

Dementia Canterbury



Noho ora pai ana I te korokeke – Living well with Dementia

Winter 2019

Walk for Dementia 17 March 2019



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From The Manager

During the last months we have held both our Golf Tournament, and our Memory Walk. The terrorist attack in Christchurch cast a shadow over both, but we were delighted and humbled with the support our community showed throughout both events. A huge thanks to all who provided additional support by way of sponsorship, donations, goodwill, event promotion and hands on support. Planning is already underway for both events in 2020 which we hope will be bigger and better than ever.

At Dementia Canterbury, Volunteers are some of the significant life blood of our organization. We could not do much of the community-based support without them, and so we are delighted to see some of our volunteers recognized via both regional and national awards this month. Congratulations to you all.

In August we are partnering with the Court Theatre who are showcasing the excellent French play “The Father” which tells the story of the impact of dementia on one man and his family. \$25 from every ticket sold using our code comes to Dementia Canterbury. Please get your tickets now, enjoy a great night out at the Court Theatre and see the stunning Mark Hadlow in action.

Canterbury also hosted a Dementia New Zealand Knowledge Exchange recently with over 80 health professionals from Canterbury and the South Island gathering together at Rydges Hotel to share knowledge and to advocate for future developments. The positive energy and desire to keep raising the goalpost higher was a pleasure to be part of.

Our new Younger Onset Service is going from strength to strength. It really does encourage us to see what a difference it is making for those living with Younger Onset Dementia. Read on for more information about the program and other events.

Thank you to you all for your ongoing support.

Nga Mihi

Darral Campbell
Manager



Personal Story

John and Petra met over 30 years ago. Back then they were neighbours who came together to support and help each other. Petra had car in need of attention, John had clothes that needed mending, and soon got to enjoy Petra's delicious cooking. At one point they were actually living in neighbouring properties and somehow a small hole appeared in the fence between! Petra and John decided that they worked so well together and enjoyed each other's company so much that they should look for something they could do together. That resulted in them purchasing a holiday park which they ran together for 10 years. They both talk very fondly of this time, loving the social contact with campers, the drive to develop and extend the business with much hard work, and the opportunities to be part of a close-knit wider community.

Unfortunately this idyllic life was shattered when John was the victim of a home invasion sustaining significant facial injuries and trauma. John's memory was affected and it seemed to take quite a long time for him to recover. Petra says they had wonderful support from the community and that they were motivated to start a neighbourhood watch group as the result of the event. John at times seemed to be coming right, but never came back to 'his old self' entirely.

With the benefit of hindsight she says there were small changes in John from that time on. Whereas once she could have relied on John having done things, this was now not always the case though he would think he had. Friends and neighbours were supportive and helped out, but running the park became harder.

Having sold the holiday park and spent a couple of years travelling the country in their caravan, working and moving around with the seasons, Petra and John found their ideal lifestyle block and set to settling in and making it their dream home and property. Twelve years on they are still there and love the fact that their hard work has made them almost self-sufficient. There is no place they would both rather be, but some other things have changed.

John has had several serious injuries working on the property, and in 2012 had a heart attack.

Petra continued to notice subtle changes in John throughout these years especially in terms of John forgetting things and becoming noticeably more accident prone. After one such accident, John's behaviour changed, and he began to have mood swings ... things that Petra knew were completely out of character. It was this change that made her decide something needed to be done and she emailed her concerns to their GP.

Following assessment, this resulted in John being diagnosed with dementia, likely Alzheimer's type. Initially they were both devastated and could not believe the diagnosis. Now looking back Petra believes John probably had dementia for a number of years before this and wishes they had got a diagnosis sooner.



They have both embraced the notion of living well and seek to optimise their health by taking Vitamin B complex and maintaining a healthy diet.

They recently completed Dementia Canterbury's Living Well Education Program, and John is now involved with Brain Ignition (cognitive stimulation) and is completing his Life Story as part of our Life Stories collaboration group with the Christchurch Libraries. Both say that the groups have been really helpful and encourage others with a diagnosis to engage with Dementia Canterbury as soon as they can.

Petra says it is harder now as John is less confident about doing things on his own which means they do them together around the property, the compromise being less time for her to pursue her own interests and have her own personal space. Petra also has an elderly mother on the other

Personal Story

side of the world who has dementia, so when she and her Dad talk, they have this in common.

John has become less social as his dementia progresses, he does not feel so comfortable in group or café type environments, again this is a change as the couple previously enjoyed a very active social life. But ever practical Petra still makes a picnic and they go off on day trips together which they both enjoy. They have also started going to church, something neither had done for many years and never

together. They both love the singing and chat that Church provides.

