

StrongVoices

EMPOWERED LIVES

Summer 2023 - 2024



Coffee and a
cool story

Precious months
of joy

Scammers lie
in wait



Kōrero

I have been lucky enough to have done this job for a few years now and alongside hanging the Christmas decorations and planning a bit of a break, I love looking back at the great things that have happened over the year.

I love the individual stories – some feature in this magazine and many others are shared on social media and in newsletters. It's those personal stories that show the impact of what we do.

This year we launched IHC Media and it's great to see so many people joining the online sessions and self-advocacy forums. People also tell us that they are enjoying the online learning modules and some have contacted Te Kura (formerly the Correspondence School) to pursue some more study and learning. Our advisory group, who are users of the site, provide us with feedback to make sure we are developing and making changes in line with what people want.

But if you haven't seen it yet – please check out the Voices section of IHC Media – ihcmedia.org.nz/voices. This is where people get to share and publish what they have been working on or are interested in. Indika reads stories illustrated and animated by his older brother Sasanka; Emily shows us how to do all sorts of useful things in her How to Emily videos; Chardonnay teaches us how to make a pompom sheep; Eddie, Scott and Ben have shared photos taken for Shayne's online Happy Snappers session and much more. We also have videos from the amazing IDEA Services kapa haka festivals held around the country and you can learn more about the great IHC Stand Tall app and game that teaches about managing money.

Sharing individual experiences is essential to one of the core things that we do – challenging people's perceptions and growing knowledge and understanding. But it's having the evidence and standing together that leads to societal change and influence. This year our Advocacy team has commissioned an extraordinary piece of work with Kōtātā Insight combining statistical data with lived experience. And the data is available for all of us with a new IHC app. For example, the research shows that people with intellectual disabilities are more likely to have coronary heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Please read more about this important work on page 7.

I'd like to pay tribute to all our staff who will be working over the holiday period. We have a fantastic team. I hope that whether you are working or not, or celebrating Christmas or not, that you can enjoy the warmer months and celebrate all the good things about 2023.

Meri Kirihimete, Merry Christmas and all the best for the year ahead.

Gina Rogers
Editor, Strong Voices

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Join the conversation:

We want to keep you posted. Be the first to read the news and views across the IHC Group and disability sector. We'd love to hear from you.

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Cover image:

Like a lot of boys his age, Angus Duncan (4) loves dinosaurs. But not everyone has a mother who makes toy ones. See the story on page 17.



IHC considers new role for future

IHC

IHC is looking at the future role of its members as we adapt to changes in society and the different pressures on families.

IHC Chair Tony Shaw reported to the Annual General Meeting in October on a Working Group that was established this year to define the roles of the Member Council and Associations. The Group recommended that IHC develop a Membership Strategy to outline a role for members that was relevant and fit for purpose into the future.

Tony said there had been a steady reduction in the number of Associations, and changes in the nature of volunteering and of disability support as we move away from traditional and residential services.

He said it was important to strengthen the voice of people with intellectual disabilities, and the role of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. There was also a need to better reflect families and whānau with intellectually disabled children and the diversity of different communities.

In 2022 IHC commissioned an independent review of its Associations and Member Council, which suggested the organisation clarify and simplify the roles of both and provide more support.

The Association and Member Council Working Group reported

to the IHC Board in August with 32 recommendations that clarify the roles of the IHC Member Council and IHC Associations and bring about a shift in focus. Most recommendations aim to improve processes that support the Council and the Associations to fulfil their responsibilities.

The Working Group identified the need for IHC to clearly articulate membership benefits and find ways to retain existing members and engage with a new generation of members.

“IHC came about through the advocacy and hard work of disabled people, parents, families and whānau of people with intellectual disabilities,” the report says. “The landscape has changed in that many young families in the community do not have the same level of support families had in the earlier days of IHC. The whole disability support environment has become bigger and more complicated to navigate. A more stringent effort needs to be made to move the work of Associations to be outward rather than inward looking.”

The key recommendation was for IHC to develop a Membership Strategy because the way membership operated now was not sustainable.

The number of IHC Associations has been reducing over the years. The Working Group report highlights the shortage of members willing and

able to join Associations. “Balancing the tension between valuing existing members while at the same time attracting the next generation of members is an important task,” the report says. “There are vibrant Associations operating and Associations that have plans to increase their vibrancy. The place we find ourselves in now is not that Associations don’t work but that the environment has changed, and we need to adapt to remain relevant.”

Another important recommendation was to have at least two people with intellectual disabilities as members of the Member Council. This recommendation supported a commitment to people with intellectual disabilities, supported by their families and whānau, to have more choice and control over their lives.

The IHC Board accepted the recommendations and the IHC executive team has now nearly completed implementing them. The next steps will be to trial the improvements and make any final adjustments and changes to policy. These will go to the Board for approval.

Above: Election candidates were questioned about their stance on disability issues by self-advocates at the IHC Election Forum in October.



Coffee parties come with a cool story and a great taste

IHC Foundation

Tupperware parties have disappeared from the scene in New Zealand, but a newcomer has arrived to be the next cool thing.

Coffee parties are filling the gap, offering specialty single-origin Pluma coffee.

The ethically sourced Pluma coffee, first imported to New Zealand from Mexico by The Lucy Foundation in 2017, is available to Hamilton coffee drinkers at markets and through parties and to everyone else online.

What makes the coffee even more desirable is that people with disabilities are involved at every stage of its production in Mexico and its sale in New Zealand, and they are all paid a living wage.

The Lucy Foundation, the brainchild of Dr Robbie Francis Watene and named 'Lucy' after her prosthetic leg, has helped to reinvigorate the production of an heirloom variety of coffee at Pluma Hidalgo, a small mountain community in the south of Oaxaca, Mexico.

"Five core disabled people are paid to

hand-process the coffee for the New Zealand market," Robbie says. They have been part of the operation from the start. "We work with 30 people consistently there."

But the whole community is involved, and coffee crops have been improved with the use of organic fertilisers, pest control and workshops. Once the coffee harvest is over, the local team runs a café employing the same people.

"They are showing the community what disability leadership is without stating it," Robbie says.

In New Zealand, two people are employed to run The Lucy Foundation's Seed Training Programme, to upskill people with intellectual disabilities to work in the coffee industry. "The rest of us are volunteers." Robbie works as a disability researcher at the Donald Beasley Institute.

"We worked on the smell of an oily rag for many, many years," she says. "We wanted to show that you could have a whole value chain that was responsive to disability rights."

Robbie says they now have a proven model and have shown what is possible. "We are in our second year of having sufficient funding for New Zealand operations to deliver our objectives."

