

# Across the Spectrum

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## From our CE

Welcome to our first issue of *Across the Spectrum* in our new brand. We'd love your feedback, so please feel free to email [newsletter@spectrumcare.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@spectrumcare.org.nz) to let us know!

With the New Year now well underway, 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 introducing 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've had a relaxing break over the festive season and enjoyed some valuable time with friends and family.

As we're still facing a global pandemic, let's remain vigilant, look after ourselves and our whānau over the festive season, and **'Make summer unstoppable'**.

Wishing you and your whanau a safe, happy and prosperous year - from all at Spectrum Care!

Sean Stowers – Chief Executive

[spectrumcare.org.nz](http://spectrumcare.org.nz)





## Opening of Alnwich House

At the start of the year, a group of mums got together to discuss what the future might look like for their growing children.

They decided they needed a 'forever home' for their 'young adults' and contacted Spectrum Care to discuss how we could support this process.

It was a full 'partnership approach', with whanau and people involved in every decision, including interviewing and hiring staff, and deciding what furniture they were going to have in their home.

Staff, whanau and people supported all worked together to find a way and plan what goals they wanted to achieve over the next year.

The young adults also welcomed the staff into their family homes to get to know them better before they all moved into their new house.

Our four young friends (Cassie, James, Andrew and Chontel-Rose) are now living in their new home with some wonderful support staff, and the whole process

- from start to finish - clearly illustrated the person-centred approach that Spectrum Care uses to enable people to have supports that are tailored to their individual needs and goals.



## Living our best life at Spence and Salisbury

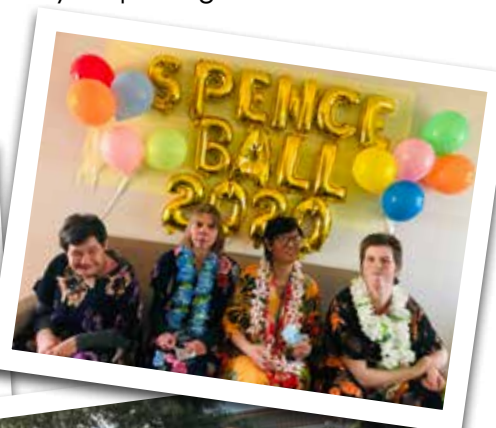
Lockdown was not going to stop the residents of Spence and Salisbury from going to the ball!

The annual Spectrum Care Ball is a hugely anticipated event for many of the people we work alongside, helping support ordinary life outcomes for the attendees, as well as a fantastic time too!

But with social-distancing measures in place, this year's Ball 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 maybe it's 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 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 of our recent office move, that allows us to strengthen relationships with the people we work alongside, our communities and iwi.

It was also great to see person we support, 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 Spectrum Care’s ‘Awhi’ Maori cultural group remarked that “Today was a proud moment, as we finally have a marae to have monthly powhiri. This has been a long journey 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 of the principles of kawanatanga (partnership and shared decision-making) and rangatiratanga (protection, revitalisation and development of taonga Maori), and about the need to develop the voice of Maori across our organisation.

“That new inductees can go on to an authentic tikanga-based marae, in a culturally safe way, speaks to the skills and capacity we’ve developed.

“And to think that the first voice heard is the kai karanga of a person we support, who years ago set that task as lifetime goal, speaks to a significant journey and opportunity.

“On a personal note, the powhiri reminded me that all things start from a place of respect and patience, whether it’s custom, tradition or difference.

“To see our Awhi group finally have a marae where we can stand proud is testament to those that have come before us and those who carry on.”

A big thanks to the Awhi Group and, in particular, Gaylene Wahitapu for making this connection for us.



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

# Introducing Programme Astra

Over the next three years, Spectrum Care staff will have the opportunity to participate in accelerated training, called Programme Astra, which will help prepare all of us – staff, people and whanau – for the future.

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

- Positive Behaviour Support – 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 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 team and work site support the learning being completed.

There will be courses for whanau. 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.

Programme Astra directly supports our vision that every person with a disability deserves a life of choice, freedom and independence.



## 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're looking for people, whanau and staff to help us with the design, review and implementation of Programme Astra.

If you're interested, please let us know by emailing [sue.robertson@spectrumcare.org.nz](mailto: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 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 (eg planning her next holiday, Catherine selected the Hanmar springs brochure and found a picture of a massage, which are now parts 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.

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.
- How Catherine had developed lots of new skills 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 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 your heart wants.

Interested? Visit Thomas' website here [www.tomsreadings.com](http://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](http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/123441374/achieving-independence-together)