Living on their beloved property together means they continue much as usual, and after waving me off after my visit yesterday, today have been in touch offering to grow Pumpkins for Dementia Canterbury to sell. If they do, I hope you will buy some!

Client/Care Partner Feedback from Groups

Client

- The group is what we need, in a nice and friendly way.
- Helpful to learn more about what we can and should be doing to help us each day.
- You go home feeling happy.
- Togetherness.
- Enjoy company and friendship.
- Just being here. Nice people. Social. Good range of topics. One of the best groups I go to.

Carer

- Availability of help and methods of access.
- Sharing of situation - we are not alone.
- Listening and sharing.
- Very supportive group and valuable to attend.
- Thank you for the chance to be able to speak without fear of judgement.
- I felt very safe in confiding with the group leader, and the group.

Staff Changes



MARY ANNE BECKINGSALE

With considerable sadness we farewelled Mary Anne Beckingsale, who has been a Social Worker in our service for 5 years. Mary Anne has stepped down for now for family reasons but we hope that at some point in the future she will rejoin our team.



JULIE CARTER

We welcome Julie Carter, Social Worker to a full-time role. Julie has been working as a Needs Assessor in Mental Health in Auckland and is looking forward to beginning new adventures in Christchurch.



BEV SEABRIDGE

Bev Seabridge, one of our Activity Co-ordinators is taking 18 months leave without pay to complete her Masters in Art Therapy. We are thrilled to be able to support Bev with this. Her current amazing skill set will be missed, but we look forward to welcoming her back in January 2021.



KIM SLACK

In the interim we feel very privileged to have Kim Slack (Learning Specialist at Christchurch Libraries) coming on board 2 days per week. Kim is well known to us supporting the development of both Next Chapter and Life Story groups



DONNA JEMMETT

Donna Jemmett joined our team as a Dementia Educator in May. Donna replaces Philippa Cosgrove who, after 7 years in the role doing an amazing job including research, has moved on to fresh pastures. Donna has a nursing background and has worked in a variety of specialist dementia environments both as a nurse practitioner and manager.



PHILIPPA COSGROVE



ANNA MCWHA

In February Anna McWha joined our team as an Activity Assistant which is a new position. Anna is well known to us having been a volunteer with both our activities program and as a companion volunteer. Anna will be managing our city cafes, Next Chapter and Bunnings Groups.

Volunteer Awards

We are thrilled to see our Volunteers honoured in two lots of recent Awards. Dawn Steel received an Award from Volunteering Canterbury in a service at the Christchurch City Council. The Awards were presented by Ruth Dyson (MP). Dawn volunteers as a driver, as an activity volunteer as part of our Life Stories Programme, as a Receptionist one morning per week and as an organiser in our Annual Appeal.



Dawn with Grandsons.



Dawn Steel with Volunteer Co-ordinator Jasmine Salam.

In the Minister of Health Volunteer Awards held at The Beehive, Wellington, Dementia Canterbury won the Award for Outstanding Achievement in a Community or NGO Health Service. We were delighted to see three of our Volunteers in attendance. The Award acknowledges all our Volunteers in the Activity Programme. Congratulations to you all – and thank you.



Jenny Henderson, Dr Ashley Bloomfield Director-General of Health and Chief Executive, Miriam Dew and Yvonne Watson.

Activity Group Updates

McBakers:

A picture speaks a thousand words. These photos of the McBakers speak volumes about the spirit of this industrious group. Our bakers are busy rolling, cutting, and grating. Everyone has a job to do and plays a part in the finished product — the comradery, humour and cups of tea in the centre of the table.

Art Making at the Art Gallery:

Clay portraits were a daunting project for most of our artists. Admittedly portraiture can be intimidating, even for the most experienced artists. However, the group took a deep breath, dived in and gave it a go. Susie (Art Gallery educator) patiently led us through the process step by step. The results were astounding; all of the portraits were unique (like their creators), and you could sense the energy and concentration in the room. When finished, everyone felt a massive sense of achievement and carried their portraits with pride.



Art Making at the Art Gallery – Clay face.

Avebury House Walking group:

I know some would balk at the idea of walking in the winter months, but the crisp, bright, Christchurch winter days are a blessing. Only torrential rain or ice stop us from going out.



McBakers – pizzas.

On the odd days we need to stay indoors, Diane leads the group with exercises for body, brain, and spirit; inside of the beautiful Avebury House Homestead. So, whatever the weather it's always a great workout (and a good laugh).

