

# StrongVoices

EMPOWERED LIVES

Winter 2022

Dare to dream

On the road

Love stories

**ihc**  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**40<sup>th</sup>**  
Anniversary

**ihc** Calf & Rural  
Scheme





# Kōrero

It's hard to avoid discussions about the cost of living now. The Consumer Price Index has just hit its highest level in three decades – it's costing more and more to fill up our supermarket trolleys, our cars and, quite simply, our family members.

We all try to make our pay or our benefits stretch further. But what if you are earning less than \$2 an hour because you have an intellectual disability and you are on a minimum wage exemption? We have recently commented on this injustice in the media.

Yes, it is a complex issue. Yes, we want people to have jobs and opportunities. It is made more complex by the caps on what people can earn while receiving a benefit – but we say there must be a better way to pay people fairly for the hours they work, and they should be able to buy more than small, overpriced supermarket items. You can read more about this on page 18.

This cuts to the core of why advocacy in IHC is so strong. A key right is the right to a good home and a good life. The Supported Living Payment is \$359.00 a week after tax (over 18, single rate) and the standard Disability Allowance is a maximum of \$70.04 – that's more than Jobseeker Support of \$315.00 after tax (over 25, single rate) but not by much. Also, the idea of Jobseeker Support is that it's not forever and that people may earn more when they find a job. But the Supported Living Payment and Disability Allowance represent long-term fixed incomes.

Accessible Properties plays a key role. As a community housing provider its tenants qualify for the Government's income-related rent subsidy that caps the rent at 25 percent of their income (with the Government funding the shortfall). We all hear the horror stories of people paying half or more of their income on rent in the open rental market, so it's great that most of our tenants (with and without disabilities) are left with 75 percent of their incomes for other bills. However, the size of the Supported Living Payments and Disability Allowances means that for many people the budget is still very tight.

Accessible Properties manages IHC's houses and properties and provides housing and tenancy services for social housing.

The housing shortage in New Zealand has reached an all-time high – and with increased costs of living more New Zealanders (with or without jobs) simply cannot afford market rents. Rents for new tenancies nationwide rose by 5.8 percent in the year to December 2021, according to Stats NZ's latest rental price index.

At March 2022 there were 26,868 applicants on the Government's social housing waitlist, an increase of 13.4 percent since 31 March 2021. Accessible Properties is working hard to build more homes, but with increased costs and labour and supply shortages.

At these times it is more important than ever that we focus on providing our core services while innovating to ensure quality and opportunities that improve people's lives.

It will be a big year ahead and we look forward to keeping you updated.

**Gina Rogers**  
Editor

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### COVER IMAGE:

Holly McSweeney is set to climb high at the ropes course at the Outward Bound Youth Horizons course in Queen Charlotte Sound. See story opposite page.



# Young adventurers dare to dream

IHC

**On a summer day in January, Caitlin Fleming built a large sandcastle on the beach in the remote Te Kainga Bay in Queen Charlotte Sound. She sat in it, looked out across the sea and told a story – “it’s about a beautiful Queen Elizabeth”.**

For Caitlin and the other young people taking part in the Outward Bound Youth Horizons course, this was a chance to create and to dream. They spent five days at Anakiwa in Queen Charlotte Sound pushing boundaries and making friends. On their second day they learned to sail a cutter and landed in Te Kainga Bay to spend the night sleeping under the stars.

The IHC Foundation provided \$30,000 in funding so the 11 students and school leavers with an intellectual or developmental disability could attend the course.

Without any distractions – phones and laptops had to be left behind – they focused on the challenges of being close to nature. They took part in adventure tramping, camping, sea journeys, rock climbing and a high ropes challenge.

Working with three Outward Bound instructors and two support workers, the group learned to work as a team to solve problems, to make decisions and to support each other in the various challenges.

Caitlin, from Christchurch, is the second person in her family to do an Outward Bound course and, at age 20, she is younger than

her dad Lindsay was, at 21. Caitlin is proud that she is carrying on the family tradition. Her younger sister Ashleigh plans to go to Outward Bound later this year.

But Caitlin didn’t get any inside tips from her dad. “It’s about your discovery and your self-discovery. It’s your story, not someone else’s story,” he says. “I am really proud of what she has achieved.”



Nathan Carter, from Darfield in Canterbury, is a champion runner in mainstream cross-country and road race events. This summer he found new skills in the high ropes challenge. Going to Outward Bound was part of his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, which he plans to complete this year.

Nathan, 19, left Darfield High School last year and is working hard towards independence and employment. He got his full driver’s licence when he was 18 and drives his own car. He is doing work experience at the Rolleston Salvation Army store and stacking shelves at a New World supermarket. On top of that he is living away from home one day a week to get ready to go flatting.

For a young autistic man who finds trying new things a challenge, Nathan has been testing his limits. Following Outward Bound he went on a sea adventure with the Spirit of Adventure in February.

“The overwhelming thing about that was that there were 30 young people. That many people can be a bit of a challenge for him,” says his mum, Bridget Carter. “He is definitely a lot more confident being on his own,” she says. “He is autistic and proud. He is very happy in his own skin.”

Nathan doesn’t find communicating easy, but came back from Outward Bound very clear about one thing. “I want to do it again please.”