In August, six trainees graduated from the Seed Training Programme, which was granted \$40,000 this year by the IHC Foundation, and six more graduates started in September. "We are giving them real hands-on work in a real business. They are paid the living wage for that work. It's only fair and right that they are compensated fairly for that work. A lot of them haven't been paid before."

Robbie says they cannot force employers to think inclusively, but they can demonstrate it.

She says Pluma coffee is a highly rated premium coffee. "We made the decision that we wanted a very good product. We wanted to move away from the charity model."

Marketing the product and helping to run the Seed Training Programme since November last year is Nicola Rosser. Nicola has a lived experience



of disability and has worked in the disability sector. She also runs her own personal coaching business, My Road.

While her colleague Seth Newman works with four trainees in packaging and dispatching the coffee, Nicola works with two trainees on sales.

Nicola says she realised that they needed to do something pretty creative and pretty quickly to sell the coffee and it also had to be something that the trainees would be comfortable doing.

“We have been to schools. We have been to a car yard, some team meetings. For me, the coffee party is learning about the process, about where the coffee comes from.”

Nicola has developed an easy-to-read resource about the coffee process.

“The story and the taste test of coffee draws people in, and we have bags of coffee for people to take away.”

They have a stall at the St Andrew’s Artisan Market once a month on Saturdays and aim to do two coffee parties a month. “The difference between a market and a coffee party is that you have people coming and going and you don’t have time to tell your story.”

The Lucy Foundation has recently received a grant from the Frozen Funds Charitable Trust to allow Nicola to work one-on-one as a job coach for Seed graduates.

While the Lucy Foundation does not pay for fair trade or organics certification for its Pluma coffee, Robbie says they can guarantee its quality and ethical production because they know everyone involved in the process. “We can identify disability leadership at every step of the process.

“It’s definitely the hard path. We have not taken the easy path. What it will look like in the future will be up to the

people we work with. The more coffee we sell, the less we will have to rely on charitable funding.”

Previous page: The whole community at Pluma Hidalgo is involved in reviving the production of Pluma heirloom coffee with the use of organic fertilisers, pest control and workshops.

Top left: Field Director Catalina Merino Varela (centre) with (from left) Dona Serafina, Chica, Damian, Herminio, Pepe, Romelli (out of shot) and Robbie participate in an organic fertiliser workshop in Pluma Hidalgo.

Above left: Aimee Tarrant (left) and Rebecca Trundle host a coffee stall at the Disability Expo in Auckland.

Above: The Lucy Foundation is the brainchild of Dr Robbie Francis Watene and named ‘Lucy’ after her prosthetic leg.



Neil Taylor stood shoulder to shoulder with Taranaki families

IHC

Former IHC Chair Neil Taylor died on 29 August ending his long commitment to this organisation and to the South Taranaki community he loved.

“Neil made an extraordinary contribution over 45 years to improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities,” says IHC New Zealand Chief Executive Ralph Jones. “Along with so many others, I’m enormously grateful for his unstinting service and invaluable expertise as well as being very sorry to lose a good friend.”

The news of Neil’s passing prompted a stream of tributes from the many South Taranaki organisations he had helped over the years, along with those of friends and colleagues.

In 1978 Neil and his partner Paul Harris, of Harris Taylor Chartered Accountants, came up with a plan to support their community. Paul supported the Scouts, while Neil called into the Hawera office of IHC and asked if he could help. Neil’s wife Vivien says it was his mother who encouraged him to seek out IHC.

Neil did not have a child with a disability, but he joined forces with those who did to make lives better for families. He joined a team of parents in South Taranaki who raised money tirelessly to provide the services their disabled children were missing out on.

“Working in the field of intellectual disability as a volunteer has been

incredibly rewarding for me and my family for the largest part of my working life,” Neil said in 2016 when he was reappointed to the IHC Board.

“Joining IHC was for me an opportunity to give something back to the community and to be part of an organisation that upholds strong values and a commitment to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disability.” Neil became Chair of the IHC Board in 2017 and served until 2020.

The South Taranaki Branch of IHC ran like a well-oiled machine fuelled by the goodwill of the people of Hawera and the surrounding towns. Members of the branch committee met their annual fundraising target with superhuman effort involving galas, cake stalls, catering, golf tournaments and the love of a good community. The annual IHC gala brought in \$10,000 and the IHC Golf Tournament at Manaia Golf Club another \$3000. Neil and Paul’s firm sponsored the prizes each year.

Neil was South Taranaki Branch President of IHC from 1986 to 1996. He also served as IHC Vice President, and he was on the Board of both IHC and Accessible Properties Ltd, chairing the Audit and Finance committees of both organisations. He was a Chartered Accountant and Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. In 1998 he was made a NZ Life Member of IHC. Neil received a QSM in the 2020 Queen’s Birthday Honours list for services to people with intellectual disabilities and the community.

The South Taranaki Branch, founded in 1959, went into recess in 2017 finally acknowledging the fact that fewer people these days have the time or the inclination to serve on committees. Speaking at the time, Neil put it down to time-poor families rather than lack of support for people with intellectual disabilities.

“There was a community love for this organisation. In the early days we had phenomenal community support for our branch committee.”

Neil is survived by his wife Vivien, his three daughters, Steph, Jo and Gerry and Vivien’s two sons, Vaughan and Nick, and 10 grandchildren.

Above: Neil and Vivien Taylor were married for 30 years. Neil supported IHC for more than 45 years.

Poor health of disabled people ignored

IHC

The health of people with intellectual disabilities is being neglected by health authorities.

Research commissioned by IHC reveals people with intellectual disabilities are more likely to have coronary heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes and cancer.

And that's just for starters. The poor health statistics haven't improved in the past 20 years, despite the National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability calling for an end to the neglect of health issues for people with intellectual disabilities.

In 2003 the committee said, "Many adults with an intellectual disability endure prolonged suffering from health conditions that are treatable, relievable and curable, yet receive inadequate medical management."

Despite that, the last look at their health status was the 2011 report 'Health Indicators for New Zealanders with Intellectual Disability'. Frustrated that neither the Ministry of Health nor Whaikaha, the new Ministry of Disabled People, had any plans to update the report, IHC commissioned research team Kōtātā Insight to find out more.

Kōtātā researchers Luisa Beltran-Castillon and Keith McLeod have combined statistical data from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), one of the more comprehensive linked datasets in the world, with the lived experience of intellectually disabled people. The IDI holds de-identified data on individuals and households in New Zealand, collected from government agencies, surveys and non-governmental organisations.

IHC Advocate Shara Turner says the research reveals what little progress has been made on improving the health of people with intellectual

disabilities. "Intellectually disabled people experience significant poor health outcomes and decreased life expectancy. The New Zealand Government has not implemented any interventions to address this," she says.

