

Community MOVES

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Personally speaking

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you all found time for some rest and recreation in the fantastic weather over the holiday season.



At IHC the year has got off to a rapid start. The start of the year always means Annual Appeal time for us and this year's theme goes straight to the core of what we do. This year we are talking about decision-making and the importance of supporting people to make as many choices as possible about their own lives. Through our charitable programmes we run workshops and provide materials that support not only the person with a disability to learn and think about how to make decisions, but also supports family and friends to empower them to do so. It can be a life-changing process. I know many of you generously support our fundraising throughout the year – I'd like to personally thank you for the difference you make.

Early in January we paid tribute to Dr Donald Beasley, former President of IHC and New Zealand Life Member. He died on 27 December 2017, aged 97. Donald made a huge contribution to this organisation – founding the Northland branch and powerfully advocating for people with intellectual disabilities nationally and internationally. Read our tribute to Donald on page 3.

Accessible Properties' homes remain in high demand with so many people looking for good affordable and accessible homes. Recently the media reported that Tauranga had become New Zealand's least affordable city. Our team in Tauranga is involved with a wide-reaching group aiming to end homelessness in the city. As the largest social housing provider in that city, and with a thorough understanding of the difference a good home makes, we are keen to make more homes available to people in need. We know that developing this important market also helps strengthen the IHC Group for the future.

We have continued into 2018 with a focus on our services. We are working to make sure our residential and vocational services are the best they can be and we are in the process of introducing refreshed quality and safety programmes and new technology to support our work.

We have welcomed a new Chief Operating Officer, Joan Cowan, into our organisation and I am delighted to have her on board. You can read more about Joan on page 4.

There is always more to do as we strive to do the best for the people we support. I look forward to updating you throughout the year.

Ralph Jones
IHC Chief Executive

Parents had ‘fire in the belly’



Former IHC President Dr Donald Beasley with grandson Leathan at the beach house near Whananaki, his favourite spot in the world. Much of the flax was planted by his father Herbert, a keen conservationist.

Donald Beasley

10 April 1920 – 27 December 2017

Donald Beasley became a member of the IHC Parents' Association in 1955. Although he didn't have a child with an intellectual disability, the association had recently opened up its membership to the wider community – not without some controversy.

That change, however, opened the way for someone who was to become an influential leader of IHC, both within New Zealand and on the world stage. He established the Northland branch of IHC and went on to lead the organisation nationally as President from 1964 until 1979. He was made an IHC New Zealand Life Member in 1981.

Donald's association with IHC started soon after he qualified as a paediatrician. Donald and his wife Carol had returned home in 1954 from Britain, where Donald had completed his specialist training. Facing a long queue to get a suitable hospital position in Auckland, he set up in private practice in Whāngārei.

It was there that he became involved with IHC. On the international stage, he served two terms as President of the International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap. Throughout this time he was a strong advocate for the children of Northland and beyond, especially those who were less fortunate than others, either socially or because of their disability or health needs.

He did not underestimate the role of parents in IHC. On the 40th anniversary of the New Zealand Society for the Intellectually Handicapped in 1989, he said:

“The striking feature of the society in complete contrast with every other voluntary organisation was the burning conviction of the membership, particularly parents, first that by and large people with intellectual handicap had been severely underestimated and that changes were necessary. This conviction, this zeal, this fire in the belly provided the energy for the work I was able to do and powered the knowledge, professional expertise and authority.”

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COVER IMAGE:

Five-year-old Anakin Kingi thought all his Christmases had come at once. His family were heading to Hawkes Bay for a couple of days of fun at the National Aquarium in Napier and at Splash Planet in Hastings. See story page 11.

New chief is ready for a challenge

IDEA Services' new Chief Operating Officer Joan Cowan is not someone who will shy away from a challenge.

In October last year Joan completed the 'Polar Bear Challenge', which is part of the Polar Circle Marathon in Greenland. The challenge is for runners to complete a marathon one day followed by a half-marathon the next day on the polar ice cap.

A fellow participant was Peter, a man with severe physical disabilities who was supported to complete both races. Joan says she was reminded that the sky is the limit for people with disabilities – and that anything can be achieved with the right support.