**Above: Caitlin Fleming and Samuel Pethig tackle the low ropes.**

**Left: Runner Nathan Carter discovers new skills.**





# Dairy farmers keep Karen's dream

IHC

**Dairy farmers are keeping a dream alive for Karen Chapman, who grew up on a dairy farm in the small Waikato settlement of Otatau and has only ever wanted to milk cows.**

Her story and those of the farmers who made that dream a reality screened on TVNZ's *Seven Sharp* in March. A nationwide appeal following the show raised \$62,000 for IHC, with Volkswagen New Zealand contributing \$25,000.

Karen's dream of milking cows once looked hopeless because her dad, Noel Chapman, a sharemilker, died while she was still a teenager. She and her mum, Olive, then shifted into Pukekohe where, in a double tragedy, her mother died suddenly too. Karen moved into IHC residential care.

Karen has been supported by IHC and IDEA Services for more than 40 years and by a network of dairy farmers in and around Pukekohe, many of them participants in the IHC Calf & Rural Scheme fundraising scheme. Through the scheme, farmers raise animals and donate the proceeds to IHC.

This year, the IHC Calf & Rural Scheme is marking its 40th anniversary by celebrating all the farmers who have made lives better for people with intellectual disabilities. In 40 years, the scheme has raised \$40 million.

Once local farmers knew of Karen's love of cows, they welcomed her into their milking sheds, and encouraged her to lead their best pens of animals to judging at the Franklin A&P Show.

One farmer provided her with her own cow

which she was able to keep at his farm, where Karen would brush it and feed it. "It was a jersey cow. She died in her sleep," Karen says. "Beauty was her name." To be clear though, Jersey cows aren't her favourites. What Karen would really like is her own Ayrshire cow, a Scottish breed of red and white cattle.

The Franklin A&P Show at the Pukekohe Showgrounds is the highlight of Karen's year, and she was disappointed this year when it was cancelled for the second year running because of the pandemic. She is now banking on next year. "Just kick it out the door," she says.

A long-time family friend, Glen Lee, has driven her around the farms near Pukekohe for as long as anyone can remember.





# am alive

Karen says she is “a good friend to me, I have known her for a long, long time”.

Karen’s mother Olive would visit Glen for a cup of tea at school pick-up and drop-offs in Otatau, and Glen recalls that when Olive and Karen moved to Pukekohe they still used to visit her. “Karen and her mother would actually walk from Pukekohe to Otatau, which was about 20 kilometres. They missed Otatau.”

Glen now drives Karen the 20 kilometres to Otatau and back for milking. “It gives her such a lot of pleasure and it’s no skin off my nose. And it gives me the same amount of pleasure,” Glen says.

Karen used to milk for Syd and Jenny Goodwright on the home farm, now owned by their son Tom Goodwright. Now Karen



milks for Syd and Jenny’s daughter Becky Payne and her husband Mike on their farm not far away. Another sister, Hannah, farms close by too, with her husband Trevor Turner. All of them are donors to the IHC Calf & Rural Scheme and know Karen well.

“We know she loves farming, and she will help wherever she can,” Jenny says.

Syd and Jenny have been donating calves – real and virtual – to the Calf Scheme for more than 30 years, and for half of that time Jenny has worked as a canvasser for the scheme. She visits around 50 local farmers each season to encourage them to pledge calves.

“I am really lucky because I have a lot of farmers in the district like me who want to keep supporting the Calf Scheme,” Jenny says.

Syd says it’s about supporting people who aren’t as lucky. “There would be a lot of people who give who are loyal to IHC, but a lot of people who are loyal to Jenny as well,” he says.

Karen milks every fortnight at Becky and Mike’s farm. “She is cool to milk with,” Becky says. “I always try to ask her different things but, when she is in the shed, she is totally focused on the cows and brings the conversation back to milking.”

She says Karen likes to put the cups on. “She can see when they have milked out properly. She is good at hosing down too.”

Karen says she used to help her dad milk around 100 Friesian-Jersey-cross cows after school. Now the herds are bigger and the milking sheds more complex.

And there’s a new challenge waiting for Karen from June this year. Becky and Mike have bought a bigger farm and will double their milking herd from 200 to 400 Friesians, swapping their herringbone shed for a rotary shed.

It isn’t just dairy farmers who Karen counts among her friends. She spends time helping Lisa Kendall on her farm. Lisa, a high-flyer in the Young Farmer of the Year competition, is a farming contractor and sheep milker, farming east-Friesian ewes with her partner James on 20 hectares at Karaka, 20 minutes north of Pukekohe.

Lisa, who in 2020 won the Northern FMG Young Farmer of the Year competition and is competing again this year, was introduced to Karen in 2017 through the IHC Volunteer Friendship Programme – an initiative paid for by fundraising.

IHC National Fundraising Manager Greg Millar says the IHC Calf & Rural Scheme gives IHC an important connection to the rural sector and has evolved along with changes to the sector over 40 years, particularly as smaller farms and local relationships have given way to larger dairy units.

Legendary All Black Sir Colin Meads, a Waikato beef farmer and supporter of the Calf Scheme from its start, encouraged beef and sheep farmers to get involved too.

“We are incredibly grateful to the many farmers who have supported us over the years – some of them down through generations,” Greg Millar says.

**Left:** Karen Chapman celebrated a successful day of filming with farmers, friends and the *Seven Sharp* crew. From left: Syd Goodwright, *Seven Sharp* producer Alistair Wilkinson, Jenny Goodwright, IDEA Services Area Manager David Huxtable, Karen Chapman, Glen Lee, *Seven Sharp* reporter Carolyn Robinson, camera operator Peter Day and freelance camera operator Ben Ireland.