However, she says, other countries have introduced annual health checks as a way to try to improve the health of this group. In papers to several international conferences this year, Shara has urged the introduction of free annual health checks focused on preventative healthcare for intellectually disabled people – using something like the Comprehensive Health Assessment Program (CHAP). IHC has been advocating for the introduction of the health checks since 2007.

"There is robust evidence supporting its implementation here. Looking at the costs and assumptions of the benefits of this intervention it would make economic and social sense to implement a programme like CHAP in New Zealand."

The Kōtātā Insight researchers say people with intellectual disability and their whānau show poorer outcomes across a wide range of social and economic indicators and for populations already at higher risk of disadvantage, intellectual disability acts as an additional risk factor.

Their report is the first effort at a comprehensive set of monitoring indicators that reports on the lives of people with intellectual disability. The database can be used for further research and the code used to update the indicators in the future.

An app has been developed to allow disability advocates, academics, policy makers and others access to the results. Find out more here https://ihcnewzealand.shinyapps.io/ihc_dashboard



The following actions would see a significant improvement in health for intellectually disabled people:

- Free annual health checks focused on preventative healthcare.
- Extra training for all doctors and nurses on intellectual disability rights and reasonable accommodations.
- Funding for carers and others to be part of the care team if an intellectually disabled person is in hospital.
- Preventative and screening programmes in areas such as cervical, breast and bowel cancer.
 - Improve health support with Easy Read and video resources.
 - Teach people about health and how to speak up about their health.
 - Get medical centres to develop policies to improve the health of intellectually disabled people.
- Have an intellectual disability marker in health records and collect, analyse and release separate data about intellectually disabled people.
- Create a wellbeing framework that measures the wellbeing of intellectually disabled people.
- Create a mortality review service improvement programme about the deaths of intellectually disabled people.



Monday stressbuster sessions are doing the trick

IHC

Every mother with a pre-teen or teenager needs a break. And it's just as true for the kid, especially when mum is also their carer.

Monday afternoons have become a circuit-breaker for a group of six mothers and their disabled children who meet in Whangārei to have some fun – separate fun – with creative arts therapists Marcia Underwood and Chyna Wilkinson-Gale.

The young people chill out in one room with Chyna exploring music, movement and drama, while their mothers make art with Marcia in a neighbouring room at the Te Ora Hou meeting space in Whangārei.

The dual therapy sessions are run by Mauri Tui Tuia: Creative Therapies New Zealand, which specialises in music, dance and art therapy sessions for whānau.

Executive Director Jan McConnell says the sessions break down isolation and encourage the sharing

of wisdom and strengths. "It's them supporting themselves – the parents' wisdom supporting the parents' wisdom," she says.

Jan says the Te Ora Hou community wharehau is a special place where whānau are nurtured by connecting to Te Ao Māori – the Māori world. "It brings them into the community of all the people who use the space."

At first, the mothers regarded the sessions as something for their kids and were glad of the door between the therapy rooms so they could keep an eye out. But it wasn't long before the mothers' group took on a life of its own.

Lisa Thompson comes with her 18-year-old son Max, who has cerebral palsy. Lisa and Max were referred by IHC Family-Whānau Liaison Jim Callaghan. "One of the aspects of raising a child with significant disabilities is finding a community of peers as your child reaches teenage years. We appreciate Jim and IHC identifying

"We go with the flow, where the engagement takes us. We are quite excited and extravagant and over the top."

a need for access to art therapy for rangatahi and coordinating such a fantastic team for us to engage with."

Lisa is an early childhood teacher working with pre-school tamariki with disabilities or who are medically fragile. "I often support and nurture whānau as they navigate this particular pathway of parenting, but I hadn't really realised how much I would appreciate sitting in a room with other parents as just the mother of Max – finding my own sense of community I guess.

"Max looks forward to attending, smiles and laughs and contributes to the group dynamic with enthusiasm," she says.

"As we potter with art materials we can identify with each other's journey,



acknowledging that at times this can feel like a very lonely parenting journey, and making connections feeds our wairua as does the process of creating.

“Most of us have arrived here and we have done 3000 things today, and here we have 45 minutes. I think each person leaves feeling a little lighter and that has got to be a good thing.”

IHC Family Whānau Liaison Jim Callaghan arranged the sessions and secured funding through the Whangarei District Council to pay for 20 sessions – 10 sessions for the young people and 10 sessions for the parents/caregivers. The sessions started in June, and were extended until the end of the year with extra funding from the IHC Whangārei Association and the Four Winds Foundation charitable trust.

Jim says there has been enthusiastic feedback from the parents and smiles from the kids and he has invited himself to some of the sessions – “I have even sung with the

kids. It makes my heart sing.”

Chyna says the young people arrive at her sessions ready to have fun, to entertain and be entertained. “What I have seen is the level of excitement rise as they come through the door.”

She says there is a range of needs within the group, including fairly high and complex needs. Initially there was some anxiety from them and their mothers about being in different rooms. That has gone.

“We go with the flow, where the engagement takes us. We are quite excited and extravagant and over the top.”

Chyna says the rangatahi are growing in confidence and there’s a little bit of risk-taking. They are valuing the opportunity to have some independence from their mums and to master some new challenges.

Marcia says the mothers, who initially regarded the sessions as something for their children, have found that

art can sneak up on them. “The participants are making art while they are talking.”

She says the mothers are sharing what is going on in their world with people who get it. At the start they struggled with the concept of taking time and space for themselves. “They couldn’t even entertain the idea of it. This is about freedom for these participants whose needs are so tight around the requirements of their child.”

Marcia says her goal is to nourish these mothers who are so dedicated to their children and to take some playfulness into their world. “My hope is that it will move towards connection.”

Previous page and above: Whānau and professionals in the disability community in Northland had an opportunity recently to experience a taste of arts therapy, music therapy and dance movement therapy on offer by Mauri Tui Tuia at Te Ora Hou Community Centre in Tikipunga.



New central city gig for training café

IHC Foundation

Air New Zealand has offered a new café space at its Auckland head office to the operators of Flourish, a training café for people with intellectual disabilities.

Flourish opened at Takapuna on Auckland's North Shore in August last year. It is an initiative of Project Employ and is supported by the IHC Foundation.

Founder Sarah Dann-Hoare says the approach came from the airline, keen to demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion. "Air New Zealand proposed that we open a café in their head office at Fanshawe Street."

She says Air New Zealand is designing the space from scratch and the café, which will service 600 employees, will be a five-day operation from 7.30am to 3pm on weekdays. The café will employ a barista and café assistants. The roles of café assistants have been offered to three Project Employ graduates. Damian and Phoebe will work there as paid interns, and Emily, who already has a permanent contract at Flourish Café, will divide her time between the Takapuna and

Fanshawe Street cafés. "Once we are set up we can open up the training side of it to people over the bridge." In time, trainees will share their time between the Takapuna and city cafés.