On 8 January Joan took over from Janine Stewart, who had been acting COO since February last year. Joan says it feels like she has come full circle. She started working for IHC in 1997 as a support worker at weekends, then worked in many roles within the organisation, including Community Service Manager and a Regional Advisor in the Central Region, before leaving in 2006.

She then went to work at Explore, which at that time was a small regional behavioural support service. "Explore was awarded the National Behaviour Support contract, which was an amazing opportunity to take a fresh look at service delivery in an environment where we

needed to show measurable results," she says.

Most recently Joan was General Manager Specialist Advice and Services for Healthcare New Zealand, responsible for leadership and management of three business units – Explore Specialist Advice, Solora Rehabilitation Services and Freedom Medical Alarms.

Now back at IDEA Services, Joan will be based at National Office in Wellington. She says she will continue with the changes to services that are under way while supporting and acknowledging the existing strengths and good work that are the backbone of the organisation. And for families? "It's about continuing to ensure and improve on the quality of services," she says.

"I am a real believer in looking at what we are doing and challenging ourselves to make sure we are as good as we believe we are."

She favours a team approach. "My style is to encourage people to use their initiative.



IDEA Services' new Chief Operating Officer, Joan Cowan

I want people to feel that they are a part of the solution."

Where staff are using their skills and knowledge to achieve great services, her goal is to share that knowledge directly with other staff. "The most motivating thing for the person who is doing it well is to be seen to be doing it well, and to be applauded for doing so.

"My style is transparent and inclusive and I want to encourage a workforce that enjoys coming to work and feels valued for the good work that they do."

Joan plans to meet as many IDEA Services staff as possible, as soon as she can. "I am looking forward to being out and about. I don't think you can understand what is going on unless you have a presence."

Super teams honour Sir Colin in Te Kūiti

Lady Verna Meads is sitting at her local café in Te Kūiti. The waiter, knowing her order by heart, is bringing over her cappuccino topped with cinnamon.

A few Blues players have just entered, and player Jerome Kaino comes over for a chat.

“It’s lovely to meet the wife of Colin,” he says, before asking for directions to the rugby ground.

Verna informs the 81-test capped All Black that it’s just down the road.

The Chiefs and Blues Super Rugby teams are in Te Kūiti to play a preseason game for the Farmlands Rural Legends Shield. Together the teams have chosen to donate the \$5000 match-day prize money to IHC in honour of the late Sir Colin Meads.

Would Colin have liked to see Super Rugby teams donating to IHC? “He very much would have,” says Verna, “and for the game to be local too!”

For the Chiefs it was a perfect fit – bringing the team to their fans in the King Country region and taking the opportunity, alongside Farmlands and the Blues, to honour Colin and Verna and support IHC.

“Meads is an icon of New Zealand and lived within the Chiefs’ region,” says Chiefs CEO Michael Collins. “It’s wonderful to help and support a cause Meads was so passionate about.”



Lady Verna Meads with Te Kanawa Street Day Base service users and Sir Colin Meads' statue in Te Kūiti.

Farmlands Strategy and Communications Director Colm Hamrogue agrees: “It’s a huge honour for us to be here today at [Colin’s] home ground.

“It’s really about giving back to legends like Colin Meads. They’ve given so much for New Zealand, and so much for towns like Te Kūiti,” Colm says. “It’s very important we give back to communities and charities.”

And the game itself? For IDEA Services’ Otorohanga day base user Hemi Winikerei, the “wrong team won”.

But was it a good game? “Yeah, cool fun,” he says.

For the record the Blues won 45-19.

IHC thanks everyone involved for their generous donations and support.



Lady Verna Meads flanked by Blues and All Blacks rugby players Jerome Kaino (left) and Sonny Bill Williams.

Matamata – a small town with a huge heart



Committee members present at the final Matamata IHC Area Committee meeting on 31 July 2017 were (from left) Gwen Kirkwood, Jackie Ireland, Valerie Williams, Christine Lee, Gail Pearson and Annette Davidson (Chair).

