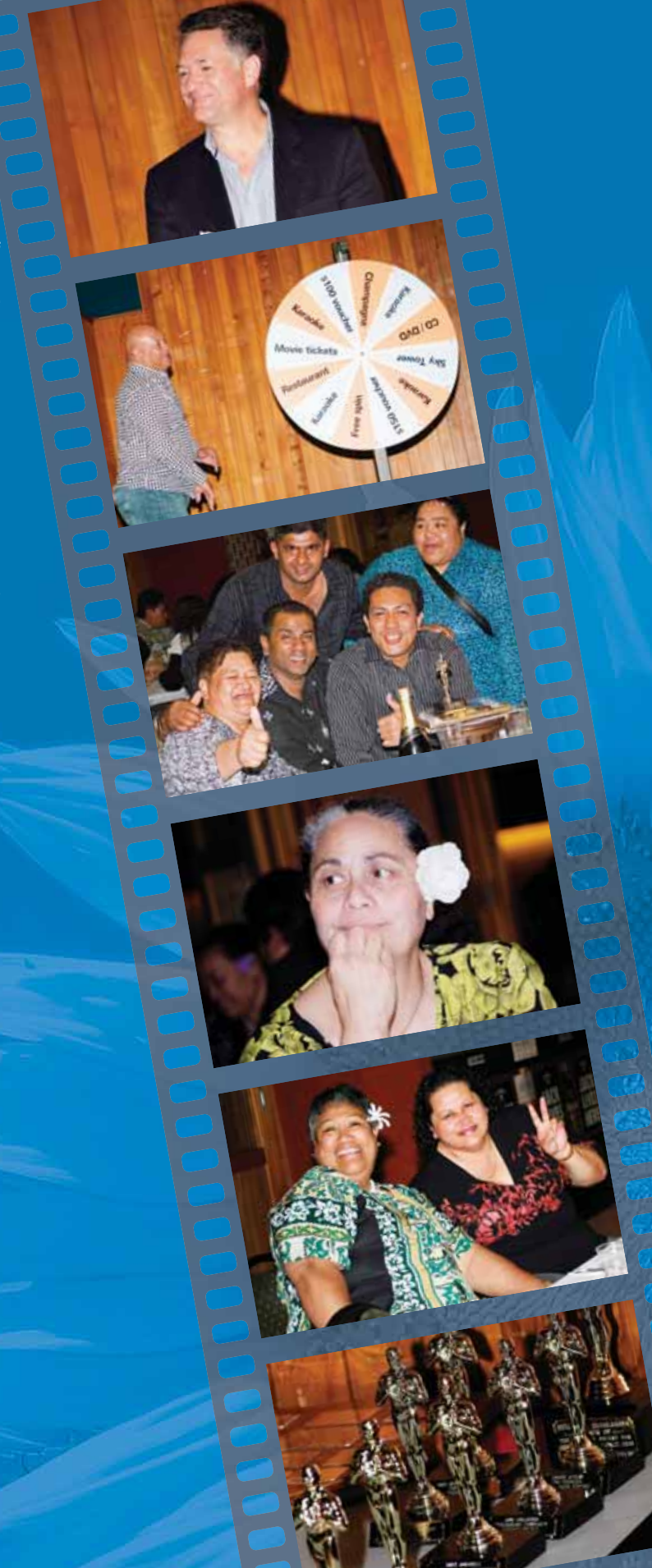
The celebration continued late into the night as everyone enjoyed a buffet dinner, spun the Wheel of Fortune and contributed to some enthusiastic and memorable karaoke performances.

The 2008 SOSCARS Stars were:

- Outstanding Community Support Workers:John Williams
.....Jane Gulliford
- Outstanding House Leader:Masi Konelio
- Outstanding Service Coordinator:Vince Doggrell
- Outstanding Support Role – Head Office:Dorle Van Der Westhuizen
.....Cheryl D'Silva
- Cultural Award:.....Asish Narayan
- Plaque of Excellence:Hemanthi Ekneligoda

Congratulations to all – winners and staff alike.

We'd also like to offer our thanks and appreciation to all those involved in organising the event. It wouldn't have been such a success without your time and effort.



Would you like to receive *Across the Spectrum*?

Across the Spectrum is aimed at celebrating the achievements of individuals with an intellectual disability as well as promoting awareness and understanding of disability issues. If you would like to receive *Across the Spectrum* regularly, or know of anyone who you think would benefit from a copy then please let us know. Please email info@spectrumcare.org.nz. If you'd like to receive a printed copy of *Across the Spectrum*, don't forget to include your address details.