Sarah says two groups of trainees have now graduated from Flourish. The first four graduates have found work – three of them are working in other cafés and one is working in retail. Five of those who graduated in July are currently looking for work. Six new trainees started in August.

Project Employ now offers a supported employment service to its trainees. The team works with them during their six-months of training to manage their transition to paid work.

"This is a new decision based on feedback from trainees, their families and local business owners," Sarah says. "We are evolving based on what is needed, and that is for us to offer our trainees the whole package."

In the year since Flourish opened, Sarah says the café project has developed. They have recently begun working with training specialist ServiceIQ to do a "hospo-savvy"

course covering food safety and customer service. This will have NZQA accreditation.

Flourish is also attracting attention elsewhere in the city. Sarah says the Auckland University of Technology patisserie school asked if one of their students, Danika Jones, could do a two-week placement at Flourish "just to observe her and guide her in a new workplace". In turn, Danika shared her cake-making skills. "It's really great that the community is using us in this way." Danika has decided to stay on at Flourish Café as a volunteer baker one day a week.

Sarah says she and her team have been surprised at the difference they have seen in the trainees' self-confidence. "Not only do they now have friends, they are getting to know the customers really well too. Their lives, their worlds, are getting so much bigger."

Above: Daniika Jones, Auckland University of Technology patisserie student, and David Spencer, Project Employ trainee, measure the ingredients for some cake-baking.

Whaikaha releases complaints review

On 27 October, the day of the IHC Annual General Meeting, Whaikaha released the findings of its review of complaints policies at IDEA Services.

The review was done by barrister Rachael Schmidt-McCleave for Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People, after complaints from some families of intellectually disabled residents in November and December last year.

The review focused on IDEA Services' complaints process and on Whaikaha's role in responding to concerns and complaints.

Rachael Schmidt-McCleave said there was a power imbalance between service providers and users and the perception of what happened when a person complained was critical to all organisations in the sector.

"Whatever the outcome of this review, it is absolutely vital and critical that both Whaikaha and IDEA work to rebuild the trust of the community they serve."

She recommended all communications with disabled people and their family members makes clear that IDEA Services has a zero-tolerance approach to retaliation on those raising concerns and that all concerns and complaints are welcomed and will be dealt with in accordance with its complaints policy.

She recommended a review of IDEA Services' complaints policy, and that Whaikaha set its framework in writing, including statements on how natural justice considerations would be met and how its management plan would be extended to all portfolio managers, and include open communication and regular meetings and how to apologise correctly.

IHC Chief Executive Ralph Jones acknowledged there was some distrust and said while the report was concerning, IDEA Services was committed to working with

Whaikaha to improve the process in both organisations.

"It is very troubling that some individuals and families feel their voice has been lost in the complaints process and that some were reluctant to come forward. As an advocacy organisation we are working to address this right now."

In a communication to staff about the review, he said there were sometimes stories in the media that were critical of the work that we do. "And that's hard to take when we, and particularly those of you providing frontline services, are working so hard and are so committed to making life good for people we support.

"I want to thank all of you who work so hard to provide quality services and to make people's lives better."

Matthew ended his year on a high

IDEA Services

Matthew Caldwell has been having his best time at work lately.

He is one of the team at Easy Big Trees in Makarewa, a tight-knit family nursery in a small community north of Invercargill that grows big trees and sends them all over New Zealand.

Jet boat and helicopter rides were part of the fun in October and then in November he and his workmates celebrated Matthew's 20-year anniversary as an employee with a special lunch.

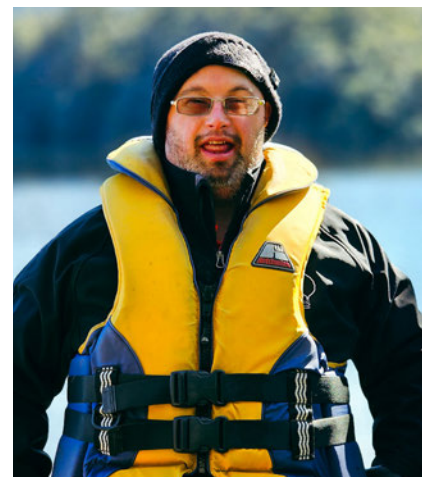
Matthew started at Easy Big Trees while he was still at school at Ruru Specialist School. He was 20 years old and his stint of work experience has lasted 20 years so far. He works there every Friday.

"I do like working there," Matthew says. "Barney Harrison is very good to work with."

Barney Harrison, Sales and Marketing Manager at Easy Big Trees, is one of the family that owns the nursery. He is a fourth-generation Harrison to be involved in the business.

"Matty has been assisting in weeding and general tidying and more recently potting small plants," Barney says. "Matty is a real fun chap to work with and we all enjoy and value Matty's frequent wit and humour."

At the beginning of October, the nursery closed for the day and Matthew and most of the team had the day out "in their big backyard". The day included a helicopter trip, jet boating down the Wairaurahiri River, a hike and a barbeque lunch on the shores of Lake Hauroko and fishing.



Matthew is very keen on native trees. "Rimu is a really good tree. It is a native tree. It takes a long time to grow." He has been supported by IDEA Services since 2008.

Above: Matthew's off jet boating down the Wairaurahiri River.



Renee took to the stage with mana

IDEA Services

Renee Marriott, a 42-year-old woman often isolated from the community because of her disability, reduced her mother to tears when she took to the stage in Ngā Tāngata Manawa o te Tai-tonga Kapa Haka Festival in Christchurch.

“This is the first time in 42 years that we have been able to celebrate Renee for Renee when we came and watched her perform,” says her Mum Tracey Waho-Blayney. “She has the mana to be able to stand in her own space. I came away with tears. I just don’t know how to explain it.”

Tracey says Renee has partial trisomy 22, is non-verbal and has often been withdrawn from life. “Because of her disabilities, it’s not easy for Renee to get involved.” But no longer.

“I have seen a real change in Renee’s outlook on life. Since she has been involved in kapa haka, she is well aware of her surroundings and the people around her. It’s connected whānau as we learn the waiata and karakia together. I just know she has grown so much because she has got to have all these experiences.”

Kapa haka teams wowed audiences across the country at this year’s IDEA Services four regional kapa haka festivals and came home with a huge sense of pride and connection.

Thirty roopu were in training for months, polishing their moves and their voices to perform. For the performers – kiritaki supported by IHC and IDEA Services – this was a chance to connect and celebrate Te Ao Māori – the Māori world.

