

Chatters

A publication of Crossroads Clubhouse

July/August 2014

MID WINTER PARTY



Thoughts of Hope

Life is hard, as people say, but to have good self-esteem and a positive attitude towards life helps. Self-esteem can be achieved if you speak the truth about yourself. God gives us principles to follow; our life is worth existing.

I have been told that I'm friendly, gentle, forgiving, loving and thoughtful. When I feel low I tell myself not to self-harm but to endure with hope and to remember God still has hope for me to achieve my aspirations.

Walking around Mt Albert empties out the devastation within my mind – when I see new things I feel uplifted. I once heard that we are all at different levels. I hope that I am forever useful and kind.

David L

The contributors to this issue of Chatters are:



The ideas and opinions expressed in Chatters are not necessarily those of Crossroads Clubhouse, Arahura Trust or Auckland District Health Board. We welcome your feedback and are happy to pass this on to the contributors of Chatters.

Directors Report

Having recently attended a debate between the major New Zealand political parties, and with our election just around the corner, it's starting to feel a bit political around our Clubhouse.

Mental health in New Zealand has never been a particularly "sexy" political topic. Voters seldom base their votes on which party will provide the best outcomes for those diagnosed with a mental illness. I think it's fair to say that this is unlikely to change. I do think though that the way a political party approaches mental health provision points clearly to their approach to the overall well-being of New Zealanders. The right-leaning parties argue (generally) that a well managed economy will ultimately lead to better outcomes for all New Zealanders as prosperity filters down. While I don't want to make an economic argument against this principle, it is clear from the work we do at Clubhouse (and the difficulties that some of members have to simply exist) that this theory excludes the small but extremely vulnerable section of society for whom "sound fiscal management" has little affect.

More directly, the debate addressed some of the concerns of NGOs in the mental health sector. Most of these concerns have been outlined at www.fairfunding.org.nz. Our NGO sector is said to be strong one. Auckland central in particular is home to a number of really great NGOs which provide an amazing mix of services. The future of these services relies on a sound relationship with DHBs and the Fair Funding campaign makes simple and reasoned suggestions as to how this can be done better. I really enjoy my work as part of this sector and my vote this year will certainly take much of this into account.



Stephen Hart

p.s. full credit for my photo goes to the Chatters design team. Thanks guys ;)

Newsflash

Clubhouse is making further efforts to reach out to other organisations. We have made **presentations** at 'Richmond Services' and 'Mind and Body' and plan to visit Mason Clinic, Te Whetu Tawera, Framework, Affinity, Pathways and the Buchanan Clinic. It is an inspiring experience to see what other services in the mental health field are up to and comforting to know we are not working in isolation.



Our **Clubhouse slogan** has changed. We decided that "A Place to Belong : A community for adults with a mental illness" no longer describes us adequately. Our new motto is "Belonging. Purpose. Hope: An evolving community that supports and assists the journey to good health and well-being."



On Monday afternoon we have set aside some time to discuss **Clubhouse Development** from 3-4pm. This is an opportunity to focus on elements of Clubhouse that need some consideration. We covered the work-ordered day first which lead to the topic of Member Leadership. While no decisions to implement change have been made yet, the sessions provide time for essential evaluating and reflection on what we're doing.

Congratulations to Clubhouse International and Fountain House (New York) who have won the world's largest humanitarian prize! \$1.5 million was awarded to "the successful model to help those suffering from mental illness to reclaim their lives and realize their potential through work and the support of a caring community." The Clubhouse Model is a beacon of hope for those living with mental illness who are too often consigned to lives of homelessness, imprisonment, social stigma, and isolation. Clubhouses purposefully depend on their members for daily operation. We embrace members as productive, independent people with talents and contributions important to our society.

We have been looking at the way we record information in our

Newsflash



Clubhouse
members
visiting
Richmond
Services

Membership Reviews (membership catch-ups). Done every six months, these reviews are useful to track our personal well-being journey. What was challenging me six months ago? What was I finding helpful? Where am I now and what would I like to see myself doing in the next six months?