It's the third week in February and IHC supporters in Matamata are out on the street to remind local people that it's time for the IHC Annual Appeal.

There are few places where support has been stronger or for longer than Matamata. It's the same drill every year: supporters set up a stall on the main street to display information about IHC's support of people with intellectual disabilities. The cake for the raffle is baked and lavishly decorated by Jane Rea, wife of IHC South Waikato Association Chair Keith Rea. There is also a grocery raffle with items donated by supporters.

Taking a turn on the roster for the street stall is Gwen Kirkwood, who turned 90 in February. For nearly 50 years

she has been raising money for people with intellectual disabilities in Matamata. She ran the IHC door-knock appeal for 37 years until IHC stopped going door-to-door when it became clear that fewer people had cash on hand. Gwen also helps at the town's opportunity shop. Local community groups share the shop, each taking one week a year.

Gwen has been honoured by the Queen – she received a Queen's Service Medal in 1996. She has been honoured by IHC – she is Patron and Life Member of the IHC South Waikato Association. She has been honoured by the town – in 2012 she was named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Matamata Rotary Club for outstanding service to Matamata for more than 60 years, and last year she won the Margarette Golding Award from International Inner Wheel.

But Gwen won't take any of the credit and points to the loyal support of Matamata locals and to all her colleagues who have served on the Matamata Area Committee with her: Valerie Williams, Annette Davidson, Keith Rea, Christine Lee, Gail Pearson, Jackie Ireland and others. Like her, many of them have given decades to improving the lives of disabled people who live in the town – gifts at Christmas, Easter eggs and buns at Easter and support all year around. Some of their family members live in the three IHC residential homes in Matamata.

"My husband and I lost our first two children and that made us very concerned about people who have problems and disabilities," Gwen says.

"Matamata is a very compassionate town. People are very keen to

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Christopher left a remarkable legacy

Christopher Ranby's brain was damaged at birth, leaving him with an intellectual disability and at the same time leaving New Zealand with a remarkable legacy.

Today he might have been a poster child for the intellectual disability movement. But Christopher was born in 1945, at a time when most disabled children were hidden away and there was little on offer except institutional care. Against all expectations that he wouldn't live past 20, he lived until he was 72, dying in his sleep in November last year.

Christopher's birth turned his mother Lorna into a campaigner. Lorna and Beart Ranby had no intention of hiding their child and rejected the idea of institutional care. They joined a new movement of parents who believed their children were entitled to education and better support. This was the start of IHC in Waikato and the Bay of Plenty.

In recognition of Lorna's efforts, Christopher's name was given to New Zealand's first non-governmental social housing for people with intellectual disabilities – Christopher House, which was established in 1954 in Hamilton. That facility was followed by Christopher Park, the first residential complex for people with intellectual disabilities, which opened in 1960.

So who was Christopher? Christopher was the eldest of three children. The Ranbys farmed at Waitoa between Morrinsville and Te Aroha in



Christopher Ranby at Cooks Beach in 2007. His disability propelled his parents into public roles they weren't entirely comfortable with, determined to get better support for him.

Waikato and son Paul describes his family as a tight unit. "The three of us were all 15 or 16 months apart. We were raised together on the farm – a small dairy unit of 136 acres. We ran alongside the main highway and rail route. Christopher loved the trains.

"We acted like a normal family – one member of it was a bit different," Paul says. "He was always there; he was always included."

Christopher was home-schooled while Paul and their sister Allison went to boarding school. Paul says he remembers his father astounding people by saying that Christopher was learning to read.

He had various periods of respite care at Christopher House, but mainly he lived on the farm, and Paul reflects that he was probably lonely when they were at school.

"He was very ordered; he would line up cards in their suits. He would open people's cupboards to see if they were straight and ordered. He understood more than people realised and his memory was intact," Paul says.

"He loved doing puzzles – he was curious in everything around him. The hardest things were when people would laugh at him."

Paul says Christopher never spoke. "At his funeral I talked

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Goodbye and thanks to

In November the crew of HMNZS *Endeavour* paraded through New Plymouth with full ceremony to say goodbye to the city and some good friends.