Museum:

For the April group, we looked at the Ironmongers in the historic Christchurch street and then headed behind the displays for a closer look at some of the exhibits. One or two in the group admitted to having some of these items in their kitchen cupboards at home! However, for most, memories of their childhood kitchens were ignited.

In May, we learnt about the entrepreneur, Mrs Pope; who had a haberdashery shop on the street. Hearing stories of the personal and business challenges she faced over the years was inspiring. With this sense of awe for Mrs Pope, we then headed behind the scenes to try on the 19th-century costumes and items that Mrs Pope would have sold. The corsets were quite a challenge! "Thank goodness for Triumph" someone exclaimed.

Guided Botanic Walk:

The guided walk takes a break for a few months over mid-winter, this photo was from our May tour. With our guide Faye, we are all learning to walk slower and to pay more attention. The more we learn about the history of the

Activity Group Updates

gardens, the plants and trees, the more we appreciate our beautiful Botanic gardens. Fay sparks our interest, and with this more in-depth knowledge, we are all learning to look more closely and wonder about the marvels of nature.



Tree Investigation.

Opawa Gardening group

This little Oasis in Opawa is a real hidden treasure. Our group often comment on the sense of calm they feel when they arrive here. The group from Dementia Canterbury visit on the second Wednesday of each month. Jenny and Lyn from the garden have been leading our group for the past couple of years and have a wealth of knowledge on gardening and a knack of finding precisely the right gardening task for each person.

This month we experienced some heavy frosts, so it was a time for thinking about our feathered friends in the garden. We made birdfeeders, painted a birdhouse, and turned the earth to remove the weeds (and expose the bugs for the enthusiastic chickens hovering beside us).

We do encourage you to pop into the garden if you are passing. All are welcome. Wander around and check in on the bees and the chickens. On a warmer day, it's a lovely spot to sit with a picnic. Alternatively, if you want to roll your sleeves up and get your hands dirty, the volunteers are there on a Saturday morning and warmly welcome any extra help.

Warmest wishes to you all until next time
Diane, Bev and Anna.

Younger Onset Activity Group

In February this year Dementia Canterbury started a weekly day activity programme for our people who have dementia at a younger age.

The aim of the programme is to provide regular meaningful social connection with other young people, along with cognitive & physical activities.

The group is held every Thursday from 10am-3pm. Currently we can cater for up to 15 people, and we have a waitlist of 6. We spend the morning at our office and then head out in the afternoons into the community to various places. Read on to hear what is included in this programme, but there is one thing for sure... this day is filled with a team spirit, a sense of belonging & support of one another & a whole load of laughter!

After spending time researching ideas, designing and planning the programme it is hard to believe we have already been underway for over 3 months.

Some of the planning involved included creating a warm welcoming environment, the structure of the day, content such as music & physical activity components, outdoor & indoor places to visit around Christchurch to suit the weather, resources needed, menus for lunches just to name a few.

At the beginning of the programme we spent some time collecting information from the group members about their favourite musicians/bands and their favourite comedians. We also collected information about what places in Christchurch they would like to visit. This is important as these ideas all help us build the programme around what our group is interested in.

In the morning we have a music spot on the tv screen, we complete the Press word builder, have a "tell us about..." spot where we provide an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other, a physical movement session which may include tai chi for example and then we have a comedy spot also shown on the tv. We also do a range of other activities and some of these so far have included chocolate tasting (very popular!), completing a conservation project of making bird feeders, a hat day and making autumn gift cards. Lunch is a great opportunity for everyone to get involved as we have designed lunch menus that mean group members are all included in the preparing of food and this time is filled with chat.

Our afternoons out and about so far have included going to The Berry Shop for fresh fruit ice-cream, Sumner for fish n' chips & a walk, a tour of the new Turanga library, a walk-through Mona Vale, cafes for coffee, The Christchurch



Summer Beach Younger Onset Activity Group

Art Gallery, a picnic lunch at Burnside Park and quoits & badminton at Avic Hill Reserve. A member of the group has fed back how important going out together is, saying “to be able to go out on trips, it has just been amazing and I have wanted to go there but because of the anxiety of the dementia I tend not to go”.

We have started a research component for the programme with the assistance of researcher Dr Susan Gee. This includes a questionnaire for the care partners and a focus group held with the group members. It is important for us to collect information about what the group members and the family members feel about the programme, what they see are the benefits and any improvements that could be made.

To finish a few quotes from group members and care partners “together we have our team, I just love it here” plus “attending the group is the highlight of his life now”.

Diane & Justine



Burnside Park Stroll.