**Above:** Mike Payne, Karen Chapman and Becky Payne get set for a morning of on-camera milking.



### NZ Post offers free courier products

NZ Post is supporting charitable organisations and social enterprises by giving away free courier services in the second year, of its Delivering for Good programme. Around 10 charities and social enterprises will win free courier products for one year with a public vote (from 9–23 May) to determine which one of the winners will win an extra year of products. The winner will be announced on 30 May. “For us, delivering for New Zealand also means supporting the neighbourhoods and communities where we live and work,” says NZ Post Group Sustainability Manager Dawn Baggaley. For more information, or to enter, visit [deliveringforgood.nzpost.co.nz](https://deliveringforgood.nzpost.co.nz) or email [community@nzpost.co.nz](mailto:community@nzpost.co.nz)

### New medication system for IDEA Services

IDEA Services has introduced a new medication system that makes medication even safer in our services. The system means everyone – medical professionals, pharmacists and our staff have greater visibility over the medication people are taking. The new system has now been rolled out throughout the South Island and is also being used in parts of the North Island (with RIDSAS/ Specialist Accommodation teams, and in Northland and West Central Auckland) with the roll out due to be complete this year. Prudence Lennox, IDEA Services’ Director of Nursing, says replacing the old paper-based system is making medication rounds a lot easier and less time-consuming for support workers. “Most GPs say they’re finding it very easy to use and, for the people we support, this has meant beneficial medication changes because prescribers and pharmacies can see the same information in real time. It has also been helpful for specialists and consultants supporting people in our services where face-to-face visits haven’t been possible,” she says. IDEA Services is the first disability service provider in the country to implement 1CHART.

### Award for Fundraising newcomer

Trilby Benge has been awarded the Fundraising Newcomer of the Year Award at the Fundraising Institute of New Zealand Fundraising Excellence Awards. This is in recognition of her role as IHC Donor Care Officer since joining IHC in July 2020. “Trilby fitted quickly into our small fundraising team and is an important link to more than 21,000 active monthly donors to IHC’s Smile Club,” says Greg Millar, National Fundraising Manager. “Trilby responds professionally and well to donor questions or concerns and is central to a programme like this – she has become an expert in this area.”



# Companions on the

IHC

### Lynda Young-Kennedy knows the gravel roads, the steep tracks and the dead-ends of Southland’s back country better than most people.

She has travelled many thousands of kilometres in her 26 years of asking farmers to donate calves and other stock to the IHC Calf & Rural Scheme.

The numbers tell the story. In 40 years, the scheme has raised \$40 million from 10,000 farmers. Donating calves is something farmers say is easy and the right thing to do for their communities. When the animals go to the sales, the money goes to support people with intellectual disabilities.

On many farms, pledges to the Calf Scheme are renewed every season and they are often continued from one generation to the next.

In the early days when Lynda was a canvasser, she travelled with a notebook and pencil when she visited the farmers who made regular pledges and to sign up new ones.

“I would keep two journals. One was the dairy number and the other one was under the farmer’s name,” she says. Technology and databases make keeping track of farmers a lot easier now.

“I was lost more times than I can even think about,” she says. There was one time around Kirwee in Canterbury when a GPS took her kilometres on a roundabout route to visit a local canvasser.

Lynda says her family have always been keen to help. In the early days her father, former builder Richard Young, travelled with her to mark all the isolated roads on a map. But it was her mother, Florence, and one of Lynda’s Airedale terriers who were her constant companions on the road.

“Mum came away on every trip. She used to say, ‘If the wheels are turning, I am going to be there’. She contributed massively to the scheme. She would go to the sales and fill out all the average numbers and help with canvassers’ supplies,” Lynda says. “She loved helping IHC.”





Lynda spent time as a small child on her grandparents' Dipton sheep farm and later helped when her uncle took over the farm. He also ran some beef cattle. What her Calf Scheme friends may not know is that her first encounter with cattle as a young girl was a terrifying ordeal.

She had gone out to get eggs on the farm when she was surrounded by cattle and had to hide from them in the hen house. "The gates had been opened and they wandered in from one paddock to another and came into where the hens were." She remembers finally plucking up enough courage to run back to the house.

The family farm was sold and absorbed into dairying like many sheep farms in Southland.

Years ago, when her IHC manager asked her to take charge of the pledges from dairy farmers he told her he didn't think the scheme would take off in Southland because it was sheep country. Dairying is now a big part of Southland's economy.

Later Lynda lived on a dairy farm for a number of years. "I must have become annoying with all my questions, but I was eager to learn. I certainly have an appreciation of all the hard work that goes into dairying and sheep farming."

Lynda has two children, Jason and Marlena, and five grandchildren all living in Invercargill. She is looking forward to a great granddaughter in July.

She plans to keep on doing the job she loves and values. "If you are going to see canvassers, or the PGG Wrightson reps at the sales, or if you are going to visit the farmers, it's always really pleasant. I think that is why I have been there for 26 years. Some people retire with regrets. I won't. I think I have made a difference."

**Above: Lynda Young-Kennedy and her Airedale terrier Yakira on the road.**

**Below: Lynda and her mother Florence Young enjoy Lake Tekapo on their travels.**



# road

The rides became easier in 2011 when Volkswagen New Zealand signed up as a major Calf Scheme sponsor and supplied two vehicles, one each for the South Island and North Island. Lynda says the high clearances of the VW Amarok she drives now, and the reversing camera, have got her out of a few sticky on-farm situations.