First up was the Ngā Tāngata Manawa o te Tai-tonga festival in Christchurch in September. This

was the first time we had held a kapa festival in the South Island and teams came from Canterbury, South Canterbury, Southland, Otago, Nelson and Marlborough, and one from another provider Te Roopu Tuhono (Christchurch).

Next up was the Te Wakatini festival in Hamilton on 11 October, the Te Hoenga Waka festival in Takapuna, Auckland on 26 October and finally the Te Ngākautaki o ngā Kāhui-maunga festival in Whanganui on 7 November.

IDEA Services Kaitakawaenga Taki Peeke says the kapa haka events were all part of the build-up to a national kapa haka festival in 2024.

“These festivals are about Māori culture. That is what we have seen from Day One. When we see that performer on stage, we see them sparkle. People on stage aren’t service users; people on stage aren’t kiritaki. They are performers.”

He told the audience at Takapuna’s Bruce Mason Centre that they had come a long way from the first festival in 2017 at a hall in Kelston. In 2019 the festival was hosted in Hamilton, but numbers have grown, and Hamilton held its own festival this year.

Taki says kapa haka is the vehicle that carries the aspirations of Māori with intellectual disabilities to be included in their culture. “People are born with very exceptional talents that come in different sizes and different packages. This is a challenge to all our communities to accept all people.”

IDEA Services Northern Regional Manager Vonny Davis paid tribute to Taki for his commitment to

kiritaki. To mark his departure from IDEA Services after 26 years he was presented with a toko toko (talking stick) by artist Bernard Makorare.

Georgie Meadows, Chair of the IDEA Services Southern Regional Māori Advisory Group, says while the Christchurch event was a huge life experience for those participating, “it’s not just getting together and singing songs”. It is part of the organisation’s Māori strategy to provide bicultural training for staff and upskilling for everyone in basic te reo Māori pronunciation and tikanga.

“Upskilling the staff at the same time is what enables the kiritaki to keep on learning,” she says.

The Christchurch hosts, the Otautahi roopu, were first onto the stage at the Aurora Centre. Local organiser Renee Davis, a Service Manager for IDEA Services, says Renee Marriott enjoys it so much she does not want to let go of the poi or the tītī (the long sticks used in the tītī tōrea song E Papa Waiari).

Above: Maddie Bruno and (in the background) John Curry from Whakatu (Nelson) perform in the Ngā Tāngata Manawa o te Tai-tonga Kapa Haka Festival in Christchurch.

Next page: Renee Marriott of the Otautahi roopu in Christchurch drew the eyes of the audience in her striking whānau korowai.





Veronica reclaimed her last precious months of joy

IDEA Services

Veronica Kennedy lit up every room she was in. She loved to party, sing and dance even though she was dealing with a range of serious health conditions.

When Liam Searson took over as Service Manager at Veronica's IDEA Services home in Henderson, Auckland, he wasn't sure how he would get on with older people with intellectual disabilities. He had previously worked with autistic children.

He had yet to encounter Veronica. "She was in her late 70s when I met her, and she was the life of the party. She was a born performer," Liam says. "She should have been in Hollywood. If she liked you, she was lovely and absolutely charming. But if she didn't like you, you would know it."

Luckily for Liam, Veronica liked him and for the next five years she singled him out for special attention – and expected some special attention in return. "Veronica was a huge reason I enjoyed managing the house," he says.

Her ability to act the part of a dying woman during one hospital stay had staff convinced the end was nigh, until one of her support workers paid a visit and Veronica sat up in bed, much improved.

But the good years were coming to an end. In 2021 Veronica's health worsened and she spent a lot of time in hospital and doctors' surgeries.

Liam says her arthritis was causing her debilitating pain. She had constant nausea and vomiting and was losing weight. "The early months of 2022 were really horrible for her – a lot of anxiety and pain. It was really hard as non-medical professionals giving her any kind of support that would alleviate the pain."

He says her health was in such a poor state that staff were constantly taking Veronica to hospital and GPs without much improvement.

The IDEA Services team were working alongside her GP and practice nurse, community occupational therapist, physiotherapist, dietitian and community nurse, but there were

barriers to Veronica getting the help that would make a difference.

Referrals to pain specialists were declined on the grounds that her intellectual disability meant she wouldn't be able to engage cognitively in the pain-management strategies. A referral to the Older People's Health Service was also declined because issues seen as related to recent surgery had to be managed by the surgical team.

Liam says Veronica did not have enough time with doctors at the local GP practice or during hospital admissions, and she was discharged early from hospital when she was not stable. There were long waits at outpatient clinics and to see community specialists, and a lack of understanding from medical professionals about the level of clinical knowledge and oversight in IDEA Services residential homes.

In the end, with support from the IDEA Services National Clinical Team, Veronica was referred to hospice services in March 2022. An initial assessment by a hospice doctor was

followed by an intensive in-patient review.

“It was a positive experience. They really overhauled all her medications that weren’t really needed any more. She was only in there three days, and it was a miracle getting her pain under control and her nausea under control,” Liam says.

“She had her 83rd birthday at home and she was happy there and we had her family around. Even the week before she died she was out shopping

– fish and chips for lunch.

“Veronica enjoyed being cared for at home, with family and friends visiting regularly, and with her support workers who knew her well and who she knew and trusted. I was a very small part of her care. I wasn’t the one with her all day and all night – that was the support workers; they were amazing.”

Then suddenly Veronica became acutely unwell and had to be taken to hospital, where she died. “Everyone

who knew Veronica misses her,” Liam says. “She was just so fiery with such a lust for life.”

Veronica died in June 2022 and her family have given permission for her story to be a case study in the new palliative care learning module for support workers.

Previous page: Veronica Kennedy’s struggle to get good end-of-life care from health services is featured in a new palliative care learning module for support workers.

Kim adds her expertise to national palliative care group

Kim Fuller, Clinical Nurse Consultant with the IDEA Services National Clinical Team, has joined a group working to improve palliative care in New Zealand.

Kim has been chosen to be part of Te Whatu Ora’s National Palliative Care Steering Group. Its job is to advise the government agency on how to make sure palliative and end-of-life care meets the needs of all New Zealanders and their whānau.

Kim says there has been a focus, nationally, on upskilling staff in the aged care sector, but other residential service providers have been missing out. She sees a gap in palliative care support for people with intellectual disabilities, with brain injuries and in poor mental health.

She says Te Whatu Ora requested expressions of interest from people keen on joining the steering group. “I really felt quite strongly when I saw the expression of interest that it wouldn’t really reach the sector, so that is why I put my hand up.”

The initial focus of the steering group will be to:

- recommend how to achieve fair access to, and outcomes from, palliative care services for all New Zealanders
- identify and recommend core palliative care services that will be publicly funded

- develop a national model for paediatric and adult palliative care
- propose national adult specialist palliative care service specifications and costings
- recommend how to sustain a clinically and culturally competent and diverse workforce.