From The Regions

Kaikoura:

Sadly, with the resignation earlier in the year of one of the Kaikoura Librarian staff (Nikki), the Next Chapter Group has been 'on-hold' for a few months. However, the good news is that two new librarians received dementia training on May 21st, with the plan for this monthly activity group restarting again in August, when Dementia Canterbury staff will be present to support the group. This timeframe also gives the Museum and Library staff, and volunteers involved, plenty of time to re-group and to gather energy and resources.

Planning is also underway for more volunteer training during the August visit to Kaikoura, plus regular education for care partners.

West Coast:

Next Chapter groups on the West Coast are definitely on the horizon as well! An initial dementia training for a group of Librarian staff from Hokitika, Greymouth and Westport was held at the Greymouth Library on May 8th. The good news is that the inaugural Next Chapter activity group is due to take place at the Greymouth Library on Tuesday 25th June. Kim Slack from the Christchurch South Library, and Lee Andrews from Dementia Canterbury will travel over for the day to facilitate this session.



West Coast group.

Tell The Truth

We are brought up (hopefully!) to have high regard for the virtue of speaking the truth. Sometimes telling the truth can take great courage and fearlessness, at other times it can less nobly be an attempt to point out that we are right and someone else is wrong. When dementia enters the picture there comes a time when always telling the truth and correcting a person when they are wrong slides down the virtue scale as it becomes not only unhelpful but potentially damaging to a person's self-esteem and wellbeing as well as eroding the trust and goodwill in your relationship with them.

Changing the habits of a lifetime however can be challenging. I recently read a memoir by an English author who lived with her mother-in-law with dementia. Although the writer had read books that told her not to argue or contradict a person with dementia, she found this advice difficult to follow. Even when her mother-in-law had quite advanced dementia she would try to 'help' her to see that what she was saying was incorrect or rude or try to get her to see that the person she was speaking to was her in fact her own reflection in the mirror. This had the effect of upsetting her mother-in-law and damaging their relationship and although she was aware of this, the impulse to correct her mother-in-law was difficult for her to shift.

Understanding the changes that dementia brings is at the

heart of beginning to change patterns of communication. When a person looks capable and healthy it can be difficult to understand that their apparent rudeness or obtuseness is not intended as a personal slight but is the result of a disease process over which the person has no control. The ability to separate the person from the disease process allows a communication partner to step back from reacting to the content of the communication and refocus on the needs of the communicator. Dr. G. Allen Power defines dementia "as a shift in the way a person sees the world around her or him", as short term memory and the world of everyday facts becomes more difficult for the person to access, we need to shift our habitual way of responding so that the person is not being constantly corrected and reminded about everything they have gotten wrong or forgotten. For while they may have forgotten what day of the week it is, they have not lost touch with their feeling and emotional world and as we all know it doesn't feel good to be found constantly wanting, especially when we are not in a position to make things better. You can't cure dementia by trying harder.

What then are more skilful ways of responding when someone is clearly wrong about something; "I didn't go out for lunch with John yesterday what nonsense!" Firstly, does it matter that the person is wrong about something, oftentimes a potential conflict can be avoided by simply remembering to let go of the need to correct (and it's



Tell The Truth

corollary- to point out that we are right). When it does matter, it can help to focus on the feelings behind the words, "I haven't got a dentist appointment, I'm not going anywhere". Rather than point out that the appointment is written on the calendar in their writing, acknowledge the feelings involved...the fear or anxiety that may have been evoked and offer calm, supportive reassurance...and the enticement of the pleasant activity that will happen after the dentist trip. The ability to step back and focus on a person's need in the moment rather than reacting to the content of the conversation is not easy for most of us and requires active thought and practice. Often, it's only on reflection that a more helpful way of responding occurs to us, but with time, reflection and practice it is possible to make changes that can lead to less conflict and resistance and more teamwork.

As dementia progresses some people may begin to inhabit a personal reality that differs from the objective everyday world. It may be that a person believes a long deceased parent is still alive, or that they are still in employment

decades after retirement. Applying 'truth' to these realities can be counterproductive. Afterall, reality for all of us is composed of the stories we tell ourselves, for people with dementia it is not the veracity of these narratives that matters but the richness and connection that they engender. Rather than telling the person that their parent is dead or they are long retired, a more life enhancing approach is to ask 'tell me about your mother, tell me about your job as a salesman'. Note that this response does not mean you are 'colluding' in the person's view of reality, you are simply bringing curiosity and interest to what the person is saying, providing them with the chance to reaffirm their identity and history in a way that is meaningful for them now.