Based in Invercargill, Lynda is now national coordinator of the IHC Calf & Rural Scheme. She organises a team of canvassers who visit farmers throughout New Zealand to encourage them to donate to IHC the proceeds from the sale of stock – dairy, beef or sheep.

She liaises with PGG Wrightson livestock reps and keeps track of the pledges, the sales and the animals. PGG Wrightson Livestock has supported the scheme from the start, handling the sales for IHC.

"I used to go up all around the South Island and even travelled in the North Island. I would catch up with transporters, sponsors, canvassers and supporters."

Lynda is at her desk a lot more now, but she visits canvassers over winter and she likes to attend as many stock sales as she can to make sure things are running smoothly.

The outbreak of *Mycoplasma bovis* in New Zealand in 2017 hit farmers and the Calf Scheme hard. "We had to do our best to keep our farmers safe with moving animals around and grouping animals together," she says. "M. Bovis stopped a lot of my travelling. And then there was COVID."

The trips will be lonelier these days. Florence, 86, died unexpectedly last year in hospital, under Level 4 restrictions during the pandemic. Lynda was not able to visit her before she died. The hospital had been restricting visits from her family, and then it was too late.

Lynda says Florence travelled with her right up until the end. Their last trip was to deliver Calf Scheme supplies to a canvasser in Gore. "We had a cup of coffee and a cheese roll with him. She had this kind of connection with all the people we met on our travels."





IHC

# A garden in waiting

## Painted planters transform a backyard

**When some old tree ferns were removed from a Mosgiel backyard in November last year, they left behind a bare fence line and empty spaces. That provided a blank canvas for the creative types among the staff and residents at an IDEA Services home.**

A garden was waiting to happen at Hagart-Alexander Drive.

Within a few months, the fence was stained, hanging flower baskets were installed and tyres from Beaufort were painted and lined to use as planters. Then the plants joined the party.

The six residents who live at 'Hagart' are pretty self-sufficient in vegetables these days and there is plenty left over to share with other IDEA Services homes and neighbours.

Everyone was involved in the project in some way – either planning, painting and planting the new garden – and then cooking.

The chief gardeners are Barry Strawford and Jackie Clarkson. Together they stained the fence and took a lead in developing the garden. IDEA Services Support Worker Justine Tindley got in touch with Mitre 10, which contributed \$1000 to the project from its national 'Helping Hands' programme.

Barry and Jackie now regularly water and weed the garden and harvest the produce, which came thick and fast through the warm months. "Every day we go out and get some new veges and find new recipes online," Justine says. "When people visit, they get a tour of the garden."

Barry says the work on the garden started with the fence. "When the trees got cut

down, we stained it all greeny coloured to make it look nicer," he says. "I do the lawns as well. I do the watering as well. We do the planting as well."

He says the garden is providing a variety of vegetables. "Courgettes is one of them and lettuces is another one and potatoes – leeks as well, strawberries too," he says.

"And cabbage," says Jackie. All the residents have a say on what is planted in the garden.

A bonus for Barry has been making friends with a next-door neighbour. They borrow tools and swap vegetables over the fence. "His name is Alan, and we talk about plants and everything else. I have become friends with him. He gives us tomatoes too. It makes me feel good when I get out there. I am really chuffed with it," Barry says.





"The neighbour loves it," Justine says. "Before this happened, there was no connection with our next-door neighbour."

Barry has now issued a challenge to other IDEA Services houses. "We need a competition to see who the best gardener is going to be."

The creative energy has now shifted to the kitchen where everyone tries to think of ways to use the oversupply of zucchinis – Carol Myles' fritters and zucchini loaves are favourites.

*"We need a competition to see who the best gardener is going to be."*

Justine says residents are now beginning to think about what to plant next. The idea is to keep the garden going throughout the year. "Barry wants to get a glasshouse like Alan's."

**Clockwise from left: Jackie Clarkson transforms an old tyre into a blue beauty. The tyres are freshly painted and lined and ready for planting. Barry Strawford finds a cauliflower nearly big enough for dinner. Jackie chooses an impressive lettuce that will easily feed six people. Carol Myles serves up zucchini fritters for lunch to the delight of her housemates.**







# Disabled students pay the price for 'broken' system

## SECTOR

**Ninety-nine percent of educational professionals surveyed by IHC want a complete overhaul of the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS), which funds support in the classroom for high-needs students.**

IHC asked 600 families/whānau, educators and medical and allied professionals what needed to change in education for disabled students. Their answers form part of the IHC submission to the Ministry of Education's Highest Needs Review.

It is ORS that attracts the most heat. Survey participants described how hard it was to apply and to get accepted for funding that was rationed. It was a competitive system, where families felt pressured to downgrade their child's abilities to get support while others were left without the support their child needed.

IHC Advocate Trish Grant, who has spent the past 17 years fighting for a fair deal for disabled students, says there has never been more unanimity. "I was surprised at the medical and allied professionals' responses – 100 percent of them were critical of ORS."

She says families are frustrated that it is taking so long to make any changes and they are cynical about one more review that won't make any difference. "There is huge frustration and despair.

