

Across the Spectrum

ISSUE 104 SUMMER 2020

Inside:

- > Finding a way together
- > Haere mai Spectrum Care
- > Introducing Programme Astra
- > Enhancing mana by enhancing communication
- > Communicating beyond barriers
- > Achieving independence together

From our CE

With the festive season in full swing and the year coming to a close, I'd like to reflect on some recent experiences that embody the story of Spectrum Care.

A visit to Upper Hutt recently saw the opening of a new home for four young adults leaving home for the first time. Through the combined efforts of our Spectrum Care and Homes of Choice teams, whanau were able to see their children transition – like other children their age – into a flatting arrangement. Hopes are high that we can help maximise the potential of these young adults to ensure they live lives of choice, freedom and independence.

We received feedback in our 2019 Customer Survey about needing to improve our communication with whanau and the people we support, and a small but significant action has been introduced: a new standard practice, where the Recruitment Team capture a short description and photo of the new staff member, to be shared by the Service Coordinator with people we support and their whanau.

These short introductions make all the difference in keeping people informed.

Further feedback received in the 2019 Whanau Survey was to 'put fun into respite'. Hats off to our Wellington respite team for a recent 'planned break' for five young people, that involved an overnight stay at the Wellington Zoo spider enclosure!

Nothing like taking you out of your comfort zone and doing something unusual – very cool! Great to see people wanting to use their funding more flexibly to create memorable experiences.

In closing, I hope you have the opportunity for a relaxing break over the coming weeks, and enjoy some valuable time with friends and family.

Wishing you and your whanau a safe and happy holiday – from all at Spectrum Care!

Sean Stowers – Chief Executive





Opening of Alnwich House

At the end of 2019 a group of mums got together to discuss the future of their children. They decided they needed a forever home for them. They contacted Spectrum Care and at the start of 2020 we meet with them and discussed how we could support this process.

It was a full partnership approach with the families and people involved in every decision. They were involved in all of the interviews, hiring of the staff, as well as even deciding what furniture they were going to have in their homes. Staff, whanau and the people being supported, all worked together to find a way and plan what goals they wanted to achieve over the next year. The people also welcomed the staff into their homes to get to know them better before they all moved into Alnwich house which has helped to form some good relationships. Our four young friends (Cassie, James, Andrew and Chontel-Rose) are now living in their new home with some wonderful support staff. The whole process from start to finish clearly illustrated the person-centred approach that Spectrum Care creates to enable disabled people to have supports that are tailored to their individual needs and goals.



Lockdown Balls at Spence and Salisbury

Lockdown was not going to stop the residents of Spence and Salisbury from going to the ball.

The annual Spectrum Care Ball is a hugely anticipated event for many of the people we work alongside, it provides ordinary life outcomes for the attendees – and everyone has a fantastic time too! But with social distancing measures in place the Spectrum Care event was unable to proceed. Thankfully, some clever thinking from the staff at Spence and Salisbury house meant a way was found, together. Perhaps there are a some fairy godmother genetics in the staff or perhaps it is the strength and commitment to the people that they support that made these fantastic 'House Balls' happen. A huge thanks to the staff at Spence and Salisbury for putting on these events.



Haere mai Spectrum Care

Spectrum Care welcomed as Tangata Whenua of Te Manukanuka o Hoturoa Marae

After 26 years of holding powhiri at our Onehunga location, our move to new offices in Greenlane also meant it was time to find our own Marae. After an extensive search, we chose Te Manukanuka o Hoturoa Marae – otherwise known as ‘The Airport Marae’.

Te Manukanuka o Hoturoa Marae is a Marae that is adorned with magnificent carvings and tukutuku panels that have been handcrafted by master carvers and weavers. It bears the name of the captain of the Tainui waka Hoturoa who was a great navigator who led the Tainui people to the lands of Aotearoa, New Zealand. The Marae stands proud overlooking the Manukau Harbour and its ancestral lands.

The first powhiri welcomed several new staff members from many different parts of New Zealand and after being welcomed onto Te Manukanuka o Hoturoa Marae, as tangata whenua (people of the land), our Spectrum roopu will now have the opportunity to welcome all our new inductees in this setting. The marae was also where they received day one of their induction training. This is a very positive consequence from our recent office move that allows Spectrum Care to be more connected with the community. Having a Marae for powhiri supports to build and strengthen relationships with the people we work alongside and the community.