The **five Ways of Well-Being** (developed by the New Economic Foundation and adopted by the Mental Health Foundation) are about feeling good and functioning well. The surrounding speech bubbles list some of the aspects to consider when we review personal well-being.



The Sensory Connection

'Sensory Modulation', one of the current buzz-words in mental health, means using sensory activities to manage stress, anxiety and emotional crisis. We can learn self-regulation skills to help calm ourselves down when we are upset or to alert us when we are having trouble paying attention. The advantage of the sensory approach is that it relies on physiological (body) reactions rather than cognitive and psychological strategies that are often difficult to use when in crisis.

It is sometimes difficult to think clearly when you are in crisis. When you begin to experience signs of trouble you can employ coping strategies to self-regulate and prevent the crisis from escalating. Over time you could put together a sensory kit, create a comfort space and practice coping strategies. Emotional overload mostly occurs in two forms. Our reactions to stress may be anxiety, panic, agitation, fearfulness, angry outbursts and sleeplessness; or we may experience fatigue, psychological numbness, withdrawal and excessive sleepiness. While experiencing either form our

thinking ability is disrupted and we may feel helpless or out of control.

The body has an amazing capacity for self-regulation. People have always used rocking chairs, tight wrapping, heavy-quilts, pacing around or wringing hands to help manage stress. Become aware of your own states and, by experimentation, learn what types of sensory input help you. Every body is different.



General characteristics that make sensory input calming or alerting:

Calming

Mild/soft
Slow
Rhythmic
Simple
Familiar
Expected/predictable
Soothing
Undemanding
Has positive associations

Alerting

Strong
Fast-paced
Non-rhythmic
Complex
Novel
Surprising/unpredictable
Irritating
Demanding

Specific Examples:

Calming:

Smells

Soothing smells lavender, vanilla, cedar

Visual

Natural or dim lighting
Pleasant scenery
Watching a candle/fireplace
Lack of clutter/ simple rooms

Auditory (Hearing)

Soft, slow music
Familiar background noise (fan)
Humming, singing quietly
Repetitive sounds (ocean waves, relax CD's)

Taste

Sweet hard candies
Tea (mint or chamomile)
Porridge and brown sugar

Oral Motor Sense

Lollipop
Sucking thick liquid through straw

Alerting:

Peppermint, lemon or lemongrass

Artificial lighting, rapidly changing light
Complex visual images
Video games
Mess and clutter

Loud, quick-paced music
Unfamiliar background noise (jack hammer)
Whistling
Changing sounds (city streets)

Strong spicy, sour or bitter food
Lemon drops
Peppermint or cinnamon candy

Crunching raw vegetables
Crunching crushed Ice

Along with the usual five senses there are four other kinds of activities that may help in crisis situation. **Vestibular Activities** (stimulate the balance sense); rocking chair/ swing, bouncing on therapy ball, dancing, swimming. **Proprioceptive Activities** (stimulates the movement sense); walking, jogging, exercise/gym, Ping-Pong. **Deep Pressure Touch**; massage, heavy-blankets, curl up in tight ball. **Deep Abdominal Breathing**.

Phil's International Travel



Where did you go?

Thailand, India and The United Arab Emirates. I spent 5 days in Pattaya, Thailand, then 5 ½ weeks travelling between Mumbai, Pune and Goa in India. On the way home we spent 4 days in Dubai, The United Arab Emirates.

What made you decide to go?

My friend (who was my best man at my wedding) invited me two years ago to go on this trip to visit his family.

What was the purpose of your trip?

A holiday to visit friends and relatives of my travelling companion.

What was the atmosphere like during your travels?

Challenging, but exciting, new and fresh. I had never visited any of these places before.

What was most difficult about the trip?

The environment, climate, language and difference in foods were challenging.

How did you cope?

I decided I would try all the food that was offered to me. There was only one occasion when I didn't accept what was offered. The first taste was nasty so I didn't have any more. This was in a restaurant; no one seemed to be offended.

Did you eat healthy food?

Yes, we ate all sorts of things. My favourite was a beef dish cooked with spinach called 'saagwala'. The food was over the top, I was always offered far too much. The hospitality was just amazing. Everyone was so friendly and open. My friend and his family wouldn't let me pay for anything.