"I feel very emotional about it. But I also feel hopeful – the fact that the Minister herself [Associate Minister of Education Jan Tinetti] says the system is broken – but also the feeling that it can't go on."

One parent said they were tired of hearing excuses for education failures.

"After nine years of schooling, I can confidently say her being ORS-funded is only of benefit to the school to provide token education. It's mostly babysitting. I'm ashamed and appalled at New Zealand education's slack and unaccountable excuses. Our daughter is bright and very teachable, but no one can be bothered."

Another said: "The system is broken. I can only support my child to attend school sporadically if I work a few hours a week."

It was common for parents and whānau to have to give up work or reduce working hours to provide extra support at school or at home for children not accepted for a



full day, or sent home while others went on school trips.

Students and their families are left to bear the brunt of the system failures. "It's exhausting and never ending, and I feel like a failure as a mother because I know he is not living up to his potential. His life is narrow and a little sad – no real friendships. We have made progress: after three years of battling and asking at least he is allowed in mainstream classes and finally included in a sports team. The sport is a little scary as it's just relying on the goodwill of peers to be gentle and accommodating. He is loving being part of a team."

Many educators felt alone in their classrooms without adequate resources and support to

do the best job for their students.

"There are huge gaps at every level of education that impact on children and young people who learn differently to be understood, supported appropriately and succeed while at school and beyond." – Education professional

"Children need to be included as much as possible, and inclusion should be meaningful and relevant, benefiting everyone, not a token gesture just to show that the child is included." – Education professional

"Early intervention is crucial – why do we have to fight to get the resources we need, and we know the children need to be successful? It is simply unacceptable." – Education professional



## Is this good enough?

Schools saying that they cannot provide a safe environment for disabled children equals discrimination/non-inclusion

Schools not using the specialist teacher component of the funding for the student

Lack of professional development around inclusion in schools

Lack of knowledge of principals and teachers

Parents not knowing their rights or afraid to complain as things may not go well then for their child

Poor pay for teacher aides so quality staff cannot be found

The same kind of support called different things in different areas

Lack of some services in some areas, eg, attendance services

Lack of a plan to address non-attendance at school – no teeth in legislation/no practical help for parents for school refusal

Unaddressed mental health issues in parents that affect children

Housing issues affect transience and therefore education – Medical professional



## Is this good enough?

“I have an 11-year-old patient with cerebral palsy who uses an electric wheelchair and specialised desk in the school environment. Because of his physical disability he fatigues easily and requires the assistance of a teacher aide for a couple of hours a day.

“Because he is cognitively normal, he is unable to access ORS funding, and his HHF [School High Health Needs Fund] will stop in the next six months, with written confirmation that it will not be renewed.

“Effectively, this will mean that this cognitively able, physically impaired child will stop being able to access the curriculum.” – Medical professional

Trish says the ORS resourcing policy isn't fit for purpose because it doesn't recognise that there are a lot of students outside the criteria who need help at school, for example children with fetal alcohol syndrome. The policy was designed for certain defined conditions, such as Down syndrome.

She says the ORS eligibility criteria are rigid, the application process is onerous, and its implementation is problematic, with families ending up with less support than they expect.

“But the Treasury loves it because it is a predictable amount of funding.”

Trish says she was surprised by the strong input into the survey from medical and allied professionals.

“The amount of support some children are provided is barely enough for their support team to know who they are, let alone provide any meaningful support to the child and their educators.” – Medical professional

“It is frequently difficult to match students

at higher and lower needs with appropriate levels of support. The current system is numbers-based, rather than actual level of need-based.” – Medical professional

“ORS models are deficit-based, which worsens the gap between disabled students and non-disabled students before they even begin school. ORS is becoming a ‘one-size-fits-all’ funding package rather than a supportive evidence and goal-driven inclusive education scheme. Schools shouldn't be left trying to juggle unders and overs to be able to provide the right supports for children.” – Medical professional

Trish says some speech and language professionals highlighted ethical issues because the way of working with children isn't resulting in the kind of outcomes that could be achieved.

In its submission to the Highest Needs Review, IHC has listed 18 recommendations to ensure that disabled students have equitable access to, and outcomes from, a quality, disability-inclusive education system.

Trish says the Highest Needs Review is focused on 3 percent of the total student population. “We know that 17 percent is a conservative estimate of the number of children who need support.

“So much has been spent on propping up a system that fails students and schools,” says Trish. “It's time we invested in supporting disabled students in ways that allow them to thrive at school.

“We still don't know in 2022 how many disabled students there are, where they are and what they need.”

Read the IHC submission to the Highest Needs Review at <https://ihc.org.nz/submissions>

**Page 10: Photograph by Pavol Stugel – Unsplash**  
**Opposite page: Photograph by Patrick Echters – Unsplash**

**Above: Photograph by Andrew Ebrahim – Unsplash**





## Dame Denise is new IHC Patron and firm friend

### IHC

**Dame Denise L'Estrange-Corbet is the new Patron of IHC, an organisation she committed to long ago when she was asked to judge the IHC Art Awards in 2009.**

Her immediate connection with the artists came as a surprise to her. "I had absolutely no idea what an impact not only the art, but also the artists would make on me. They are just the most beautiful people I have ever met," she said in a 2018 interview.

Dame Denise is now looking forward to expanding her role and making a difference for many more people with intellectual disabilities.

"To be named as Patron of IHC is such an absolute honour for me. I most enjoy travelling the country and meeting with all the artists in the run-up to the IHC Art Awards. That is very special to me," she says.