It was also great to see Olivia Walker karanga us onto the marae. While she's done this many times at our old office, it was her first experience on a marae. Tumeke Olivia! Plus, long time Spectrum Care ambassador, Wichmond Tavioni spoke on behalf of the new inductees as he too was welcomed onto the Marae as part of protocol. Ka pai korero, Wichmond!



Gayleen Wahitapu, a core part of our Awhi group remarked that “Today was a proud moment for me as a member of the Awhi group for Spectrum Care as we finally have a marae to have monthly powhiri. This has been a long journey for such a long time for the Awhi group”.

Our Service manager Maui Paraki said “The Powhiri at Te Manukanuka o Hoturoa Marae, symbolised a growing authenticity of the partnership with Tangata Whenua.

I was reminded when reading some recent work around this kawanatanga (Partnership and shared decision making,) and rangatiratanga, (protection, revitalisation and development of Taonga Maori), about the need to actively pursue and develop opportunities that treated as a central focus of the opportunity for the voice of Maori across all of our organisation to be heard and experienced. That new inductees can go on to an authentic Tikanga based Marae, in a culturally safe way, speaks to the skills and capacity we have developed at Spectrum Care. To think that the first voice heard is the Kai Karanga of a person from our service, whom years ago had set that task as lifetime goal, speaks to a significant journey and opportunity.

On a personal note, the Powhiri reminded that all things start from a place of respect, and patience, whether it's custom, tradition or difference, therefore to see our Awhi group finally have a Marae where they can stand proud is testament to those that have come before us and those who carry on.”

A big thanks also to the Awhi Group and, in particular, Gaylene Wahitapu for making this connection for us. Our Awhi group provide appropriate cultural support for Spectrum Care and for Maori people we support and work to enhance a culturally appropriate workplace for all staff.



Every person with a disability deserves a life of choice, freedom and independence

Introducing Programme Astra

Over the next three years, employees of Spectrum Care will have the opportunity to participate in an accelerated training programme. Programme Astra will prepare all of us – staff, people and whanau – for the future. It's the strength of our commitment to the people we support that we're most proud of.

At the end of the training, our staff will have learnt about:

- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) – uncovering the real reasons for behaviour and improving the quality of people's lives
- Building and nurturing intentional networks – more tools to invite people in and to support relationships
- Informed decision making – people will make more of their own decisions with support
- Personal planning that matters

Because we face challenges together and empower capabilities, the training is for the whole team, supported by the programme and coaches selected from Spectrum Care who have been provided with specialised training. We are also working with managers and service coordinators to make sure each home supports the learning being completed.

There will be courses for our families and whanau to take as well. These will be delivered online and are completely optional. They will provide you with more skills to support your loved ones and help you understand how support staff can support your family members make their choices and decisions.

These training programmes have been developed from the very best disabled support services worldwide. They will, however, look familiar to people and whanau as they are similar to the practices we have been working with for several years. We have consulted within and outside of New Zealand to source and design these training programs. By making them part of our staff's normal practice, we can ensure that the people we work alongside have the best chance of maximising their potential and then we can be able to help them realise it. Programme Astra directly supports our vision that every person with a disability deserves a life of choice, freedom and independence.

Programme Astra will also take a look at our recruitment practices to make sure we are attracting additional high calibre staff to further complement the existing high levels of staff we currently have.



We need your help!

What we do at Spectrum involves investing in people and their whanau. We strongly believe in a person-centred approach to what we do, therefore we need your input. We are looking for people, whanau and staff to help us with the design, review and implementation of the programme. If you are interested, please let us know by emailing Sue Robertson at sue.robertson@spectrumcare.org.nz.

We will be sending more information out about Programme Astra on a regular basis. If you have any questions at anytime, please get in touch by emailing Sue Robertson anytime on sue.robertson@spectrumcare.org.nz.





Enhancing mana by enhancing communication

Our staff help identify the potential in each and every one of the people they work alongside, then set out to help them realise it.

Recently, we received a compliment for Gillian, the house leader at Makora, specifically around how she has supported Catherine with her goal planning, and the relationship she has built with Catherine's parents Mary and Lou. Investing in families and whanau is key to supporting them.