Their ship, the Royal New Zealand Navy fleet refuelling tanker, was decommissioned on 15 December, ending a 30-year relationship with the city and with IHC – its chosen charity. For years, on visits to its home port, sailors had put on their overalls and rolled up their sleeves to work at IDEA Services residential homes and vocational centres throughout Taranaki.

The volunteers put their skills to work to build, garden, repair, clean and do any other job that needed doing to make life a bit easier for people with intellectual disabilities.

But at the Charter Parade in New Plymouth on Saturday 18 November, the crew exchanged their overalls for dress uniforms and paraded with the Royal New Zealand Navy Band from the clock tower in Queen Street to the Puke Ariki landing, where Commander Martin Doolan handed back the City Charter to New Plymouth Mayor Neil Holdom.

The charter between the ship and the district had given the ship's company 'the right and privilege of marching with drums beating, band playing, colours flying, bayonets fixed and swords drawn' through the streets of the city. "It's a very old tradition," Martin says. The town turned out to watch.

Martin has been at the helm of HMNZS *Endeavour* since 2015 and in that time the ship has made four visits to its home port. He says when he took command he



With drums beating, band playing and colours flying, the crew of HMNZS *Endeavour* paraded through New Plymouth.

was keen to preserve the special relationships the ship had with IHC and with Moturoa School – aware there would be a two-year gap between the *Endeavour* being decommissioned and the new HMNZS *Aotearoa* coming into service in 2020. New Plymouth will also be the home port for the *Aotearoa*.

"I just wanted to maximise our impact until the new ship came online, because there will be a bit of a gap."

He says most of the work has involved maintenance and his crew have been keen to help. "Once you have been there you realise you are making a contribution and making a difference."

On their last assignment before the Charter Parade sailors turned up at the IDEA Services Atawhai Nursery at Hurworth outside New Plymouth to lend a hand. North Taranaki Area Manager Margaret Rangitonga says the weather was bad, so they had to abandon some of the outdoor work they had planned and instead worked alongside staff and people with disabilities to propagate native plants.

The Navy has had a special relationship with IHC in Taranaki ever since the frigate HMNZS *Taranaki* chose IHC as its nominated charity in 1976, says former Area Manager Clive Pryme. Clive says he got a call from the Purchasing Officer of the *Taranaki*

HMNZS Endeavour



lymouth to say goodbye.

asking if there was anything the crew could do to help us. IHC had recently built an eight-bed residential unit for children and wanted to put in a playground. "When the crew arrived in port they fitted all the ropes and put the thing together. From then on, every time the *Taranaki* was in port we arranged something for them – gardening, even painting roofs. They used to come in and upgrade the ropes on the adventure playground."

After the *Taranaki* was decommissioned in 1982 the relationship continued through HMNZS *Waikato*, another frigate, then with HMNZS *Endeavour*. "It's been very, very good and very, very positive," Clive says.



Commander Martin Doolan (left) and navigator Lieutenant Seagar Clarkson watch as HMNZS *Endeavour* berths in Port Taranaki for the last time on 15 November. The ship was decommissioned on 15 December. Fairfax Media – *Taranaki Daily News*.

Regional Naval Officer Janet Wrightson Lean has been what is called the 'Lady Sponsor' of the *Endeavour* since she did the official job of launching it in South Korea in 1988, when her husband David Lean was Mayor of New Plymouth. Janet has acted as liaison between the Navy and New Plymouth since 2006.

Janet paid tribute to the work done by the *Endeavour's* crew for IHC. "They have done some amazing stuff at the residences over the years."

Martin Doolan says the *Endeavour* will remain at Devonport until February or early March before being taken away for scrap. "I hope I don't see that," he says.



Endeavour crew member Wayne O'Brien and Shaun Mitchell (5) at the New Plymouth IHC Centre in the 1980s. Fairfax Media – *Taranaki Daily News*.

Help on offer as 2018 census goes online

Every five years Stats NZ runs the census – counting how many people and dwellings there are in New Zealand. The next census day is 6 March 2018.

This year people are being asked to fill out the census information online.