"My main aim is going to be bringing more awareness and visibility to people with intellectual disabilities, and how much they can enhance workplaces.

"I would like to see more corporate and small businesses taking on people with intellectual disabilities so they can be integrated into workplaces, and this role will give me that ability."

The co-founder of New Zealand fashion house WORLD, Dame Denise became the IHC Art Awards Ambassador in 2016. In 2018 she called on public and private organisations to consider art projects and collaborations

with artists working outside the mainstream. She said there was a need for recognition of these artists within the art fraternity too.

Dame Denise has led the charge. She met artist Joanna Lynskey at the IHC Art Awards and offered her a job. Joanna has worked for WORLD for nine years.

In 2019 Dame Denise launched a range of WORLD limited-edition canvas bags through the new WORLD Legacy Charity Project, featuring the artworks of intellectually disabled artists. Profits went to the artists and the IHC Art Awards.

In 2020 when the pandemic put paid to the IHC Art Awards gala night and auction, she held an Artists4Artists event and asked established New Zealand artists to donate artworks to raise funds for the awards, giving winners an opportunity to sell their works at Webb's auction house.

"COVID has put paid to so many plans we had, and it has been impossible to hold any events. But now the restrictions seem to be lessening, we will be starting again.

"I believe you lead by example and, hopefully, when people can see what you are doing, and see that it is working, they too will want to come on board.

"I am so very much looking forward to a wider involvement in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. For me it is about inclusion and making them feel wanted and appreciated, as they have so much to offer. We just have to keep putting it out there until it sticks."

IHC Group Chief Executive Ralph Jones says Dame Denise has shown enormous commitment to people with intellectual disabilities.

"Her enthusiasm and advocacy over a long period of time has been unstinting. We are delighted she has agreed to continue her support of IHC as our Patron. She's been instrumental to the growing success of the Art Awards, travelling the country to visit and encourage intellectually disabled artists."

In 2002 she was awarded an MNZM (Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit) for services to fashion and in 2017 she was made a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to fashion and the community.

As well as working with IHC she is an ambassador for Diabetes New Zealand (Auckland) and the Mental Health Foundation.

Dame Denise takes over the role of Patron from Sir Roderick Deane and Gillian, Lady Deane, CNZM, who have championed the interests of IHC and the intellectually disabled community since 1976. Sir Roderick lobbied to get people with intellectual disabilities out of institutions and into communities.

**Above: New IHC Patron Dame Denise L'Estrange-Corbet is looking forward to expanding her role.**



# Countdown starts to IHC Art Awards

IHC



## The countdown has started for the IHC Art Awards with the naming of this year's judges.

Actor Libby Hunsdale, artist and sculptor Simon Lewis Wards and Student Volunteer Army CEO Sam Johnson make up our panel of judges for the 2022 IHC Art Awards.

Libby Hunsdale starred in the 2021 film *Poppy* and was the first lead actor to play a woman with Down syndrome in a feature film in New Zealand. She is also the first person with an intellectual disability to be on the judging panel.

A rising star, Libby is now appearing in *Down for Love*, a primetime series on TVNZ 2, about people with Down syndrome looking for love. (See the story on the opposite page.)

Auckland sculptor Simon Lewis Wards works predominantly in ceramics and cast glass and is best known for his playful interpretations of iconic New Zealand candy.

After a four-year stint in Paris, Simon came home with a clear vision for his practice. He set up a studio in a repurposed vineyard in the Waitākere Ranges, where he now works on his projects, including large-scale public sculptures.

"I could not be more excited to be involved in the IHC Art Awards. The winning works from previous years are absolutely beautiful, and I can't wait to see what this year brings," Simon says.

Sam Johnson has been a long-time fan of the Art Awards since being given a book about them. "Last year I purchased an artwork via the Awards and it's a favourite of mine. I purchased it after the lockdown and I think it describes my lockdown experience," he says.

"People with disabilities have been impacted by COVID in more ways than people realise, yet the young people with disabilities we work with in partnership with IHC continue to be incredible local heroes, helping each other out and volunteering in small ways to help those around them."

Since the pandemic started in 2020, the IHC Art Awards have not been able to celebrate the art and the artists in person. But we are enjoying connecting with a wider audience online to promote the awards and sell the art – 100 percent of the sale price goes to the artists.

While dates are still being finalised, the judging is expected to take place in June and July to select the Top 100 works and the 30 finalists. This will be followed by L'affaire People's Choice Award voting. IHC is again planning to exhibit the Top 100 works at a pop-up gallery in Wellington.

Entries are now open, and close on 31 May. People aged 13 and over with intellectual disabilities, or intellectual disabilities and autism, can enter. All artworks are to be submitted online using the Art Awards Entry form. Visit [ihc.org.nz/art-awards-2020](http://ihc.org.nz/art-awards-2020)

From left: IHC Art Awards judges Libby Hunsdale, Simon Lewis Wards and Sam Johnson.

Below: Sam Johnson last year purchased this work by artist Matthew Weeding, who created the portrait using colour crayon and pencil on board.







# Love stories in the making

## SECTOR

**Finding a love match when you have an intellectual disability is not an easy business. But six people with Down syndrome have tried to do just that with a film crew watching their every move.**

*Down for Love* is a new primetime show screening on TVNZ 2 and filmed by Attitude Pictures.