Kim, who is from Whangārei, started working for IDEA Services as a Health Adviser for Northland in 2006. She had previously worked as a nurse in London and Scotland, and then in Australia at the [since closed] Camperdown Children’s Hospital in Sydney, providing palliative care for brain-injured children.

The IDEA Services Clinical and Learning and Development teams have recently developed an online palliative care learning module as an introduction for support staff. It is a collaboration with Hospice New

Zealand. “It’s a different way of caring,” Kim says. “Palliative care is about the whole person and their support networks.”

She is keen to reframe the way we talk about end-of-life care, to make the words ‘palliative care and ‘hospice’ less confronting.

In the module, support staff will hear more about Veronica Kennedy. In a case study Service Manager Liam Searson describes the efforts made by IDEA Services staff to advocate for Veronica to get the best treatment for her complex medical problems.

Below left: Kim Fuller, Clinical Nurse Consultant with the IDEA Services National Clinical Team.

Below: Service Manager Liam Searson works for IDEA Services in Henderson, Auckland.





Scammers lie in wait

IHC

It was late on a Sunday night when the email arrived warning Hugh he had a problem. He was too tired to notice all the obvious signs that a scammer had him in their sights.

“I was tired, and I didn’t use the usual checks,” says Hugh Devereux-Mack, who was at the time a Senior Advisor with New Zealand’s cyber security agency CERT NZ. “I didn’t look at where it came from. It looked like Facebook, and the email raised a common problem, so I put in my username and password.”

Hugh ended up on a web page that didn’t look right, so he tried again with his username and password before he realised what was happening.

Fortunately for Hugh, he had two-factor authentication turned on. That’s a two-step process that makes it more difficult for a scammer if they get access to your online accounts by also asking for a code number or other evidence as an extra layer of security.

“If I had not had two-factor turned on they would have had access to all the social media accounts I had access to.”

He says it’s important not to feel ashamed if you get sucked into a scam because that only plays into the hands of scammers. The more we can talk about it to trusted friends and family the better.

“Shame comes into play after you have been a victim, but it’s also a

scammer’s mode of operations,” he says. “We need to work on destigmatising it. You are either a victim of a crime or a potential victim of a crime and it’s OK to speak up about it.

“Two-factor authentication is similar to your seatbelt when you are driving. If something goes wrong and a scammer has your username and password, it helps keep you safer. You should never give away or tell anybody your two-factor authentication codes.”

You get an uneasy feeling talking to Hugh that all your passwords might need replacing with something longer and certainly smarter. But now, in a series of video seminars available on IHC Media’s Kōrero stream, you can hear more from Hugh about how to keep safe online. The seminars cover choosing a strong password and how to spot and deal with phishing emails and texts.

His best advice is to use a strong and unique 15-character password – or ‘passphrase’. Facial recognition and fingerprints can be useful. Hugh also warns against acting quickly. If you are feeling rushed to make a purchase or click on a link or reply to an email, his advice is to stop, walk away from your device and make a cup of tea. Then go back with a clear head. Because if you are feeling panicked or rushed, that is a signal you may be the target of a scammer.

Hugh says some of the saddest scams he has seen in his time at CERT NZ are romance scams. “The

cost is not just financial.” He says people develop relationships with the scammers and continue them even when people warn them that they are scammers and not to send any more money or gift cards.

And you don’t have to have a lot of money to be scammed. “We know that the majority of scams in New Zealand are for less than \$500.”

Beat the scammers by watching our video series at www.ihcmedia.org.nz/korero

Hugh’s top tips for keeping yourself safe are:

1. Be suspicious if someone contacts you unexpectedly asking you to do something.
2. Don’t be rushed into clicking a link or phoning a number. Walk away and seek advice.
3. Have a really good password and two-factor authentication to access your bank, your email and your social media.
4. Talk about cyber security and scams with friends and family.

Above: Scammers rely on shame to silence their victims.



Fun times in a cool market

Sector

Gyro Plastics' Feilding factory does some pretty serious plastics manufacturing for New Zealand's power and electric vehicle industries.

But upstairs in a meeting room Chief Executive Trudi Duncan and Operations Manager Vanessa Kenyon are showing off new, much more colourful plastic products designed for a new market.

The company has launched a range of communication aids and sensory toys and devices designed to help anyone who needs them.

The table is full of plastic flash cards, each with a picture alongside its name for visual learners. There are also plastic tiles that fit into 'routine boards' to help with daily tasks by illustrating the steps. And it's hard to put down the toys, which move under your fingers and produce a whole lot of sensations.

Trudi and Vanessa say their Sensay products are a visual learning and communication system. Many of them are manufactured at the Feilding factory using 3D printing; other products are imported because they work with the system.

Plenty of toys will appeal to

early learners or those who are neurodiverse. But they are not just for children; they include communication tools that assist people who have had traumatic brain injuries, strokes or those with anxiety – anyone who has difficulty communicating. Trudi and Vanessa also see potential with Braille and for use by people learning languages.

Vanessa raised two autistic boys and used flash cards for her younger son James, who at nearly five years old wasn't talking. She made cards and routine boards for him out of cardboard and within weeks he started to say words. She says that when he looked at a book the picture meant something, but the words had no meaning for him. "I then realised that he was really, really visual."

Vanessa used the flash cards for several years with James until he didn't need them anymore. "By the age of nine, he had it."

Flash cards aren't new. Educators and others have been using them for a long time, but Trudi and Vanessa are hoping their products will save teachers a lot of time at the printer and laminator.

Trudi, the mother of four young children, was keen to explore

Vanessa's idea. "My life experience also led to me understanding it right away." She says she knows that children learn in very different ways. "What hit home to me is how drastically different all children's needs are."

She is quick to assure Gyro's customers that this is not a departure from its core business but rather an exploration of talent within the business.

Trudi says the family company has been in business in Feilding for nearly 60 years and is well connected to the community. Gyro has supported the local Special Children's Christmas Party for 14 years. Her father supported the event because of two grandsons with cystic fibrosis. Trudi took over the running of the company as owner and CEO 10 years ago and continues that support.

"For us, supporting healthy lifestyles is a broader outcome. Wherever we can help and make people's lives easier is where we are headed."

Top: Trudi Duncan (left) and Vanessa Kenyon show off their more colourful plastics.

Time to ditch 'them and us' attitudes

Sector

Psychologist Dr Olive Webb has spent 50 years so far working with people with intellectual disabilities and says it's time to ditch the 'them and us' way of thinking.

Her recently published memoir, *From Behind Closed Doors*, recalls the disabled people left to exist out of sight in institutions and who are still struggling to claim full citizenship.