In February, Stats NZ will send an access code to every household in New Zealand for people to use. Forms can be filled out using a mobile phone, desktop, laptop or tablet. Paper forms will still be available for those who prefer them.

IDEA Services is working with Stats NZ to make sure there will be support available for people living in residential homes and in our Supported Living Services to fill out the forms.

Information from the census helps plan how billions of dollars of government funding are spent. Because information is collected about everyone in New Zealand, it can be used to make plans about services and where they should be, such as hospitals, kōhanga reo, schools, roads and public transport.

Key facts

- Households will be sent an access code in February.
- Watch out for your letter.
- Every member of the household must complete a census form.

For help, or to request a paper copy of the census forms, call 0800 CENSUS (0800 236 787). For more information about the census, go to census.govt.nz



Ken Taylor, a Clinical Director for the oral health screening, checks an athlete.

Special Olympics follows up on athletes' health

Special Olympics New Zealand is making changes to its Healthy Athletes Programme to improve the health of athletes year-round.

It will be following up with athletes who participated in the recent National Summer Games to check that they are receiving the treatment they need for any health problems that were identified.

For some years, Special Olympics has screened athletes attending its National Summer Games and some regional games through its Healthy Athletes Programme. The programme offers free health screening of eyes, ears, teeth and feet and recommends referrals where necessary.

Now for the first time Special Olympics is tracking the follow-up that takes place, says Special Olympics Healthy Communities Coordinator Rachel Clarke.

"I have had some early and encouraging responses which indicate that the screening makes an important difference in the health and wellbeing of our athletes, and prompts athletes to receive the necessary care and intervention they require," she says.

At the National Summer Games in Wellington in November, more than 70 voluntary clinicians screened 1097 of the 1300 athletes. Fifty-five athletes were found to have urgent health problems – 35 involving teeth, 11 concerning feet, eight involving

hearing and one athlete with an eye problem that needed immediate attention. There were also a large number of non-urgent results that needed follow-up.

"Athletes with intellectual disabilities typically have poorer health than other New Zealanders," Rachel says. "The cost is a huge barrier and facilitating the access – making appointments and getting to appointments."

The recent games marked a number of other 'firsts'. The results from hearing tests were electronically reported for the first time and emailed to team managers and through them to athletes. "Paper results don't always make it home," Rachel says.

A specialist team from the University of Auckland, led by Professors Charles McGhee and Dipika Patel, worked with the vision screening, assessing for keratoconus. People with Down syndrome are particularly susceptible.

The Summer Games were supported by the Health and Disability Commissioner, which provided information for athletes and their families about their rights when using health and disability services.

What do you do with a boy who's mad on water?

Five-year-old Anakin Kingi thought all his Christmases had come at once. All of a sudden the family were packing into the car and heading to Hawkes Bay for a couple of days of fun at the National Aquarium in Napier and at Splash Planet in Hastings.

The family was one of many who got a break this summer thanks to IHC's 'Take a break with us' programme and funding from the Zena Elsie Orr Memorial Trust fund.

Anakin loves anything to do with water, so the break was designed to have as many activities involving water as possible.

Thomas and Chante Kingi, Leisana, 12, and Anakin had two nights in a Hastings motel. It was the family's first visit to Napier and their first holiday in a motel, and they made the most of it. They started early from home in Palmerston North for the drive to Napier so they could take in the aquarium before check-in time at the motel in Hastings. "To be honest, we don't get away that much."

They got a good deal on tickets to Splash Planet and spent the entire day at the adventure park from opening until closing time. "Our tickets were for full access to everything that was in the park. Anakin is a water baby and he just wanted to go swimming – he just thoroughly enjoyed the whole of the park," Thomas says. "We made our sandwiches in the morning and we took down our drinks and had a good picnic lunch."

Five years ago, Thomas faced the fact that his heart condition would



Anakin Kingi heads to the water with his family, Leisana, Chante and Thomas.

no longer allow him to work. So he and his wife Chante swapped places. He stayed home to care for their children and Chante went back to fulltime work.