The participants meet potential suitors on blind dates and go to some romantic destinations – the Rainbow's End theme park, wine tasting and a harbour cruise in Auckland, Larnach Castle in Dunedin, and mini-golf. Some of the participants also meet each other on dates.

Some of the faces might be familiar. Carlos Biggeman, a 29-year-old Dunedin photographer, won the 2021 Attitude Creative Award. Libby Hunsdale, 20, from Whanganui, was the lead in last year's feature film *Poppy*. Palmerston North actor Lily Harper, 32, starred in Wellington's Circa Theatre production of *Up Down Girl* last year. Aucklander Leisel Shepherd, 21, works with her Mum selling make-up and skin-care products. Snowboarder and mountain biker John Halliday, 38, from Alexandra, already has a ring picked out. Aucklander Josh Bradley, 21, is a keen clubber and feels it's time for some serious dating.

Attitude Pictures' Series Producer Robyn Paterson and Dan Buckingham, Attitude Pictures' CEO and Executive Producer, found the cast through community organisations, social media and their Attitude networks. They say it is important that those who are part of the series are genuinely keen to be involved and looking for love.

Attitude Pictures has collaborated with the New Zealand Down Syndrome Association in developing the series. NZDSA sent out the casting call through its networks, saying the show would highlight the strength and diversity of the Down syndrome community.

Many of the participants share the steps they have already taken, or would like to take, to find a partner. In cases where participants are looking for some guidance and advice, they speak with a relationship expert.

The search for love is often contentious and difficult for those with intellectual disabilities, for all kinds of reasons. The series canvasses this.

Robyn Paterson and Dan Buckingham say this is something they were acutely aware of going into the series. Several of the participants and their families talk about the issues – among them how some families find it hard to let their children go into adult relationships – and the challenges they have faced so far.

"We ensure the person we are filming with gets to lead telling their own story, with wrap-around support and context coming from others in their life. Our hope is that the series will improve people's understanding of living with an intellectual disability, by providing a platform for people to share their experience," Robyn says.

*Down for Love* is screening on Mondays on TVNZ 2.

**Above:** *Down for Love* cast (from left) Carlos Biggeman, Leisel Shepherd, Josh Bradley, John Halliday, Libby Hunsdale and Lily Harper.

**Below:** Josh Bradley treats his date Hayley Rubie to a day at Rainbow's End.







# This is a success story worth sharing

## SECTOR

### **Project SEARCH in Canterbury is finding great jobs for disabled school leavers. The challenge now is to share that success with many more young people.**

"Interns are out there working in good jobs and above minimum wage and proving what they can do," says Project SEARCH tutor Linda Leishman, who is guiding her fourth set of interns this year.

Project SEARCH is hosted by the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB). Interns spend a year at Burwood Hospital learning about the work environment in a classroom setting, while doing real work at the same time throughout the hospital.

CCS Disability Action is driving the project and Riccarton High School is the managing school. The IHC Foundation contributed \$128,250 to pay for the programme coordinator.

Of the seven interns who graduated in 2021, four have been offered contracts. Three graduates are now employed full time by CDHB. Carl Te Tone Huia is working in the Christchurch Hospital Supplies Department, Wiremu Manahi-Holm is working as an orderly, and James Duthie is an administration officer in Clinical Records. Jacob Levington is working part-time as a grocery assistant at PAK'nSAVE Northlands and can move to full time as soon as he is ready.

Project SEARCH is now trialling a new role of Job Developer to encourage more employers to take on graduates and to help reduce the gap between interns finishing the programme and getting a job. Courtney Murray has been employed to get the word out.

"It's my job to help them find jobs for themselves and for them to keep the power in their hands," Courtney says. "When I am interacting with our graduates, I try to keep them in the lead."

She is proud of the success rate for the 2021 interns. "They are all working meaningful hours in mainstream positions on secure contracts, and they are all being paid minimum wage or higher for their time and service," she says.

"Most of our success for the 2021 class is through CDHB, with graduates being hired into the departments where they completed their third rotation during their Project SEARCH year."

For the first six months of the year, Courtney works with the graduates from the previous intake, and then her focus shifts to the present intake. She wants to build connections with employers and is keen to have conversations with any employer wanting to know more about Project SEARCH.

Eight interns graduated in 2019 and 2020, and eight more are enrolled in the 2022 intake. The numbers are small because the programme struggles to get students/interns with Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) funding from the small population base in Canterbury.

"We are only able to take applications from ORS-funded young people at school, so we can capture that ORS funding. At any given time there might be only 40-50 ORS-funded students. It's a finite pool that we are drawing from," Linda says. "There are lots of young people who come out of school who don't have ORS funding who would benefit from Project SEARCH."

Project SEARCH is open to students between the ages of 18 and 21 who are in their last year of school and qualify for ORS funding.

For more information, please contact Courtney at [Courtney.Murray@cdhb.health.nz](mailto:Courtney.Murray@cdhb.health.nz)

**Above: (back row from left) Laura Robertson, Wiremu Manahi-Holm, Carl Te Tone Huia, James Duthie, (front row from left) Gabriel Beyrer, Jacob Levington and Bella Lammers.**

**Right: Project SEARCH 2021 interns at their graduation lunch (clockwise from left: Gabriel Beyrer, James Duthie, Carl Te Tone Huia, Jacob Levington, Wiremu Manahi-Holm, Laura Robertson and Bella Lammers.**









IHC

# Low wages for disabled workers are an embarrassment

**New Zealand's minimum wage is \$21.20 an hour – but for 900 disabled workers that doesn't apply. A quarter of them earn between \$1 and \$2 an hour.**

Employers can pay them less than other workers by using an exemption to the minimum wage law. Of the 900 people with the minimum wage exemption (MWE), 70 percent are paid less than \$5 an hour and 25 percent less than \$2 – before tax.