Were you happy there?

I felt safe and comfortable with my friend's relatives, they made me feel very welcome.

Did you meet any people?

I met lots of people, my friend's mother, his three brothers, three sisters and his friends from childhood.

How did you get organized for the trip?

Two years ago, we started planning the trip and putting money aside.

How did travel around?

By plane, bus, Jetski, tooktooks (3 wheeler motorbikes), and by foot!

How was the weather on your holiday?

It was so hot I was praying for rain. It rained the following day for about two hours. That was the only rain we had in six weeks.

Were the countries you visited as you expected them to be?

I had perceptions of India being like the movie 'Slum Dog Millionaire' with slums everywhere. But there is also a lot of wealth, although there is a huge gap between the rich and poor. I was surprised to see young people at restaurants with the latest Jags and Mercedes, yet beggars would also come up to you on the street.

Did you like the culture?

The culture was very interesting. I didn't see much of the hindi culture, it was definitely there. The people I was staying with had religious beliefs but didn't discuss them.

Would you recommend this trip?

Thailand is a great place to visit; it's clean, cheap and a big party town 24/7. India is worth visiting if you can handle the culture - there is an enormous amount of people, the language can also be a barrier. However, is it very beautiful, especially the south, there are mountains and lakes like the South Island of New Zealand. Dubai is amazing; I would recommend it to anyone, but you need money. It has the tallest building in the world; there are malls with ski slopes and aquariums. One mall was so

big you needed a map.

How was your budget?

I spend a lot less than expected, mainly because of the generosity of my hosts.

What are your travel tips?

In developing countries like India you need to take care with food and water. Only drink sealed bottled water, watch your hygiene and don't eat salads. Unfortunately I picked up a bug and was very sick for about 10 days when I came home.



Interviewed by Paul D & Nadine

Mid-Winter Dinner



Mid-winter dinner saw forty of us pleasantly huddled upstairs in Empress of India restaurant. The light was ambient, the service excellent and ourselves well-behaved. Butter Chicken was the most popular choice, others tried the Empress special curry and Rogan Josh.

Having already had nibbles and **karaoke** at Clubhouse most people were ready for an early night. We went to this restaurant for last year's dinner too and highly recommend The Empress of India.

Social Recreation

For the June Social Recreation outing a group of 18 went to Auckland Museum. We saw the 'Wild Life Photographer of the Year' Exhibition. Entry was free for Aucklanders, but there was a fee for tourists.

I thought the exhibition was excellent. The vivid colours and attention to detail were impressive. We spent an hour looking around and met back outside the museum. Then we moved on to the Winter Gardens in the Domain, where we had an enjoyable picnic lunch.

After our picnic we drove to the Botanical Gardens in Manurewa (approximately 25 minute south of Auckland). Our van load took a tiki-tour past the garden entrance into a residential area before finding our way back to the entrance of the Botanical Gardens. We came across some spectacular mansions including one that looked like a castle.

The weather was beautiful.

Glenn P & Nadine



Job Searching Again!

I'm sad to say I am back to job searching again. I was made redundant after two months work in admin and data entry for a telecommunications dealer.

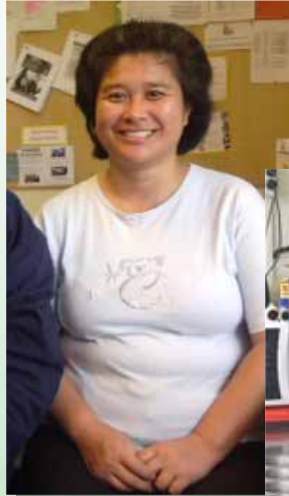
I volunteer one morning at the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre making lunches for about 15 people doing the Task Force Green CC Corps gardening. I still volunteer Wednesdays at the Ronald McDonald House baking chicken and doing other tasks for the residents of the House.

I get support from Workfocus to make applications for work; preferably as an office assistant doing administration work.

I help out at the Bruce Mason Centre, Eden Park and Mt Smart Stadiums. This is only a little bit of income. Sometimes I feel I can't cope financially. I hope to find a full-time, permanent job soon so that I can pay my bills.