He looks back now and says he is happy to play the cards he was dealt. As it turned out Anakin, who was only a baby at the time, would be diagnosed with autism and Thomas was on hand to provide the support he needed. Anakin was non-verbal until he was three years old and is now slowly gathering words. He started school in October.

"It has basically worked out well, just being able to be there for a lot of firsts – his first steps, first words. It is so rewarding just being there to nurture and coach him," Thomas says. "I have little patience and he has got none. We are both learning off each other. He is teaching me patience and resilience and I am teaching him the basics."

"These are the cards that I have been dealt – my condition and my son. Beside my son having autism, I have got a heart condition called cardiomyopathy. I have a pacemaker and an ICD [internal cardiac defibrillator]. I have got a little battery pack that they inserted under my skin. That battery pack

sends a charge through the wire to my heart to try to bring it back to a normal rhythm. It is exactly like getting kicked in the chest by a horse," Thomas says.

"I used to drink and smoke. I have given all that up – I had to if I wanted to see my son and daughter grow up. I am not one to sit down in a corner and to wait for the inevitable. I want to be there as long as I can for my children and my wife," he says.

Thomas says he and his family are very grateful for the summer break. "It was so much fun – just the fact of something new."

Trustees of the Zena Elsie Orr Memorial Trust fund recently agreed to spend \$50,000 to support the 'Take a break with us' programme. The trust was set up with a legacy to provide short-term care for people with intellectual disabilities in the Manawatū area.

The 'Take a break with us' programme is also supported by Millennium & Copthorne Hotels New Zealand, which is generously providing IHC with more than 50 twin-share, double or family-style hotel rooms and breakfast. There are 20 participating hotels across New Zealand.

Te Reo builds a sense of belonging

Armed with an iPad each, some useful apps and a desire to learn Te Reo, two Blenheim women are building a sense of belonging based on learning the Māori language.

Two years ago, Maggie Dewar and Carol Morrow started exploring Te Reo Māori together through the IHC skill-based volunteering programme. Maggie had come from Scotland to work here and wanted to learn Te Reo to connect with New Zealand. Carol was keen to connect with her Māori family and heritage.

When they first met, Carol was researching her family history. “I came from Auckland. I was brought up in Rotorua. I was descended from Hone Heke [a Ngāpuhi chief],” she says. Carol was also attending kapa haka groups with support staff.

Maggie had completed some formal courses in Level 1 and Level 2 of Te Reo and she wanted to consolidate her skills and share her knowledge. They spent two months together on Carol’s mihi and learned some waiata.

Late last year they booked in for another 10-week session – this time to focus on conversational Māori and to boost their vocabulary. Maggie says she has found it harder to learn Te Reo than other languages because of the lack of opportunity to practise. “Just spending time with Carol means that I am revising the basics.” Maggie says she appreciates Carol’s very good pronunciation.

“I can only speak a little bit,” Carol says.

“The main thing is just to enjoy



Maggie Dewar and Carol Morrow plan to keep exploring Te Reo.

ourselves and have fun,” Maggie says. “But it’s nice to have a shared focus.”

IHC Volunteer Coordinator Jane Peoples says Carol now has an iPad as well as Maggie and this has made it easier to learn together. “Not only has Carol learned more Māori – her pronunciation is excellent – she has also become very proficient in the use of her iPad.”

Even though their session is over, Carol will continue practising what she has learned and, after summer, Maggie plans to go back and share some more Te Reo with Carol.

IHC National Manager of Volunteering Sue Kobar says she plans to put a greater focus on encouraging skill-based volunteering in 2018.

It is one of two volunteering programmes run by IHC. The friendship programme is designed for longer-term relationships, while the skill-based programme is for an eight-to 10-week period and designed to achieve a set goal. “It’s wonderful to see people learning Te Reo,” she says.

“Skill-based volunteering allows people to come in for six to eight weeks, or eight to 10 weeks, or whatever it takes to achieve the goal.”

She says short-term assignments allow people to see if volunteering with IHC is something they want to do. “Ideally a short-term skill-based assignment could lead into a longer-term friendship.”