Disability Issues Minister Carmel Sepuloni agrees that this is discrimination. In February 2019 she said she intended to replace minimum wage exemptions with a wage subsidy. But, following consultation with the sector, the plan has stalled, with Cabinet being told in November 2019 that views were sharply divided.

Disability advocates say it's a clear breach of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

IHC General Manager of Programmes Janine Stewart says it's "embarrassing internationally" that the policy is still in place. She says it's a leftover from a time when people were in institutions and sheltered workshops, and attitudes were different about the kind of lives disabled people could expect to live.

"We should in the sector feel absolutely outraged that nothing has happened. The announcement has been made, get on with it," Janine says.

Under the Minimum Wage Act 1983, businesses can apply for an exemption to pay an employee with a disability less than the minimum wage on the basis they're less productive.

There's very strong opposition to changing the exemptions from employers and from some families. A Cabinet paper from late 2019, after the consultation, reported that views were sharply divided.

For those in favour "a wage supplement is seen as a fairer approach that will ensure that disabled employees receive fair pay for their work. In contrast, those who are opposed to changing the MWE system are mainly concerned about the potential for job losses and the flow-on effects, such as family members having to leave their own jobs to become full-time carers if their disabled relative loses their job. A recurring concern expressed in submissions is that the proposed replacement would lead to businesses using MWEs having to shut down due to increased costs, placing jobs at risk.

"We are clear that a wage supplement must be designed so that employees' overall

incomes are maintained or increased, even after the abatement of benefits and other financial assistance that results from higher hourly earnings," the report says.

While the Government would foot the bill to top up workers' wages under a subsidy, businesses fear they will incur extra costs like increases to KiwiSaver contributions.

In April Carmel Sepuloni told TVNZ 1News that the issue was still on the radar. "It's our intent to realise that commitment this term. We certainly wouldn't want to see the businesses stop in any way, but we want to make sure that we are supporting a practice that isn't discriminatory."

Janine says ending exemptions is not simple but it needs to happen. "They need to bring some smart people together and look at the problems and the solutions. Stop making it about the employers. Let's make it about the people.

"It's a sad indictment when you have a Minister saying it's discriminatory but not doing anything about it."

**Above: Photograph by Jonathan Kemper – Unsplash**



IHC

# Gavin is waiting to see the world

**Travel and tourism student Gavin Allpress plans to see more of the world one day and to help other disabled people travel more easily. With strong ambition and support from IHC, he is working on his life plans.**

Gavin, 35, uses a wheelchair, and finding accommodation was difficult and expensive in his home town of Auckland. He shifted to Hamilton, but the story was the same. "It was the housing shortage. There wasn't any suitable houses or suitable price range for me to live," he says, Gavin ended up in emergency accommodation in a motel.

In 2019 Gavin moved to Christchurch to enrol at the Ara Institute of Canterbury to study travel and tourism, booking into student accommodation at the YMCA Christchurch. However, his room was on the third floor, and he was at risk of not being able to exit easily in an emergency.

Gavin says he lives with ADHD and medical conditions affecting his bones. He doesn't have to use his wheelchair all the time and manages to walk short distances at home. He knew, though, that he needed more help. He approached LifeLinks for a needs assessment and a couple of weeks later he connected with IDEA Services' Supported Living.

"That is when I met Ian," Gavin says. "Me and Ian have been working together ever since. It's goals and laundry and that kind of thing."

IDEA Services Support Worker Ian Whittle suggested applying to IHC property company Accessible Properties for somewhere to live, and after that life began to get better for Gavin. He is delighted to finally have an accessible home that he can afford.

"In July 2020 that was when I got my house, after the first lockdown. It's good. It's really good. I like it because it's close to everything."

Ian says he works with Gavin mainly on his fitness and social connections – "ultimately to try to create a natural expansion of his social circle. He likes to keep to himself".

"We were looking for some things for me to do," Gavin says. "That is when I met Sheridan and Sheridan also connected me to Jo from Choices." Choices NZ is an IHC company providing flexible support and access to community services to help people with disabilities and health-related conditions achieve their goals.

IHC Family Liaison Sheridan Myall and Choices NZ facilitator Joanna Hannah are now part of Gavin's support team. Joanna helps Gavin with his job search and Sheridan focuses on community connections. Sheridan started with one issue that was standing in the way of Gavin getting a customer-facing role. He didn't have teeth. He'd had them removed after repeated infections.

Sheridan applied for funding for him from Mike Pero Real Estate in Christchurch to pay for dentures.

"When I first tried them, I got a bit of shock. A good shock," Gavin says.

Gavin has passed his Level 3 and Level 4 travel and tourism courses and is now planning to study for Level 5. Ian says Gavin has the skill base and the drive to achieve a lot. "He has done so much for himself. He has really been a go-getter."

**Above: Sheridan Myall, Gavin Allpress and Ian Whittle work on Gavin's travel plans.**

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Artwork by Deshan Walallavita – 'Friesian Cow', Finalist, IHC Art Awards