Her book is an account of her career that started in 1969 at Sunnyside Hospital, where she was employed as an assistant clinical psychologist. What she saw there – people robbed of their individuality – convinced her of the need to do much better.

"The men slept in close quarters. In the morning they were herded out to the dressing area between the dorms. Their nightwear was removed, and they walked naked to the bathrooms on the other side of this huge building. After being showered en masse they were herded back to the dressing lobby where they were dressed in ill-fitting and ill-shapen hospital clothes. After breakfast they were herded into the Day Room where they did – nothing."

Olive worked with others who wanted to improve the lives of individuals. But she describes being sacked after 25 years from Sunnyside in 1993 for refusing to cut her ties with community organisations, including IHC, which were seen as competitors under the new commercial model of Crown Health Enterprises.

She spent 10 years from 1993 working for IHC as a Consultant in Dual Diagnosis, Health and Disability, and Olive is now working in private practice, still supporting people with intellectual disabilities.

Olive wrote her book at the same time as hearings were being conducted by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care. She made a submission to the Inquiry, and she also supported her friend Tony to give evidence. Tony had been placed in a children's home and then

in the Templeton Centre. He was physically and sexually abused and neglected at both places.

Olive talks about how life opened up for people who left the institutions. Two of those she mentions are Tony and Annette, a woman who sat in a villa that housed 50 people staring straight ahead, seeing nothing, but who, on moving into the community, discovered a love of ballet and life.

"Over the years Annette transformed from being 'the one by the window – over there' to being 'Annette', a person with likes and dislikes, with a will of her own, a person who enjoyed pleasure and who loved."

But, Olive says, for all the progress, gaps still remain in service and support of individuals.

"We made a huge difference to Annette's life. But whilst Tony is no longer institutionalised and is no longer sexually abused or beaten, he doesn't choose where he lives nor

who he lives with. He doesn't spend his money on whatever he likes. He doesn't hug anyone. He doesn't have a girlfriend. He has little privacy and few secrets."

Olive stresses the importance of sound practice by all psychologists. "Especially, we need to understand a person in light of their entire developmental history. I believe that until you know a person totally and thoroughly you shouldn't be working with them. Often this means you have to play detective and take the time to get the information from many sources. You have to be able to see their world through their eyes and understand their unique experience of life."

To purchase a copy of the book, contact Olive directly at owebbnz@gmail.com

Below: Dr Olive Webb at the Wellington launch of her memoir *From Behind Closed Doors*.





Learn stuff and go places with IHC and Te Kura

IHC

The latest from IHC Media is a free learning package offered in partnership with Te Kura, the former Correspondence School.

Four Te Kura videos are ready and waiting online in IHC Learn. They show you how to find information about your community and about public transport, and there are tips on how to manage your time and fill in forms.

Finding out where to go for information will make your day-to-day activities a lot easier and keep you safe in your community.

The transport course looks at the advantages of using different sorts of transport. Students practice using timetables, develop map-reading skills and how to plan and complete a journey using public transport.

The time-management course is great for people who have trouble knowing how long things can take and to think about how they spend their time. It also looks at the idea of time-wasting and strategies to avoid this.

Form-filling can be hard. This course looks at why we need to fill in forms,

how to fill them in, and provides tips on the kind of words you might find.

Te Kura made these learning videos and has heaps more you could do. You could do some schoolwork or even study towards a certificate or qualification that could help with a job.

Te Kura's National Leader of Learning, Kirsten Anderson, says the collaboration with IHC was an exciting project to work on and it was great to be able to share Te Kura's resources.

"The idea was for the modules, which are basically life skills, to provide a taster programme for IHC young adult and adult students.

If they want to do more, they can enrol with Te Kura," Kirsten says.

"In fact, we've already had some inquiries as a result of the modules being posted on IHC Learn."

This is a FREE offer from our friends at Te Kura for people with an intellectual disability. You will need to say IHC is your school for this. You will also need a support person to sign up with you and to support you with your study. That might be someone

who is paid to support you, a family member or a friend but they need to have enough time to help you.

Contact Te Kura and read more here: <https://www.tekura.school.nz/about-us/contact-us>

IHC Media is a new platform with content for and by people with intellectual disabilities. Including IHC Learn, there are four streams. IHC Live! has live sessions for dance, music, art, drumming, movement and photography.

IHC Kōrero has some essential watching about cyber safety.

IHC Voices shares your stories and lets people see the world through your eyes.

Join the fun, learn some new skills, have your say and make friends from all over Aotearoa.

Above: The Switch guys from IDEA Services in Dunedin are learning about public transport too. They use their Bee bus cards to explore new places in the community. (From left) Ella Fox, Tom Dreyer, Nina Amer, Katie Beamish, Cody Marshall and Denderah Gould.



Elaine knows how to do the hard yards

IHC

Elaine Brown was missing in action for months from the IHC Op Shop in Pukekohe.

She was sleeping overnight in a chair beside her son Arthur's hospital bed, afraid he wouldn't get the right care. Arthur can speak only in short sentences and finds it difficult to say what he needs. He was admitted for a hip operation and had developed complications.

Elaine, 83, has always done whatever she's had to for Arthur, 59, and she has volunteered with IHC for the past 50 years, standing up for people with intellectual disabilities.

Her years of service have been acknowledged with a Distinguished Service Award for her work with the IHC Counties Association. Elaine was celebrated at a special event at the Counties Op Shop, where she was one of its earliest volunteers.

No sooner was the celebration over, when Elaine had a heart attack. It was her second one in 10 years and she has been told to take it easy.

For 40 years Elaine has been a volunteer clothes sorter, jam maker and knitter for the Op Shop. She was there when the first shop opened in 1981 and through three moves. She

still sorts clothes out the back, once a week.

Elaine has made hundreds of jars of orange marmalade for sale in the shop, stripping her orange tree and her neighbour's trees every year. She has knitted hundreds of pairs of slippers with carpet wool bought cheaply. She says they sold well – the carpet wool was tough, and the slippers lasted. She has also fronted up to IHC gala days, helping on the stalls and providing contributions of clothes and baking for sale.

When Arthur was two years old, doctors told Elaine he was severely disabled. She already knew it but says her fears had been put down to the worries of a first-time mother.

Elaine first arrived at the IHC office in Pukekohe when Arthur was five and she was expecting her fourth child. "I had two in the pushchair, one walking beside me and I was about to have number four," she says. Arthur was one of the children in the pushchair. "He didn't walk until he was about four."

When her youngest, Robin, was born Elaine and her husband Lewis, a forestry worker, decided to place Arthur in Mangere Hospital for

a month's respite care. Mangere Hospital opened in 1966 as a psychopaedic facility and was a specialist institution for people with intellectual disabilities.