To find out more see ihc.org.nz/get-involved, call 0800 442 442, or email volunteering@ihc.org.nz

Parents had 'fire in the belly'

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He recognised that parents were the driving force of the organisation. "They are the passionate membership. We could never have done what we've done if it had not been for parents."

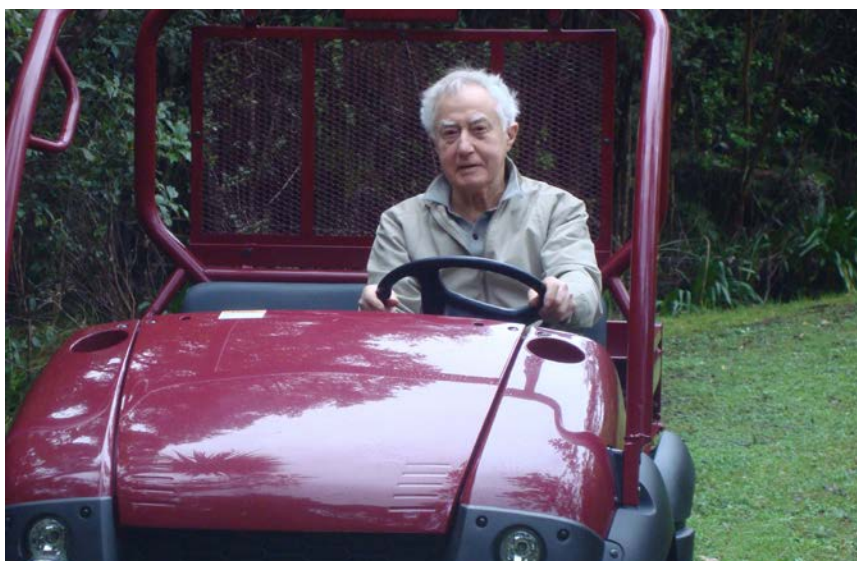
Donald Beasley died on 27 December 2017 in Whāngārei. He was 97.

IHC Chief Executive Ralph Jones paid tribute to his significant contribution to people with intellectual disabilities.

He promoted some important developments in his time as President, including changing the name of the organisation to reflect the support given to adults as well as children, and offering support to governments and organisations in the Pacific Islands to promote the establishment of services for people with intellectual disabilities. He also paved the way for widening representation within the organisation – a move that led to the establishment of a fully representative New Zealand Council in 1981.

Donald Beasley was a paediatrician with a high profile in medical circles and strong relationships with allied disability organisations throughout the world. The Dunedin-based Donald Beasley Institute was renamed in his honour in 1991 – it remains a leader in intellectual disability research today.

"Donald was an outstanding leader of IHC during his term as President, a powerful advocate for the intellectually disabled, a fine paediatrician, a brilliant orator, and a wonderful New Zealander," says Sir Roderick Deane, IHC Patron.



Donald's Kawasaki mule not only made it easier to get down to the beach, but acquired a personality of its own.

Dr Brigit Mirfin-Veitch, Director of the Donald Beasley Institute, says the fact that New Zealand has an independent institute dedicated to research and education in the field of intellectual disability is due to Donald's perception and farsightedness.

"He recognised that evidence-based social research and education was critical to ensuring that people with learning disabilities could take their rightful place as members of their local communities. We have continued to pursue this goal for more than 30 years, and it remains as relevant today as it was when Donald and others framed the issue in the 1970s.

"The staff of the Donald Beasley Institute have benefited from Donald's continued interest in and encouragement of our work for many years. His advice and kind words always came at exactly the right moment, and always had an energising impact."

Donald was born in Auckland on 10 April 1920 and spent some of his childhood in Whanganui with siblings Warren and Joyce. He met his future wife, Carol

Graham, in Auckland. They were to have four sons.

In a eulogy, family member and paediatric surgeon Professor Spencer Beasley said that for 22 years Donald was the only paediatrician in Northland. "The cumulative benefit he has given to the people of Northland is hard to estimate but must be enormous."

He served as Chair of the Northland Area Health Board and as President of Health Boards NZ until 1992. His advocacy work and public health service earned him an OBE and CBE.