Wish me luck on my journey, thanks!

Pauline T



People don't get well in isolation. Why not?

Last year I spent the whole year by myself. I felt like a loser, shut off from humanity. I cut myself off from people, always wanting to be on my own. Now, things have changed. I've turned about in a year. It wasn't that hard but really depressing.

Coming to Crossroads Clubhouse has helped me accept my illness, but also helped me realize that I can be a functioning member of the Clubhouse community. Seeing people everyday lifts my mood and makes me function more effectively.

I missed the human contact. I only realized this afterwards. I didn't even know that I was missing contact with people; having another person to offer me friendship and a listening ear.

The qualities that I look for in other people are honesty, integrity and empathy. In turn I try to be the same. One of my dreams is to find a partner.



Rob

The World Cup

The 18th world cup of soccer has just been completed. The cup was held in Brazil. Germany were the eventual winners defeating Argentina 1 to nil in the final. This was Germany's 4th World cup triumph and its first as unified Germany (Germany at one time was divided into West and East Germany.) This was also the first time that a European team have won the cup on South American soil.

The commentators said that this world cup was one of the best ever. 171 goals were scored in the tournament, the highest amount of goals ever (equal to the amount in 1998.) In this world cup the major nations struggled against the so called minors. Power houses like Spain, England and Italy failed to get out of group play, and nations like Columbia and Costa Rica (that have not had much success in previous world cups) went all the way to the quarter finals.

The biggest shock of the tournament was pre-tournament favorites Brazil going down to Germany 7 to 1 in the semifinal. My pick for the best player in a game was the American goal keeper Tom Howard. He made 15 saves in the match against Germany (which Germany won 1 to nil.)

The Brazilians spent \$11 billion on the world cup. This caused a huge outcry in Brazil as that money could have been put to better use elsewhere. However the world cup brought joy to many people. It was a success.

Paul G.



New Zealand Elections Approach

Paul G. and Merv

The elections are coming up this year in September. Merv will give you reasons to vote National while I (Paul G.) will give you reasons to vote Labour.

National will do the following:

Create more employment, invest in people, create more apprenticeships for school leavers, focus on getting unemployed people into employment, seek trade opportunity with China and America, keep the age of superannuation to 65 years, put more police on the beat, and introduce a 3 strikes policy to worst offenders.

And now for Labour:

Labour believes in people before profits. They want to re –distribute wealth so the poor people can receive more money in benefits and help. The rich are rich enough and can spare some of their wealth. Labour's policies that would facilitate redistribution are increasing the tax rate for wealthy people and adding a capital gains tax . Labour is environmental friendly which is also important.

I hope the above will help you make a decision. Every vote counts!

Chocolate Brownies

Ingredients

250 gms butter melted
1 ½ cups sugar
4 eggs
¾ cup cocoa powder
200 grams chocolate chips
1 tsp vanilla essence
2 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder

Method

Mix melted butter, sugar and eggs with mixer until smooth.

Add cocoa powder, chocolate chips and vanilla essence.

Sift in flour and baking powder.

Mix well then pour into lined baking tin.

Bake at 180 C for 40 minutes or until cooked.



Pauline T

Matariki

Matariki is the Māori name for the cluster of stars also known as the Pleiades. It rises just once a year, in mid-winter – late May or early June.

Historically, Matariki occurred at the end of the harvest season. It was a time in which the storage houses (pātaka kai) were full with food, and a time to acknowledge the successes of the past year and look toward the year ahead. With the coming together of family and friends it was a time to share with each other skills, achievements and history through story telling, song and dance, carving and weaving, ancient ceremonies and the passing on of knowledge and history.

Today Matariki means celebrating the unique place in which we live and giving respect to the land we live on.

At Crossroads we planted a lime tree to celebrate. Matt and Tony recited karakia, Emma, Maricor and Chelyn lead us in waiata. The ceremony was followed by kai.