It was an experience they wouldn't repeat. They were shocked when they brought him home. "The first thing he did was go to the bread bin and grab some bread as though he had never seen food in his life," Elaine says. "The toilet training went out the window. We had to start that all over again."

Elaine was voted on to the Counties Committee more than 20 years ago and was part of the Counties Monitoring Team for 10 years, checking that people being supported in services were doing all right. The IHC Counties Association is in recess at present, struggling like many committees of its kind to attract younger families. Elaine continues volunteering, regardless.

Above: IHC Counties Volunteer Coordinator Brigit Bowron celebrates the award with Elaine (centre) and Sue Kobar, IHC National Manager of Volunteering and Community Development.

Stuart aimed for a great life for everybody

IHC

For 30 years Stuart Jenkins has spoken up for disabled people, not just from his home base in Northland but throughout the country.

He was recently presented with a Certificate of Service by the IHC Whangārei Association in appreciation of his hard work and years of service.

Stuart joined the local Whangārei committee in 1993 and added his energy to its fundraising activities.

That energy was soon employed at a national level. In 2008 Stuart joined the IHC Self-Advocacy Advisory Group, a sub-committee of the IHC Board, and later that year he and his fellow committee members became co-researchers in IHC's The Great Life Project.

IDEA Services had contracted researchers at the Donald Beasley Institute to create a quality-of-life questionnaire – which became the Great Life Project.

Donald Beasley researchers worked with co-researchers from the IHC Self-Advocacy Advisory Group to develop a questionnaire that would help determine an individual's quality of life. Researchers started by asking participants: What makes life good? What could make life better? What stops life from being good?

In 2010 Stuart and other Self-Advocacy Advisory Group members were involved in Our Stories, the forerunner to IHC's travelling multimedia exhibition Take a Moment With Us. In 2011 the focus shifted to the General Election for Stuart and the Self-Advocacy group. The committee launched its 'Get Ready and Vote' campaign, highlighting issues that most affected people with intellectual disabilities.

Asked if he thought disabled people were living a great life, he says, "I

hope they are." Was he? "Yes."

Stuart says he used to go to meetings throughout the country, talking about his life – something he enjoyed.

But he says he wanted to get under the seat when the tributes started coming from IHC Whangārei Association Chair David Laird, IHC General Manager of Programme Janine Stewart and Area Manager Sally Hume.

Stuart, now 78, was born in Whangārei and lived and worked,

mostly in agriculture, in the Whangārei area. He was in supported living with IDEA Services until October last year, when he moved from his flat to a rest home at Waipū.

He has joined the local Returned Services Association and a gardening club and still keeps up with IHC Association business in the north. "If I am in Whangārei on the night of the meeting, then I will go."

Below: Stuart Jenkins, honoured by the IHC Whangārei Association for his years of service.





David recognised with lifetime award for advocacy

IHC

IHC Self-Advocacy Advisor David Corner has been awarded life membership of disabled people's organisation People First – Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

David was invited back to Nelson to receive his award, the place where he had attended his first meeting in the early 1980s. "A friend who I know in Nelson asked me to chair a meeting. I didn't properly know what People First was," David says.

After that meeting he was one of six people elected to go to a People First conference in Christchurch in 1985.

David was presented with the life membership by Top of the South (TOS) President and member of the National Committee Michael Aldridge on 15 July at a TOS Regional Meeting.

Life membership is the highest award given by People First New Zealand – only three other people have received the award.

David has been a People First member for 37 years and he has held office at both local and national levels, including serving as Central Region President and Vice President. He has been a member of People First committees in Dunedin, Christchurch, Nelson, Wellington and Mana. He was awarded the Leona Gitmans Te Aranga Award for self-

advocacy in 2010.

"I am most proud of seeing many of the other people that I have known over the years become involved in People First and having their say."

David has worked as a Self-Advocacy Advisor for IHC for 26 years, including a term on the IHC Self-Advocacy Advisory Group. He was the Inclusion International Asia Pacific Self-Advocate Council representative from 1998 until 2020.

After his final Inclusion International meeting in 2020 he was awarded life membership of that organisation for his service. He participated in brainstorming sessions at meetings and conferences about the issues

facing people with intellectual disabilities from all parts of the globe and contributed New Zealand's and his own experiences to the mix.

"It's all about listening, including and respecting and valuing the people with intellectual disability," he said in a video prepared for his final meeting on Zoom.

Above: David Corner has worked for people with intellectual disabilities for decades – 37 years with People First and 26 years with IHC so far.

Below: David was presented with People First life membership by Top of the South President Michael Aldridge.





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IHC NATIONAL OFFICE

Level 15, 57 Willis Street,
Wellington 6011
PO Box 4155, Wellington 6140
Ph 04 472 2247, Fax 04 472 0429

EDITOR

Gina Rogers
Ph 04 495 2771
Email editor@ihc.org.nz

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ISSN 2744-3930

Cooking classes add an extra ingredient

IHC

Cooking classes running at Comcol North Canterbury deliver a lot more than food prep.

Ask the trainee cooks who spend 10 weeks in the Rangiora community college kitchen, making shopping lists, making food and making friends. They don't want the classes to end.

IHC North Canterbury Association committee member Kay Pearce came up with the idea and the committee came up with the funds to pay for three 10-week sessions this year. Each session took seven people – and there's a waiting list, including some who want to do it all again.

The classes are run by Brooke Close, supported by Faye Gread. Brooke is the Programme Coordinator and Tutor for Comcol's youth re-engagement course GROW. Faye works in reception and administration.

But when it gets to Friday – their usual tasks are set aside for what they both say is the highlight of their week. The trainees arrive, a coffee might be poured for anyone who missed breakfast, then they get down to business deciding what they want to cook for lunch.

The food shopping is well researched.

They go online to New World and PAK'nSAVE websites to see who has the best deals, then they go shopping. They are back at Comcol for morning tea before starting the meal preparation for their shared lunch.

The sessions cover equipment safety, hand hygiene, knife skills, safe food handling and the kitchen clean-up afterwards.

"We made many successful items in the kitchen, learning new skills each week, transferable to home life," Brooke says.

"The first group were identified by IDEA Services, as they were part of the local day programme," Kay says. "We sought applications for groups two and three from our wider community of people with intellectual disabilities. All classes have been filled each time, plus I have had waiting lists.

"What they have taken away from this programme is confidence and the enjoyment in creating dishes together, of which all will be shared with family and friends in the future."

Above: Making hamburgers from scratch are (from left) Kate McClintock, Gillian Hunter, Nick Latz, Alijah Prakash and Logan Moloney.

Make it

fair for ALL!

We ALL want a public education system that works for ALL learners, including disabled and neurodiverse learners.

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