The family says that the beach house at Moureeses Bay, near Whananaki, was probably his favourite spot in the world.

"At Whananaki, the purchase of a Kawasaki mule was ostensibly to help him and [grandson] Leathan get to the beach more easily, but it soon acquired its own personality, to the extent of us celebrating its birthday each year in a ceremony that involved sitting around it with a cake and candles," Spencer said.

Donald's wife Carol died in 1987. They are survived by their four sons: Alastair, Michael, Tony and Adrian.



Beart and Lorna Ranby with Allison, Paul and Christopher (right).

Christopher left a remarkable legacy

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about language not being just words. He had sounds and variations of sounds. You can get a long way on yes and no if you frame a question right. His eyes were very expressive – joy, anger and fear were pretty clear.”

Paul says one of his earliest memories was overhearing his mother talking to another parent on the phone. “She said, ‘We have to bring our children out into society and into public view and stop hiding them away.’”

He says Christopher’s disability propelled his parents into public roles they weren’t entirely comfortable with, determined to get better support for him and children like him. “They were very human, down-to-earth people.” He says it was against Lorna’s natural inclination to go public. “She wasn’t someone who sought the limelight. I think of her as a warrior queen out there. I have got some of the speeches

she would give – very eloquent, decisive, passionate. Dad, even more against type, was in there on committees.”

Lorna started the South Auckland branch of the Intellectually Handicapped Children’s Parents’ Association in 1950, a year after the organisation was founded by Harold and Margaret Anyon in Wellington. Lorna advertised in local newspapers calling for a meeting of parents with intellectually disabled children. South Auckland at that time stretched north to the Bombay Hills and south to Taumarunui and Lorna rented a car and took to the road. One by one, more than 33 towns formed sub-branches of IHC throughout Waikato and the Bay of Plenty. “I think there might have been some anxiety in Wellington that things were moving too fast in South Auckland,” Paul says.

Christopher House was IHC’s first hostel and provided short-stay accommodation to give parents a breather. Christopher Park was developed as a specialist

facility offering longer-term, 32-bed residential accommodation, respite care, workshops and various support services. It closed in 1989 when the institutions were shut down and people with disabilities went to live in the community.

When the Ranbys left the farm and retired first to Auckland then back to Tauranga, Christopher went with them. When they could no longer care for him he went into residential care with IDEA Services in Pukekohe. Christopher spent the last five years of his life at the Selwyn Heights Hospital wing in Hillsborough, Auckland.

By today’s standards his life was difficult in many respects, Paul says. But overall he believes Christopher lived a good life – “given the circumstances in which he was born and the culture in which he was raised. He had parents who took him seriously and provided the best care they could and a brother and sister who learned how to be with him.”



Matamata IHC Area Committee Chair Annette Davidson (right) thanks Gwen Kirkwood (left) and Valerie Williams, who were both on the committee from the start.

Matamata – a small town with a huge heart

...continued from page 6

help. They know the families – it's a more personal thing."

The Area Committee started in 1962 as a sub-branch of the South Auckland Branch of IHC. Gwen joined the committee in 1969 and for the past 30 years served as Treasurer and Correspondence Secretary. Over the years she wrote hundreds of cards on behalf of IHC. She wrote a personal thank-you to every volunteer who helped at the street stall and opportunity shop, and Annual Appeal letters to all the schools that provided helpers, the Lions Club for transport, bank tellers who helped with the count, and rural coordinators.

Gwen and her husband Jack epitomised the IHC/Lions Club partnership that has existed in the town since the Lions built the first IHC pre-school in Station Road in 1970. The Lions raised \$7862 and 45 local tradesmen donated their time.

The building is still in use as a vocational centre. Jack was a longstanding member of the club until his death in 2012. In 1997 he was made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for community service. The annual Lions/IHC Golf Tournament raised funds for 50 years – only winding up in 2015. "They have been great supporters of us. Several of those men still come along and knock on the door and give us a cheque," Gwen says.

Last year the Area Committee held its last meeting after 55 years, but all its activities will continue to be carried out by the IHC South Waikato Association.

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