Members Engaging with Pets at Crossroads Clubhouse

Historically, animals have been associated with promoting mental and physical health benefits for humans. However, their integration into hospitals and other health care settings has been slow. There is now increasing evidence suggesting that those who keep pets are likely to benefit from various health improvements. Service users engaging with animals in rehabilitation settings are experiencing significant reductions in anxiety and increased health benefits.



Members at Clubhouse look forward to the days that dogs are on the premises and enjoy their time with them. Members tend to relive their own experiences with their pets in the past. Having a dog at Clubhouse, brought in either by a member or by staff are facilitating an end in loneliness and isolation. It also gives members another opportunity to communicate and build their self-confidence.

Chelyn



Django makes me feel happy. A dog is a man's or a woman's best friend. I feel honoured that I can pat and play with Chelyn's dog.
Megan



Patting a dog at Clubhouse makes me feel happy and comforted. It soothes me and makes me feel wanted.
Matthew R



Dave's Book Report

Limitless is a quick inspirational story to be read daily, or when you feel you need to. The author of the book, Nick Vujicic, was born with no arms or legs and tells how his life was blessed, with Christian faith, a supportive mum and dad and extended family.

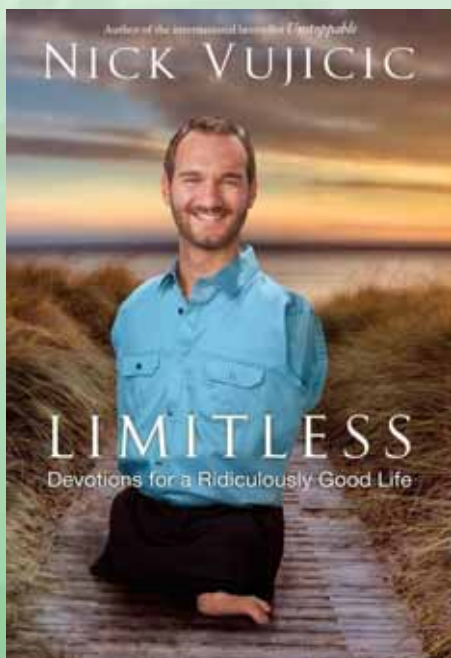
The author struggled as an adolescent to come to grips with his disability. He would pray to God every night to wake up the next day with limbs. He contemplated suicide by drowning himself in a bath but stopped short because he knew it would break his parents' hearts.

Because of his faith he came to terms with his disability and Nick realised he could use it to encourage others. He is now married and travels the world as an inspirational motivator speaking to scores of people at schools and orphanages. Lubi and I read the book daily to inspire us. If he can make it so can we. It is a positive way to start the day.

I would like to finish with a quote by Nick.

"If God can take someone like me, someone without arms and legs, and use me as His hands and feet, He can use anybody. It's not about ability. The only thing God needs from us is a willing heart."

Dave B





Dido is a British singer song writer who sings pop music. Dido attained international success with her debut album "No Angel" in 1999 selling 21 million copies worldwide. Her real name is Florian Cloud De Bouneville O'malley Armstrong. She was born on the 25th of December in 1971 in Kensington, London, England, UK. She was born on Christmas day. She's a good singer and I recommended her music—it is worth listening to.

Fila

Weigh 2 go....

We have been running 'Weigh 2 go' for a few weeks now. I have been attending the meetings for 7 weeks now. Unfortunately I have not lost any weight yet, but I have learnt many ideas about eating healthier.

In a meal, the palm of your hand should be the amount of protein, your fist should be the amount of carbohydrates and two hands are the amount of vegetables.



What to look for when shopping:

- ⇒ **Fat** * Less than 10gm per 100gm,
- ⇒ **Sugar** * less than 10gm per 100gm,
- ⇒ **Sodium** * Less than 450mg per 100gm
- ⇒ **Fibre** * More than 6gm per 100gm.

Nikki D.

A Unique Approach

Like all our work, this was produced inhouse by members and staff – our approach to recovery: working side by side at Crossroads.

We'd love to show you our Clubhouse.
Please call anytime to arrange a tour time.



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For more about our Clubhouse visit:
www.crossroadsclubhouse.org.nz
For more info on the Clubhouse model
visit: www.iccd.org

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