It is not that we have given up on 'telling the truth' but that we are communicating a deeper truth, one that is based in kindness and connection and which seeks to enhance the dignity and wellbeing of another.

Dementia Canterbury Educator

Dementia Canterbury's 2019 AGM

Dementia Canterbury's Annual General Meeting will be held on 31st July 2019 commencing at 5.30pm in the large seminar room at 3/49 Sir William Pickering Drive, Burnside, Christchurch.

For discussion at the meeting is a proposal to change from an Incorporated Society to a Charitable Trust.

All current members should have received individual letters about this giving more information. We anticipate that this is largely an administrative change and it will be business as usual.

Should you have questions, please feel free to contact Darral Campbell, Manager, at darral@dementiacanterbury.org.nz or phone 03 379 2590.

Events

Walk for Dementia

This year's Walk for Dementia held on Sunday 17th March at the new sports facility Nga Puna Wai was very successful. Everyone who attended really enjoyed themselves and the facilities were excellent. Many thanks to all those involved.

Here are some photos of many taken on the day.



Charity Golf Tournament

The inaugural Charity Golf Tournament held at Clearwater on Friday 29th March was a wonderful success with the 18 teams involved supporting our raffles and auction in great spirit. Many thanks to all those involved including the organisers, sponsors and supporters. Here are a couple of photos showing the enjoyment of those attending.



Fundraising

Ezibed supports New Zealand charities

Did you know that you can now support Dementia Canterbury when going on a holiday or business trip?

Last year we partnered with Ezibed, a New Zealand owned online travel agency, operated by Mitchell Corp NZ Ltd., based in Christchurch. We are working together on a new way to raise funds for our organisation and are very excited by this partnership!

Ezibed strives to support the fabulous work of local community groups and charities, in particular those that advance health and sustainable environments.

How it works

For each night's accommodation booked online, Ezibed will make a donation to a local community project or charity of your choice. The best part is – there is no extra cost to you. So next time you plan a trip away, head over to <https://ezibed.com> to book your perfect place to stay and don't forget to select Dementia Canterbury before checkout.

If you know someone who travels a lot – please share this exciting news. Tell them about [Ezibed.com](https://ezibed.com) and ask them to nominate Dementia Canterbury as their chosen charity.

Supporting Dementia Canterbury has never been easier, and you get to enjoy a good night's sleep at some of New Zealand's best and affordable accommodation providers.

Find out more here: <https://ezibed.com/fundraising/dementia-canterbury>

Stamps for Library

Trevor Hayes, our amazing Philatelist is working towards his target of \$20,000 through the sale of stamps donated to Dementia Canterbury to fund our Library collection. Please help Trevor reach this wonderful target by donating any stamps/stamp albums for him to sell on our behalf. Thank you Trevor for your valued support.



Donation slip

YES, I'd like to support people living with dementia

As a not-for-profit agency, Dementia Canterbury needs the support of the community to continue to deliver services that really make a difference to the quality of life for all affected by dementia.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

☐ I would like to receive regular email updates from Dementia Canterbury

Please accept my donation of: ☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other \$_____ or:

Internet Banking Details: ASB 123240:0097861:00 Dementia Canterbury

(Please use your Surname as a 'Reference') or: Cheque is enclosed ☐

Credit Card Details: Please charge my credit card with \$_____ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐

Card number _____ Expiry Date _____

Name on Card _____ Cardholder's Signature: _____

Invest in your future – remember Dementia Canterbury in your Will.

Contact us for more information. Email admin@dementiacanterbury.org.nz or call 03 379 2590.



COURT THEATRE FUNDRAISER

'THE FATHER' – 14TH August 2019



There is a woman in Andre's flat claiming to be his daughter. But Anne lives in London now... Doesn't she? And Andre lives in Paris... Doesn't he? And where has Anne's sister, Elsie gone? Don't tell him she's dead. She isn't... Is she?

An international sensation, *The Father* is the most acclaimed new play of the decade, smashing our misconceptions of time, memory and dementia in this profoundly moving and darkly comic masterpiece.

"*The Father* is a play which bristles with theatricality. It's a story which is best told on-stage. It takes an unlikely protagonist and with delicacy, compassion, edge and muscle, tells his story brilliantly."

-Artistic Director, Ross Gumbley

All Tickets and Enquiries direct through: courttheatre.org.nz/dementiacanterbury

Thank you for supporting The Court Theatre and Dementia Canterbury.

\$25 from each ticket purchased through this link for *The Father* on Wednesday 14 August will be donated to Dementia Canterbury.

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