Gillian has made a huge effort to improve communication for Catherine – attending sign language classes, using photos, symbols and brochures to help Catherine tell us things and make decisions (e.g. planning her next holiday, Catherine selected the Hanmar springs brochure, found a picture of a massage, this is now part of her next holiday plan). Gillian makes careful note of Catherine's preferences and really thinks through how to turn these into goals and skills. Gillian noticed Catherine was choosing to order fish when out so together they formed a person centred goal around learning to cook with fish.

Last year Catherine required support to use photos and symbols to could choose her own goals, this year very little support was needed.

At Catherine's most recent goal planning meeting her parents were so pleased with her new goals, they said they were brilliant. Specifically they were impressed with:

- How Catherine seems to be so happy and really love living at Makora.
- How her House leader Gill knew lots of signs and the pictures she had prepared for the meeting were brilliant.
- The skills Catherine has developed using her iPad and computer.



Communicating beyond barriers

Thomas has a surprising goal, one that many people take for granted – he wants to be a taxpayer! Being able to earn an income has been a focus for Thomas and he has now started his own business.



For thousands of people living with disability, a life of one's own can only be achieved with support. His team has been able to work alongside Thomas to set up his very own business giving Angel card readings. Thomas doesn't speak with his words, he speaks with his heart through his Angel Cards. People from around the world can now send Thomas a picture and he will complete a reading for them. His staff show him the photo and he selects the Angel card images to be sent back to the person in the photo. Thomas has a unique ability that shows that no matter how complex someone's challenges may be, they are worthy and they are of immense value.

Thomas was struggling to get his message across to his team using standard communication cards, but it wasn't until a member of his support team suggested the Angel cards that he really began to shine. Speaking with Thomas' mother she believes his gift is that he is able to tell you what you heart wants. Interested? Visit Thomas' website here www.tomsreadings.com and find out for yourself.

Support, guidance and wholehearted optimism with every step.

Achieving independence together

Spectrum Care helps young people achieve independence by empowering capabilities and facing challenges together.

When you're 19, you long to be independent. But for thousands of people living with disability, a life of one's own can only be realised with support.

David Evans is 19 and needs help in every part of his life, but he also wants to achieve things on his own, says his mum Joanne. Spectrum Care is helping him do just this, by supporting his move into a shared flat.

At the same time, Joanne has gone from thinking she could never be parted from her boy to letting him go flatting with Spectrum's support. "He's more than ready," she says. "He loves his respite weekends, but they're no longer enough. He's nearly 20 and, ordinarily, he'd now be flatting and working or studying."

Although still in school, David's family is getting him ready for the big move early next year. "We're trying to stagger leaving school and moving out of home," says Joanne. "Doing both together would be too much."

David has been gradually prepared for 'grown-up life' over the past five years. He began with a gym programme, run by a trainer who's developed a programme specifically for disabled children and youth. "David loves the treadmill and lifting weights," says Joanne.

David has a rare developmental disorder called 15Q Syndrome. "It means he has learning difficulties and sensory issues, and generally can't look after himself," says Joanne.

However, he's physically active and attends the school holiday programme run by Spectrum Care. And now – after being gently persuaded by Spectrum Care's Chief Operating Officer Ray Finch – Joanne also lets him go for weekend breaks.

"It took a lot of trust on our part," says Joanne, "because you feel like you're handing over very precious cargo!"

David's introduction to Spectrum's weekend 'planned break' house was gentle, starting with just a few hours. He then stayed for dinner, before eventually sleeping over. "It was a big leap of faith for us," says Joanne, "but he absolutely loves going there."



The family first came to Spectrum Care five years ago, after moving from Dubai to New Zealand following a job offer for David's dad, Darren. The change for the family was huge.

David and his younger sister, Alys, had been cared for by a maid who, Joanne says, loved the children, but New Zealand and Spectrum Care offered David so much more.

This includes a Saturday club where David gets to try out activities like art and crafts. And then there's touch rugby, which Joanne says is "hilarious, because David doesn't like being touched. But he loves the camaraderie and running around the field."

And now, with a little help, a bright independent future beckons for David, while he embraces the excitement of living with other young people.

"Independence is so important to him – to his self-esteem and confidence," says Joanne. "Just knowing you can achieve something on your own is huge for young adults like him."

Article first appeared in Stuff.co.nz
www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/123441374/achieving-independence-together